Cinepoetry? Movement and *Photogénie* as Aesthetic Categories of the Poetic Avant-garde

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> It would have been strange if in an epoch when the popular art *par excellence*, the cinema, is a book of pictures, the poets had not tried to compose pictures for meditative and refined minds which are not content with the crude imaginings of the makers of films. (...) [O]ne can predict the day when, the photograph and the cinema having become the only form of publication in use, the poet will have the freedom heretofore unknown.
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> G. Apollinaire, *The New Spirit and the Poets*[1]

The relations between avant-garde poetry and silent film, on which I shall focus, have been to a certain extent analyzed by Polish scholars. However, mainly film and culture studies scholars have examined this fascinating and complex issue, often from a historical or documentary

[1] Guillaume Apollinaire, *Selected Wwritings of Guillaume Apollinaire* (New York: New Directions, 1971), 228.

perspective, drawing on structuralism and semiotics.[2] Two complementary anthologies of film of the interwar period, by Jadwiga Bocheńska and Marcin Giżycki, respectively, which include numerous texts written by poets who were inspired by artistic cinema (and I will mostly refer to artistic cinema in my article), have played an invaluable role in this regard.[3] The Polish avant-garde had an acute "film awareness."[4] Although Polish cinema of the interwar period mostly specialized in popular productions, especially melodramas and patriotic dramas, Polish audiences also watched experimental and avant-garde silent films from all around the world. Film as a theme was also very popular in the poetry of the interwar period; indeed, some poets had a very close relation with film.[5] Anatol Stern agreed to an experimental adaptation of *Europa* [Europe] by Stefan and Franciszka Themerson (1931-1932); Jalu Kurek, a spokesman for "pure cinema," made one of the few Polish experimental films of the era, entitled *OR* (*Obliczenia rytmiczne* [Rhythmic calculations], 1932); Jerzy Brzękowski wrote the script for *Kobieta i koła* [Woman and circles] (1931) – though the movie was unfortunately never made.[6] Since Brzękowski was a member of the "a.r." group, and author of many cinematic essays and reviews, Władysław Strzemiński encouraged him to write his own theoretical book on early

[2] Apart from the books that I refer to in my essay, the following authors have examined the relationships between Polish avant-garde poetry and cinema in more detail: Ewa and Marek Pytasz, *Poetycka podróż w świat kinematografu, czyli kino w poezji polskiej lat 1914-1925* [A poetic journey into the world of cinematography: Cinema in Polish poetry in the years 1914-1925], in: *Szkice z teorii filmu* [Essays on film theory], Alicja Helman and Tadeusz Miczka (eds.) (Katowice: Prace Naukowe UŚ, 1978), 18-32; J. Kucharczyk, *Pierwiastki filmowe w twórczości literackiej Tadeusza Peipera i Jalu Kurka* [Film elements in the literary works of Tadeusz Peiper and Jalu Kurek], *Kwartalnik Filmowy* 57,1 (1965). Recently, a brilliant book by Kamila Kuc has been published in English: *Visions of Avant-Garde Films: Polish Cinematic Experiments From Expressionism to Constructivism* (Indiana and Minneapolis: University of Indiana Press 2016). Rafał Koshany wrote about cinema in poetry after 1945. Marcin Giżycki, pointing to similar references, writes that "the influence of cinema on Polish poetry has been discussed extensively;" however, I think that there ias still more to discover in this regard, the more so as this topic has been usually addressed by film studies scholars. For example, Giżycki argues that in Tadeusz Peiper's poetry objects are intentionally presented as "immobile," which supposedly means that there are no links between his poetry and film. *Cf.* Marcin Giżycki, *Awangarda wobec kina: film w kręgu polskiej awangardy artystycznej dwudziestolecia międzywojennego* [The avant-garde and cinema: Cinema in the circle of the Polish artistic avant-garde of the interwar period](Warsaw: Małe, 1996), pp. 32,35.

[3] *Polska myśl filmowa. Antologia tekstów z lat 1989-1939* [Polish film studies: Anthology of texts from 1989-1939], edited and selected by J. Bocheńska (Wrocław: ZNiO, 1975); *Walka o film artystyczny w międzywojennej Polsce* [The fight for artistic cinema in interwar Poland] , edited by Marcin Giżycki, (Warsaw: PWN, 1989). On avant-garde poets and writers' views on film *cf.*: Jadwiga Bocheńska, *Polska myśl filmowa do roku 1939* [Polish film studies until 1939] (Wrocław: ZNiO, 1974); Marcin Giżycki, *Awangarda wobec kina* [The avant-garde and cinema]; Wojciech Otto, *Literatura i film w kulturze polskiej dwudziestolecia międzywojennego* [Literature and film in the Polish culture of the interwar period] (Poznań: PTPN, 2007); Aleksander Wójtowicz, *Wśród "nowych możliwości". Powieść awangardowa i film* [Among 'new opportunities:' The avant-garde novel and film] [in:] *idem*, *Cogito i "sejsmograf podświadomości". Proza pierwszej awangardy* [Cogito and the "subconscious seismograph:" The prose of the first avant-garde] (Lublin: UMCS, 2010); Aleksander Wójtowicz, *Charlie w Inkipo. Nowa Sztuka i Chaplin* [Charlie in Inkipo: New Art and Chaplin] [in:] *Nowa Sztuka. Początki (i końce)* [New Art: Beginnings (and endings)] (Kraków: WUJ, 2017).

[4] Otto, *Literatura i film* [Literature and film], pp. 21-22. This phrase was coined by Alicja Helman.

[5] In his introduction to *Walka o film artystyczny* [The fight for artistic cinema], Giżycki comments on the hopes associated with the new medium, combining the beliefs of Polish futurists, "Blok" constructivists and representatives of the Krakow Avant-garde. Jalu Kurek's movie *OR* was to prove that "watching poetry" is possible. The reconstruction of this lost movie by Ignacy Szczepański and Marcin Giżycki can be viewed at: https://artmuseum.pl/pl/filmoteka/praca/gizycki-marcin-szczepanski-ignacy-jalu-kurek-or-obliczenia (date of access: January 11, 2021). There are explicit and implicit film inspirations in the poems of the interwar period by both Scamandrites, such as Tuwim or Wierzyński, and avant-garde poets, such as Bruno Jasieński or Kurek (M. Giżycki, *Walka o film*, pp. 17-18; W. Otto, *Literatura i film*, pp. 14-20). Many such poems have recently been collected by Darek Foks in his *Zawrót głowy. Antologia polskich wierszy filmowych* [Vertigo: Anthology of Polish film poems] (Łódź: NCKF, 2019). The influence of film on avant-garde prose was thoroughly discussed in the interwar period; it was summarized by, for example, Stefania Zahorska in *Co powieść zawdzięcza filmowi* [What does the novel owe to film] (*Kwartalnik Literacko-Naukowy* 29 [1934]). A. Wójtowicz has complied an excellent reference list of sources on filmic aspects of avant-garde literature in *Wśród "nowych możliwości"*.

[6] According to Giżycki, the script was first reprinted in French under the title *Pour le film abstrait* (*Cercle et Carré* 3 [1930]), and then in *Linia* (1, [1931]). Giżycki, *Awangarda wobec kina*, p. 18.

cinema.[7] When it comes to avant-garde poets, apart from Stern (the author of over thirty movie scripts), Kurek (the author of about five hundred short essays on film) Brzękowski, Bruno Jasieński, Tytus Czyżewski and, of course, Tadeusz Peiper (who commented on film in his post-war notes and in the draft of his unfinished book on "screen aesthetics") featured prominently in *Wśród ludzi na scenach i na ekranie* [Among the people on stage and on screen][8].

