EMPTY THREATS:

THE COLLISION OF AESTHETIC, INDUSTRIAL, AND REVOLUTIONARY

IMPERATIVES IN MONTAGE

by

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Acknowledgements

In the spirit of this project, it would be nice to be able to encapsulate my graduate school experience into a tautly edited, poignant montage. It would serve as the transitional sequence from the moment I entered USC's School of Cinematic Arts until now, midnight the night before I have to upload. I would gaze wistfully at the camera in an emotional recollection of the past several years. Unfortunately, how do you condense an inordinate amount of living into such a small amount of screen time? The Soviet version would mimic Eisenstein's plate-breaking scene except I would destroy a pear against a tree. The Vorkapich version would be an artistic tour de force featuring lots of subjective shots of me procrastinating and then writing furiously. At some point, I would fall asleep and awake as the fourth Fury, wreaking vengeance on all word processors. The Siegel version would be a travel/sports montage mash-up with lots of trips to New York and mother-daughter tennis wins interspersed throughout. The music video version would either be directed by Hype Williams and look exactly like the beginning of Belly (sans DMX but with the a cappella version of "Back to Life") or it would be directed by Brian De Palma (sans Tony Montana but with Manny Ribera and "Push It to the Limit"). The problem with these versions is that only life fully lived can adequately express the seemingly inconsequential moments, which defined and shaped this dissertation. It feels utterly impossible to squeeze a large amount of gratitude into mere words but I think it is at least worth a try.

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Introduction:
Montage as Practice and Metaphor of Visuality

Good morning, daddy!
Ain't you heard
The boogie-woogie rumble
Of a dream deferred?[1]

Introduction

In "Dream Boogie," from the poem suite *Montage of a Dream Deferred*, Langston Hughes takes the reader on a tour of Harlem. Hughes deftly weaves a vibrant narrative informed by be-bop, boogie-woogie, and jazz about the city and its inhabitants. In *Montage of a Dream Deferred*, Hughes juxtaposes disparate images of children at play, lovers making and breaking up, and the rhythm of the city throughout the day. The poem "Movies" highlights the cynicism with which Hughes viewed Hollywood as he writes "(Hollywood laughs at me, black — so I laugh back.)"[2] Despite labeling Hollywood "a crocodile art," Hughes borrowed the cinematic device of montage to cut quickly from one scene of Harlem life to the next. The brief glimpses of Harlem afforded in poems including "Juke Box Love Song," "New Yorkers," "Not a Movie," "Dead In There," and "Island," all combine to present a lyrical picture of black life around 1951. Montage provided Hughes with a structure for reflecting on mid-century black culture. The parade of the Elks Club, the ballad of the landlord demanding rent, and the late night jam sessions at Minton's "(ancient altar of Thelonious),"[3] are all happening "between two rivers, north of the park."[4] However, Hughes interaction with montage wasn't just formed in movie palaces in New York; almost two decades earlier, Hughes was hired by the Soviet-German film studio, Mezhrabpom, to write a film about the status of African-Americans in the United States.[5] Although the project fell through, in September 1932, Hughes spent four months traversing the Soviet Union and eventually published a recollection of his travels, *A Negro Looks at Soviet Central Asia*, which compared cotton farming of Soviet Central Asia to the American South. As an *Amerikanski Negrochanski tovarishi* (American Negro comrade), Hughes spent a good deal of time interacting with artists, musicians, and writers of Central Asia and presumably encountered Soviet montage films such as Vsevolod Pudovkin's *The End of St. Petersburg* (1927) and *Storm Over Asia* (1928) both made at Mezhrabpom studios. Familiar with montage in a Soviet and American context, Hughes compresses the spaces of Harlem into one holistic depiction of a city in opposition to the rest of the country.

By the time *Montage of a Dream Deferred* was published, montage in the American industrial context had already been codified into an efficient narrative device. Montages were fast-paced, impressionistic flashes tasked with condensing time and space. The interludes were characterized by quick cuts and multiple exposures capable of conveying a panoramic effect. This differed from the general definition of montage, which in French means to mount, to put together. The French used montage to refer to editing in general, where montage denoted the physical description of mounting images one after another or one on top of another. Alternatively, Soviet filmmakers and theorists developed their specific idea of montage around the intellectual effects of juxtaposing different images. Across film history, montage has taken on different forms in different contexts. What remains the same across contexts is how important montage is in terms of understanding visual culture. In my dissertation, I adopt a dossier approach and focus on a few case studies to expose the continuities and disjuncture between them. This structure is designed to echo montage itself, by placing disparate montage moments next to each other. Ultimately, I argue montage is one of the most important visual forms for how we understand the contemporary media landscape.

