Article

History of Media Studies

Film as a Dream of the Modern Man: Interpretation of Susanne Langer's "Note on the Film"

Tereza Hadravová

Charles University, Tereza.Hadravova@ff.cuni.cz

Tereza Hadravová, "Film as a Dream of the Modern Man: Interpretation of Susanne Langer's 'Note on the Film'," History of Media Studies 5 (2025), https://doi.org/10.32376/d895a0ea.38a6f049.

Abstract

The paper concerns a "Note on the Film," a short appendix to *Feeling and Form* by Susanne K. Langer. The interpretation interweaves the Note into a larger context of Langer's philosophical work—primarily in terms of her understanding of the dream as a lower symbolic form, to which the film is compared—as well as in terms of her account of literary arts among which, she suggests, cinema belongs. Langer's references to Sergei Eisenstein are discussed, and their respective concepts of cinema are compared. An implicit political dimension of Langer's writing on film is emphasized by relating her critique of modern civilization, as sketched in the last chapter of *Philosophy in a New Key*, to her film aesthetics. At the end of the paper, I compare my interpretation of the Note with the one that was offered by Trisha Curran.

In the short "Note on the Film," published as an Appendix to her book *Feeling and Form*,[1] Susanne Langer extensively refers to the writings of Sergei Eisenstein, who was three years her junior. In Eisenstein's ideas, she recognizes a similarity to her own understanding of the symbolic nature of art and, specifically, to what she calls a dream-like character of motion pictures. The detected affinity—strengthened by an unusual lack of distance and direct criticism from Langer[2]—may seem surprising since, at first sight, the differences prevail. While Eisenstein famously promoted montage as the key element of film language, Langer's interest in the art of film concentrates on the work of camera. Moreover, Eisenstein's film work is hardly separable from its political context, whereas for Langer film —as every art—is an autonomous sphere. The aim of this essay is to find out how close relation between Langer and Eisenstein one can sustain and where do their respective lines of thought potentially intersect.

[1] Langer, *Feeling and Form*, Appendix.

[2] In her books, Langer often extensively quotes and interprets sources coming from various fields, including logic, philosophy, biology, and neuroscience; her writing style is dialogic. Rather than to corroborate her own view, she, however, usually looks for inadequacies and inaccuracies in the ideas of her dialogic partners.

The idea that a human being is essentially a symbolic creature, which Langer articulates throughout her earlier book *Philosophy in a New Key*,[3] has far-reaching consequences, one of them being a claim that the arts—as an intentional and self-conscious symbol-making activity—possess the power to deeply change the world one lives in. The idea that humans can be transformed through the arts also deeply resonates with Sergei Eisenstein's artistic aspirations and commitments.

[3] Langer, *Philosophy in a New Key*, originally published in 1942. Hereafter referred to as *PNK* with page number(s).

Although Langer's philosophical work is, if not completely apolitical, then far less so than Eisenstein's famous revolutionary manifestos —such as *Strike* (1925) or *Battleship Potemkin* (1926); one can register a tone of uneasiness at the modern society in her writing. She considers society dangerously out of balance due to what represents its greatest achievement—the highly sophisticated use of symbols. The childhood of mankind, which she locates in myth, rite, and dream, is gone, but the victory of reason, however successful in terms of power and knowledge, is likely to be short-lived, as humanity, bereft of dreams, would eventually lose the ability to think creatively. I will argue that the worry about the state of contemporary society that Susanne Langer outlined in the final chapter of *Philosophy in a New Key* is, in a way, revisited in the appendix to *Feeling and Form*, where a remedy to the modern malaise is found.