Wojciech Otto's monograph *Literatura i film w kulturze polskiej dwudziestolecia międzywojennego* [Literature and film in the Polish culture of the interwar period] (Poznań 2007) focuses specifically on avant-garde "film" poetics – I shall address the same question in my article. While one can easily agree with Otto's insightful observations, considering the wide range of topics involved, his book is rather succinct, thus leaving room for further explorations. Otto's argument, namely the use of film concepts in poetry, classified in terms of the "narrative relations" in poems (including quasi-cinematic editing, intertitles, simultaneous narration, time gaps, omissions, and even a poetic play with "scene backgrounds" and "camera movements"), is well-founded and inspiring. However, more often than not, Otto does not analyze poems in detail, nor does he address a problem that many researchers of the early avant-garde consider crucial: the relationship between experimental literature and film, in regards to the crossing of artistic boundaries and the use of various tools to create a complex performative work of art. Scholars who study early Polish and Western cinema observe that many leading artists of the interwar period repeatedly argued in favor of the autonomy of their medium. This claim defined the era. "Reflections on the seventh art" (1911) by Ricciotto Canudo, a French impressionist, marks the beginning of the battle for cinema's artistic independence. It was motivated by a desire to change its status, so that it would no longer be associated with popular entertainment.[9] Scholars who first addressed this trend in Soviet Russia, Germany, or France (Dziga Vertov, Hans Richter or René Clair and Man Ray), most often members of the avant-garde, insisted on the specificity or even revelatory role of "the cinematic" as an autonomous feature of film. In my article, I address this broad subject in a succinct manner, examining the relationship between French and Polish avant-garde poetics of film and poetry. They both seem to be rooted in early European modernity: at that time it was believed that the cognitive apparatus of modern man, and thus his perceptual sensitivity as well, had changed significantly under the influence of new media, technological inventions, and scientific discoveries.

Christophe Wall-Romana, an American film scholar and Romanist, argues that the relations between film and poetry were very close. In his most recent book, he refers to the majority of French avant-garde poems as "cinepoetry." Wall-Romana observes in the introduction to his book that, in

[7] Giżycki, *Awangarda wobec kina*, p. 34. Active on the French avant-garde and film scene, which acknowledged the importance of the relations between literature and film, Brzękowski was perhaps best qualified to write such a book. Interestingly, this question is not addressed in the critical book *W Krakowie i w Paryżu* [In Kraków and in Paris] (PiW, Warszawa 1968); Cendrars's love for film is only briefly mentioned.

[8] Tadeusz Peiper, *Gdy dziesiąta muza otrzymała dźwięk i słowo* [When the tenth muse received the sound and the word], in: *Wśród ludzi na scenach i na ekranie* [Among the people on stage and on screen], vol.2. (Kraków: WL, 2000).

[9] R. Canudo, "Reflections on the Seventh Art," in: *French Film Theory & Criticism: A History/Anthology, 1907-1939*, ed. Richard Abel (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993), 291-303. David Bordwell adds: "But in 1910 hardly anyone was prepared to argue that a recording technology constituted an artistic medium. There was no art to the telegraph or the telephone" (David Bordwell, *On the history of film style* [Harvard: Harvard University Press, 1997], 27-28). Cinema was widely regarded as enhanced photography, a tool for reproducing reality or documentation. In Poland, many argued in favor of the unique properties of cinema as an artistic medium, starting with Karol Irzykowski and his tenth muse (1913), as well as texts by Stefania Zahorska, who was especially fond of Dadaist cinema and Soviet experiments, or Jalu Kurek, who was passionate about "pure cinema." *Cf. Walka o film arystyczny*, 28-31.

fact, little has been written about the affinities between experimental poetry and film. He further points out that Jean Epstein's 1921 book *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui, un nouvel état d'intellgence* [Today's poetry: A new state of mind] was a crucial text for him.[10] Written by a queer modernist poet, director, and film scholar, the book was devoted to poetry. However, it also included an artistic manifesto, praising the analogies between literature and film. It was published in the same year as *Bonjour Cinéma*, a collection of Epstein's manifestos and essays, closely related to his work as a film director.[11] Wall-Romana focuses not so much on writers and scriptwriters, such as Antonin Artaud, Jean Cocteau, and Blaise Cendrars, but rather on the attitudes expressed in, for example, the opening quote by Guillaume Apollinaire, praising cinema as the principal vehicle for modern poetics. Together with Picasso, Jacob and Raynald, Apollinaire founded the Society of the Friends of Fantômas in 1913. Apollinaire's love for Louis Feuillade's popular series, produced by the famous Gaumont studio, allows us to see the cubist poet as an early surrealist, even though Breton liked Feuillade's *Vampires* more and watched it together with the famous Jacques Vaché. The discovery of Chaplin's and Griffith's films in 1916 had a colossal impact on French impressionist cinema as well as on Soviet revolutionary cinema, especially Eisenstein's and Kuleshov's films. They also influenced Apollinaire's *The New Spirit and the Poets* (1917).[12] Perhaps surprisingly, Wall-Romana also argues that symbolist and synesthetic concepts of the leading advocate of pure poetry, Stéphan Mallarmé, were also rooted in film poetics. Mallarmé is thus seen in a new light. He lived near Le Pirou-Normandin cinema, which opened in 1896, and was enthusiastic about the new medium.

According to Wall-Romana, "cinepoetry" refers to the poetics of both literary texts and film

> at its most general, cinepoetry (…) consists of envisioning a specific component or aspect of poetry as if it were a specific component of cinema, or vice versa, but always in writing. The screen becomes the page, a close-up turns into a metaphor, or conversely, the irregular spacing of words is meant to evoke the movement of images on screen. Poets took cinema and film culture to be reservoirs of new textual genres and practices, but they also mediated on the apparatus and the industry as potential fields of poetic expansion and actualization.[13]

[10]Zbigniew Gawrak wrote one of the first ever and the first Polish monographs devoted to Jean Epstein's films (*Jan Epstein. Studium natury w sztuce filmowej* [Jan Epstein: A study of nature in film] [Warsaw: Wyd. Artystyczne i Filmowe, 1962]). Gawrak commented on the Polish roots of one of the main representatives of French impressionism. Jan Stanisław Alfred Epstein was born on March 25, 1897 in Warsaw in a wealthy Jewish family. Gawrak introduces the Polish audience to a very important filmmaker; in Polish criticism in the 1920s and the 1930s, mainly due to Irzykowski's *Dziesiąta Muza* [The tenth muse], Epstein was associated with pure formalism, and wrongly so.

[11]I refer to both texts after: Jean Epstein, *Écrits sur le cinema 1921-1953*, *volume 1*, *1921-1947*, foreword by Henri Langlois, introduction by Pierre Leprohon (Paris: Édition Seghers, 1974). I have translated the quotes myself. A selection of (other) excerpts from Epstein's four theoretical books are reprinted in Gawrak's monograph.

[12]Christophe Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry: Imaginary Cinemas in French Poetry* (New York: Fordham University Press), 3-4. Wall-Romana draws on Edgar Morin, who argued that cinema allows us to understand contemporary theatre, music and poetry (*The cinema, or the imaginary man* [1956], after Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 29).

[13]Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 3. Wall-Romana emphasizes that "cinepoetry," especially considering the groundbreaking importance of the cinematic experience for modernity as such, disturbs the adopted historical order of literary movements, according to which avant-garde movements opposed 19th-century symbolism in art (it applies to Polish art as well). The role played by the cinema blurs the boundary between avant-garde art and mass culture, which is said to be crucial for early modernism, traditionally understood in terms of canonical and elitist art. Thus, Wall-Romana draws on Deleuze and Guattari's concept of "minority" poetics. In this approach, modern poetry entered the 20th century thanks to the pulp art of cinematography (Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 4). Many avant-garde artists opposed other social and cultural norms: they were rarely French natives, and many of them were Jews and representatives of non-Francophone nations. Their art could be read in terms of gender and queer studies. Wall-Romana points to Jean Epstein, a homosexual Jew and an avant-garde movie maker, as a representative of minority poetics.