Part of the power of montage is derived from its ability to juxtapose incommensurate images. Either through placing the images next to each other or through double exposure, which forces one object to penetrate the other. To juxtapose is "to place or deal with close together for contrasting effect."[6] Stemming from the combination of the Latin word *juxta* meaning "next" and the French word *poser* meaning "to place," hence literally to place next to. That naughty little x in the middle of juxtapose even evokes the placing of two contrasting ideas, words, or images on top of or next to each other. As in montage, the placement of dissimilar ideas side by side highlights the differences between them and brings out their aesthetic, narrative, and intellectual possibilities. Like the poet collocating words to achieve the greatest possible effect, we must attune ourselves to the power of juxtaposition. When Emily Dickinson writes "How public — like a Frog" in "I'm Nobody! Who are you?" she juxtaposes "How public" with "like a Frog" to throw into startling contrast her desire for spiritual privacy.[7] Dickinson constructs a speaker content to contemplate life as a "nobody" and asks the reader to imagine how terrible life would be as a "somebody" croaking all "the livelong June." Dickinson's poem strikes a chord because its distinction between nobodies and somebodies is pertinent to the individuals discussed throughout my dissertation. In the first chapter on Soviet Montage, I discuss the Soviet avant-

garde's relationship to montage. Within this context, a certain amount of recognition had tragic consequences, as even those who contributed most effectively to the Stalin Cult would eventually be executed in Butovo prison.[8] The second and third chapters examine in detail how the parameters of American montage were set within the American industrial context, which revolves around "nobodies" entering the Hollywood star-making factory with the express purpose of becoming "somebodies." The final chapter considers how the success of music video propagated a montage aesthetic beyond television and the consequences of the democratization of montage through access to new media.

My study and understanding of montage's distinct history as a form and style demonstrates how montage informs apriori conditions of viewing. How do we parse what is important to us when we are inundated with images? The increasingly visual nature of our contemporary culture is made possible by the plethora of screens that surround us. Montage reflects the way we view images today. The interplay of screens — movie theaters, televisions, computers, ipads, mobile phones, and handheld devices — results in a discordant juxtaposition of images that intrinsically mimics montage. How we consume media is a balance between push and pull technologies and we are constantly faced with situations where both occur at the same time. Think about the distracted viewer watching television, surfing the Internet, and checking the phone possibly on one device simultaneously! Navigating the screens of personal devices and televisions in the home as well as screens in public spaces such as airports, grocery stores, restaurants, and bars affords glimpses of imagery often without context. Constantly catching sight of multiple screens, even multiple open windows on your computer, can produce startlingly discordant imagery. Our experience is analogous to montage. It is the quotidian experience of observing images and making sense of them. At times, seemingly unrelated imagery sparks a moment of clarity and coherence.

Spectral Connections Inform Montage's Early History

In the prologue to *Lipstick Traces*, Greil Marcus reconsiders the definition of history. Marcus asks, "Is history simply a matter of events that leave behind those things that can be weighed and measured - new institutions, new maps, new rulers, new winners and losers - or is it also the result of moments that seem to leave nothing behind, nothing but the mystery of spectral connections between people long separated by place and time, but somehow speaking the same

language?"[9] One of the spectral connections guiding Marcus is Elvis Costello's excitement over the Sex Pistols proclaiming "fuck" on television in 1976 and Walter Mehring's poem "What is DADAyama?," both of which reference train platforms and blood pressure. For Marcus, "the happenstance of specific words in common is an accident, but it might suggest a real affinity."[10] In *Lipstick Traces*, Costello and Mehring link the Sex Pistols, dada, and the Situationist International movement and represent two men "looking for words to make disruption precious."[11] Trains, spectral connections, and rebellion in film and television inform the following pages as well. By juxtaposing disparate cultural moments, Marcus urges the reader to contemplate historical affinities that occur across time and space. Like Marcus, I position dissimilar cultural moments side by side to highlight the correspondences between them and our contemporary media landscape. One similarity I examine is artists "creating images to make disruption precious" through the use of montage as a form and style. Haunting each montage moment is a flicker of transgression, which oscillates from a profound uneasiness with authority to a sly disregard to the systems they were embedded within. Each chapter lays out montage as intrinsically threatening. One of the threats embodied by montage is its ability to expose tensions — between art and industry, meaning and style, narrative and spectacle. Montage always exists within certain technological and production conditions, which determine, in part, how and why montage is deployed.

Despite the prevalence of montage in film and television today, there was a time when the aesthetic was conceived of and theorized as revolutionary. At its inception, montage was associated with artists working to uphold the ideals of the Russian Revolution of 1917. Artists used the radical form of montage to challenge the conventions of domestic and international "bourgeoisie" cinema. Classical Hollywood was adept at cannibalizing the style of foreign cinemas and the 1920s and 1930s saw the incorporation of elements from German Expressionism and Soviet montage. Discussing montage as a style and form within the American industrial system requires situating montage within the context of Soviet Russia after the October Revolution. If montage was a superhero and we were tracing its genealogy, the Soviet situation would form the basis of its origin story. Admittedly, Eisenstein formulated his sense of montage out of the work of Charles Dickens and D.W. Griffith. In the unforgettable opening lines of *A Tale of Two Cities*, Dickens writes "It was the best of times, it was the worst of times…" introducing his two themes of fate and death through parallelism, repetition used for rhetorical

effect. Throughout his work, Dickens used parallelism to contrast opposing themes. This repetition of a grammatical structure for emphasis and to compare oppositional elements is akin to the juxtaposition of disparate images within montage. Additionally, Dickens qualifies as the patron saint of montage because it's possible to draw a line from Dickens to D. W. Griffith to the Soviets.