In what follows, I first introduce some of the themes Langer develops in *Philosophy in a New Key*; especially those related to dreaming as a lower symbolic form. I introduce the distinction between sign-perception and symbol-perception and outline Langer's critique of modern civilization as lacking resources for symbol-perception. In the second part of the paper, I try to unpack the, rather inchoate,

"Note on the Film"—a short essay of barely twenty paragraphs—in which Langer alludes to similarities between the experience of film and that of dreaming. Similarly to Langer I then, in the third part, use Eisenstein's writings as a mirror of her own approach. However, unlike her, I also look at some aspects of Eisenstein's thought that she has left unaddressed; I am interested in similarities as well as differences between them. In the last part of the paper, I get back to her critique of modernity and pose film as one of the means of making the modern humans dream again. Finally, I compare my interpretation of Langer's Note with the first (and only) systematic study of Langer's film aesthetics by Trisha Curran.

I.

A significant part of the *Philosophy in a New Key* is devoted to vindicating the idea of the primitivity of symbolization. The human mind has a "profoundly symbolific character" (*PNK*, 127) and, unavoidably, resorts to a "perceiving as" mode as its basis. Humans in Langer's understanding must relate things, abstract forms, and perceive connections. There is no primitive, animal-like stage; reality gives itself as a layered network of connections from the very beginning even prior to language, in either a phylogenetic or ontogenetic sense. There are no "sense-data," no primary materials out of which the edification of human knowledge can be built and raised. At the beginning of the human mind there are, rather, "pure" symbols—synthetic and integral repositories of an open set of potential meanings. Rather than referring to a concrete entity in the world, their role consists in marking certain configurations as meaningful.

One of the simplest possible, thoroughly private materializations of what Langer calls a "symbolic instinct" is found in dreaming. This is how she describes the experience of dreaming:

> In our most primitive presentations—the metaphorical imagery of dreams—it is the symbols, not its meaning, that seems to command our emotions. We do not know it as a symbol. In dream-experience we very often find some fairly commonplace object—a tree, a fish, a pointed head, a staircase—fraught with intense value or inspiring the greatest terror. We cannot tell what makes the thing so important. It simply seems to be so in the dream. (*PNK*, 131)

The perceptual experience encountered in dreams is thus purely symbolic; the objects perceived in dreams are embodied values. This is what makes dreams so closely related to ritualistic and superstitious relationships with the world; they all belong to what Langer calls "the lower forms of symbolistic thinking" (*PNK*, 114) for which it is characteristic that the things one encounters are, so to speak,

enhanced with a radiating meaningfulness. While superstition and ritual are ways of perceiving the world typically associated with "primitive societies," dreaming seems to be the last available form of lower symbolistic thinking for people living in a modern, technologically advanced, disenchanted civilization, where the only faith that endures is "blind faith in the conquest of nature through science."[4]

In the real, waking life of modern humans, the perceptual experience known from dreams occurs less frequently, although, as Langer notes, there are certain objects that do commonly induce it, such as a cross or a ship (*PNK*, 239–40). While dream-perception is replete with symbols, ordinary perceptual experience is merged with what Langer calls sign-perception. "Signs," as defined by Langer, refer to signals or stimuli and, in the context of perception, can be understood as reaction prompts.[5] This is even more emphasized in the perception of modern humans, whose thinking is almost purely instrumental.

With some approximation, we can thus draw a continuum between "sign-perception" and "symbol-perception." Pure sign-perception is considered by Langer mainly in relation to animals, which, in her views, are capable of thinking in these fairly limited ways; that is, within a short horizon of immediate affordances and dangers. Symbol-perception, on the other hand, is a uniquely human way of understanding the world. Dreams represent symbol-perception at its extreme (or, more precisely, one form of it), while everyday practically oriented perception lies closer to the sign pole of the continuum, though it is not equivalent to it.[6]

Before proceeding, one more conceptual clarification is necessary. In Langer's terminology, there are two main types of symbolism that encompass all forms of human mental activity (from dreaming and believing, to perceiving, thinking, and creating art): presentational and discursive symbolism. This is one of the key conceptual distinctions she introduces; however, for reasons of space, it cannot be properly discussed in this paper.[7] Suffice it to say that while discursive symbolism, with its discrete elements and composite structure, is tailored "to describe the external, physical and empirically observable world;" presentational symbolism, with its synthetical nature, participates in formulation of experience and thus contributes to its development.[8] The most refined form of discursive symbolism is found in the sciences, while the arts, according to Langer, embody presentational symbolism at its best.