There are many examples of combining poetry and film in the European and American avant-garde art: they obviously challenge theories that proclaimed the autonomy of cinema, often emphasized by both committed theoreticians of cinema and its critics.[14] Surrealists were fascinated by melodramas and crime stories. Rudolf de Kuenzli argues that this had to do with the "literary" aspects of film, i.e. the narrative or the plot of the movie, and not experiments with lighting, framing, or editing, as was the case with dada art.[15] André Breton adored Musidora (Jeanne Rocque), who played the main role in Feuillade's *Vampires*. The Parisian star became famous, among other things, for her scandalous relationship with the writer Colette. Irma Vep, a stage artist in a tight-fitting black costume, was one of the inspirations behind the surrealist concept of a woman. Her name is an anagram of the title *Vampire*.[16] Revealed in the movie through time-lapse photography, the detective discovers her true identity as the leader of the Vampire gang which has been terrorizing Paris when the re-arranges the letters of the name in his mind. According to Wall-Romana, this scene may be read in terms of silent film poetry, with which both impressionists and dada filmmakers experimented later. Wall-Romana further argues that this scene and the time-lapse photography influenced "flowing" lines in poems by Apollinaire, Cendrars, and Jacob.[17] In turn, Man Ray, perhaps the best known representative of Dada and Surrealism in film, is credited with coining the concept "cinema-poem" (*ciné-poème*).[18] The inventor of "rayographs," which he also used in his movies, considered the very structure of his most famous experimental movies to be poetic. Although, at times, he inserted written text into his movies, for example, in *Le retour à la raison* (1923), as well as in the more mature version

[14] The leading role in this respect was played by the media-mixing representatives of French, German and Balkan Dadaism/Surrealism, primarily sculptors and collage-artists, but also moviemakers. Pavle Levi discusses this issue in *Cinema by Other Means*. Levi writes, for example, about the "cinematic aspect" of Duchamp, whose *Bride Stripped Bare by Her Bachelors* can be interpreted in terms of a time-lapse movie and shared creative solutions found in Man Ray's photography, films and art (a particularly interesting example of intermediality would be "silent poems" whose blurred black lines may be seen in *Le retour à la raison*). Examples of the "re-materialization" of the medium are particularly interesting, e.g. in the sculptures by Serbian surrealists Dušan Matić and Alexander Vučo (*Mad Marble* [1930]), inspired by Man Ray's films, but also in impossible scripts, defined by Levi as "written" or "paper" films, such as *Doctor Hypnison, or the Technique of Living* (1923) by the Serbian writer Mony de Boully. Pavle Levi, *Cinema by Other Means* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 26-27 and 46.

[15] Rudolph de Kuenzli, *Introduction*, in: *Dada and Surrealist Film*, ed. Rudolph de Kuenzli (Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 1996), 9. Such a thesis would be confirmed by surrealist movie scripts. Surrealists often wrote movie scripts. As Agnieszka Taborska observes, surrealist scripts were similar to popular *films racontés*, i.e. press reviews. Philippe Soupault's *Paris Nights* was to convey the cinematic experience in terms of style and composition. Soupault also created "cinematographic poems," and one of them, *Indifférence*, about the Eiffel Tower, was made into a movie by Walter Ruttman in 1922. A. Taborska, *Surrealizm*: *Spiskowcy wyobraźni* [Surrealism: Conspirators of imagination] (Gdańsk: Słowo/obraz terytoria, 2013, 2013), 422 *ff*. Robert Desnos's, Benjamin Péret's and Arthur Artaud's scripts, banned from Breton's circle, who considered only Buñuel's and Dali's films to be surreal, could not be made into a movie. Wojciech Otto also wrote about *films racontés* as a new literary genre inspired by experimental films (Otto, *Literatura i film*, 175 *ff*).

[16] Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 138-139.

[17] Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 18.

[18] The term "poetic" is often used to describe different aspects of American avant-garde films in American film studies (referring to the works of Maya Deren or Stan Brakhage). P. Adams Sitney, who writes about this concept in *Cinema of Poetry*, first discusses the "poetic" in Passolini's movies, arguing that "the poetic" in Antonioni's, Bertolucci's or Godard's movies stands in opposition to the notion of *cine-poem*, which implies a creative fusion of poetical and cinematic methods. In Passolini's movies, "the poetic" referred to examining social and political reality, and Sitney writes in a similar way, among others, about Bergman's and Tarkovsky's movies (P. Adams Sitney, *Cinema of Poetry* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2015], 2-3).

of his early Dadaist work *Emak Bakia*. *Ciné-poème* (1926).[19] Man Ray's next film was closer to the very concept of film poetry as a fusion of arts that was also practiced by French Impressionists. *L'Étoile de mer* (1928) is an impressionist film. Fragments of Robert Desnos's poem, which was also the script, are inserted into the movie. Although they were incorporated into the movie as intertitles, in classic silent film fashion, the lines of the poem in no way function as "captions" that help the reader understand the plot. Rather, the poem constitutes an additional dimension of the impressionist movie, rendering interpretative traces surreal.

These and other phenomena related to the fascination of the French avant-garde poets with cinema may be read in a different light, especially if we take into account the writings of early theoreticians of cinema, especially French impressionist moviemakers, such as Canudo, Louis Delluc, Germaine Dulac and, above all, Epstein. They often discussed "the poetic" as a feature of artistic films. Indeed, while this concept was often used as a metaphor, it was as prominent in movie theory as the view that film is an autonomous and independent form of art. Wall-Romana, who considers Epstein a truly significant film theorist and moviemaker, even refers to him as the founder of the concept of "cinepoetry." Texts by Canudo, who in his manifesto of "the seventh art" described cinema as an art form which essentially brings together different art forms, might have also influenced French impressionist moviemakers and theoreticians. The "rhythms" of the cinema, combining image with other temporal arts, such as music and dance, were considered poetic.[20] Germaine Dulac, one of few female directors in the 1920s, argued: "If, at his moment, I think of interior movement, I think of literature (poetry, drama, novel) and also music."[21] Similarly to Epstein, she also compared photography, an essential cinematic means of expression, to the writer's pen or ink. Ultimately, however, she found film to be much different from literature and theater, concluding that cinema was similar to an abstract art form, such as music. Dulac poetically wrote about "the visualization of thoughts" in her manifesto. She also wrote about a "visual symphony" which is "made of rhythmic images, coordinated and thrown upon the screen exclusively by the perception of an artist."[22] Louis Delluc also referred to film as "visual poetry," ultimately drawing

[19]For example, Inez Hedges writes about Man Ray's films in: *Constellated Visions: Robert Desnos and Man Ray* L'Étoile de mer, in *Dada and Surrealist Film*. The script for the film that was previously considered lost is also reprinted in this book. According to Hedges, the female body is "narrated" in the film, in accordance with the aesthetic principles of surrealism. Although Hedges focuses on the links between Ray's photographs and his previous films, she also examines the hidden meaning of the film, which is similar to Breton's *Nadja* – also a poet and a woman, *soror mystica*, who helps man achieve alchemical unity (Hedges, *Constellated Visions*, 102). In the introduction to his book, de Kuenzli focuses on Dadaist experiments as an extension of attempts aimed at overcoming the immobility of a visual – still respecting the abstract concept of visual arts, also related to kinetic constructivist sculptures, and possibly also avant-garde music. De Kuenzli draws attention to the anti-narrative logic and the metaphorical and metonymic potential of Picabia and Clair's *Entre'act*. He also describes Hans Richter's movies as "cinematic poetry" (de Kuenzli, *Intoduction*, 4-6).