As in a comic book superhero myth, the origins of montage in Russia in the 1920s highlight a captivating tale of individuals in pursuit of noble, artistic goals in a morally complicated time. The Soviet artists were shaped by and committed to the new revolutionary state. For Soviet filmmakers and theorists, montage covered a multiplicity of ideas beyond the simple act of joining two strips of film. Primarily, they were invested in what happened intellectually, conceptually, and emotionally when images were juxtaposed. In contrast to film as entertainment, the Soviets saw film as a powerful method of mass propaganda. Soviet filmmakers set out to convey social ideas through the emotionally effective use of film form. The question they hoped to answer was how could film best spread the Revolutionary message. Simultaneously, tensions arose between the individual as artist and the state propaganda machine. As Soviet avant-garde artists experimented with form and the creation of a new visual language, they came into conflict with the tightly controlled artistic production of Socialist Realism.

An examination of Soviet montage helps distinguish montage in its American industrial context. The role of art immediately after the Russian Revolution raises some interesting analogies for the present condition of viewing media, albeit in a very different sociopolitical context. Artists in the aftermath of the Russian Revolution embraced political iconography in order to perpetuate the ideals of the Revolution. The goal was to reach a mass audience and the best way to execute this was to transform everyday spaces. Suddenly, the city was conceptualized as performer, stage, and audience. Soviet artists enthusiastically invented ways for ensuring their ideological public art would be encountered by the populace. Political posters in defense of the Bolshevik Revolution decorated the windows of the Russian Telegraph Agency offices throughout the country. Posters pasted on walls captured the spirit of Futurist poet and artist Vladimir Mayakovsky, who wrote, "Art must be everywhere — on the streets, in trams, in factories, in workshops, in workers' apartments."[12] And not just a small dedicated group of viewers seeking to understand their new world through avant-garde art but the mainstream, the

masses. Agitprop trains delivered film and posters to the countryside beyond the confines of the city. The artist Gustav Klutsis imagined "agitational stands,"[13] which he conceived of as "pop-up" avant-garde theater. "Klutsis believed that to install these constructions outdoors, to activate their cinematic and verbal information, and to have them interact with people on the street would produce a new model of street theater."[14] Klutsis, like other artists at the time, hoped people would come upon the interplay of text and image and engage with them at an intellectual level. In these examples of Russian montage posters and films, what is analogous to contemporary media is the accessibility of the images, their intended interactivity, and their mythic propagandism. We live in a media-saturated society defined by these very same themes. Instead of wrestling with the progression from Bolshevism to totalitarianism, the American condition is firmly entrenched in capitalism.

Slavko Vorkapich and Don Siegel are compelling case studies because their time in the studios dovetails with Hollywood's Classical Period from 1929-1945. The trajectory of their two careers underlines how montage fit into an industry wrestling with the arrival of sound film, the enforcement of the Production Code, the Great Depression, and the repercussions of World War II. During the Classical Period, genre emerged as a formative influence on the production and consumption of film texts, but montage transcended genre. Vorkapich is responsible for shaping Hollywood's adoption of montage as an aesthetic and narrative device. Working at various studios throughout the 1930s, Vorkapich established the parameters of American montage, informed and influenced by the legacy of German Expressionism and Soviet montage. Even as Vorkapich brought montage into the American industrial system of classical Hollywood, his work was often viewed as a threat to be contained, absorbed, "narrativized." As Vorkapich established the parameters of montage, tensions arose. Tensions flared over power, personnel, recognition, and style. Fundamentally, montage posed a threat to the narrative as it drew attention to its process with a succession of rapid cuts. Walter Murch, the editor of *Godfather II* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1974) and *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1979), acknowledges there is a great deal of work that goes into a cut in editing, even when its designed to go unobserved. He writes, "A vast amount of preparation, really, to arrive at the innocuously brief moment of decisive action: the cut – the moment of transition from one shot to the next – something that, appropriately enough, should look almost self-evidently simple and effortless, if it is even noticed at all."[15] In contrast to transparent editing, montage cutting stands out as rapid-

fire and jarring despite classical Hollywood efforts to make montage interludes fit seamlessly with the continuity editing of the surrounding narrative. The montage elevates the viewer out of the diegesis and into the realm of the poetic, simultaneously suggesting the collaboration inherent within filmmaking, while foregrounding the montage director as artist.

Vorkapich's work throughout the 1930s at Paramount, RKO, and MGM made montage forceful and visible as a form. As David E. James notes in *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles*, "it was as the creator of montage sequences in Hollywood films that he became so celebrated during the 1930s that 'Vorkapich' became a common industry film script notation to indicate their presence."[16] Usually, "Vorkapich shot" in a script would designate a highly stylized sequence conveying the condensed impression of an event. To classical Hollywood film historians, montages of the 1930s are synonymous with Vorkapich and within the canon of film studies; he is often credited with introducing Hollywood to montage. Richard Maltby in *Hollywood Cinema* contends Vorkapich's montages "were as close as Hollywood came to a stylistic imitation of Eisenstein."[17] Like Eisenstein, Vorkapich's legacy is linked with the avant-garde and his montage work and film, *The Life and Death of 9413: A Hollywood Extra* (1928), are anthologized on avant-garde DVDs such as *Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film 1894 – 1941*. Bruce Posner on the *Unseen Cinema* compilation introduces clips of Vorkapich's film work from 1928 to 1937 with, "Émigré Slavko Vorkapich landed in Hollywood awe-inspired by D.W. Griffith, Rex Ingram, and Chaplin and proceeded to create a stellar montage-editing style which relied upon hyper-kinetic visual stimulation. His groundbreaking work remains influential, and he is acknowledged as America's first dual practitioner and theoretician of motion pictures."[18] As a B player within Hollywood, the details of Vorkapich's contributions have been somewhat obscured. This is partly because Vorkapich preferred lecturing (later teaching at cross-town rivals UCLA and USC) to writing, and because Vorkapich was considered an editor in an environment that prized first producers and later directors as auteurs.