For Langer, it is of utmost importance to argue that both types of symbolism, that is discursive and presentational, are equal in their epistemological status, and a good society acknowledges that. She claims that the arts are on the same footing with the sciences when it comes to what should be considered knowledge. However,

[4] This is how Langer and her co-author characterize an intellectual atmosphere of the United States before the Second World War: "This unreflecting mood of what one can only call 'worldly faith'—blind faith in the conquest of nature through science—was even more marked in America than Europe ... partly because we had no established philosophical tradition to hold the balance against so much practical activity." And they continue: "The blind faith in science has ended in disillusion and no faith at all. ... [H]owever great [nation's] scientific achievements, the greatest are always for purposes of destruction." Susanne Langer and Eugene T. Gadol, "The Deepening Mind: A Half-Century of American Philosophy," *American Quarterly* 2, no. 2 (Summer 1950): 118–32. Quoted from Chaplin, *The Philosophy of Susanne Langer*, 22.

[5] I find the idea that perception is predominantly sign-perception strikingly similar to J. J. Gibson's concept of perception in terms of what he calls "affordances." See Gibson, "The Theory of Affordances." For more on difference of signs and symbols, see Chaplin, "Langer's Logic of Signs and Symbols."

[6] As Langer says: "If we have a literal conception of a house, we cannot merely think of a house, but *know one when we see it*; for a sensory sign stimulating practical action also answers to the image with which we think" (PNK, 225). See Chaplin, *Philosophy of Susanne Langer*, 179.

[7] An excellent discussion of discursive and non-discursive symbolisms can be found in *Ibid.*, 167–73.

[8] In this sense, presentational symbolism is "foundational to the development of the mind." *Ibid.*, 170. More on formulative role of symbols in *ibid.*, 173–79.

equality in importance does not mean that they do not, in practice, compete for their status in society. An ideal society, so to speak, would hold both symbolisms as equal and help them to flourish with equal care. The society Langer lived in, however, was far from this ideal; it was marked by the acute dominance of discursive symbolism over presentational.[9]

Both discursive and presentational symbolisms are primarily composed of symbols, not signs. Thus science, which is the most elaborated form of discursive symbolism, would not have been possible if humanity's interest in the world had been limited to its practical dimension, searching in nature only for "signs for behavior." Science is not, according to Langer, born from a practical need but rather from "the restless desire of an ever-imaginative mind to exploit the possibilities of the factual world as a field for constructive thought" (*PNK*, 229). It emerged from symbol-perception, rather than sign-perception.

However, once science matured, the symbolic character and purely intellectual orientation of it were corrupted by the technical progress it had, almost coincidentally, brought about. This observation is elaborated, and its consequences are pursued, in the final chapter of *Philosophy in a New Key* titled "The Fabric of Meaning." In the modern age, the symbols of science are increasingly treated as signs, albeit highly complex ones; only their practical dimension is sought after. This conception of science, along with its dominance over presentational symbolism, has infiltrated all forms of human mental engagement with the world. The ever-growing web of practically oriented knowledge and the supremacy of discursive symbolism have created a dangerous imbalance in the mental life of society—with severe consequences. To repeat, it is not simply the growth of scientific knowledge per se that Langer regards with suspicion but rather a certain attitude toward knowledge; a specific, highly instrumentalized conception of knowledge.

The original source of all knowledge, that is the ability to perceive connections and understand the reality as charged with meanings, has dried out. The modern human, "that mighty and rather terrible figure" (*PNK*, 232), becomes an unimportant part of their own system of facts and truths. "All old symbols are gone, and thousands of average lives offer no new materials to a creative imagination" (*PNK*, 245), Langer complains.

> Most men never see the goods they produce, but stand by a traveling band and turn a million identical passing screws or close a million identical passing wrappers in a succession of hours, days, years. This sort of activity is too poor, too empty, for even the most ingenious mind to invest it with symbolic content. ... Most people have no home

[9] The opposite disequilibrium, seen in societies that prioritize presentational symbolism at the expense of discursive symbolism, is characteristic of "primitive societies." Langer is careful not to look down at these societies; in her analysis, hers is similarly flawed, though suffering from the opposite problem (*PNK*, 131).

