

skates . . . Charlie with Millerant . . .¹⁸ Charlie in love . . . Charlie the drunkard'. That is the title of an article by the Frenchman Dreuse in which he poses the question of the difference between two views of the world in connection with Charlie.

Everyone is aware of the enormous influence that cinema now exerts on all the other arts. A number of French artists have reflected the images of contemporary cinema in their works: Fernand Léger, Picasso, Georges LeNain, Auberlot. Louis Latapie has produced a series of beautiful posters for the foyer of the cinema in Grenelle in which he portrays Chaplin in his films and Rio Jim.

Thus the 'happy infant' (as Ilya Ehrenburg¹⁹ called it) grows bigger and prettier and the directors, artists, poets and technicians of the whole world who are interested in the victory of the new art, must devote all their efforts to ensuring that their favourite infant does not fall into the obliging clutches of a 'heliotrope auntie'²⁰ and the sanctimonious watchdogs of morality.

2. The Montage of Attractions¹

(On the production of A.N. Ostrovsky's *Enough Simplicity for Every Wise Man* at the Moscow Proletkult Theatre²)

I. Proletkult's³ Theatrical Line

In a few words: Proletkult's theatrical programme consists not in 'using the treasures of the past' or in 'discovering new forms of theatre' but in abolishing the very institution of theatre as such and replacing it by a showplace for achievements in the field at the *level of the everyday skills of the masses*. The organisation of workshops and the elaboration of a scientific system to raise this level are the immediate tasks of the Scientific Department of Proletkult in the theatrical field.

The rest we are doing under the rubric 'interim', carrying out the subsidiary, but not the fundamental tasks of Proletkult. This 'interim' has two meanings under the general rubric of revolutionary content:

1. The *figurative-narrative theatre* (static, domestic – the right wing: *The Dawns of Proletkult*,⁴ *Lena*⁵ and a series of unfinished productions of a similar type. It is the line taken by the former Workers' Theatre of the Proletkult Central Committee).
2. The *agitational theatre of attractions* (dynamic and Eccentric – the left wing). It is the line devised in principle for the Touring Troupe of the Moscow Proletkult Theatre by Boris Arvatov⁶ and myself.

This path has already been traced – in outline, but with sufficient precision – in *The Mexican*,⁷ a production by the author of the present article and V.S. Smyshlyayev⁸ (in the First Studio of the Moscow Art Theatre). Later, in our next collaboration (V. Pletmyov's *On the Abyss*⁹) we had a complete disagreement on principle that led to a split and subsequently to our working separately, as you can see by *Wise Man* and *The Taming of the Shrew*, not to mention Smyshlyayev's *Theory of Construction of the Stage Show*, which overlooked all the worthwhile achievements of *The Mexican*.

I feel that I must digress because any review of *Wise Man* that tries to establish a common link with other productions completely ignores *The Mexican* (January-March 1921), whereas *Wise Man* and the whole theory of attractions are a further elaboration and a logical development of my contribution to that production.

3. *Wise Man* was begun in the Touring Troupe (and finished when the two troupes combined) as the first work of agitation based on a new method of structuring a show.

II. The Montage of Attractions

This term is being used for the first time. It requires explanation.

Theatre's basic material derives from the audience: the moulding of the audience in a desired direction (or mood) is the task of every utilitarian theatre (agitation, advertising, health education, etc.). The instrument of this process consists of all the parts that constitute the apparatus of theatre (Ostuzhev's¹⁰ 'chatter' no more than the colour of the prima donna's tights, a roll on the drums just as Romeo's soliloquy, the cricket on the hearth¹¹ no less than a salvo under the seats of the auditorium¹²) because, despite their differences, they all lead to one thing - which their presence legitimates - to their common quality of attraction.

An attraction (in our diagnosis of theatre) is any aggressive moment in theatre, i.e. any element of it that subjects the audience to emotional or psychological influence, verified by experience and mathematically calculated to produce specific emotional shocks in the spectator in their proper order within the whole. (These shocks provide the only opportunity of perceiving the ideological aspect of what is being shown, the final ideological conclusion. (The path to knowledge encapsulated in the phrase, 'through the living play of the passions', is specific to theatre.)

