Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* and the Renaissance: An Example of Stalinist Cosmopolitanism?

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This article addresses an apparent conundrum. Sergei Eisenstein's film trilogy *Ivan groznyi* (Ivan the Terrible, 1945–48) is patently nationalistic, not to say xenophobic. Consider, for example, its caricatured images of westerners at the tsarist and Polish courts with their starched ruffs, contorted faces, and artificial manner of speech. Ivan, that wild-eyed and grotesque figure in black who is bent over by those cramped, medieval spaces through which he processes in the film, seems the very incarnation of what had so recently been dismissed as "obscurantism" (*mrakobesie*) in the Soviet Union of the 1930s. As Iosif Stalin himself complained, the *oprichniki* resemble the Ku Klux Klan.[1] But how could such images be used for a purportedly hagiographic representation of the national leader by the consummately cosmopolitan and sophisticated Eisenstein, that voracious reader of western texts, whose planning notes are maddeningly polyglot (for the would-be decipherer) as he moves seamlessly from Russian to English to German to French and who, in his writings of those years and in his lectures at Vsesoiuznyi gosudarstvennyi universitet kinematografii (All-Soviet State University of Cinematography, VGIK) uses both Russian and western examples without distinguishing between them? One could account for the disparity by pointing out that Eisenstein received a commission from Stalin for the film (conveyed by Andrei Zhdanov), together with explicit instructions as to how Ivan should be represented, but I consider that explanation inadequate.[2]

Here I hope to go some way toward resolving this seeming paradox. In my view, *Ivan,* which, as Yuri Tsivian points out, "some people even think the most complex movie ever made," cannot be dismissed as an officially endorsed propaganda piece, even though Eisenstein was awarded a Stalin Prize for it.[3] Nor should it be taken, as it has been so often, as a prime and unambiguous example of the revival of the national. I will argue that a compositional dominant in the *Ivan* trilogy is the pull of cosmopolitanism and the ostensibly contrary pull toward the national, ostensibly contrary in that cosmopolitanism versus nationalism is in some ways a false dichotomy. But "cosmopolitanism" is actually an overly vague term, and consequently some clarification of what I might mean by it here, and its relationship to nationalism, is needed before proceeding to discuss its relevance for Eisenstein's *Ivan.*

Cosmopolitans are in reality not free-floating individuals who "cosmi-

1. Katerina Clark and Evgeny Dobrenko, eds., *Soviet Culture and Power: A History in Documents, 1917–1953* (New Haven, 2007), 440.

2. Yuri Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible* (London, 2002), 66.

3. Ibid., 7.

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cally" have an appreciation for or familiarity with each and every place or cultural system. Their conceptual horizons are always limited, and what they will entertain always includes only a selection (of places, people, languages, texts). In consequence, there are in effect multiple cosmopolitanisms, multiple versions of the cosmopolitan world, often coexisting or competing in one place or even within one individual.

Soviet cosmopolitanism of the 1930s was distinctive, inextricably bound up with Soviet internationalism and patriotism, and yet not reducible to either.[4] But in fact theorists of nationalism and cosmopolitanism such as Liah Greenfield and Pheng Cheah have pointed out that the national and international or cosmopolitan have not historically been completely counterposed orientations.[5] In the Soviet case one complication involves distinguishing cosmopolitanism from internationalism, which in the cultural field was closely tied to a desire for international cultural hegemony, in other words to a national cause. The three concepts and causes—national, international, cosmopolitan—overlapped to some degree, especially given that from January 1941 through the war years and a little beyond (when Eisenstein worked on the script and trilogy) any cosmopolitanism had to be accommodated to stark political realities. A shift to greater Russian nationalism became especially marked from around 1937, to some extent due to the specter of war, but the discourse of cosmopolitanism did not disappear from the public sphere, as will become evident in this discussion.[6] Eisenstein and like-minded Soviet intellectual peers did not themselves identify with that term. In the 1930s it was rarely used in the Soviet press and did not have particularly positive connotations, though not yet the outright pejorative force it had during the "anti-cosmopolitan" campaign of the late 1940s.

The cosmopolitans of the Soviet 1930s were, *as cosmopolitans,* driven by a desire to interact with other cultures and intellectuals in the outside world, and especially in Europe, and to expand their own horizons and those of their compatriots. They pushed for a more cosmopolitan culture while still committed to the Soviet state, and so I will call them "cosmopolitan patriots," by which I mean those who in the 1930s aspired for the Soviet Union to become the center of a highly sophisticated, European cultural world.[7]

4. See, for example, Immanuel Wallerstein's discussion of the interdependence of "national," "universal," and "cosmopolitan": "The National and the Universal: Can There Be Such a Thing as World Culture?" in Anthony D. King, ed., *Culture, Globalization and the World System: Contemporary Conditions for the Representation of Identity* (Minneapolis, 1997), 90–103.

5. Liah Greenfeld, *Nationalism: Five Roads to Modernity* (Cambridge, Mass., 1992), 14; Pheng Cheah, *Spectral Nationality: Passages of Freedom from Kant to Postcolonial Literatures of Liberation* (New York, 2003), 8, 2; see also Perry Anderson's historical overview of the interrelationship in "Internationalism: A Breviary," *New Left Review* 14 (March–April 2002): 5–25.

6. David Brandenberger, *National Bolshevism: Stalinist Mass Culture and the Formation of Modern Russian National Identity, 1931–1956* (Cambridge, Mass., 2002), esp. 56–62 and chap. 5.

7. After coming up with this term I discovered that Kwame Anthony Appiah uses it in "Cosmopolitan Patriots," in Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds. *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling beyond the Nation* (Minneapolis, 1998).

I count Eisenstein as a cosmopolitan patriot and argue that his *Ivan the Terrible* can be interpreted, inter alia, in terms of this orientation. He was also an internationalist in the sense that he worked for the cause of Soviet international cultural hegemony; he was frequently assigned to host foreign intellectuals visiting Moscow and expected to dispose them favorably to the Soviet Union. He was a "patriot"—though far from chauvinist.

The national theme is present from the very beginning of Part 1 with its opening coronation scene of 1547, where Eisenstein has the young tsar conclude his speech with the words: "Two Romes have fallen, Moscow is the third, and there will be no fourth! And for that Third Rome the single master will be I ALONE."[8] My deliberately literal translation of Ivan's words also highlights a common reading of the film as an extravagant allegorical portrait of Stalin, a document in the cult of personality.

The film proceeds to justify Ivan's claim to international stature by showing how, in the course of his career, imperial might is won by an absolute ruler. This theme accorded well with what was effectively Eisenstein's mandate from Stalin via Zhdanov to make this film—to provide in the story of Ivan's reign an allegory for the career of Stalin showing his greatness as a unifier of the country, as others did in responding to similar commissions. If we are able to take Eisenstein's public statements at face value, he concurred.[9] The three parts of the trilogy are designed to show how this medieval Russian tsar unified his country by determined might, defeating internal enemies and pushing its borders out to reach the sea. In Part 1 we see the beginnings of this with Ivan conquering Kazan from its Tatar rulers, an event historians have conventionally seen as the beginning of the Russian imperial period. Ivan then proceeds in the next two parts to take Livonia (roughly the Baltic states).