[20]Canudo initially wrote about the "birth of the sixth art" (*La naissance d'un sixième art*, 1911), claiming that film was "a plastic art in motion" (Bordwell, *On the history of film style*, 62), and only then about "the seventh art" ("Reflections on the Seventh Art," 1911, first edition: 1923; *French Film Theory & Criticism*, pp. 291-303). He added dance to the spatial arts (such as architecture, painting and sculpture) and the temporal arts (such as music and poetry), claiming the cinema was their perfect synthesis: "The seventh art combines all the arts. These are moving pictures, i.e. Plastic Art that develops according to the principles of Rhythmic Art. (…) The forms and rhythms that we call life appear thanks to the rotation of the camera" (Canudo, "Reflections on the Seventh Art," in *French Film Theory & Criticism,* 293). See also Iwona Kolasińska-Pasterczyk, *Francuska szkoła impresjonistyczna* [French Impressionist School], in *Kino nieme* [Silent film], ed. Tadeusz Lubelski, Iwona Sowińska, Rafał Syska (Krakow: Univesitas, 2012), 690.

[21]Germaine Dulac, "The essence of the cinema: The visual idea" (first edition: "Les Cahiers du mois" no. 16-17 (1925)), *Film Theory: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, ed. Philip Simpson, Andrew Utterson, Karen J. Shepherdson (London: Taylor & Francis 2004), 59.

[22]Dulac, "The essence of the cinema", 61.

on painting.[23] Jean Epstein, discussed thoroughly in *Cinepoetry*, wrote about the "poetical aspects" of film explicitly and extensively. In *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui, un nouvel état d'intellgence*, in the fragment that functions as Epstein's manifesto, we read: "Cinema permeates new literature. This mysterious art also borrows a lot from literature."[24] Epstein believed that both means of artistic expression stood in opposition to theater, considered to be the traditional carrier of the bourgeois narrative. Drawing on Canudo, he also argued that both film and literature are autonomous art forms.[25] The director of *The Fall of the House of Usher* (1928), an unusual, rhythmic, and highly metaphorical movie based on Edgar Allan Poe's short story, claimed that there was a connection between the tendency to fictionalize and simplify the plot – which Dulac associated with undesirable literariness – and the existing means of presenting stories, be it on stage or in prose. Epstein argued that there were movies which opposed this tradition, and that their narrative structures were based on dreams or memories, including Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, which the post-structuralist theorist of cinema Gilles Deleuze also considered a cinematic novel.

Epstein claimed that cinema embodied the experience of modernity: an era of mass labor, mechanical (re)production, popular culture, and the Freudian "management of collective psychosexual fatigue," which manifested itself as excess and anxiety, and not, as was also believed, dullness.[26] We should also remember about the fascination with movement and time, on which Epstein successfully commented, drawing, albeit somewhat generally, on Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution*.[27] Gilles Deleuze, who also drew on Bergson in his book on cinema, argued that cinema gave rise to the popular modern understanding of time.[28] Cinema was the youngest invention of modern times: "What counts is that the mobile camera is like a general equivalent of all the means of locomotion (…) – aeroplane, car, boat – (…) and many means of communication-expression (printing, photography and cinema)."[29] At the same time, according to the philosopher, it remained a system which reproduced "any-instant-whatever that is" "as a function of equidistant instants, selected so as to create an impression of continuity."[30] Indeed, we can think about the emergence of the significant, the unique, at any time.[31] According to Deleuze, a "mobile section," the cinematic "im-

[23]Delluc wrote about film as an "animated image" and "visual poetry," seeing it primarily as the art of moving, stylized detail. Eugene C. McCreary, "Louis Delluc. Film Theorist, Critic, and Prophet", *Cinema Journal* 16,1 (Autumn 1976), 20-21.

[24]Epstein, *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui, un nouvel état d'intellgence* (1921), in *Écrits*, 65.

[25]Epstein, *De quelque conditions de la photogénie* (1923), in *Écrits*, 137.

[26]Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 119 .

[27]In 1903, Bergson delivered a lecture entitled *The Creative Mind*, which was later developed in the book *La Pensee et le mouveant* (1934). Translated into many languages, the book influenced Cubists and contributed to the creation and popularization of the term "Bergsonism." In *Creative Evolution* (1907), Bergson compared the human mind to a cinematograph, which, in the philosopher's view, was a negative thing, pointing to a tendency to perceive the world in a symbolic way, in a series of still memorized images. Deleuze in *Cinema* engages in a dialogue with this concept, borrowing the crucial concept of "the movement-image" from Bergson and maintaining that the latter did not appreciate the sensational possibilities of cinema, although he created concepts that perfectly capture their essence. Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema 1: The movement-image, Cinema 2: The Time-Image* (London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2013), 10-11 and 17.

[28]Deleuze, *Cinema*, 10–11. Wall-Romana calls Epstein's concept "techno-romantic;" it blurs the boundary between the intellectual and the material. Because of his holistic approach, Abel Gance referred to Epstein as "a young Spinoza" and Epstein employed the concept of "a unique intellectual plane," uniting bodies, minds and objects with a "clear Spinozist intent" (Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 122). Wall-Romana argues that the Deleuzean concept of the "plane of immanence" is rooted in *Poésie d'aujourd'hui*; Deleuze also refers directly to Epstein's writings in *Cinema*.

[29]Deleuze, *Cinema*, 12-13.

[30]Deleuze, *Cinema*, 13.

[31]Deleuze, *Cinema*, 15.

age-movement," is connected with the first chapter of *Matter and Memory* (1896): the discovery of "an image that is movement beyond the conditions of natural perception."[32] The ancient concept of time, Deleuze argues, is focused on eternity, the whole, in which movement refers to "forms" or "ideas" which are immovable, and it itself expresses their dialectics. Modern science, in turn, looks at time in Bergsonian terms as an "independent variable;" movement is no longer recreated in physics, geometry, and astronomy on the basis of transcendental formal elements but rather using "immanent material elements," i.e. mobile sections.[33]

Because of film, mimesis should no longer be associated with a still image of an eternal, unified moment. Deleuze seems to repeat what Epstein, Delluc, and Canudo said earlier about movement in film, although the Impressionists associated many other qualities with film, rendering it a metaphysical or even a mystical process. The possibility of capturing the "fourth dimension of reality," i.e. movement or growth in space-time, was electrifying for them. "*Photogénie*" was associated with this phenomenon.[34] Epstein argued that all phenomena whose "moral dimension" (and only movable aspects of reality had a moral dimension: "both things and consciousness") can be enhanced thanks to film are photogenic.[35] Spinoza's pantheism, also present in Bergson's philosophical concepts, becomes cinematic in nature, which gives Epstein's, Clair's, and Delluc's films, as well as impressionistic concepts themselves, a sublime character, characteristic of the early avant-garde, which competed with scientific inventions. Epstein argues that one should not look for traditional "movement" in film, because movement in a movie is the result of us perceiving all spiritual dimensions – not three, as was previously thought, but four: "[the fourth dimension] obviously exists: it is time. Spirit moves in time as it moves in space. (…) Photogenic mobility is mobility in space-time. We can say that the photogenic aspect of a given object is the result of its space-time variations."[36] The belief in the unique possibilities of the film camera was widespread among the enthusiasts of the new medium. Similarly to Epstein, Germaine Dulac observes: "[a]mong others, there is a slow-motion study of the blooming of flowers, whose stages of life appear to us brutal and defined, birth, blooming, death, (…) and whose movements equivalent to suffering and joy (…) appear before us in cinema in the fullness of their existence."[37] Interestingly, likewise in French and Polish avant-garde poetry, especially in artistic manifestos, we find not only a fascination with change and movement typical of twentieth-century aesthetics, which indicate a Bergsonian relationship between poetry and cinema, but also a "paper" approach to the movable, i.e. a paper representation of space-time. I shall comment on the views of Polish avant-garde poets, who encouraged the reader to read their poems in connection with cinematic, essentially photogenic, conventions. A "stop-motion" reading – with its focus on quasi-editorial "cuts," settings, and "close-ups" as essential elements of the poem,

[32]Delezue, *Cinema*, 10-11.