A reliance on auteurism as the measure of greatness is reflected in Posner's description of Vorkapich's process in the commentary for *Unseen Cinema*. Posner declares, "Vorkapich had complete creative freedom in writing, designing, directing and editing his montage sequences for feature films, his work was often reduced to its bones in the released productions."[19] This quote implies Vorkapich, the auteur, was stifled by the working conditions of the studio system and

firmly places him within the tradition of an American avant-garde at odds with Hollywood. James, however, situates Vorkapich in the larger context of other artists working in the interstices of the industry. Vorkapich was operating outside of the industry when he made *The Life and Death of 9413* with Robert Florey and Gregg Toland, however; all three hoped to use the film as a "calling-card" within the industry. Once Vorkapich started working within the studios, he remained marginalized, fighting for credit for his work. Vorkapich's highly stylized sequences epitomize the exhilaration of modernist filmic experimenting, yet they often sit uneasily with the larger realistic narrative. For example, the interludes for *What Price Hollywood?* (George Cukor, 1932) revisit the theme of callous fame elucidated in *The Life and Death of 9413 — A Hollywood Extra* as they outline Mary Evans (Constance Bennett's) rise and fall from stardom. The combination of celestial superimposition and abstract patterns in Vorkapich's interludes exemplifies his efforts to insert avant-garde techniques into the prose of film narrative. During his time in the studios, Vorkapich established the parameters of American montage in an industrial setting and even ushered in a short period where montage directors were tenuously accepted as part of the production process. However, Vorkapich's work, by virtue of its difference in a studio system that prized transparent editing, was doomed to controversy.

One reason Vorkapich appreciated montage was because, through the juxtaposition of incommensurate ideas, he could transcend the literal meanings of two shots to create poetic images. Vorkapich preached this to Don Siegel in 1939 at a prophetic meeting on the MGM lot as Vorkapich neared the end of his career within Hollywood. The two men serve as counterpoints to each other as the different trajectories of their careers highlight how montage was finally absorbed into the production process. While Vorkapich's montages drew attention to themselves, Siegel's were designed to fit seamlessly with the narrative surrounding them. Coincidentally, Vorkapich and Siegel left Europe, Vorkapich from Paris and Siegel from London, to make their way by ship to the United States. Both men ascribe a mythic quality to their journeys, which saw them working their way across the Atlantic Ocean in lieu of buying a ticket. Vorkapich boarded the *Il'de France* in August 1920 and accepted the job of a waiter turned deck cleaner.[20] His arrival in New York in 1920 with a scant thirteen dollars in his pockets was a clean break from Europe and he went so far as to write in his diary, "All threads of bad luck have been torn."[21] Notwithstanding a complete lack of musical proficiency, Siegel crossed the Atlantic as a drummer on an ocean liner. Siegel landed in Los Angeles in 1934,

penniless, but with a family connection to Warner Bros. that would serve him well. In contrast to Vorkapich's association with the American avant-garde, Siegel represents a figure more firmly entrenched in Hollywood's studio system. His films, including *Riot in Cell Block 11* (1954), *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* (1956), *Flaming Star* (1960), *The Killers* (1964), *Dirty Harry* (1971) and *Charley Varrick* (1973), are all quintessential American popular culture. Although Siegel eventually made a name for himself as a director, his early career at Warner Bros. was defined by his ascension through the ranks of the Special Effects Department culminating in Warner Bros. first Montage Director. Although Hollywood embraced Vorkapich for a time, his "foreignness" stood out against the jingoism of the buildup to World War II. In contrast, Siegel's time in England only added a sheen of aristocracy to his "Americanness." Siegel loved ping-pong and tennis and his competitive spirit fostered a desire to distinguish himself from his peers in Special Effects, but he also understood how to be a team player and pay his dues. Whereas Vorkapich butted heads with the system, Siegel accepted the constraints in order to leverage himself as a capable and efficient director.

Siegel's desire to be a director of "Class A" photoplays informed his choices as he worked his way up from an assistant in the stock shot film library to a First Assistant Director in the Special Effects Department. When Byron "Bun" Haskin, the head of the Special Effects Department, suggested Siegel meet with the legendary Vorkapich to learn how to make a montage, Siegel seized the opportunity. Siegel was ambitious and quickly recognized montage would afford him more power on the lot. In his autobiography, Siegel described his meeting with "Vorky," who clearly made an impression. Siegel writes, "Slavko Vorkapich looked like a montage slightly tilted."[22] Siegel recounts Vorkapich's description of a montage and its importance to the viewer,