A different sense of the film's ideological orientation is, however, potentially present in one of the many clusters of references in the trilogy—visual and literary material drawn from the Renaissance. This era is far from the major source of images statistically, but the frequency with which Renaissance images are deployed does not alone determine their significance. In planning the trilogy, Eisenstein drew heavily on Russian national myths and imagery, principally from a deeply religious, medieval Russia, but he incorporated other, non-Renaissance, western elements as well. In discussing possible Renaissance sources, then, I am not attempting a total interpretation of *Ivan* but aim only to throw light on a neglected aspect—the cosmopolitan dimension as suggested by these sources. Because one of the trilogy's pervasive subtexts, as indicated by sporadic references, is the west European Renaissance, speculating on possible readings of these references is valuable. One Renaissance visual referent, for example, is that young Fedor Basmanov, a founder and leader of the oprichniki, vi-

8. "'Ivan groznyi': Kinostsenarii S. M. Eizenshteina," *Novyi mir,* 1943, no. 10–11: 67. Emphasis in the original. The traditional historiography has it that the monk Filofei set out this doctrine in a series of letters in the sixteenth century, though the number, addresses, and dates of the letters are the subjects of controversy.

9. S. M. Eizenshtein, "'Ivan Groznyi': Fil'm o russkom renessanse XVI veka" (1942), *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh* (Moscow, 1964–65), 1:193, 194; Rossiiskii gosudarstvennyi arkhiv literatury i iskusstva (RGALI), f. 1923, op. 1, d. 530, l. 2.

sually echoes Sandro Botticelli's portrait of Giuliano de Medici, while in Part 2 Andrei Kurbskii's future Polish wife recalls portraits of Catherine de Medici.[10]

Such visual cues might seem to be minor details or mere stylization, but Eisenstein explicitly wanted a Renaissance context for Ivan's rule. The prologue to Part 1 proclaims it. Also, Eisenstein titled an important account of his conception of the film, published in 1942, "'Ivan the Terrible': A Film about the Russian Renaissance of the Sixteenth Century." In this article Eisenstein associates Ivan with some of the famous west European rulers of the Renaissance, the tsar's approximate peers, including Catherine de Medici and Henry VIII, and argues that the use of violence was ineluctable in these famous Renaissance leaders' pursuit of the twin aims of aesthetic and political power.[11] Thus having Basmanov resemble a portrait of Giuliano de Medici indirectly points to the fact that the Medici family wielded power by violence and material wealth rather than by office. Lest one see this argument as merely the casuistry of a Russian nationalist or Stalinist apologist one should note that Michael Cherniavsky made similar points in his 1968 article "Ivan the Terrible as Renaissance Prince," where he portrays Ivan as a "just tyrant," praises him as a "patron to foreigners, carriers of civilization," and catalogues the violence meted out by west European potentates in the period. Cherniavsky accounts for this violence in terms of Renaissance mores for its prince (particularly seen in Niccolo Machiavelli's writings), which "legitimized in one person absolute political power with no limitations."[12]

As Joan Neuberger has pointed out, violence particularly fascinated Eisenstein. In fact his main quarrel with Sigmund Freud was that Eisenstein believed violence was more fundamental to the human than sex.[13] Did he, then, want to dignify what many have seen as an encrypted apologia for the violence used in the Stalinist national cause through allusions to the Renaissance? Did he produce in this film an allegorical representation of Soviet glory by locating that "terrible" phase of Russian history within a pan-European context that included the Renaissance as a time of extraordinary cultural achievement? Or, on the contrary, though the film is patriotic and inflected by a purge mentality, could it be read as presenting the life of Ivan as the tragedy of an able leader who, in a sort of Faustian bargain, implements the violence that might facilitate a national flowering such as occurred in the Renaissance of his day, but who is instead, in Part 3 as projected, left to contemplate blood and devastation all around as that flowering eludes him through the misdirected excess of the violence he employed?

10. Another reason for pointing to Giuliano specifically was because he was stabbed to death in the cathedral, as was Ivan's simpleton cousin Vladimir in Part 2 of Eisenstein's film. Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible*, 67. Also, Jane Sharp has pointed out to me that many of Eisenstein's frames are organized by Renaissance principles of perspective. Jane Sharp, conversation in Los Angeles, 19 November 2010.

11. Eizenshtein, "'Ivan Groznyi': Fil'm o russkom renessanse XVI veka," 189–95.

12. Michael Cherniavsky, "Ivan the Terrible as Renaissance Prince," *Slavic Review* 27, no. 2 (June 1968): 201, 211.

13. Joan Neuberger, *Ivan the Terrible* (London, 2003), 16.

The Cosmopolitan Dimension in Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible*

In further pursuing these counterposed interpretive possibilities (justification, critique), I want to look at a central scene in *Ivan* Part 1. Late at night the tsar sits at the desk in his cavernous stateroom, beset by affairs of state. He instructs an emissary to take a splendid chess set to Elizabeth of England as a move dictated by his astute diplomatic strategy. Allegedly, if Elizabeth plays by Ivan's rules England will profit. The cameraman Andrei Moskvin's lighting effects throw up on the wall a shadow of Ivan, magnified to superhuman proportions and deliberately contrasted with the incommensurately smaller shadow of the envoy to suggest, as Tsivian has put it, "the dimension of statesmanship, or literally Ivan's 'stately mind' [*gosudarstvennyi um*]" (figure 1).[14]

The shadows cast on the study wall include one of an armillary sphere on his desk, and this shadow is comparable in size with Ivan's.[15] The coupling of Ivan with the sphere, with its representation of the celestial system and the meridians, could be read in a number of ways. An obvious one would be that the sphere is an accoutrement of Ivan's role as conqueror of territory, master of space. The astrolabe, a sort of two-dimensional version of the armillary sphere, was used in navigation for guiding ships across vast oceans, so that the sphere's inclusion here is suggestive of the great maritime imperial conquests of the western powers.[16] Not coincidentally, perhaps, at the beginning of this scene Ivan reiterates his obsession with ("re"-) acquiring an outlet to the sea. But the sphere has another referent, critical for Eisenstein: it is a commonplace of Renaissance portraiture to have a man of wisdom (a scientist) or a potentate represented with an astronomical or astrological instrument, most classically in Hans Holbein the Younger's *The Ambassasors* (1533).[17] Thus in effect this trilogy presents a new image of the Soviet ruler: wild-eyed though Ivan might appear in court scenes and when engaged in a sort of perpetual "struggle" (*bor'ba*), that central term of Bolshevik discourse, he presides, at the same time, over knowledge and culture that are inextricably linked to power.

The armillary sphere could be seen as symptomatic of the Stalinist turn in the 1930s to conceiving the nation's might, and even its identity, in terms of dominion over culture and knowledge. In a 1942 memorandum, Aleksandr Scherbakov (the Central Committee ideology chief) stresses that Ivan was a man of learning (a point made in several accounts of Ivan from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries): "Ivan IV himself was one of the most educated men of his times and a champion of the broad dissemination of knowledge. He strongly supported progressive endeavors such as the introduction of book printing in Russia. All of these reforms provoked vigorous resistance on the part of representatives of the feudal

14. RGALI, f. 1263, op. 2, d. 1176, l. 53, cited in Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible,* 45.

15. This is not in the first draft of the script.

16. Gerard L'Estrange Turner, *Renaissance Astrolabes and Their Makers* (Burlington, Vt., 2003), i, 233; Bruce Stephenson, Marvin Bolt, and Anna Felicity Friedman, *The Universe Unveiled: Instruments and Images through History* (Chicago, 2000), 67.

17. Other examples include his portrait of Kratzer and his *Dance of Death* (1525) in which the armillary sphere is featured. John David North, *The Ambassadors' Secret: Holbein and the World of the Renaissance* (London, 2002), 192–93.