[33]Deleuze, *Cinema*, 12.

[34]Malcom Turvey wrote an entire book on revelatory early concepts of cinema, focusing on Epstein, Vertov, Balázs, and Kracauer (Malcolm Turvey, *Doubting Vision. Film and the Revelationist Tradition* [New York: Oxford University Press, 2008]. Epstein was convinced that film was actually a new human cognitive apparatus, in a scientific sense, similar to the microscope. It allows one to see the dimensions of reality that are invisible to the naked eye. The very concept of *photogénie* was coined by Louis Delluc (*Photogénie*, Paris 1920) in an attempt to ensure the autonomy of the cinema. Delluc tries to justify its unique nature, but the text remains vague. Delluc writes, for example, that *photogénie* should not be associated with beautiful sets or actors. Louis Delluc, *Photogénie* (*Film Theory: Critical Concepts in Media and Cultural Studies*, 49-51).

[35]Epstein, *De quelque conditions de la photogénie*, in *Écrits*, 138

[36]Epstein, *De quelque conditions de la photogénie*, in *Écrits*, 139.

[37]Dulac, "The essence of the cinema," 60.

which "unravels" before the reader's eyes – makes us think about pure or autonomous poetry which stands in opposition to nineteenth-century Kantian aesthetics' view of a work of art as static and immobile, enjoyed during a private, silent session.

The features that were to determine the character of new film and new literature, whose basic form, according to Epstein, were outlined by Rimbaud in *Illuminations* and Cendrars in *Nineteen Elastic Poems*, are defined by a new "aesthetics of proximity."[38] For Wall-Romana, the popularity of the Griffithian close-up in literature and film is associated with the tired masses, something that Epstein also comments on, and the fact that it is an important experience of modernity. According to Epstein, fatigue is "a new state of mind."[39] The exhaustion of the modern city dweller, often associated with socialism and the fight for the rights of the working class, was discussed in the press in connection with silent movies. Chaplin and Griffith, American masters of the silent movie, commented on class differences in their works. A similar remark, in a similar context, may also be found, for example, in *Metafora Teraźniejszości* [The Metaphor of the Present], one of Tadeusz Peiper's most popular manifestos. It was published in 1922, i.e. around the same time as Epstein's text: "Contemporary poetry is full of metaphors. Never before have metaphors been as favored as they are today. Some argue that this interesting literary phenomenon has to do with the fact that people today are exhausted and fatigued; new, unexpected verbal connections are meant to tease and invigorate them."[40] Looking with a tired eye is for Epstein both close and non-interpretive: it is vague and blurry, like a slow-motion impressionist film. The poetry of proximity is the poetry of everyday life, which also means that all "holistic" forms of cognition, for example, dadaism as abstract art, must be abandoned.[41] In Man Ray's experimental works, we look at the material so closely that it acquires materiality in the actual touch of the object-artist, whose reflection is captured on film. Rationalizing explanations or symbolist puzzles disappear and a "rayogram" appears.[42] When we are watching a movie, the eye develops and adds to the perception of scenes-as-events and at the same time penetrates the supposedly unmediated material, which here is real. Similarly to Man Ray's works or Fernand Léger's *Ballet Mécanique* (1924), Epstein's man, both in cinematic and literary reality, as in life, comes face to face with the material. However, Epstein's popular movies have been artistically transposed. The French poet-director calls close-ups "the theater of the skin:" "[s]uch penetration creates intimacy. The face flashes under the magnifying glass, it shows its fiery geography. (…) It is the miracle of real presence, life manifests itself, open like a beautiful pomegranate, peeled from its shell, assimilable, barbaric."[43]

[38]J. Epstein, *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui, un nouvel état d'intellgence*, in *Écrits*, 66.

[39]Gawrak, *Jan Epstein*, 81. According to Epstein, both excitement and constant tension are to blame for how tired the masses are, which he describes as a new state of mental health. In *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui*, he writes: "Do you think that the train driver (…) who faces catastrophe at almost every station does not arrive at his destination intellectually tired? At this point, if he were a poet, he would be writing poems. Poets simply said first what we could not see" (Gawrak, *Jan Epstein*, 82).

[40]Peiper's understanding of fatigue is different from Epstein's. In Freudian terms, fatigue leads to hyper-excitement, sexual frustration, or anxiety which manifests itself in restlessness and excess. Psychologists such as Théodor Ribot and Albert Deschamps wrote about fatigue as anaesthesis. Wall-Romana, *Cinepoetry*, 119; Tadeusz Peiper, "Metafora teraźniejszości" [The metaphor of the present], *Zwrotnica* (November 1922), in *Tędy. Nowe usta* [This way: New mouth](Krakow: WL, 1972), 54.

[41]The Dadaistic negation of meaning, the impossibility of grasping it completely, may be seen in the representations of "the irreducible materiality of a self-referential object." Such was the nature of Duchamp's ready-mades. Duchamp commented on their "visual indifference." Levi, *Cinema*, 3.

[42]Levi, *Cinema*, 7.

[43]Epstein, *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui, un nouvel état d'intellgence*, in *Écrits*, 66. Epstein's manifesto at this point is divided into lines. The final positions are marked with commas, which suggests an attempt to write an artistic program in verse. Such a strategy was also employed by Polish avant-garde artists, such as Peiper or Brzękowski.

The "aesthetics of succession," another key cinematic and poetic feature, also invites comparisons with life, this time in its "swarming" mobility: "[a] ton of details makes up a poem, and cinematic editing, drop by drop, creates a spectacle. It is then enough to centrifuge this process and we will obtain the final impression from what is left. Cinema and literature are motion. A sudden but also angular[44] succession leads to the circular perfection of impossible simultaneism."[45] Epstein further mentions: the aesthetics of mental quickness, the aesthetics of sensuality, the aesthetics of metaphors, and the aesthetics of the ephemeral. Epstein talks about both visual and literary metaphors and refers to Abel Gance and Apollinaire. According to Epstein, a poem is a "cavalcade of metaphors in a short circuit,"[46] and the main difference between literary and visual metaphors is that on the screen the metaphorical principle "imposes itself directly." For example, when Apollinaire compares a cheering crowd who is waving white handkerchiefs to white birds or leaves falling or spinning in the wind, in both cases, these metaphors are not to be read symbolically. "[S]uch birds are not pigeons or ravens, but simply birds." For Epstein, they rise and fall – they move – "[w]ithin five years, cinematographic poems will be created: 150 meters and 100 images, like beads in the rosary of a complex plot."[47]