> Montage literally means the placing of one picture on to another. Eisenstein used it as a form of editing: taut, precise, sometimes a matter of frames. Generally, it gets over a lapse of time. But when one considers that montage is the single section of film that gives the audience credit for creative intelligence, the importance of montage transcends the mundane film as a whole. The use of symbolism stirs the imagination of the viewer. One can show the invisible or intangible by means of visible impressions. The whole film can be made more vivid and given more pace by the proper use of montage technique.[23]

Siegel viewed the meeting with Vorkapich as prophetic because it opened his eyes to the possibilities of montage. In Siegel's recollection, Vorkapich's advice covers active viewership, tempo, rhythm, symbolism, and enhanced visual capacities achievable through montage. Siegel returned elated to Warner Bros. laden with lined paper for sketching out montage sequences "borrowed" from Vorkapich.[24] As a director of montages, Siegel would achieve success in editing and shooting short sequences, work with top actors and actresses, and garner the notice of studio head, Jack Warner. In contrast to the film's editor, whose chief responsibility was the first complete assembly of the film, Siegel directed and cut together montages unsure of how the interludes would be integrated into the film. The extent to which the producer, director, or studio head was involved in the editing process varied depending on the film in question. Invested in emphasizing the contributions of the montage department within the studio, Siegel successfully leveraged montage to achieve the formation of a montage department under his control and eventually, his dream of directing.

Following Hollywood's adoption during the 1920s of a Fordist model of industrialization predicated on a specialization of labor, there was a tightening in the division between creative and technical workers. Both Vorkapich and Siegel blurred these boundaries. Whereas Vorkapich operated primarily as a one-man show, Siegel used montage as a pretext for the development of a dedicated department under his supervision. Vorkapich's montage work represents the aesthetics of German Expressionism and Soviet montage while Siegel's work draws on Vorkapich but tries to fit seamlessly with the surrounding narrative. Siegel saw in montage an opportunity for more responsibility and power within the studio system. Ambitious and self-assured, Siegel carved out a niche at Warner Bros. conscientious of how producing consistently professional work on a shoestring budget would enable his transition from Special Effects to directing Class A photoplays. Siegel thrived at Warner Bros. because he strove to match the style of the film's director. Ironically, Siegel gained recognition and attention because of his desire to fit in with the picture as a whole! Even so, his montages don't always fit seamlessly into the finished product. The interludes for *Knute Rockne* (Lloyd Bacon, 1940), for example, creatively captured the excitement and athletic prowess of the Notre Dame football team with quick edits that stand apart from the pace of the film. Before the reliance on instant replays and instantaneous cutting in sport broadcasting, Siegel's sporting montages in *Knute Rockne* and *Gentleman Jim* (Raul

Walsh, 1942) are distinctive for their lithe energy. Through the depiction of multiple points of view, they capture the intensity of football and boxing.

While Vorkapich's interludes are most often associated with the avant-garde, today, Siegel's montage work is overshadowed by his directorial efforts, which continue to make their mark on popular culture. On July 21, 2012, Cinespia featured *Invasion of the Body Snatchers* at the Hollywood Forever Cemetery sparking the debate over whether Kevin McCarthy screaming "You're next" is more frightening than escaping the Hollywood Forever parking lot. In retrospect, the brief interaction between Vorkapich and Siegel encapsulates a collision of the avant-garde with the studio system. Vorkapich established the stylistic and symbolic virtues of montage but fell out of favor with Hollywood. In contrast, Siegel antagonized the gatekeepers into letting him direct and continued to draw on the techniques of montage to enhance his work. While Vorkapich theorized montage's importance in establishing filmic specificity, Siegel's evolving role at Warner Bros. establishes montage use in the industrial setting as an efficient stylistic and narrative device. The industrial context that defines classical Hollywood, its specialization and departmentalization of labor, offered Siegel a space to flourish in his own department and represents the inclusion of montage as a separate department. Contrary to invisible editing, montage's disjunctive cuts could disorient the viewer. Vorkapich and Siegel were kept in check by the threat of ending up on the cutting room floor. Jack Oakie alludes to the myth of careers destroyed with one snip of the editor's scissors when he advises, "Boys, never cut a cutter." For these two montage specialists, seeing their work abbreviated or excised was a real possibility. Ultimately, if they assembled a sequence that was too radical, it ran the risk of exclusion from the film at the hands of the editor or producer in charge of the final assembly. Slavko Vorkapich's "Battle of Vitoria" sequence from *The Firefly* (1937), for example, appears in the film in an abridged version. Vorkapich's work and theory, in its embrace of avant-garde traditions, helped distinguish him internationally as the seminal auteur of classical Hollywood montage.