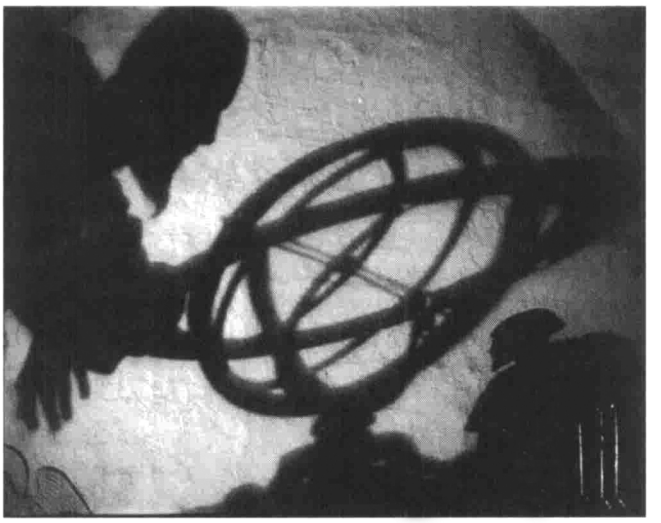

Figure 1. Film shot of Ivan's shadow and that of his emissary.

order—hardened patrimonial estate holders, tenaciously insisting on preserving the feudal order."[18] This contrast between the enlightened lover of books and his contemporaries, the obscurantist feudalists, was another version of the common practice in Soviet writings of this time of representing positive historical figures (Aleksandr Pushkin most spectacularly) as somehow in advance of their time, impending toward the great Soviet moment and consequently not tainted by their class identities.[19]

Later in the stateroom scene, after the emissary leaves, Ivan settles back in his chair and closes his eyes while the shadow of the sphere projected on the wall hovers above the shadow of his head. Thus is Ivan inscribed into a series of standard moments for representing the leader figure in Stalinist iconography to be seen, for example, in the Vasiliev "brothers" (Georgy Nikolaevich and Sergei Dmitrievich)'s film *Chapaev* (1934), that classic of socialist realist cinema, where the eponymous hero, a civil war commander, pores over a map plotting battle strategy deep into the night, while his troops sleep. A more paradigmatic and recent (for Eisenstein) example would be Viktor Govorkov's classic poster "O kazhdom iz nas zabotitsia Stalin v Kremle" (Stalin in the Kremlin Cares for All of Us, 1940), in which Stalin, alone in his Kremlin study at night, is writing the nation, again, by implication, while that nation sleeps, though in the stateroom scene Ivan is thinking the nation rather than writing it.[20] These

18. A. Shcherbakov, "Tovarishchu Stalinu, I. V. o p'ese A. N. Tolstogo 'Ivan Groznyi,'" cited in Kevin M. F. Platt and David Brandenberger, "Terribly Romantic, Terribly Progressive, or Terribly Tragic: Rehabilitating Ivan IV under I. V. Stalin," *Russian Review* 58, no. 4 (October 1999): 643.

19. For example, for Pushkin, see N. L. Brodskii, *A. S. Pushkin: Biografiia* (Moscow, 1937), 891.

20. Victoria E. Bonnell, *Iconography of Power: Soviet Political Posters under Lenin and Stalin* (Berkeley, 1997), fig. 4.17, 187.

shots in his stateroom are intercut with shots of his wife, Anastasia, sleeping in her bedroom so that one could alternatively interpret this as Ivan's thinking not about affairs of state but about his wife, or as a "meanwhile" his wife is sleeping, yet another example of how different readings of the same scene are simultaneously available, and of how the personal and psychological, and the allegorical and political in the film are inextricably interwoven.

As Eisenstein himself wrote, in the trilogy Ivan is not consistently an allegorical representation of Stalin but sometimes stands more for his father and sometimes for Eisenstein himself.[21] And there are several ways in which the sphere could be seen to have an autobiographical referent that might point to Eisenstein's intellectual ambitions. One possibility would be several artworks whose contours are reminiscent of the armillary sphere that were produced in the early 1920s by the constructivist artist Aleksandr Rodchenko, since Eisenstein also had ties to the constructivist movement.[22] Another would be Eisenstein's plans of August 1929 to produce a spherical book that would encompass knowledge and theory and could be read not linearly, as with a conventional book, but in all directions.[23] Evidence supporting that possible referent includes the fact that while Eisenstein was filming *Ivan* in Kazakhstan, he was working in tandem on what could be considered a less ambitious version of the spherical book, a theoretical work he began on 6 December 1943 called "the foundation of the entire building" (of his theory).[24]

In the mid-sixteenth century, the time of the film, a Russian tsar would not likely have had an armillary sphere, as Eisenstein was most probably aware.[25] By contrast, during the reign of Elizabeth, some 110 astrolabes were made in England.[26] Is Eisenstein, by including the (unlikely) armillary sphere in Ivan's chamber, seeking to enhance the image of medieval Russia and thereby challenge the historiographical cliché about Russia that the Achilles heel, so to speak, of its development is that it never experienced a Renaissance and consequently missed out on being as advanced as western Europe (and in the eyes of some was not European at all)? Robert Vipper, whose 1922 book *Ivan groznyi* so impressed Stalin that Eisenstein was instructed to use it in writing his script (and did), stresses (as does Cherniavsky) that foreign visitors to Muscovy in Ivan's time were extremely impressed by the physical grandeur of the capital and by the country's cultural level, as well as by Ivan's accomplishments as a consummate diplomat.[27]

21. Naum I. Kleiman, "Problema Eizenshteina," in Sergei Mikhailovich Eizenshtein, *Metod,* vol. 1, *Grundproblem* (Moscow, 2002), 245; RGALI, f. 1923, op. 2, d. 1168, l. 25.

22. For example, Rodchenko's *Spatial Construction no. 9* (1920–21).

23. "[Kniga-shar]," in Sergei Mikhailovich Eizenshtein, *Montazh* (Moscow, 2000), 475.

24. Kleiman, "Problema Eizenshteina," esp. 5–7, 9, 12–13, 15.

25. I am grateful to Paul Bushkovitch, Will Ryan, and Carolyn Pouncy for help in reaching this conclusion.

26. Turner, *Renaissance Astrolabes and Their Makers,* vii, 404.

27. RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, d. 561 contains extensive notes from Vipper, but also from Vasilii Kliuchevskii, Aleksandr Pypin, Igor Grabar', and Aleksandr Veselovskii. R. Iu. Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (Moscow, 1922), xxi, xlvi, xlvii; R. Iu. Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (Moscow-Leningrad, 1944), 24–25, 30, 106–7.

Is this inversion of the European hierarchy of political-cum-intellectual power an act of falsification born of nationalist fervor? Or is Eisenstein suggesting an alternative model for the contemporary ruler of his own country by means of an allegorical representation of "Ivan"? Incidentally, Eisenstein was instructed from on high to eliminate any mention of the alliance with Elizabeth, an injunction he simply ignored.[28]

The armillary sphere could be seen as opening up the Russian (Soviet) purview. The device's provenance includes ancient China and ancient Greece, and it came to Europe via the Middle East. It could thus be seen as standing for the circulation of ideas and contacts, both within Europe and around the globe. This possibility is suggested in Eisenstein's writings about Tsar Ivan where he stresses that "he was the first to make major international connections with western countries."[29] In fact though the assumption is that Eisenstein was expected to produce a Russian nationalist interpretation of Ivan along the lines of Vipper, who presents a similar analysis of Ivan as the tsar who sought to realize a Third Rome, Vipper himself actually emerges as something of a Westernizer. In his book *Ivan groznyi* he praises the tsar for "having set [himself] the tremendous aim of turning semi-Asiatic Moscow into a European power" and claims that Ivan was "drawn to [conquer] Revel and Riga so as to have access to western countries."[30] In other words, as a "nationalist" he sought Russia's aggrandizement by extending its international (European) cultural purview.