Emotional and psychological, of course, in the sense of direct reality as employed, for instance, in the Grand Guignol, where eyes are gouged out or arms and legs amputated on stage, or the direct reality of an actor on stage involved through the telephone with a nightmarish event taking place dozens of miles away, or the situation of a drunkard who, sensing his approaching end, pleads for protection and whose pleas are taken as a sign of madness. In this sense and not in the sense of the unravelling of psychological problems where the attraction is the theme itself, existing and taking effect *outside* the particular action, but topical enough. (Most agit-theatres make the mistake of being satisfied with attractions solely of that sort in their productions.)

I regard the attraction as being in normal conditions an independent and primary element in structuring the show, a molecular (i.e. compound) unity of the *effectiveness* of theatre and of *theatre as a whole*. It is completely analogous to Grosz's¹³ 'rough sketches', or the elements of Rodchenko's¹⁴ photo-illustrations.

'Compound'? It is difficult to distinguish where the fascination of the hero's nobility ends (the psychological moment) and where the moment of his personal charm (i.e. his erotic effect) begins. The lyrical effect of a whole series of Chaplin scenes is inseparable from the attractional quality of the specific mechanics of his movements. Similarly, it is difficult to distinguish where religious pathos gives way to satiric satisfaction in the torture scenes of the mystery plays, and so on.

The attraction has nothing in common with the stunt. The stunt or, more accurately, the trick (it is high time that this much abused term was returned to its rightful place) is a finished achievement of a particular kind of

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mastery (acrobatics, for the most part) and it is only one kind of attraction that is suitable for presentation (or, as they say in the circus, 'sale'). In so far as the trick is absolute and complete *within itself*, it means the direct opposite of the attraction, which is based exclusively on something relative, the reactions of the audience.

Our present approach radically alters our opportunities in the principles of creating an 'effective structure' (the show as a whole) instead of a static 'reflection' of a particular event dictated by the theme, and our opportunities for resolving it through an effect that is logically implicit in that event, and this gives rise to a new concept: a free montage with arbitrarily chosen independent (of both the PARTICULAR composition and any thematic connection with the actors) effects (attractions) but with the precise aim of a specific final thematic effect - montage of attractions.

The path that will liberate theatre completely from the yoke of the 'illusory depictions' and 'representations' that have hitherto been the decisive, unavoidable and only possible approach lies through a move to the montage of 'realistic artificialities', at the same time admitting to the weave of this montage whole ('illusory sequences') and a plot integral to the subject, not something self-contained or all-determining but something consciously and specifically determined for a particular purpose, and an attraction chosen purely for its powerful effect.

Since it is not a matter of 'revealing the playwright's purpose', 'correctly interpreting the author' or 'faithfully reflecting an epoch', etc., the attraction and a system of attractions provide the only basis for an effective show. In the hands of every skilled director the attraction has been used intuitively in one way or another, not, of course, on the level of montage or structure but at least in a 'harmonic composition' (from which a whole new vocabulary derives: an 'effective curtain', a 'rich exit', a 'good stunt', etc.) but essentially this has been done only within the framework of the logical plausibility of the subject (it has been 'justified' by the play) and in the main unconsciously and in pursuit of something entirely different (something that had been enumerated at the 'start' of the proceedings). What remains to us in reorganising the system we use to structure a show is merely to shift the focus of attention to the essential (what was earlier regarded as attendant decoration but is in fact the principal messenger of the abnormal intentions of a production and is not logically connected with the run-of-the-mill reverence of literary tradition), to establish this particular approach as a production method (which, since the autumn of 1922, has been the work of the Proletkult Workshops).

The school for the montageur¹⁵ is cinema and, principally, music-hall and circus because (from the point of view of form) putting on a good show means constructing a strong music-hall/circus programme that derives from the situations found in the play that is taken as a basis.