However, Don Siegel's experience working on montages from 1936 to 1945 provides a framework for highlighting how quickly the montage department became an indispensable aspect of the Warner Bros. production process. In classical Hollywood cinema, "the burgeoning studio system swelled with specialists and departments for each facet of moviemaking."[25] At the three big studios, churning out fifty-two pictures a year, work was done around the clock and

"editors were subdivided into A and B editors (for A and B feature films), with assistants, apprentices, and separate departments for sound, music, and montage sequences."[26] Assigning authorship to a montage sequence is a complex matter. Stylistically, the montages are distinguished from the surrounding film; yet it is hard to know where one person's contributions begin or end. This is partly attributable to the goal of invisible editing strived for in most classical Hollywood films, thus, editing is less tangible than the impact made by other departments. Additionally, the daily mechanisms of the montage departments at MGM and Warner Bros. have been partially obscured by history. Without focusing on Inter-Office Communications, production records, and Warner Club Newsletters, the accomplishments of the Warner Bros. montage department would fall through the cracks. Delving into Siegel's montage work necessitates its juxtaposition with the sociopolitical milieu at Warner Bros. in the late 1930s and early 1940s. In Edward Dmytryk's anecdotal *On Film Editing: An Introduction to the Art of Film Construction*, the director outlines the principles of film editing and devotes a chapter to montage. In "Where It All Began – The Montage," Dmytryk describes the two basic types of montage as Hollywood montage and European montage. Of the two machines used for editing during the classical era, a Moviola or a flatbed, the Moviola was favored by Hollywood, although Dmytryk preferred a combination of the two.[27] For Dmytryk, European montage found its greatest expression in the work of the Russian filmmakers of the 1920s who used "straight cuts to develop story, situation, and character."[28] He sees this style of montage as exemplified by the Odessa steps sequence from *Battleship Potemkin* (Sergei Eisenstein, 1925).

In contrast, the Hollywood montage is "almost invariably a transition. It too is composed of a number of silent cuts, often in a series of dissolves, and always musically underscored, but there its similarity to its foreign cousin ends. It is, in truth, simply a more complicated, and often more pretentious, version of a straight dissolve."[29] In describing Hollywood montages as transitions, Dmytryk is talking about elapses in time and space. For example, time passing as the seasons change, depicted through shots of a tree in winter, spring, summer and fall. Or, traversing across the nation, which is encompassed in successive shots of monuments of the East Coast giving way to vistas of the West Coast. These are instances where the montage is constructed primarily through dissolves and embodies Dmytryk's suggestion, "In complex clusters, such as the Hollywood montage, the dissolve is the filmmaker's 'time machine,' transporting the viewer instantly backward or forward in time or location at his will."[30] Like Dr.

Who with his telephone booth TARDIS, Vorkapich and Siegel transcended time and space in many of the montages they created for the studios. In addition to the Hollywood montage as time machine, Vorkapich and Siegel, recognized the powerful way montage could convey the subconscious. Incorporating the aesthetics of Surrealism and German Expressionism, Hollywood montages brought to life Freud's analysis of the unconscious. Dmytryk points out how Hollywood montages were used "as a means of exposing a character's unspoken thoughts or to pictorialize his subconscious experiences, as in dreams or nightmares. Such montages are really moving collages, and their effectiveness depends in great part on the creativeness and dramatic skill of the editor."[31] Drawing on the legacy of Surrealism, both Vorkapich and Siegel's montage work often explores the unconscious life of the characters.

Accessible, Interactive, Mythic Describes Montage's Later History

Vorkapich and Siegel's experiences within the studios are echoed in the career trajectories of music video auteurs of the 1980s and 1990s. Although these men and women were working outside of the studios, they saw the possibilities for career enhancement inherent in music video montage. Siegel's ambitious, rebellious attitude made it possible for him to transcend the studio hierarchy. Similarly, the enterprising men and women involved in producing music videos recognized an opportunity to establish a reputation for themselves first outside of the confines of the industry and later within. Many of the individuals, besides the musicians themselves, who first got involved with music videos, were fresh out of film or art school and eager to try their hand at directing and editing. The final chapter of my dissertation examines how music television freed montage from the constraints of a larger diegesis and promulgated the form on television and beyond. Elaborated in this chapter are several canonical moments in the evolution of music television as analyzed through the lens of iconic music video montages of the past thirty years. While montage in the classical era was often corseted by the realist narrative, music videos foregrounded montage for montage's sake. Music television was the perfect medium to appropriate and unleash montage. Like other channels struggling to find a niche in the nascent cable universe, MTV wanted to captivate distracted viewers. Specifically, MTV's earliest broadcasts were a continuous flow of short, kinetic, visually arresting sequences set to music designed to attract twelve to thirty-four year olds.[32] MTV even opened its broadcast with a montage of appropriated public domain footage of the Apollo 11 moon landing

superimposed with MTV's changing logo on the flag. The montage encapsulated the channel claim to rebelliousness and occupation of unchartered television territory.

In retrospect, the success of music television seems preordained. However, an analysis of the debate over the nature and economic viability of music television suggests the medium's subsequent success was far from inevitable. For example, without the proliferation of personal recording devices and cable, the form would not have developed as it did. In examining the relations between montage, pop music, and television, I privilege certain case studies because they occurred during periods of technological innovation, market restructuring, and challenges to traditional representational practices. By investigating a number of discrete moments associated with the public's most formative experiences with televisual montage, it is possible to highlight how the consequences of the interactions resonated beyond the culture industries. Just two months after launching MTV in 1981, the executives imitated radio station listener contests and promoted a write-in contest called *One-Night Stand with Journey*.[33] Even beyond the Journey contest, MTV's appeal was designed to be interactive and brand the channel as rebellious and irreverent. The goal was to make the channel attractive to a youth demographic and to this end, MTV regularly featured New Wave bands and other new acts that radio stations oriented around rock albums avoided. Within music television, montage as an aesthetic defined musicians' audiovisual presence and opened up theoretical questions about subjectivity and power, active versus passive viewership, postmodernism, spectacle, and stardom. Displaying a prescient cable strategy predicated on award shows, MTV's launch of its annual Video Music Awards in 1984 emphasized music video auteurs. Like the Ouroboros, MTV bestowed Moonmen and simultaneously auteur status on musicians and directors who were featured on MTV, thus reinforcing the channel's astronomical eminence. Oftentimes, these music video auteurs, both musicians and directors, blurred the rigid boundaries surrounding race, gender, and sexuality. Music videos increased the musician's aura through densely packed imagery, which was fast-paced, colorful, exuberant, and edgy. The musicians, who had always seemed so far away, as just voices on the radio, were suddenly, intimately present in the viewer's home in all their audiovisual glory.