> that is a symbol of their childhood. ... Many no longer know the language that was once their mother-tongue. (*PNK*, 245)

Since its reality has been stripped of symbols, such a society, Langer argues, becomes liable to yield to cheap mysticism, nationalism, and propaganda. She suggestively describes the loss of orientation in a world of neutral facts and the anxiety as its natural follow-up. The *loose, half-baked ideas* that modern humans often find so seductive are a poor replacement for a world replete with symbols, which would offer them a safe repository for their experience. The modern man, so to speak, is a human without dreams.

II.

Film, as Susanne Langer states in the appendix to *Feeling and Form* titled "A Note on the Film," is derived from a dream. This is not the first time she connects dreaming with the creation of expressive symbolic forms. In the previously published *Philosophy in a New Key*, the dream was characterized as providing material from which two distinct traditions emerged. One tradition resulting in supernatural narratives, such as fairy-tales or ghost stories, fills the public imagination with fragments that can be used to satisfy private fantasies of a wide scope. The other, which can be called myth, transforms private material into a realm that is ultimately inaccessible from a solely private perspective. Both myth and fairy-tale thus use the same symbolic material—the primitive symbolism of human dreams—yet they build distinct worlds. On the one hand, there is the world built from private, though commonly shared, fantasies; on the other, there is the world that transcends the individual and situates one within the perspective of a non-human subject (*PNK*, Chapter 7).

The relationship between cinema and dreaming that Langer highlights in the Note is, however, different. Dreaming does not provide cinema with material in the sense of content; it is not a repository of images and structures of relationships available to filmmakers. What makes film close to a dream is its mode of presentation, which is dream-like. This claim needs to be understood against the backdrop of the theory of art developed in *Feeling and Form*.

According to Langer, film is one of the poetic arts. In the book to which the "Note on the Film" is appended, she distinguishes two basic poetic arts: literature and drama. As poetic arts, they share what she calls the primary illusion—a virtual life—but, as different types of poetic arts, they approach virtual life from different perspectives. Whereas narrative (that is, fiction or literature) is essentially related to the past—the experience has a past character—drama presents its events in a future-oriented way; everything happening or occurring

on stage is directed toward the future, carrying an air of the destiny. Drama and literature may thus share the same characters, setting, and plot, i.e., have essentially same narrative content; however, the content takes on quite different features in each. In the former case, the narrated events have a past character; even if set in the narrative present, they are understood as consequences of the past, and the past itself is what the narration is about, so to speak. In drama, on the other hand, the mode of presentation gives the events a prescient character; they contain signs of the events yet to come; the focal point of drama thus resides in the future.

When Langer says that the film has a dream-like character, she refers to the sense of the present encountered in a dream. There is no sense of the past, no sense of the future; one is entirely in the here and now. Recall her description of the experience of dreaming mentioned earlier: one is immersed in a world, which is thoroughly meaningful, yet it does not refer to any specific meaning. Commonplace objects are, as she says, "fraught with intense value or inspiring the greatest terror," but these emotions are not related to any past or future (un)happiness or a threat—we do not fear these objects because of what they have caused or might cause. "It is the symbol, not its meaning, that seems to command our emotions" (*PNK*, 131). In a film, one may encounter the same content as in a piece of drama or literature, but the film art form makes it seen anew: without a relation to the past, without a relation to the future. The focal point of the film, what the film *is about*, is the present.

As a consequence, film presents objects, as Langer puts it, as "equidistant" from the eye. This is somewhat difficult to understand since, first, the camera, can of course present things in detail or in full frame as being literally more or less proximate to the viewer. Moreover, there are necessarily internal narrative emphases in the story of a film—some characters have leading roles while others function as supporting actors; some objects serve as significant props, while others take up only a circumstantial part of the *mise-en-scène*. Thus, both literally and metaphorically, some elements of a film are closer to the eye, while others are further away, located at the periphery of vision or on the horizon. How then can the claim about the equidistant character of the objects presented in film be taken seriously?

