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| **Man with a Movie Camera (1929)** |
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| Together with *Berlin: Die Sinfonie der Großstadt* [*Berlin: Symphony of a City* (1927)], *Chelovek s kinoapparatom* [*Man with a Movie Camera* (1929)] is one of the best-known examples of a city symphony — a film genre that is also described as ‘city film’ or ‘city poem,’ combining elements of documentary, narrative, and experimental film. Written and directed by Dziga Vertov, the film was shot in Moscow, Kiev, and Odessa, and depicts modern urban life throughout a single day. Focusing on the icons of urban modernity (industry, motorized traffic, anonymous masses, shop windows, mass entertainment), the film evokes rhythms of metropolitan life by through experimental techniques including fast editing, split screens, fast motion, jump cuts, freeze frames, multiple exposures, and stop-motion animation. Vertov included elements of avant-garde self-reflection, and featured images of the film’s production. Specifically, the film features an omnipresent cameraman shooting the film, a woman editing it, the film operator screening it, and spectators watching it. Taking the pulse of the city and quite literally translating it into the rhythm of cinema, Vertov’s meta-film makes explicit the connection between film spectatorship and the stimulus-response mechanisms said to be produced by metropolitan modernity. |
| Further reading:  Graf, Alexander. ‘Berlin – Moscow: On the Montage Aesthetic in the City Symphony Films of the 1920s.’ *Avant-Garde Film*. Eds. Graf, Alexander., and Dietrich Scheunemann. Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007. 77-92.  Tsivian, Yuri., ed. *Lines of Resistance: Dziga Vertov and the Twenties*. Pordenone: Il Giornate del Cinema Muto, 2004.  Turvey, Malcolm. ‘City Symphony and *Man with a Movie Camera*.’ *The Filming of Modern Life: European Avant-Garde Film of the 1920s*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011. 135-62. |