What initially felt like a teenage rebellion had to struggle from its inception against co-optation by business interests. The collision of art and commerce has been relevant since the debut of MTV and its early programming choices, which merged music video and art video in an

unruly fashion. For example, performance artist Laurie Anderson's *O Superman*, with its stylized close-ups and silhouetted puppet hands set to Anderson's voice distorted by a vocoder, was played in between more mainstream videos.[34] As the decade wore on, only a very fine line divided the branding and selling of pop star and product. Until this line was completely obliterated by Lady Gaga and Beyoncé in the Jonas Akerlund directed *Telephone*. This grandiose, confused nine-minute advertisement includes a myriad of product placement (Virgin Mobile, HP Envy 15 Beats laptop, Monster headphones, Polaroid, and the "Plenty of Fish" dating website) with a variety of product shout-outs (Diet Coke can curlers, Chanel, Wonder Bread, and Miracle Whip). As the basis of MTV's domination in the 1980s and 1990s, music videos were connected with youth rebelliousness but mobilized in the service of selling products to audiences and audiences to advertisers globally. Thus, music video montages underscore the tension between artistic production and capitalism. The two are not mutually exclusive; often the most ingenious mechanics merge with vibrant creativity and emanate from a collective effort inside a factory with a disunified artistic vision. Music television has always had corporate ties; however, the best music videos retained some of the revolutionary elements of past audiovisual experiments in their demonstration of the vitality, playfulness, and visceral nature of youth culture. This culture could not be ignored and MTV came to represent the convergence of music, technology, digital culture, and cultural pastiche. One of the main reasons viewers are drawn to music video montages is because of their distillation of imagery. The quick succession of images captured viewer attention by forcing them to make sense of the gaps between images. This density of imagery was thrilling and supported repeat viewings. Music television, by popularizing montages extricated from a surrounding narrative, disseminated a montage aesthetic beyond television.

Conclusion

Writing in *American Cinematographer* in 1972, Slavko Vorkapich discussed his frustration with writing about the visual medium of film. He remarked, "Books on poetry can quote, books on painting can show reproductions, books on music can illustrate with musical notation, but we have no cinematic notation that we could feed into our private computers."[35] While Vorkapich envisioned a day when Super 8 reels of illustrative clips would accompany every book on film, his dream of "cinematic notation" accessible online has arrived. Traditional

media outlets are completely intertwined with the computer and hand-held devices. Today's mechanisms of consumption encompass film, television, YouTube, Hulu, Netflix, and Google. Previously established "push technologies" of television and film are married to newer "pull technologies," where the audience searches for content online. User selected online viewing and DVR technology supports time-shifted consumption of media. At the forefront of this shift were music videos, which have shifted from content "pushed" to the viewer by music television to clips "pulled" by the user from Internet sites like YouTube, VEVO, Vimeo, and Stereogum. As evidenced by Psy's *Gangnam Style* and Ylvis' *The Fox (What Does the Fox say?)*, music videos are often at the epicenter of viral Internet memes. Along with content, advertisements are deployed across digital and traditional platforms. Traversing contemporary media culture, the viewer is inundated with imagery designed to maximize exposure and interactivity, including inescapable advertisements waging an all-out audiovisual assault across multiple platforms. In an increasingly conglomerated media landscape, buying, spending, and accumulating is framed as an economic imperative to viewers imagined as consumer-citizens.

The consumer-citizens of today are no different than the audiences of Hollywood's Classical Period. Just as the montages between 1929 and 1945 provided a lens for understanding visual culture, the proliferation of "cinematic notation" across a variety of media screens today makes it imperative to discuss montage. Vorkapich, who saw himself as called upon to express in a short sequence an idea, event, or mood as graphically and excitingly as possible, hoped to correct the misconception of montages as merely "footage saving devices."[36] Vorkapich preached to Siegel how montage informed filmmaking in its entirety because, "Like a good Montage sequence, a picture should have: Rhythm, Tempo, Movement, visual change and imagery."[37] He insisted audiences responded to all these elements in early Westerns, slapstick comedies, and spectacle films thus, these audiences were "montage subconscious."[38] During the 1930s, montage operated as a modernist intervention into the realist narratives of classical Hollywood cinema. The montages conflicted stylistically with the surrounding narratives and, while superfluous, they could just as easily dispense with the rest of the film. Vorkapich's transitional sequences for *The Conquerors* (William A. Wellman, 1932) efficiently convey the reversals of the Standish family and their banking empire. Vorkapich encapsulated decades of economic change metaphorically through the depiction of mountains of money, stacks of toppling coins, and other visual cues. Just as montage condensed time and space into a few

seconds of screen time, new technologies of travel and communication were shrinking a sense of the world. Eventually, new media technologies and the ease with which media crossed global boundaries resonated in montage's later renaissance as a postmodern malleable form exploding onto television and the Internet. Rather than restrict montage with a corset pulled taut by a film's larger narrative, cable television and the Internet freed the interludes, making montage the focus rather than a transitional device. The result was the music video montage, a perfect form for emphasizing tensions around race, sexuality, and class while obliterating the boundaries between advertising and art.