This broadened cultural horizon potentially advocated in Eisenstein's account of Ivan clearly does not preclude the exercise of violence. In Eisenstein's article on Ivan and the Renaissance, he points out that Henry VIII and Catherine de Medici are famous for having presided over a cultural renaissance in their domains, but one often administered through brutality and violence. Catherine de Medici, as he points out, believed in the humanist ideal of the learned Renaissance prince whose authority depended on letters as well as arms and was "one of the pioneers in founding the golden age of the great French national state of the era of the Sun King and the seventeenth century." But, as he emphasizes, she is also credited with masterminding the massacre of French Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day (actually an event which, Vipper points out, Ivan decried in a letter to Maximilian II).[31]

28. Neuberger, *Ivan the Terrible,* 14; Maureen Perrie, *The Cult of Ivan the Terrible in Stalin's Russia* (Basingstoke, Eng., 2001), 152–53. Eisenstein planned a very different image of Elizabeth for Part 2 but cut it out because of the alliance with England during the war. Joan Neuberger, "Eisenstein's Cosmopolitan Kremlin: Drag Queens, Circus Clowns, Slugs and Foreigners in *Ivan the Terrible,*" in Stephen M. Norris and Zara M. Torlone, eds., *Insiders and Outsiders in Russian Cinema* (Bloomington, 2008), 63.

29. S. M. Eizenshtein, "Krupneishii gosudarstvennyi deiatel'," *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh,* 1:199.

30. Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (1922), xxix, xxxii, respectively; Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (1944) has a slightly different formulation as compared with xxix, omitting in particular "semi-Asiatic" (107).

31. Eizenshtein, "'Ivan Groznyi': Fil'm o russkom renessanse XVI veka," 190; Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (1922), xxvii.

In linking Ivan's exercise of violence with its practice among giants of the western Renaissance, Eisenstein might seem to be seeking to refocus the image of Ivan from the "terrible," that is as cruel, paranoid, and quite possibly insane, to the "awe-inspiring" or "formidable," alternative meanings of the epithet in Ivan's title, *groznyi*—invariably rendered in English as "terrible." Here Eisenstein could also be seen as following Vipper, who rejects as a distortion this standard understanding of what "groznyi" means when applied to Ivan, insisting that Nikolai Karamzin, who by providing in his classic *Istoriia Gosudarstva Rossiiskago* (1819–1826) an account of Ivan as truly "terrible" and unhinged, caused a shift in the historiography to an erroneous representation of Ivan's reign.[32]

In this paradoxical image of Ivan as someone who used violence but whose violence led to a national resurgence, one can see parallels between Eisenstein's film and Heinrich Mann's fictionalized biography *Henri quatre* (Part 1, 1935; Part 2, 1938) about the founder of the Bourbon dynasty who also reigned in the sixteenth century (1553–1610). During the second half of the 1930s, this novel was published in translation in the Soviet Union in multiple editions with large print runs and was widely cited by writers.[33] As Naum Kleiman, director of the Eisenstein Museum, has put it, "Eisenstein could not have not read" this book.[34]

Henri quatre is by a German but about a French "humanist" king. Written by Mann during his exile in France from Nazi Germany, it was intended to provide a counter model to Nazi values. In the novel Mann presents his somewhat idealized ruler as an implementer of Renaissance humanism. "Humanism" in the 1930s was a banner term of the antifascist movement in which Mann was a leader, but it was also a catchword of the platform of the Soviet Union that substantially underwrote that movement. Some critics also think that the representation of Henry in this novel is meant as a flattering portrait of Stalin, whom Mann revered at the time.[35]

One is tempted to speculate that *Henri quatre* was a frame of reference for Eisenstein in writing the script for *Ivan the Terrible,* and one of the sources that prompted the Renaissance parallel that informs the film, though the Renaissance featured prominently in Soviet culture of the 1930s. Within the literary sphere at that time such writers as William Shakespeare and François Rabelais were constantly promoted as the giants of "world literature." And Renaissance models dominated "socialist realist" architecture for most of the 1930s, especially the work of Andrea Palladio, whose writings appeared in Russian translation, as did those of several of his contemporaries.[36] At the prestigious Institut Filosofii, Lit-

32. Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (1922), xxiv; Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (1944), 148–49.

33. For example, G. Mann, *Iunost' korolia Genrikha IV,* trans. N. M. Krymova (Moscow, 1937); and Mann, *Zrelost' korolia Genrikha IV,* trans. N. Kasatkina, *Internatsional'naia literatura,* 1939, no. 3–4.

34. Naum Kleiman, interview, Moscow, 1 July 2011.

35. Rolf N. Linn, *Heinrich Mann* (New York, 1967), 115.

36. Andrea Palladio, *Chetyre knigi ob arkhitekture v dvukh tomakh,* trans. I. V. Zholtovskii (Moscow, 1936, 1938); Leon Battista Al'berti, *Desiat' knig o zodchestve,* vol. 1, trans. V. P. Zubov (Moscow, 1935). See also "Novye knigi: Teoriia arkhitektury," *Arkhitektura SSSR,* 1937, no. 2:

eratury i Istorii, students (among whom were both the correspondence student Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn and the future head of the KGB, Vladimir Semichastnii) were regaled with a diet of art, literature, and theory that revolved around Marxist texts and the Renaissance.[37] During the Show Trials, Shakespeare was at times even invoked in the service of justifying the purges; one editorial, for example, cites *Henry V* in advocating immediate execution after the accused "admit" their crimes.[38]

Even though the Renaissance was much in vogue during the Stalinist 1930s and early 1940s, there are particular features of Eisenstein's film trilogy that make Mann's *Henri quatre* a probable specific referent. For one, in Mann's representation, Henry, like Ivan, is driven by a passion to unify his country that pits him against enemies both internal and external and demands military aggressiveness and skill.[39] Another important parallel between Mann's Henry and Ivan in the trilogy is that both are shown to be deeply affected by the poisoning death of their mothers. In Henry's case the poisoning was orchestrated by Catherine de Medici, Henry's nemesis in this novel. In Part 1 of Eisenstein's trilogy, Evrosinia, a leader of the rival boyars and Ivan's nemesis, was responsible for the second poisoning, that of his wife, which was particularly traumatic for Ivan. Moreover, Evrosinia's caricatured representation in the film accords with the description of Catherine de Medici in *Henri quatre* given by György Lukács in his *Historical Novel:* "She is made into a kind of stylized fantastic witch, an embodiment of the evil people."[40]

There are other parallels between Mann's *Henri quatre* and Eisenstein's article on Ivan and the Renaissance. For example, both foreground the infamous massacre of French Huguenots on St. Bartholomew's Day. In Mann's novel the massacre is instigated by Catherine de Medici and is a critical and formative moment in Henry's career. But this massacre has a special place in the theory of nationalism because Ernst Renan used it as a prime example in his canonical 1882 lecture "What Is a Nation?" in support of his contention that "the essence of a nation is that all individuals have many things in common, and also that they have forgotten many things. No French citizen knows whether he is a Burgundian, an Alan, a Taifale, or a Visigoth, yet every French citizen has to have forgotten the massacre of St. Bartholomew."[41] In Mann's novel, Henry opts to carry on

78; "V izdatel'stve Akademii arkhitektury," *Akademiia arkhitektury,* 1934, no. 1–2: 128; Branko Mitrovic, *Studying Renaissance Architectural Theory in the Age of Stalinism* (Florence, 2009).