In Langer's understanding of cinema, however, no roles are minor, and no part of the diegetic world is accidental. By saying that film presents its objects as equidistant from the eye, Langer means that each and every part of the work is, potentially, meaningful—there are no insignificant elements. Everything is interconnected, necessarily and meaningfully present, and open to analysis. Films, like dreams, are thus replete with symbols.

The film experience is similar to the dream experience; in both, commonplace objects are "fraught with intense value and inspiring the greatest terror" (*PNK*, 131). The film offers modern humans a tool to carry out the symbolic function that the world they live in no longer sustains. In the context of modern society, the ability to enrich the lived present by a virtual dimension might be an especially valuable contribution of the cinematic work of art.

III.

In the middle of the Note, Langer turns to Sergei Eisenstein. The common ground they share lies in their understanding of the nature of the film image. Although based on pictorial representations, film is essentially pictureless, as Eisenstein puts it (and Langer affirms); the film image is "objectively unrepresentable—a new idea, a new conception, a new image."[10] It has the power to "assimilate the most diverse materials, and transform them into non-pictorial elements."[11]

This idea is, once again, difficult to grasp since it seems obvious that films are composed of individual frames and these, literally, are depictions, that is, images. However, what Eisenstein makes clear in his writing is that what he, as a director, attempts at creating—via individual frames and their juxtapositions—is an image without picture; an impossible image, so to speak: an image of thought. Such an image, as he says, is a "psychological representation,"[12] existing only in the mind of the spectator. And that is what the film as an art form is built of; its basic structural element is, in Langer's vocabulary, "virtual." It transcends its original material; it "hovers," as she says with Eisenstein, "in the mind of the spectator."[13]

Eisenstein would thus also agree with Langer's categorization of film under the heading of the poetic arts. In spite of the fact that the literal material of film is an image, and the primary sense modality used in its reception is sight, film does not belong to the visual arts. The art form that lies closest to film, according to Eisenstein, is poetry. The structure of cinema, in its compressed form, is well exemplified by haiku—which Eisenstein even claims is more cinematic than the Japanese cinema of his time.

All the mentioned similarities in their thinking about cinema notwithstanding, Langer and Eisenstein ultimately have different foci. Langer is not interested in particular films but rather in the deep structure of film as an art form—in its virtual dimension. Her claim that the world represented by film is dream-like does not pertain to individual films and cannot be used to evaluate them as more or less cinematic (as Eisenstein did when he, ironically, glossed over Japanese cinema as less cinematic than Japanese haiku). Cinema,

[10] Eisenstein, *The Film Sense*, 8. In a later essay, while speaking about hieroglyphs, which Eisenstein compares to the basic structural principle of the film image, he says: "By the combination of two 'depictables' is achieved the representation of something that is graphically undepictable." Eisenstein, *Film Form*, 30.

[11] Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 414. Interestingly, just several paragraphs before the quoted sentence, she uses similar wording with slight variations, saying that cinema "seems to be omnivorous, able to assimilate the most diverse materials and turn them into elements of its own"; see *ibid.*, 412.

[12] Eisenstein, *Film Form*, 32.