Let me compare this poetic and cinematic manifesto with Peiper's *Ku specyficzności kina* [Towards the uniqueness of cinema]. It was published in *Zwrotnica* in 1923 as part of a series in which the poet commented on cinema. Peiper lists the most interesting cinematic narratives, including, similarly to Epstein in *Bonjour Cinéma*, the films of D.W. Griffith, i.e. movies, which, André Bazin associates with the beginnings of realism in cinema, the premises of which he considers to be crucial for the entire development of the new art.[48] However, at the turn of the 1910s and the 1920s, many critics and artists referred to Griffith, whose movies were immensely popular; some claimed that the director created mass spectacles and not experimental movies, even though he employed "intellectual editing" characteristic of Soviet cinema (especially Sergei Eisenstein's movies). Peiper shows his interest in this director in his unique avant-garde way by concentrating on the face of Lillian Gish, Griffith's leading heroine, in *Way Down East* (1920). According to Peiper, the close-up of a face is one of the elements of new cinematic language. Interestingly, Peiper writes about Gish's face in detail: "sometimes, different parts of her face express different things: the eyes express one thing and the mouth expresses something else; and sometimes the eyes express one thing, and the eyebrows express something else. When the 'husband' reveals to her that she is not his wife, she does not believe him at first, and then she pretends that she does not believe him and that it is all a joke. She shows it brilliantly: her mouth is laughing, and her eyes are crying. And then one eye shows one thing, and the other eye, shows something else; one eye expresses pain, while the other eye expresses amazement."[49] It is not surprising that Peiper focuses so much on the moving landscape of Gish's face. After all, in his poetic manifesto, he argued that we get to know a given object "*primo*, as a whole. *Secundo*, as a sequence of wholes that are ever more

[44]Epstein's text is quite poetic; the word "angulaire" is probably an allusion to "angular velocity," a vector measure of rotation rate, which refers to how fast an object, e.g. the earth, rotates. It may also refer to the angles of a film frame.

[45]Epstein, *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui, un nouvel état d'intellgence*, in *Écrits*, 67.

[46]Epstein, *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui, un nouvel état d'intellgence*, in *Écrits*, 68.

[47]Epstein, *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui, un nouvel état d'intellgence*, in *Écrits*. It seems that the author refers to ravens and pigeons because of their symbolic meanings; otherwise, favoring the genus over the species would be a manifestation of symbolic universalization.

[48]Bordwell, *On the history of film style*, 75.

[49]Peiper, "Ku specyficzności kina" [Towards the uniqueness of cinema] (*Zwrotnica* February 1923), in *Tędy*, 225-226.

detailed."[50] Epstein writes about the close-up as the essential artistic means of expression of film in a very similar way:

> I can never express how I love wide American shots. Suddenly, a face appears on the screen, and the drama is right in front of me, talking directly to me (...) Here, the tragedy is anatomical (...). It can last for a short time, because *photogénie* lasts for a quarter of a second (...) A face that is about to smile is more beautiful than the actual smile (...). I love lips that want to speak but are still silent.[51]

Epstein presented the perceptual apparatus of the modern man in the "fourth dimension:" vision is fragmented like a film that needs to be edited; it is focused on detail; it breaks down still and static objects in Bergson's space-time duration, in which the boundary between representation and decoration or the emotion which affects the observer's tired eye becomes blurred: "Animism is the key feature of cinema," Epstein writes:

> (...) Decorations are fragmented and each element is expressive on its own. (...) A plant on the prairie is a female smiling spirit. Full of rhythm and personality, anemones transform majestically, in a manner similar to all pants. The hand is separated from the human being; it takes on a life of its own; it suffers by itself and delights by itself. The finger is separated from the hand. Life suddenly focuses on and finds its most powerful expression in the nail, which mechanically tortures the stylograph that is charged with storm.[52]

Pointing to autonomous and unique cinematic features in *Ku specyficzności kina* [Towards the uniqueness of cinema], Peiper also drew attention to the importance of a whole and the artistic use of intertitles. In a typically impressionistic fashion, he argued that beautiful stereoscopic or painterly backgrounds should be avoided: *photogénie* would not be achieved otherwise.[53] The background was to constitute a compositional whole with the actors and enhance the impressions conveyed by the objects which move on the screen. Peiper writes about masses, about crowds, as *the* actor of the new cinema, as seen, for example, in Griffith's *Intolerance* or *Orphans of the Storm*. Drawing on the French category of *photogénie*, Peiper argues: "[Griffith] arranges [background] into long perspectives. Thus, he can show the crowd far away as a tiny blur that moves steadily to the foreground, growing bigger and bigger, taking on a form, taking on new shapes, becoming more and more distinct, and finally, in the foreground, breaking into exaggerated and distinct individuals."[54] Peiper associates playing with shots and the role of background with movement in general. The director is a visual composer: they incorporate time and (ever-changing) space into their works of art.

In both *Ku specyficzności kina* and *Autonomia ekranu* [The autonomy of the screen] (1923), Peiper discusses one of the most fundamental avant-garde assumptions, trying to convince the reader that the new medium is unique and autonomous. Peiper comments on the metaphor in his poetical manifestos as well, emphasizing that modern poetry should "work" like an electric spark, insofar as it should trigger instantaneous associations. When Peiper writes "contemporary poetry trembles

[50]Peiper, *Komizm, dowcip, metafora* [Comedy, wit, metaphor] (first published in *Tędy* [1930]), in *Tędy*, 304.
[51]Epstein, *Bonjour Cinéma*; quote after: Gawrak, *Jan Epstein*, 85-86.
[52]Epstein, *Le cinématographe vue de l'Etna* (1926), in *Écrits*, 134.
[53]Bocheńska, *Polska myśl filmowa* [Polish film studies], 82-83.
[54]Peiper, *Ku specyficzności kina*, in *Tędy*, 224.

with a blizzard of metaphors,"[55] he expresses his fascination with movement, which he shares with filmmakers and film lovers. Indeed, Peiper's "arrangement of beautiful sentences" strongly corresponds to Epstein's "cavalcade of interconnected metaphors." We have already seen that the processes of blooming and filming correspond to one another. Following in the footsteps of the author of *Cinema in Other Means*, perhaps we should look at this comparison/juxtaposition as a paper form of *photogénie*, in which "the poem would develop like a living organism; like a bud blooming in front of us."[56] The cinematic features of poems such as *Kwiat ulicy* [Street flower] or *Chwila ze złota* [Golden moment] were described in a similar manner.[57] When we read them in accordance with Epstein's theory, we notice that blooming captured in time-lapse photography – as a series of separate yet overlapping and ordered images in a specific "intellectual sequence" which develops in the spacetime of the reader's eye – also captures the Bergsonian, moving, aspect of a poem. Peiper's "moment" would develop in terms of zooming in or out, in keeping with the principles of French impressionist cinema. *Zemsta* [Revenge], and especially the poem *Na plaży* [On the beach], are great examples of how film "works" in poetry. When extremely detailed and "materialistic" images are repeated, we do not read them as a narrative. When we look at a female swimmer and a male swimmer in more and more detailed shots, repeatedly diving into and out of the sea, and then making love in the forest, we are forced to correct, and at the same time deepen, our perception. Images multiply, as the intimate encounter progresses. Still newer interpretations present themselves when we read this text in the context of Cubism. Such a reading is discussed in the 1924 article *Kamedułom sztuki* [The Camaldolese of art]: "I am inclined to think that Picasso's so-called '*perspective circonspecte*' was inspired by cinematographic perspective."[58] The bodies of the male swimmer and the female swimmer, the cityscapes of Gdynia and Gdańsk, connected by the beach, swimsuits, sea, forest, fluids and emotions are "fragmented" in the poem, and then (re)arranged on a single poetic plane; waves of lines lead to the final, climactic, line that can be re-played – recreated in (re)reading like a movie. The poetic director re-plays *Na plaży* repeatedly, as if it were a movie composed of obsessive memories, as if he tried to show the viewer, in slow motion and in detail, just how vast the spacetime is. Deleuze argues that such repetition is justified in Bergsonian "technical" and philosophical terms: "Thus in a sense movement has two aspects. On the one hand, that which happens between objects or parts; on the other hand, that which expresses the duration or the whole. The result is that duration, by changing qualitatively, is divided up into objects within a closed system to open duration, and duration to the objects of the system which it forces to open up. Movement relates the objects between which it is established to a changing whole which it expresses, and vice versa."[59]

Indeed, the "cinematic nature" of Peiper's artistic philosophy stands in opposition to assumptions about the strict autonomy of art as *the* fundamental feature of Krakow avant-garde poetry, understood in terms of "language in language," which even affective approaches could not disprove. Such an assumption is deeply rooted in Polish literary studies. Thus, we must rethink the very question of artistic autonomy in Polish literary studies. When Peiper writes in *Kamedułom sztuki* that "contemporary art cannot be fully explained, justified or created without taking into consideration

[55]Peiper, *Metafora teraźniejszości*, in *Tędy*, 54

[56]Peiper, *Poezja jako budowa* [Poetry as construction] (first published in *Nowe usta* [1925]), in *Tędy*, 349.