37. Catherine Gousseff, ed., *Moscou 1918–1941: De "l'homme nouveau" au bonheur totalitaire* (Paris, 1993), 9.

38. [Editorial], "Vragi naroda unichtozheny," *Internatsional'naia literatura,* 1937, no. 1: 6

39. A perhaps significant difference between Eisenstein's representation of Ivan and Mann's of Henry IV is that Eisenstein does not emphasize the cultural achievements of his ruler's reign (with the possible exception of the armillary sphere). Also, Henry, unlike Ivan, takes delight in carnal pleasures.

40. György Lukács, *The Historical Novel,* trans. Hannah and Stanley Mitchell (London, 1962), 320.

41. Ernst Renan, "What Is a Nation?" (1882), trans. Martin Thom and reprinted in Homi K. Babha, *Nation and Narration* (New York, 1990), 11. Benedict Anderson also em-

as if he had forgotten the massacre of St. Bartholomew's night, that is, the massacre by the Catholics of his fellow Protestants. In the interests of French unity, he even converts to Roman Catholicism, ushering in a period of religious tolerance that, in addition to his military victories, secures the unity of France. In the Eisenstein film, by contrast, the murders of Ivan's two closest kin (his mother and wife) are not forgotten but become major motivating forces in his vengeful administration.

As the parallels with Mann's novel suggest, the references to the Renaissance in Eisenstein's *Ivan* are not only visual but also have to do with the literary sources and with Renaissance letters generally. This is particularly so in regard to the revenge motive, so prominent in *Ivan.* It could be seen as a second way in which the reign of Elizabeth I in England plays a role in the film. Elizabeth, or more accurately her era, saw the flowering of the English theater with giants such as Shakespeare. But it was a particularly widespread Elizabethan theatrical genre, the revenge tragedy, that was important in shaping the plot of Eisenstein's trilogy. These tragedies had been influenced by those of the Roman author Seneca whose "horrors piled upon horrors" made them popular between 1587 and 1642 among the English who relished their spectacles of bloodshed.[42]

The *Ivan* trilogy's indebtedness to this genre would have been more apparent if Eisenstein had been able to film it as he had planned. According to his scenario, Part 1 was to have opened with Ivan witnessing the murder of his mother and her lover at the hands of the boyars, but he was instructed to cut the scene out (he inserted the mother's death into the opening of Part 2, though that film was not released under Stalin).[43]

While Eisenstein was working on *Ivan,* he also wrote about Elizabethan revenge tragedies. His particular interest is Shakespeare's appropriation of it. Here Eisenstein frequently cites such western specialists as Caroline Spurgeon's *Shakespearean Imagery and What It Tells Us* (1935), A. C. Bradley's *Shakespearean Tragedy* (1904), but also T. S. Eliot's *Sacred Wood* (1930).[44]

Another important source for his interpretation of the revenge tragedy and Shakespeare's version of it was Ivan Aksenov, an erstwhile constructivist and one of his beloved mentors from his time in Vsevolod Meyerhold's theater studio in the early 1920s, where Aksenov lectured on English theater. It might seem strange that someone in an avant-garde theater studio was proselytizing for Elizabethan tragedy, but in fact, starting from at least Alfred Jarry's play *Ubu roi* of 1896, and later in Antonin Artaud's Theater

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phasizes the importance of selective amnesia in the formation of the national narrative. See the section, "The Biography of Nations," in the final chapter of his *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism,* rev. ed. (London, 1991).

42. Fredson Thayer Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy, 1587–1642* (Gloucester, Mass., 1959), 43. James Goodwin also notes that Eisenstein has used the conventions of revenge tragedy in his trilogy. Goodwin, *Eisenstein, Cinema and History* (Urbana, 1993), 186–87.

43. Perrie, *Cult of Ivan the Terrible,* 163, 171–78.

44. Eizenshtein, *Metod,* 1:271–74; *Metod,* vol. 2 (Moscow, 2002), 107, 256; "Montazh u Shekspira," *Montazh,* 242–51.

of Cruelty, Elizabethan tragedy had been a model for much avant-garde theatrical endeavor. In other words, the *Ivan* trilogy does not simply represent an abandonment of Eisenstein's avant-garde past. Beginning in 1929 Aksenov had turned his focus more fully to the Elizabethan epoch, and in 1933–34 Eisenstein invited him to lecture at VGIK on the theater and dramaturgy of Shakespeare; Eisenstein proposed publishing these lectures in the appendix to his planned (but unrealized) textbook on directing.[45] One of Aksenov's several books on English drama is called *Elizavetintsy* (The Elizabethans, 1938).[46]

In most Elizabethan revenge tragedies the perpetrator whose brutal act must be avenged is a member of the avenger's own family, as is the murder victim.[47] In fact most of these plays, whose protagonists were gripped by an "overwhelming passion of revenge," feature "a tangled web of revenges."[48] As Aksenov emphasizes, Shakespeare's *Hamlet,* characteristically identified as the "apotheosis of the revenge play," involves three cases of a son taking revenge for his father's death—Fortinbras, Hamlet, and Laertes.[49] Eisenstein adopted this convention of multiple murders to be avenged in his script: the initial murder, of Ivan's mother and her lover, is at the hands of the boyar faction led by Ivan's aunt Evrosinia; in Part 1 Ivan's wife is poisoned by Evrosinia; and in Part 2 Evrosinia plots, unsuccessfully, to murder Ivan herself, as it were to keep the blood revenge theme alive. Ivan, on hearing of the plot, effects preemptive revenge on Evrosinia by dressing her simpleton son in the tsar's robes so that he is murdered in Ivan's stead, conforming to the convention of revenge plays in which the avenger uses cunning and dissembling to effect his revenge.[50] The murder of Ivan's wife is integral to making this film a revenge tragedy. But for this to occur in the film, Eisenstein had to "forget" that in historical fact Anastasia was only the first of Ivan's three wives and that she died of natural causes.[51]

Ivan does not actually know until Part 2 that it is Evrosinia who murdered Anastasia (though the viewer knows this when it occurs). In this part there is more bloodshed than in Part 1 and, though the script periodically stresses that Ivan's primary commitment is to national unity, his motives of personal revenge seem more operative in driving the plot. But

45. See the contributions of several authors including Eisenstein with "Esse ob esseiste" (311–12) in Natal'ia Adaskina, comp., and I. A. Aksenov, ed., *Iz tvorcheskogo naslediia* (Moscow, 2008), 2:295, 311 (Eisenstein), 314, 327, 335, 405–7.

46. I. A. Aksenov, *Elizavetintsy: Stat'i i perevody* (Moscow, 1938). Published posthumously in 1938 it includes some of his essays on the subject and four of his translations. As Eisenstein himself acknowledged, another source for *Ivan the Terrible* was Pushkin's play *Boris Godunov,* itself modeled on Shakespeare.

47. Katharine Eisaman Maus, "Introduction," in Maus, ed., *Four Revenge Tragedies: The Spanish Tragedy. The Revenger's Tragedy. The Revenge of Bussy D'Ambois. The Atheist's Tragedy* (Oxford, 1995), xiv–xv, xix.

48. Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy,* 73, 131.

49. I. A. Aksenov, *Gamlet i drugie opyty, v sodeistvie otechestvennoi shekspirologii . . .* (Moscow, 1930), 102–10.

50. Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy,* 72.