As an example here is a list of the sections of numbers in the epilogue to *Wise Man*:

1. The hero's explanatory monologue. 2. A fragment from a detective film. (A classification of 1., the theft of the diary.) 3. An Eccentric¹⁶ music-hall entrée (the bride and her three rejected suitors – all one person in the play – in the role of best men): a melancholy scene reminiscent of the song 'Your hands smell of incense' and 'May I be punished by the grave' (we intended that the bride would have a xylophone and this would be played on six rows of bells, the officers' buttons). 4.5.6. Three parallel two-phased clowning entrées (the theme: payment for organising the wedding). 7. An entrée with a star (the aunt) and three officers (the theme: the restraint of the rejected suitors), punning (by reference to a horse) on a triple volte number on a saddled horse (on the impossibility of bringing it into the room, traditionally, in 'triple harness'). 8. Good agit-songs ('The priest had a dog' accompanied by a rubber priest like a dog. The theme: the start of the wedding ceremony). 9. A break in the action (a paper-boy's voice announcing that the hero is leaving). 10. The villain appears in a mask. A fragment from a comedy film. (A résumé of five acts of the play. The theme: the publication of the diary.) 11. The continuation of the (interrupted) action in another grouping (a simultaneous wedding with the three rejected suitors). 12. Anti-religious songs ('Allah-Verdi'¹⁷ – a punning theme tune on the need to bring in a mullah because of the large number of suitors that one bride is marrying) from the choir and a new character used only in this scene, a soloist dressed as a mullah. 13. General dancing. Some play with a poster inscribed: 'Religion is the opium of the people.' 14. A farcical scene. (The bride and her three suitors are packed into a box and pots are smashed against the lid.) 15. The marital trio – a parody of life. (The song: 'Who here is young?') 16. A precipice. The hero's return. 17. The hero's winged flight beneath the big top (the theme: suicide in despair). 18. A break. The villain's return. The suicide is held up. 19. A sword fight (the theme: enmity). 20. An agit-entrée involving the hero and the villain on the theme of NEP. 21. An act on a sloping wire (crossing from the arena to the balcony over the audience's heads. The theme: 'leaving for Russia'). 22. A clowning parody of this number (with the hero). Descent from the wire. 23. A clown descends the same wire from the balcony, holding on by his teeth. 24. The final entrée with two clowns throwing water over one another (as per tradition), finishing with the announcement: 'The End'. 25. A volley of shots beneath the seats of the auditorium as a finale. The connecting features of the numbers, if there is no direct transition, are used as linking elements: they are handled with different arrangements of equipment, musical interludes, dancing, pantomime, carpet-clowns.

Editor's Note

The final section of Eisenstein's 'The Montage of Attractions', where he characterises the Epilogue to *Enough Simplicity for Every Wise Man*, makes little sense to the reader who is not acquainted with the production or with the Ostrovsky play upon which it is

very loosely based. The editors of the six-volume Eisenstein *Selected Works* in Russian have included a reconstruction of the Epilogue provided by the surviving members of the production led by Maxim Strauch. It is reproduced here:

1. On stage (in the arena) we see Glumov who, in an ['explanatory'] monologue, recounts how his diary has been stolen and he has been threatened with exposure. Glumov decides to marry Mashenka immediately and so he summons Manefa the clown on to the stage and asks him to play the part of the priest.
2. The lights go down. On the screen we see Glumov's diary¹⁹ being stolen by a man in a black mask – Golutvin. A parody of the American detective film.
3. The lights go up. Mashenka appears, dressed as a racing driver in a bridal veil. She is followed by her three rejected suitors, officers (in Ostrovsky's play there is just one: Kurchayev), who are to be the best men at her wedding to Glumov. They act out a separation scene ('melancholy'). Mashenka sings the 'cruel' romance, 'May I be punished by the grave'. The officers, parodying Vertinsky,²⁰ perform 'Your hands smell of incense'. (It was Eisenstein's original intention that this scene should be regarded as an Eccentric music-hall number ('xylophone') with Mashenka playing on the bells sewn as buttons on to the officers' coats.
- 4.5.6. Exit Mashenka and the three officers. Enter Glumov. Three clowns – Gorodulin, Joffre, Mamilyukov – run out from the auditorium towards him. Each performs his own curious turn (juggling with balls, acrobatic jumps, etc.) and asks for his payment. Glumov refuses and leaves. (The 'two-phased clowning entrées': for each exit there are two phrases of text, the clown's and Glumov's rejoinder.)
7. Mamayeva appears, dressed in extravagant luxury (a 'star'), carrying a ringmaster's whip. She is followed by the three officers. Mamayeva wants to disrupt Glumov's wedding. She comforts the rejected suitors and after their rejoinder about the horse ('My friendly mare is neighing') she cracks the whip and the officers scamper around the arena. Two imitate a horse while the third is the rider.
8. On stage the priest (Manefa) begins the wedding ceremony. Everyone present sings, 'There was a priest who had a dog'. Manefa performs a circus turn (the 'rubber priest'), imitating a dog.
9. Through a megaphone we hear the paper-boy shouting. Glumov, abandoning the wedding, escapes to find out whether his diary has appeared in print.
10. The man who stole the diary appears. He is a man in a black mask (Golutvin). The lights go out. On the screen we see Glumov's diary. The film tells of his behaviour in front of his great patrons and accordingly of his transmutations into various conventional figures (into a donkey in front of Mamaev, a tank-driver in front of Joffre, and so on).
11. The wedding ceremony resumes. Glumov has fled; his place is taken by the rejected suitors, the three officers ('Kurchayev').

12. As Mashenka is simultaneously marrying three suitors, four men in uniform carry a mullah on a board out from among the audience. He continues the wedding ceremony, performing songs parodying topical themes – 'Allah-Verdi'.
13. When he has finished singing, the mullah dances the *lesginka*²¹ and everyone joins in. The mullah raises the board he had been sitting on. On the back there is an inscription: 'Religion is the opium of the people.' Exit the mullah, holding this board in his hands.
14. Mashenka and her three suitors are packed into boxes (from which, unseen by the audience, they disappear). The participants in the wedding ceremony smash clay pots against the box, parodying the ancient wedding rite of 'packing off the young couple'.
15. The three participants in the wedding ceremony (Mamilyukov, Mamayev, Gorodulin) sing the wedding song 'Who here is young, who here's not wed?'
16. The wedding song is interrupted by Glumov who runs in with a newspaper in his hand: 'Hurrah! There's nothing in the paper!' Everyone makes fun of him and leaves him alone.
17. After the publication of his diary and his failure to wed, Glumov is in despair. He decides to commit suicide and asks one of the men in uniform for a 'rope'. They lower a lead to him from the ceiling. He attaches 'angels' wings' to his back and they start to raise him towards the ceiling with a lighted candle in his hands. The choir sings 'At midnight the angel flew across the heavens' to the tune of 'My beauty's heart'. This scene is a parody of the Ascension.
18. Golutvin (the 'villain') appears on stage. Glumov, seeing his enemy, starts showering him with abuse, descends on to the stage and rushes after him.
19. Glumov and Golutvin fight with swords. Glumov wins. Golutvin falls and Glumov tears a large label off Golutvin's trousers. It bears the word 'NEP'.
20. Golutvin sings a song about NEP. Glumov accompanies him. Both dance. Golutvin invites Glumov to be his 'apprentice' and go to Russia.
21. Golutvin, balancing an umbrella, walks up the sloping wire over the audience's heads to the balcony: he is 'leaving for Russia'.
22. Glumov decides to follow his example, clammers up on to the wire but falls off (the circus 'descent') with the words 'It's slippery, slippery: I'd be better off in a back alley.' He follows Golutvin 'to Russia' but takes a less dangerous route – through the auditorium.
23. Enter a clown (with red hair) on stage. He cries and says over and over again, 'They've gone and left someone behind.' Another clown descends from the balcony on the wire, holding on by his teeth.
- 24.25. The two clowns start squabbling. One throws water over the other who falls over with surprise. One of them announces 'The End' and makes his bow to the audience. At this moment there is a pyrotechnical explosion beneath of the seats of the auditorium.