[57]Kucharczyk, *Pierwiastki filmowe* [Cinematic features], 46; Otto, *Literatura i film*, p. 35. Kucharczyk makes cubist comparisons, referring to Janusz Sławiński.

[58]T. Peiper, "Kamedułom sztuki" [The Camaldolese of art], *Gazeta Lwowska* (June 1924), in *Tędy*, 113.

[59]Deleuze, *Cinema*, 11.

non-artistic factors" or that "wanting to justify all our aspirations only with artistic needs is like struggling in a bottle that is firmly closed,"[60] he is referring to the cinematograph, which is, in keeping with Canudo's theory, a "synthesis" of arts but also a truly revelatory machine, allowing us to see what was previously not visible to the naked eye. Peiper does not refer directly to Epstein. Indeed, we can trace all references to cinematic movement and time as the hidden "fourth dimension" of representation back to Bergson – his philosophy, especially the book *Creative Evolution*, was immensely popular at the time. Stefan Kordian Gacki's artistic philosophy of *Nowa Sztuka* [New art], analyzed by Aleksander Wójtowicz in his book *Nowa Sztuka. Początki (i końce)* [New art: The beginnings (and the ends)], reads like a *collage* of French aesthetic theories, including film theories. In *Na drodze do nowego klasycyzmu* [Towards new classicism], Gacki draws on Surrealism and argues that dreams and automatic reflexes should be employed in poetry, thus arguing for a radical change in poetic technique and emphasizing the role of cinematic techniques. They were to endow poetry with instantaneous associations, shortcuts, and lyrical and pictorial explosiveness, which Gacki associated with broadly understood "Bergsonism." According to Gacki (and Epstein claimed the same), such an artistic approach was best exemplified by the works of Blaise Cendrars.[61] Avant-garde filmmakers and avant-garde poets were equally fascinated by cinematic movement and speed as new means of artistic expression. In *Dziesiąta muza* [The tenth muse], the leading Polish theoretician of that time, Karol Irzykowski, refers to cinema as the "lyric of movement." He writes about its "aesthetic qualities," arguing that they may be "contemplated" artistically: "(...) hunters are walking in the snow, a traveler is drinking from a waterfall, people are swimming in boats as waves touch the oars, and two people are fighting. Every episode is distinctly beautiful, just like Żeromski's metaphors and landscapes."[62] The theories of the French Impressionists were also quite popular in Poland, as evidenced by various, often indirect, allusions in Polish sources. While French manifestos were never translated into Polish, Polish film theoreticians seem to show a familiarity with them.[63]

The theories of Germain Dulac, Louis Delluc, and Epstein, for example, were discussed in Polish literary journals as early as in 1922. The concept of *photogénie* was first studied and propagated in Poland by Leon Trystan, a filmmaker, director, and film journalist. Irzykowski engaged in a theoretical dispute with Trystan. While Trystan does not refer directly to Dulac, he also writes about "cinema

[60]Peiper, *Kamedułom sztuki*, in *Tędy*, 110 and 114.

[61]Stefan Kordian Gacki, "Na drodze do nowego klasycyzmu" [Towards new classicism], *Nowa Sztuka* 1 (1925): 6.

[62]K. Irzykowski, "Śmierć kinematografu" [The death of the cinematograph] (article from 1913, published in *Świat*; *Polska myśl filmowa*, 74-75). It was included in the longer text *Królestwo ruchu* [Kingdom of movement] at the beginning of *Dziesiąta muza* [The tenth Muse] (K. Irzykowski, *Dziesiąta muza. Zagadnienia estetyczne kina* [Tenth Muse: Cinematic aesthetics] [Krakow: Krakowska Spółka Wydawnicza, 1924] 13-14). Irzykowski writes there about the "aesthetic qualities of movement" and refers to the scenes which show movement as "contemplative." Thus, he tries to save the cinematograph, responding to Bergson's criticism, who considered film a medium composed of static pictures. Cinema is as fast as thinking, even if it remains schematic: "(...) because it is schematic, film is able to adapt to the leaps of imagination;" "it is the equivalent of thought, as changeable and mobile as music and poetry" (*Polska myśl filmowa*, p. 75).

[63]M. Giżycki, *Walka o film awangardowy*, p. 26. Kamila Kuc in *Visions of Avant-Garde Film* states that the Polish audience in the interwar period had access to many ambitious French productions (films by Abel Gance, Germaine Dulac or Jean Renoir) associated with the aesthetics of film impressionism (Kuc, *Visions of Avant- Garde Film*, 113-114). As Bocheńska points out, one chapter from Epstein's book *La Poésie d'aujourd'hui* was published in Polish in September 1921 in *Kurier Polski*, and it was later reviewed in *Nowa Sztuka*. Władysław Tatarkiewicz commented on Epstein's views in the series of articles *La Phénomène littérraire* in *Przegląd Warszawski* in the essay "Z estetyki francuskiej" [From French aesthetics] (vol. 1, no. 5 [1922]); *Kinema* published Canudo's article "Piękno w sztuce filmowej" [Beauty in cinema] (no. 10 [1921]) and an article on Delluc (no. 39 [1924]). *Kino dla wszystkich* published an interview with Epstein (no. 12 [1926]). Leon Trystan reviewed Epstein's and Delluc's texts in *Film Polski*. Bocheńska, *Polska myśl filmowa*, pp. 79-80.

as visual music."[64] Marcin Giżycki points out that Jalu Kurek also based his cinematic concepts on the writings of French impressionists, "whose texts he read in newspapers and journals": "From Delluc, he undoubtedly borrowed the concept of 'objects and people in proportion.' Epstein taught him to believe in the interpretative properties of the tool: the camera, the lenses."[65] Kurek explained his notion of the experimental image – *OR* – in a manner similar to Epstein's concept of the "fourth dimension," namely as the representation of "the accidental visual convergence of images and the expressive qualities of directional tensions,"[66] though he also argued that movement should be recorded at a specific (pre-calculated) speed. Meanwhile, for French cinema aesthetes like Kurek, poetry was a key point of comparison, allowing him to demonstrate the "photogenic" potential of cinema. In one of his most important theoretical essays *Kino – zwycięstwo naszych oczu* [Cinema: The victory of our eyes], Kurek argued that cinema embodies the mechanical rhythm of life and movement. He further observed: "The lens is everywhere and sees everything. We demand that it gives us an instantaneous and concrete image. Only 'photogenic poetry' can give us a contraction that is pure, unspeakable, and unwritten poetry." He then added: "Film is optical poetry" that could give crowds "15 minutes of pure poetry."[67] Cinema is in a much closer synthetic relationship with poetry for Jan Brzękowski, who wrote an experimental and very poetic film script for *Kobieta i koła* [The Woman and circles], making, among other things, visual analogies between the geometric shapes of various objects. In his essay *Film a nowa poezja* [Film and new poetry], Brzękowski draws a direct connection between cinema and poetry, pointing to the relationship between the "external forms" of cinema and its experimental means of expression. Drawing on French film theorists, especially Epstein, Brzękowski argues that, apart from speed and rhythm, the image conveys "the simultaneity of many realities," "blurs the boundaries between thought and its realization" and "divides the impression into individual elements" in order to "achieve a stronger impact of the whole."[68] This leads to a unique time-lapse analysis of film movement in a text that is both theoretical and literary:

> Let's take a car which is in a car chase. How will the poet express this? He will emphasize a certain lack of logical continuity of impressions, their instantaneous mutual succession, simultaneity, and

[64]Leon Trystan, "Kino jako muzyka wzrokowa" [Cinem as visual music], *Film Polski* no. 2-3 (1925), in *Polska myśl filmowa*, 112-115. Trystan based his discussion of the impressionist concept of *photogénie* on Louis Delluc and, above all, on Epstein, and, as Bocheńska argues, his argument was clear and logical (Leon Trystan, "Fantazja widza w kinie" [The phantasy of the viewer at the movies], *Kinema* no. 15-16 [1922]; "Jean Epstein »Cinéma«", *Film Polski* no. 2-3 [1923]; after Bocheńska, *Polska myśl filmowa*, 83. *Cf*. also L. Trystan, "Fotogeniczność (próba analizy psychologicznej)" [*Photogénie*: An attempt at psychological analysis)], in *Polska myśl filmowa*, 109*ff*.). Karol Irzykowski argued that that the concept of *photogénie* had not been clearly defined even by French theorists (Bocheńska, *Polska myśl filmowa*, 82). In many Polish essays on film, *photogénie* takes on various meanings and roles and writers often do not refer to original sources. It is presented as an abstract, vague term that is related to the cinematic, which could indicate that the term was misunderstood and used as a metaphor.

[65]Giżycki, *Awangarda wobec kina*, 102. Giżycki discusses Kurek's concepts in strictly cinematic terms in the wider context of the film he reconstructed, *OR* (*Obliczenia rytmiczne*) [Rhythmic Calculations], one of few Polish avant-garde films (*ibid*., 125-127). I do not refer to theories which are closely related to film productions; instead, I refer to avant-garde poetical theories and manifestos. Therefore, I do not discuss the Themersons' famous productions, which are, after all, deeply rooted in Polish literary tradition.

[66]In Kurek's film, film itself was to be expressive. For example, the human face was not shown so that the viewer could focus on converging shapes, direction, pace, and semantic metaphors in editing. Kurek, "Objaśniam OR" [I explain OR] *Linia* no. 5 (1933), in *Walka o film artystyczny*, 237-238.

[67]Jalu Kurek, "Kino – zwycięstwo naszych oczu" [Cinema: The victory of our eyes], *Głos Narodu* (March 22, 1926), in *Walka o film artystyczny*, 134-135. Bocheńska argues that Kurek's views on cinema are similar to his poetic concepts, typical of the Krakow avant-garde and its constructivist program. She also points out that Kurek drew on Epstein's theories. Bocheńska, *Polska myśl filmowa*, 166-167.

[68]J. Brzękowski, "Film a nowa poezja" [Film and new poetry], *Wiadomości Literackie* no. 28 (1933), in *Polska myśl filmowa*, 208.

> the role of secondary details. The film director will do the same by showing scenes from the realm of facts and actual impressions. He will show the arrow on the tachometer, the chauffeur's hand on the steering wheel, the tachometer again, the blurred landscape, the chauffeur's face, the tachometer again, etc. These (seemingly) unrelated images are more expressive than an organized and well-structured story. (...) It would be extremely interesting to show the relationship between the poetic metaphor and the film metaphor, to point to emotional situations in poetry and film, to the meaning of 'foreground' and 'close-ups' in film and poetry. In many cases, new poetry has inspired film to look for its unique means of expression. Film has had a similar effect on poetry.[69]

Epstein, similarly to Bergson, argues that reality is constantly changing. It is constantly becoming. It is never static. Both French and Polish avant-garde artists recognized the revolutionary aspects of cinema – movement was recorded on film – and it must have influenced the old ways of representing the world, defined as a space of shared experiences. Indeed, avant-garde artists often perceived it as an intermedial artistic reality. Boško Tokin (Filmus), who, together with Micić, was one of the cosigners of the Serbian *Manifesto of Zenithism* (1921), greatly influenced by French Surrealism, wrote: "The cinematograph is capable of uniting the elements of all other arts, it presents the STYLE of its epoch. As Canudo put it (...) the cinematograph has already given the world a new artist: the painter-sculptor-architect of light-musician-poet-choreographer of black and white, it has given it the *metteur en scene*."[70] Anatol Stern also saw in artistic cinema, especially in French cinema, an art that "organizes, constructs ordinary reality by means of the camera as if with the chisel."[71] In *Cinema*, Gilles Deleuze refers to Epstein, who writes about cubist and simultaneist, futuristic, painting. Instead of submitting to the perspective of "the whole" of history, the painter enters it, splits it, recreating the movement of the artistic process, i.e. the changes which take place in time, coded in a form that is unfinished, in a tunnel vision fashion: "[f]or the perspective of the outside he thus substitutes the perspective of the inside, a multiple perspective, shimmering, sinuous, variable and contractile, like the hair of a hygrometer."[72] Drawing on Epstein, Deleuze further observes: "[t]he cinema, even more directly than painting, conveys a relief in time, a perspective in time: it expresses time itself as perspective or relief."[73] Film as a "mobile section" and a "relief in time" was essential for abstract painting. It also inspired kinetic art and experimental avant-garde poetry, including (as Witold Sadowski argues) its layout. Indeed, film as a "mobile section" and a "relief in time" is able to visualize the complexities of the autonomous artistic process, and thus may also open up new interpretative and critical opportunities for "art on paper."

translated by Małgorzata Olsza

[69]Brzękowski, "Film a nowa poezja", in *Polska myśl filmowa*, 208-209. Bocheńska argues that also in *Poezja integralna* [Integral poetry] (1923) Brzękowski writes about the associative potential of poetry and also addresses the affinities between poetry and cinema. Bocheńska, *Polska myśl filmowa*, 164.

[70]*Manifesto of Zenithism* (1921). After Levi, *Cinema*, 13.

[71]Anatol Stern, "»Faust« i »Carmen« na ekranie" [*Faust* and *Carmen* on screen], *Wiadomości Literackie* no. 7 (1927): 4; quote after: Bocheńska, *Polska myśl filmowa*, 87.

[72]Deleuze, *Cinema*, 23.

[73]Deleuze, *Cinema*, 23-24.

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KEYWORDS

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FRENCH FILM IMPRESSIONNISM

Abstract:
The article tells the story of the early relations between avant-garde silent film and poetry, with a particular focus on critical texts and artistic manifestos from French Impressionist cinema. The poetry or poetic features of art were often evoked metaphorically in the manifestos and other writings produced by Ricciotto Canudo, Germaine Dulac and Louis Delluc. Poetry was treated as a general notion, affiliated with film, often called the "seventh art" and regarded to be the perfect synthesis of all the other arts. Jean Epstein, whose texts and manifestos were very popular in Poland in the 1920s, explicitly linked his theory of film to avant-garde poetry. I argue that many elements of Epstein's theory, especially in regard to camera movement and *photogénie*, influenced critical texts and manifestos of the poetic avant-garde in Poland.

‚AVANT-GARDE POETRY AND FILM CONSTRUCTION AFFINITIES

JEAN EPSTEIN

Tadeusz Peiper

AVANT-GARDE POETRY AND FILM PROGRAMMATIC STATEMENTS

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