51. The death of Ivan's wife could also be seen as a reference to the death of Stalin's (second) wife, Nadezhda, in 1932, before the murder of Sergei Kirov and the Great Purge.

the revenge motive is already present in the scene in Part 1 in which Ivan, while mourning at his dead wife's bier and upon hearing that his best friend Kurbskii has betrayed him and fled to the enemy, decides to establish the *oprichnina.* This move could potentially be seen as a vestige of the element of revenge for villainy by a foreigner that was a convention of several Elizabethan revenge tragedies and of Thomas Kyd's *The Spanish Tragedy* (1582–1592) in particular; in these earlier tragedies, the foreigner was conventionally a Machiavellian Italian, consumed by jealousy or ambition, both of which are emphasized in Eisenstein's film as motives for Kurbskii's defection.[52]

It could, then, be argued that this trilogy turned from a glorious celebration of Ivan's achievements and potential as tsar to a tragedy when the motive of revenge drove Ivan to excess (a common trajectory in revenge tragedies).[53] In Part 1 the second murder to be avenged, that of Ivan's wife, comes immediately after the stateroom scene described above, a scene that could be seen as a high point of Ivan's reign, when he is flushed with his success in Kazan, a military campaign over the Tatars in which his engineering knowhow proved decisive; thereafter we see Ivan's descent into escalating violence. Vipper in *Ivan groznyi* also provides an analysis of Ivan's career in terms of a fall from greatness brought about by excess. He describes him as "an intelligent and talented person, a person bursting with energy but with no sense of measure," adding that Ivan "never finds a balance, a calm middle road; [he] seethes like foam; 'humility' is transformed into boundless blind trust, 'anger' into a crazed vindictiveness [*zlobu*]."[54]

Vipper also characterizes Ivan's career as a "tragedy" and elaborates that having sought to "transform semi-Asiatic Moscow into a European power, he was unable to stop in time in the face of an enemy that was growing more powerful and [so he] squandered and consigned to the abyss of extinction one of the greatest empires of world history."[55] There is a difference here, however, in that what Vipper sees as a "tragedy" is Ivan's loss of territory (Livonia), but that comes after the time covered by Eisenstein's trilogy, which was to have ended with Ivan's ostensible triumph in conquering an outlet to the Baltic. Eisenstein went beyond this theme of disastrous national reversal in structuring his plot as a revenge tragedy, thereby personalizing Ivan's historical actions. He also, as Tsivian has elaborated, updated the revenge plot to embrace the psychological theories of Otto Rank.[56]

52. Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy,* 47, 48, 68, 76, 107.

53. Maus, "Introduction," xi.

54. Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (1922), liv. In Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (1944) "sense of measure" has been replaced by *vspylchivyi* (56), and *zloba* by *chuvstva perelivaiutsia cherez krai, strast' b'et kliuchom* (58).

55. Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (1922), lv; Vipper, *Ivan groznyi* (1944), 120. Vipper in *Ivan groznyi* (1944), Vipper uses "power" (*derzhava*) rather than "empire" (*imperiia*) in the corresponding sentence in the 1922 edition, but he does refer to Ivan's enlarged state as an empire on 146.

56. Tsivian, *Ivan the Terrible,* 77–81; see also in Hakan Lovgren, *Eisenstein's Labyrinth: Aspects of a Cinematic Synthesis of the Arts* (Stockholm, 1996), esp. chaps. 3–5, a discussion of Eisenstein's use of Rank's theories about the making of the psyche from Rank's *Das Trauma der Geburt* (The Trauma of Birth, 1924).

Eisenstein's emphasis on the way irrational psychological forces drove Ivan can be compared with a passage in Eliot's essay on Hamlet in *The Sacred Wood,* a work that Eisenstein cites in his writings. Eliot remarks that, in Shakespeare's play, revenge cannot be Hamlet's sole motive for his actions and inactions but rather "that intense feeling, ecstatic or terrible, without an object or exceeding its object, is something which every person of sensibility has known."[57] The idea of an irrational, "ecstatic" excess probably appealed to an Eisenstein who had recently written about "ecstasy" in an article of 1939, describing it as a "coming out of the self."[58]

Eisenstein's trilogy culminates, not in Ivan's own death or the pile up of bodies that we see in Hamlet and was typical of the revenge genre, but in a relentless series of scenes of carnage and is, in that sense, comparable with Kyd's tragedies where, as Fredson Bowers comments, "The action is bloody and deaths are scattered throughout the play."[59] *Ivan* Part 3 was to end with the tsar left solitary and lonely; he has won his outlet to the sea, but it is a hollow victory (and as many Soviet viewers would know, this territorial gain was to be reversed later by military losses). In fact Eisenstein wanted to make Ivan's loneliness (which he associates with another warrior-potentate, Napoleon) an important theme of the film.[60] Revenge plays also feature bleak outcomes. Katharine Eisaman Maus, a scholar of revenge tragedy, characterizes their plot resolutions as "deeply pessimistic." In a formulation of possible relevance here, she remarks that in these tragedies: "The idea that revenge sets right an unjust universe is once again shown to be delusive."[61]

Despite all the carnage in *Ivan,* Stalin complained that there were not enough bodies (executions). He accused Eisenstein of making Ivan in Parts 2 and 3 into a Hamlet, in the sense of a lily-livered waverer, and said that Eisenstein did not sufficiently demonstrate why Ivan's ruthlessness was necessary.[62] In fact, Eisenstein had Hamlet in mind when he wrote the scenario, but Ivan's waverings in the film, his being tormented by doubts about his use of violence, are also in the tradition of the revenge drama.[63]

Is Eisenstein's *Ivan,* then, still to be seen as an apologia for Stalinist violence, merely presented in a more complicated and sophisticated form than many scholars have realized? That Eisenstein wanted to present an absolute one-to-one correspondence for the two epochs—the Renaissance and the Stalinist—seems doubtful, however. In an article written in late 1943 and early 1944 while working on *Ivan,* he remarks that the "material of Shakespeare's tragedies has so much become part of the in-

57. T. S. Eliot, *The Sacred Wood: Essays on Poetry and Criticism* (London, 1920), 102. The same passages are in Eliot's *Elizabethan Essays* (London, 1934), 62–63.

58. Sergei Eizenshtein, "O stroenii veshhchei," *Iskusstvo kino,* 1939, no. 6: 15.

59. Bowers, *Elizabethan Revenge Tragedy,* 172.

60. RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, d. 561, ll. 42, 132, and RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, d. 554, l. 61.

61. Maus, "Introduction," xxii, xxvii.

62. Clark and Dobrenko, eds., *Soviet Culture and Power,* 441; Perrie, *Cult of Ivan the Terrible,* 174, 176.

63. Maus, "Introduction," xxi.

ventory of 'common human passions' that it seems a-historical." People "forget completely" that his works were the "outcome" of the major "shifts in the consciousness of people of his epoch."[64] In other words, while commentators point to the many contemporary references for Ivan in this trilogy, and he can be read as standing for Stalin, and Eisenstein's father, and Eisenstein himself, he also has to be seen as a historical figure operating in a different world and with a different mindset.[65]

In his writings of these years, Eisenstein stresses that ideological norms change over time. He sees Shakespeare as illustrating "general shifts from the trends of the Middle Ages to the more humanist understanding of all aspects of life" that came in with the Renaissance.[66] In his "Grundproblem" of 1943, in commenting on the revenge tragedies of Kyd and Shakespeare, Eisenstein draws a distinction between the two. In *Hamlet* he sees a conflict between the old atavistic "thirst for revenge" as a response to insult to one's family line (*rod*) with more progressive moral principles that had begun to supersede such mores. "(At the stage where the social order is determined by blood line [*rodovogo stroia*]," he writes, "bloody revenge is a necessary and constructive principle which ensures the continuance of the line)," but, he adds later in this text:

> Like any norm, at a certain stage blood revenge [*rodovaia mest'*] loses its progressive and constructive role, becomes outdated [*izzhivaetsia*] and is replaced by other ideological norms. Almost all of Shakespeare's plays are devoted to overcoming survivals of the atavistic norms and traditions of the Middle Ages in the name of the enlightened [*svetlykh*] ideas of the new [*vstupaiushchei*] era of humanism. The entire play *Romeo and Juliet* is devoted to an exposé of the atavism of blood revenge.[67]