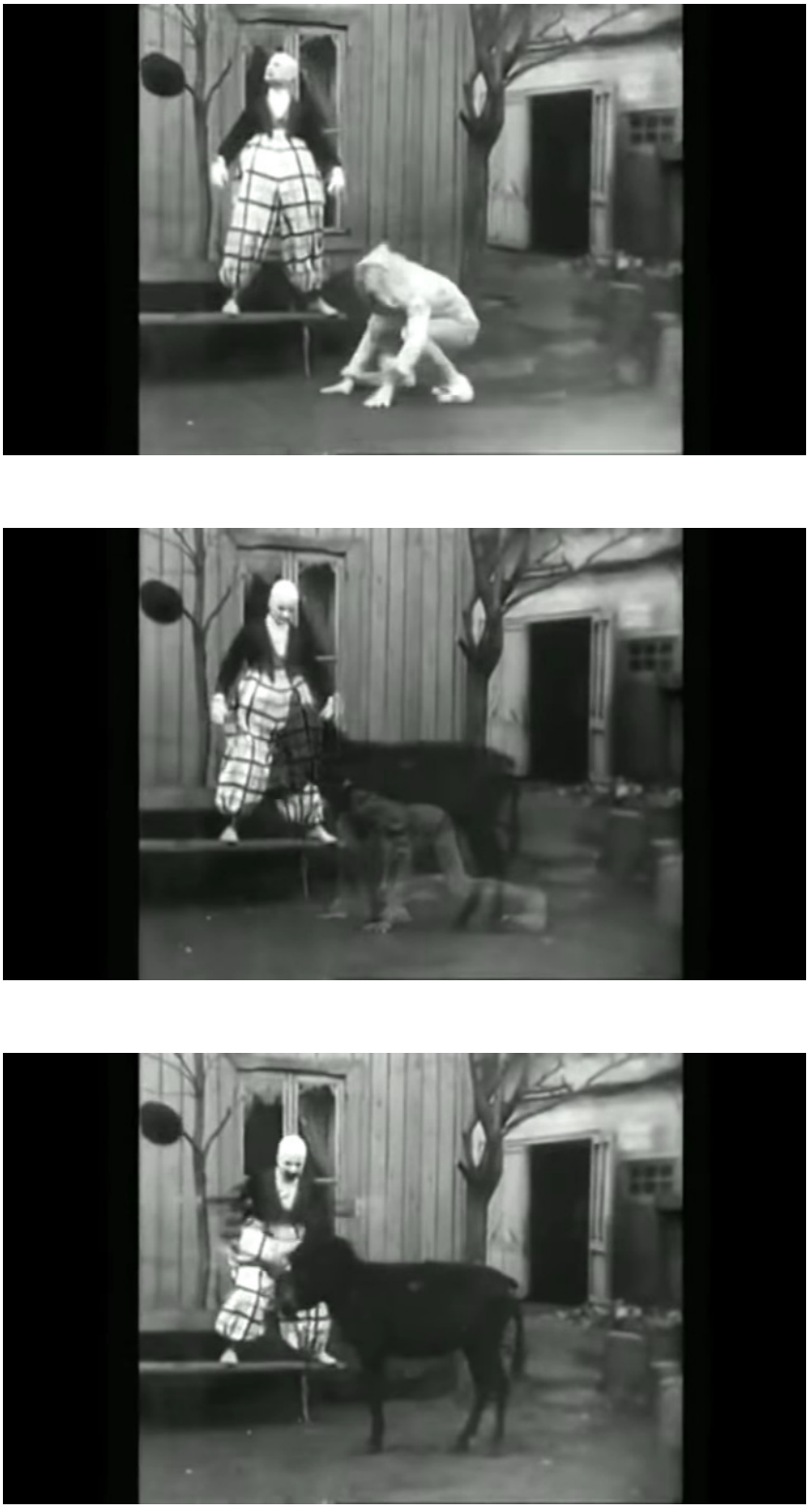
[13] Langer, *Feeling and Form*, 414.

in its virtual form, represents an egocentric materialization of the symbolic instinct, which, in actual films, can be developed in various ways.

What is even more striking is that Langer does not mention montage, despite it being both the main subject of Eisenstein's essay she quotes and the key cinematographic element in his view. Instead, as she declares at the outset of the Note, it is camera movement that she regards as the fundamental cinematographic principle. How could we approach montage in a Langerian way?

In both his films and writing, Eisenstein pursues a specific development of the dream-like material Langer identifies in cinema. I would like to argue that the elaboration Eisenstein offers in his films encompasses both forms mentioned earlier in the context of Langer's description of a dream as material for another symbolic form. Dream, Langer suggests in the seventh chapter of *Philosophy in a New Key*, can evolve into supernatural narratives, such as fairy-tales, which aim at satisfying private fantasies, as well as into myths, which are saturated with impersonal or even cosmological values. In Eisenstein's film work, particularly in his use of montage, one can encounter both types of dream development.

