

Battleship Potemkin and Apocalypse Now

Okay...here's the big jump. We're heading into film *criticism*. This is the tough stuff. You've got 2 movies to consider this week, a very old one and a very new one. Both are by well-known directors who have a passionate and obvious view of cinema.

The first film is Battleship Potemkin directed by Sergei Eisenstein. It is a Russian propaganda film from shortly after the Bolshevik revolution. It is extremely biased and hard to watch from a modern point of view. BUT

This film is extremely important to understanding early views of film. Early film criticism often viewed film as a *language*. Literally. Like words, phrases, etc. Eisenstein was one of the major proponents of this idea of a philosophy of film or language. You NEED to read the excerpt of Eisenstein that I've put up on the myCFCC page. Focus on the section on montage. Make sure you understand what Eisenstein is saying. This is a primary source, so it may take a little work on your part. Then take on the movie. Frankly, I don't expect you to watch the whole film. It's really long, and it may be hard to watch. But be sure that you watch at least the first ½ hour and the **Odessa Steps** sequence. That sequence is considered one of the masterpieces of film history. Then, tell me this:

- According to Eisenstein, what is montage? Put this in your own words.
- How do you see montage used in the film? Describe one particular sequence or montage (at least 3-4 shots) in terms of Eisenstein's definition of montage.
- What do you think? Does montage work effectively? Why or why not? What does sound do to the concept of montage?

All right...now things get interesting. Your second film is Apocalypse Now. We're going to be looking at it in terms of psychoanalytic criticism. Again, I've given you two sources for that...one on MyCFCC and one on the webpage. Get a grip on the basics of what psychoanalytic criticism deals with, and then take a look at the movie through that point of view.

Apocalypse Now is a movie that is kind of about the Vietnam war. It is also kind of about the inner journeys of two men. I only have one question for you, but it's a real test of your critical thinking....

- Pick one scene or aspect of the movie and analyze it in terms of psychoanalytic criticism. Can you see why I chose *this* film to use as the one for psychoanalytic?