I find this privileging of humanism here particularly telling because of another Renaissance reference in the film that is rarely remarked on and only cryptically embedded but which is, despite its slight presence, potentially significant. In several versions of his notes for the production, Eisenstein stipulates that in the early scenes of Ivan's precoronation reign, the secretary to one of the foreign ambassadors is made to look like Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466/1469–1536) as in the Holbein portrait (figures 2 and 3).[68] Although in the trilogy there is no explicit reference to Erasmus, a trace remains in the visual referents. These include, not just the physical representation of the secretary à la Erasmus, but also the way Eisenstein, in his depictions of several characters, draws on artwork by a cluster of

64. Sergei Mikhailovich Eizenshtein, "'Pervobytnost'' v materiale i situatsii," *Metod,* 1:257, 477.

65. For the analogies between figures and events in the trilogy and in Stalin's time, see Evgeny Dobrenko, *Stalinist Cinema and the Production of History: Museum of the Revolution* (New Haven, 2008), 51–52; Perrie, *Cult of Ivan the Terrible,* 159, 160, 168–69, 173, 176–77.

66. Eizenshtein, "'Pervobytnost'' v materiale i situatsii," 1:257, 477.

67. Eizenshtein, *Metod,* 1:87, 454, 456. Ivan invokes the principle of *rodovaia krov'* in Part 2 during his conversation with his simpleton cousin, Vladimir, before the latter's murder.

68. RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, d. 572, ll. 35, 3, and RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, d. 554, l. 86.

Figure 2. Hans Holbein the Younger, *Portrait of Desiderius Erasmus of Rotterdam with Renaissance Pilaster.*

Figure 3. Film shot of the Livonian ambassador.

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artists from the northern European Renaissance, and particularly on the work of Albrecht Dürer and Holbein the Younger. Both these artists produced several portraits of Erasmus and were part of his intellectual world. Like Erasmus but on a more reduced scale, Holbein was a cosmopolitan peripatetic, working in different parts of northern Europe. He gained his entré to London high society through Erasmus's contacts, ultimately breaking in to work for the court of Henry VIII.[69]

In Eisenstein's script, by the coronation scene this "Erasmus" figure has been promoted from secretary to ambassador from Livonia, Muscovy's arch rival for its territorial ambitions. In notes made in preparation for shooting, Eisenstein stipulates that this figure have "an intelligent and cunning face."[70] In the coronation scene of the film itself, when the other ambassadors make acerbic comments about how "Europe" will never recognize Ivan as having the status of a tsar, the "Erasmus" figure responds, "If he's strong they will recognize [him]." He then proceeds to undermine Ivan's efforts at unification by conducting a clandestine propaganda campaign against Ivan that is directed at Ivan's close friend Kurbskii who is persuaded to defect to Livonia. In one shot this "Erasmus" figure is paired visually with the sinister, prowling spy, Maliuta.[71] When in Part 2 Kurbskii shows up at the court of Sigismund, the King of Poland, this ambassador, now fully a dark figure, is among those present.

Eisenstein, then, gave a negative character in the film the likeness of a great hero of humanism! One could speculate that Eisenstein chose to present a figure in the style of Holbein's portraits of Erasmus for purely aesthetic considerations, but this cannot be the whole story in that "humanism" was a banner term for the antifascist movement, with which Eisenstein was associated. Moreover, in his writings he includes Erasmus with Rabelais in his list of "the greatest masters of the centuries-long struggle of satire with the Forces of Darkness [*Mrak*]."[72]

But let us consider the qualities for which Erasmus's life is best known. Erasmus is considered the quintessential independent spirit. He moved happily from country to country, a veritable citizen of the world, residing now in France, now in Italy, now in today's Belgium, Germany, or Switzerland, eschewing family ties, honors, and institutional affiliations in the interests of intellectual freedom and independence. A giant of the Renaissance, a humanist, and a theologian, he railed against excesses of the church his entire life, even though he was ordained as a Catholic priest.

These clichéd qualities of Erasmus could have resonated with Eisen-

69. Holbein first encountered Erasmus in Basel where he did illustrations for Erasmus's famous book *In Praise of Folly,* an attack on the Catholic Church. The cluster of intellectuals in London associated with Erasmus and Holbein extends to Sir Thomas More, the author of *Utopia* (1516), who, like several of Erasmus's close associates, was executed for sticking to the Catholic faith.

70. RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, d. 554, l. 64. Later in that file Eisenstein says that the English resident is to be in Holbein's costume and "half-'Erasmus'" (86).

71. Neuberger, "Eisenstein's Cosmopolitan Kremlin," 85, 82.

72. S. M. Eizenshtein, "Charlie the Kid" (1943–44), *Izbrannye proizvedeniia v shesti tomakh,* 5:521.

stein himself (also Erasmus's possible homosexual proclivities). In the film, however, the Erasmus figure is far from independent; he is the emissary of an ambitious and antagonist state. Furthermore, with his cynical realpolitik, he seems closer to that other renowned Renaissance intellectual and opponent of Erasmus, Machiavelli, whose *The Prince* (1513) was a central text for Eisenstein in preparing his script, and whose writings appeared periodically on the horizon of Bolshevik intellectuals.[73]

In Part 1 the emissary physically resembles Erasmus but his utterances are more like those of Machiavelli. Why this disparity? An answer is suggested in Joan Neuberger's book on *Ivan* which stresses how the film trilogy features "dense networks of repeated and inverted images." She points to the many mirror images and semantic inversions in the representation of characters and to a distinct dualism that explains why one character can represent both a position or an image antithetical to Eisenstein as well as an ideal.[74]

Inasmuch as this film is in part autobiographical, one could speculate that Eisenstein has entered into a dialog within himself. In this connection it should be noted that when the Erasmus figure speaks during the coronation scene, Ivan cocks his head and looks intensely in his direction, though Ivan shows no response when the other emissaries make their pronouncements. This "intelligent" Livonian ambassador, then, is both a worthy interlocutor for Ivan, as Erasmus was in effect for Machiavelli, and a skeptic who sold out by contracting himself to a temporal power ("cunning").[75]

We could speculate that Eisenstein had Erasmus particularly in mind while working on this film because of another historical novel by a germanophone antifascist, Stefan Zweig's idealized fictionalization of his biography in *Erasmus* (1934).[76] It seems likely that Eisenstein read this book, which was available in Moscow.[77] He had met Zweig when he came to Moscow in 1928, corresponded with him, and in his writings recurrently

73. On the centrality of *The Prince* for Eisenstein, see RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, d. 561, l. 4; Neuberger, *Ivan the Terrible,* 71. On Machiavelli's importance in Bolshevik writings, see, for example, Karl Radek, "Razgovor Nikolo Makkavelli s Zh.-Zh. Russo o demokratii i diktature," *Izvestiia,* 7 November 1934.

74. Neuberger, *Ivan the Terrible,* 3, 78, 81; see also her slightly different formulations in "Eisenstein's Cosmopolitan Kremlin," 85–87, 89–91, 93.

75. Another possibility, since the emissary is given spectacles, is that he represents Lev Trotskii though those who seek counterparts in Stalinist figures generally consider that Kurbskii represents Trotskii and Fedor Kolychev Nikolai Bukharin.

76. Stefan Zweig, *Triumph und Tragik des Erasmus von Rotterdam* (Vienna, 1934); G. Lukach, "Novelly S. Tsveiga," *Literaturnoe obozrenie,* 1937, no. 8: 22–27.