In the former case, Eisenstein uses film montage to materialize *private* fantasies. The best example can be found in his first film fragment, *Glumov's Diary* (screened as a part of his theatre production of Ostrovskij's play *Enough Stupidity in Every Wise Man*). In this work, montage is used to represent—literally objectify—the secret objects of one's dreams. The power of film, which Eisenstein satirically comments on in the fragment, is to give one what he or she desires.



Stills from *Glumov's Diary* (Wikimedia Commons)

In most of his films, however, Eisenstein uses montage in the opposite way; its main power consists in precisely *not* giving one what they want. The spectator is instead prompted to fill in the missing part. This, Eisenstein believes, can help viewers to move beyond their personal perspective and focus on the meaning instead—entering the world of ideas. Using Langer's terminology, the kind of dreaming Eisenstein orchestrates in most of his films aims to construct a myth rather than to offer a satisfying image of a fantasy we happen to share.

IV.

The main thread of this paper went from the final chapter of *Philosophy in a New Key* to the appendix of *Feeling and Form*. The crisis of modernity that Langer described almost eighty years ago was, in her analysis, characterized by the dominance of one symbolic activity over the other—discursive symbolism over presentational symbolism. I argued that, for Langer, the arts—and the art of film in particular—may be understood as playing a crucial role in revitalizing non-discursive thinking and thereby restoring balance to the distorted mental life of society.

In my reading of the "Note on the Film," I emphasized two related ideas: first, Langer's claim that cinema is like a dream, and second, her categorization of film under the heading of poetic arts. Looking back at her description of the dream experience in *Philosophy in a New Key*, I argued that the mode of experience familiar from dreaming is related to the lower symbolic forms that human thought assumed in "primitive" societies. I called this mode "symbol-perception" and contrasted it with "sign-perception," a purely instrumental "survival" mode that Langer associates with animal behavior.

Film, Langer further claims in the Note, is one of the poetic arts. This assertion makes film an important addition to the two poetic arts Langer explores in greater depth in her book: the art of literature, which is characteristic by past-oriented narration, and the art of drama, whose narration is future-oriented. Film is, so to speak, the missing third, as its characteristic dream-like mode of presentation roots one in the present; "[T]he dream mode in an endless now."[14] I suggested that symbol-perception (as opposed to sign-perception) is similarly present-oriented in its understanding the experienced world as meaningful without assigning it any concrete meaning.

[14] *Ibid.*, 415.

In the final chapter of *Philosophy in a New Key*, Langer describes her contemporary society in terms of crisis. This crisis can be analyzed in two steps: First, science, as the most refined form of discursive symbolism, has not only become the predominant epistemic

relationship to the world but has also absorbed an instrumental orientation focused on effective, powerful, and profitable engagement with the world. Second, this conception of knowledge as instrumentalized science, materialized in technology, has eventually infiltrated all mental attitudes that humans adopt toward the world and toward themselves. As a consequence, the opportunities for symbol-perception, as well as the very capacity for it, have been weakened.

I argued that Langer's analysis of moving pictures as a "dreamed reality" on the screen, which can "move forward and backward because it is really an eternal and ubiquitous virtual present,"[15] makes film a particularly fitting tool for an initiation and preservation of symbol-perception in modern humans. It is important to note that this is not Langer's explicit claim; she does not revisit her critique of modern civilization, outlined in 1942, when discussing what she, somewhat surprisingly, called "a new art" eleven years later. Her only suggestion in this context lies in her alluding to Sergei Eisenstein, who famously used his film to modify and invigorate the thoughts of spectators. I argued, nevertheless, that there are more differences than similarities between their respective views of cinema.

[15] *Ibid.*

Finally, let me compare my interpretation of the Note to the only work on Langer's inchoate conception of cinema known to me: *A New Note on the Film* by Trisha Curran. Although my claim that film is an apt means of making modern humans dream again can be criticized as too far-fetched and ultimately unverifiable, it seems to have one clear advantage: my interpretation remains more faithful to Langer's "Note on the Film" than Curran's thorough reconstruction of Langerian film aesthetics.