77. Zweig's *Erasmus* was not published in Russian translation during the 1930s, though several of his other books were, nor was it in Eisenstein's personal library. But the Foreign Languages Library in Moscow contains a French translation from 1934, an English translation from 1934, and an edition in the original German of 1934, all three of which entered the collection in the 1930s. Also, Margarita Rudomino, the library's then director, allowed Eisenstein to take books home from their collection. Naum Kleiman, interview, Moscow, 1 July 2011. Thanks to Vladimir Skorodenko for research in the Foreign Languages Library.

discusses books by Zweig, including biographies of writers and his work on Freud.[78] In the late 1930s Zweig, then one of the most popular writers among Soviet intellectuals, still had a presence in the Soviet cultural press.[79]

Zweig was one of the most prominent opponents of nationalism and advocates of European unification, a position he had taken even before World War I. In *Erasmus* he presents his hero as an emblem of this position, "the first conscious European and cosmopolitan" whose ideal was a "Republic of Letters" facilitated in this instance, not by French as the lingua franca, as in Voltaire's Republic of Letters, but by Latin, as during the Renaissance (Zweig incidentally claims that the Holbein portrait of Erasmus, used by Eisenstein, "gives us Erasmus's quintessential being"). Zweig characterizes the antagonist of that time to the Republican ideal, here clearly with Nazi Germany in view, as "nationalism" and "terrible movements of mass intoxication." He identifies Erasmus, by contrast, as a "humanist," but Zweig defines humanism in terms not likely to be approved of by those Soviet officials who advanced "humanism" as a slogan of the Moscow-leaning antifascist movement—as a free and independent mind, which refuses to be bound by any dogma or ideology and declines to join any party. Zweig, however, links Erasmus with Rabelais as like-minded and counterposes him to Machiavelli whose book *The Prince* with its advocacy of "the ruthless exercise of power and conquest in the realm of politics" he sees as threatening Erasmus's vision of "European unity as the sublimest ideal to coming generations."[80]

One should not assume that Eisenstein had interpolated Erasmus into the film cryptically in order to covertly promote the kind of cosmopolitanism Zweig espoused. Just to deepen the complexity here, in the Soviet 1930s "humanism" was not always deemed positive. Just as there are several understandings of "cosmopolitanism," there are several "humanisms," and in the Soviet 1930s not all were favored. In Ivan Aksenov's account of the Renaissance, for example, humanism is associated with "bourgeois individualism."[81] Eisenstein's innumerable notes he jotted down in preparation for shooting *Ivan* contain very occasional statements that seem to contradict any claim that he was a cosmopolitan or a "Westernizer." For example, he once planned to include "a little about the 'cosmopolitan internationalism' of Metropolitan Pimen (it is not important to which version of a state; what is important is what it has to do with him [*svoe*])."[82]

78. For example, Sergei Mikhailovich Eizenshtein, *Memuary* (Moscow, 1997), 1: 78–85.

79. Iuliia Markovna Zhivova, interview, Moscow, 19 July 2001; Stefan Tsveig, "'Motsart' Bela Balasha," *Sovetskoe iskusstvo,* 24 August 1939 (i.e., just after the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact).

80. Stefan Zweig, *Erasmus of Rotterdam,* trans. Eden and Cedar Paul (New York, 1934), 64, 4, 8, 15, 116–17, 237, 240.

81. Aksenov, *Gamlet,* 166.

82. RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, d. 569, l. 33. Also, Eisenstein calls Kurbskii's defection to Sigismund a *zapadnii uklon* (RGALI, f. 1923, op. 1, d. 69, l. 56).

Another possible complication for claiming that Eisenstein had a cosmopolitan agenda for his *Ivan* trilogy is the fact that while evidence for his espousal of some version of it might be found in his article on Ivan the Terrible and the Renaissance as published in the first volume of his selected works, which is based on a copy in the Eisenstein archive in RGALI, the article as it appeared in *Literatura i iskusstvo* is substantially different, and in it the argument emerges as less cosmopolitan than in the RGALI version.[83] This version gives more prominence to the theme of the necessity of violence for unifying the nation.[84] The disparity could be accounted for in terms of censorship and the well-known Soviet practice whereby editors rewrote what an author had written, in Eisenstein's case, as was also common, often without his knowledge or assent.[85] But perhaps Eisenstein was himself conflicted about cosmopolitanism.

Just as Eisenstein saw "humanism" in the Renaissance as an "enlightened" orientation that progressively replaced the atavism of medieval "blood revenge," so as a Marxist and anticapitalist he could be assumed to believe that the "humanism" of the Renaissance had been superseded in the twentieth century. Like Vipper, he was committed to Russian (now Soviet) westernization but not to a free-floating "cosmopolitanism" or "humanism" that was identified with "individualism," as in Zweig, or with personal gain. Lukács in *The Historical Novel* expresses reservations about Zweig's version of cosmopolitanism and humanism. He takes exception to the way Zweig in his book on Erasmus "makes humanism and revolution into mutually exclusive opposites." "The really great traditions of European humanism were, on the contrary, always revolutionary," Lukács insists, "the struggle against fanaticism and for tolerance has always stood at the center of humanist ideology both in the Renaissance and particularly in the Enlightenment," but Erasmus in Zweig's account was much too taken by an "abstract pacifism."[86]

"Abstract pacifism" was not much use to Eisenstein at this wartime moment when the script was largely written, especially given the Nazis proclaimed policies toward Jews. The central argument of Machiavelli's *Prince* concerns the need for a ruler to be strong at all times and to focus on building up the military and being prepared for war, even if this would be to the detriment of the arts and other accoutrements of "civilization."[87] Eisenstein would not have gone so far as regards the arts. But some might want to analyze this film and such features as Ivan's establishment in Part 1 of the oprichnina as a force loyal only to him, as an illustration of the principles outlined in *The Prince,* right down to its dictum that "it is much safer to be feared than loved."[88]

At the same time, the Renaissance references in this film trilogy,

83. This article was published in *Literatura i iskusstvo,* 1942, no. 27 (4 July).

84. I am grateful to Kevin Platt for sharing his sleuthing work on this with me.

85. Naum Kleiman, interview, Moscow, 1 July 2011.

86. Lukács, *Historical Novel,* 266, 268.

87. Niccolo Machiavelli, *The Prince,* trans. Quentin Skinner (Cambridge, Eng., 1988), esp. 51–52 (chap. XIV), 89–90 (chap. XXVI).

88. Ibid., 59 (chap. XVII).

whether visual or literary, essentially open up the horizon of Russian history, placing it in a pan-European cultural space. They provide a grander context for Ivan, but potentially also a model for a more cosmopolitan purview for Soviet Russia.

In the Erasmus/Machiavelli dialog, inserted cryptically into the film, we might sense the dilemmas of Eisenstein himself as, on the one hand, a cosmopolitan deeply rooted in the European intellectual tradition and immersed in contemporary western debates and trends and, on the other, as a patriot who dreamed of Soviet intellectual hegemony even as he contemplated the fascist threat to "Europe" and looked for effective ways to combat it. He conceived the film as having a fugue form, a form which, with its theme and counterpoint, he saw as comparable with the dialectic.[89] One could see this form as having provided for Eisenstein a strategy for imbricating the cosmopolitan and the national with each other, while yet permitting both positions individual expression. In other words, to view the fugue form as a compositional dominant would help resolve the paradox with which I began this article.

89. Sergei Eisenstein, *Nonindifferent Nature: Film and the Structure of Things,* trans. Herbert Marshall (Cambridge, Eng., 1987), 324–25.