In the book, Curran argues against Langer's claim that cinematic mode of presentation is the same as the one known from dreams:

> Film images bear as little relation to dream images as stream of consciousness writing bears to stream of consciousness mental activity. Our dreams are no more Citizen Kane than our idle thought processes are Mrs. Dalloway. But our dreams are ours. We possess them, and we analyze them. The films we view are separate from us. We go to a film. Our subconscious is not in control, thus we view things we would never dream; our inner censor is free to concede to the Motion Picture Association.[16]

[16] Curran, *A New Note on the Film*, 31.

Although seemingly convincing, this critique, in my view, is based on a false presupposition. Curran conceives of the dream as a private affair, whose material is subject to psychoanalysis. For Langer, however, the dream is a lower symbolic form, characteristic of a specific perceptual, emotional, and cognitive engagement with the world. I emphasized that the analogy between dreams and films Langer suggested pertains not to the content of dreams but to their form.

"She had seen far too few films," Curran explains in her *New Note*: "Thus her observation that 'the immediacy of everything in a dream is the same for film'." And, Curran continues, "nor did [Langer] comprehend the nature of filmic space."[17] Finally, Curran argues that film is not a poetic art at all, as Langer suggested, but rather a cinematic art. In essence, nearly all of Langer's claims about film are dismissed one by one. Curran's aim was to write a *new* note on film and for that, I suppose, she felt it necessary first to discard the old one.

[17] *Ibid.*

Contrary to Trisha Curran, my intention in this paper is not to write a new note on film to replace the old one but rather to flesh it out and reinvigorate it using the resources available within Langer's philosophical work.

Acknowledgments

The first version of the paper was written for the occasion of the International Philosophy of Culture Week, which took place in Warsaw in June 2019. I would like to thank the organizers—Randall Auxier, Przemysław Bursztyka, Eli Kramer and Marcin Rychter—for organizing this inspiring encounter of scholars, and one of the speakers at the event, Adrienne Dengerink Chaplin, whose deep acquaintance with Susanne Langer's philosophy I was happy to benefit from during personal conversations. Her newly published book *The Philosophy of Susanne Langer. Embodied Meaning in Logic, Art and Feeling* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020) would have been much more present in this essay, if I had chance to read it earlier than in the last stage of writing this paper. I am also grateful to the anonymous referees for *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* for their valuable comments and suggestions. My work on revising the paper for its republication was supported by the Czech Science Foundation (GAČR) under the project "Susanne K. Langer: Cognitive Aesthetics" (GA25-17273S).

Bibliography

Chaplin, Adrienne Dengerink. *The Philosophy of Susanne Langer: Embodied Meaning in Logic, Art and Feeling*. London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2020. https://doi.org/10.5040/9781350030565.

Chaplin, Adrienne Dengerink. "Langer's Logic of Signs and Symbols: Its Sources and Applications." *Eidos. A Journal for Philosophy of Culture* 3, no. 4 (2019): 44–54. https://doi.org/10.14394/eidos.jpc.2019.0041.

Curran, Trisha. *A New Note on the Film: A Theory of Film Criticism Derived from Susanne K. Langer's Philosophy of Art.* New York:

Arno Press, 1980.
Eisenstein, Sergei. *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory*. Edited and translated by Jay Leyda. New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1949.
Eisenstein, Sergei. *The Film Sense.* Edited and translated by Jay Leyda. New York: Meridian Books, 1957.
Gibson, James Jerome. "The Theory of Affordances." In *Perceiving, Acting, and Knowing: Toward an Ecological Psychology*, edited by Robert Shaw and John Bransford, 67–82. Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.
Langer, Susanne K. *Feeling and Form.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.
Langer, Susanne K. *Philosophy in a New Key: A Study in Symbolism of Reason, Art, and Rite*. New York and Toronto: New American Library, 1954.