Similar to the way Russian artists transformed their physical spaces with art and propaganda, an explosion of screens, and windows embedded within screens, changes the way we encounter art and advertising. Comparable to the Soviets, who designed montage editing to elicit an intellectual response, the interplay of various screens engenders an intellectual response as well. Examining montage across decades and through various case studies, I contend that an archaic form that took shape in the 1920s and 1930s remains the most important tool in understanding our contemporary visual culture. Montage is both an artistic practice and a metaphor for understanding our interactions with media, which forces viewers to synthesize fragments of information, oftentimes wildly unconnected, to make sense of the world around them. This process of synthesis is akin to reading *Montage of a Dream Deferred* and constructing a picture of the vitality and strength suffusing the inhabitants of mid-century Harlem. As Langston Hughes describes in "Night Funeral In Harlem," the fragments sometimes coalesce to reveal the collision of the prosaic and the sacred in everyday life. Juxtaposing the practical, financial side of a funeral, the money needed for the hearse, coffin, preacher, and flowers, against the inviolable grief for the boy who died, Hughes writes,

> "That boy that they was mournin'
> Was so dear, so dear
> To them folks that brought the flowers,
> To that girl who paid the preacher man—
> It was all their tears that made
> That poor boy's
> Funeral grand."[39]

This poem elevates the reader out of the diegesis and into the realm of the sublime. As a form, montage exposes tensions and raises questions about how those tensions are resolved. In order to fully grasp the contemporary media landscape, I believe we have to delve into the ways we are still "montage subconscious" and wrestle with how montage is our artistic way of life.

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[1] Langston Hughes, "Dream Boogie," *Langston Hughes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 169.

[2] Hughes, "Movies," *Langston Hughes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 182.

[3] Hughes, "Neon Signs," *Langston Hughes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 184.

[4] Hughes, "Island," *Langston Hughes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 243.

[5] David Chioni Moore, "Langston Hughes in Central Asia," *Steppe: A Central Asian Panorama*, Issue 2 (Summer 2007), accessed September 29, 2013, http://steppemagazine.com/articles /langston-hughes-in-central-asia. See Figures for a photo of Langston Hughes in Soviet Central Asia.

[6] *Oxford English Dictionary*, 2nd ed., s.v. "juxtapose."

[7] Helen Vendler, *Poems, Poets, Poetry: An Introduction and Anthology*, (New York, Bedford Books of St. Martin's Press, 1997), 191-92.

[8] David King, *Russian Revolutionary Posters: From Civil War to Socialist Realism, From Bolshevism to the end of Stalin* (London: Tate Publishing, 2012). Gustav Klutsis was charged with belonging to a fascist Latvian group and arrested, tortured, and shot along with sixty-three other Latvian artists and intellectuals killed on the same day.

[9] Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 4.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Vladimir Mayakovsky, "Shrine or Factory?" in *Soviet Commercial Design of the Twenties*, ed. trans. Mikhail Anikst (New York: Abbeville Press, 1987), 15.

[13] Margarita Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina: Photography and Montage After Constructivism* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2009), 21. See Figures for one of Gustav Klutsis' agitational stands.

[14] Ibid., 20.

[15] Walter Murch, *In the Blink of an Eye: A Perspective on Film Editing* (Los Angeles: Silman-James Press, 2001) 4.

[16] David James. *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 72.

[17] Richard Maltby, *Hollywood Cinema*, 2nd ed. (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2003), 498.

[18] Bruce Posner, "Commentaries," Disc 3, *Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film 1894-1941* (Los Angeles, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005) DVD.

[19] Ibid.

[20] Slavko Vorkapich, *Slavko Vorkapich: O Pravom Filmu = On True Cinema*, trans. Marko Babac (Beograd: Fakultet dramskih umetnosti, 1998), 19.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Don Siegel, *A Don Siegel Film: An Autobiography* (New York: Faber & Faber, 1996), 56.

[23] Ibid., 57.

[24] Ibid., 56. In his autobiography, Don Siegel uses the word "stole" to describe his appropriation of lined paper from Slavko Vorkapich.

[25] Gabriella Oldham, *First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 3.

[26] Ibid.

[27] Edward Dmytryk, *On Film Editing: An Introduction to the Art of Film Construction* (London: Focal Press, 1984), 20. Dmytryk writes, "cutters who use the flatbed are more inclined to cut straight across, which leads to a 'stop and start' technique and sloppiness… However, in the final stages of editing, especially when a and b tracks are used for sound overlaps, as well as for sound and music editing, the flatbed is unbeatable."

[28] Ibid., 135.

[29] Ibid.,135.

[30] Ibid., 84.

[31] Ibid., 136.

[32] Tom McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution* (Philadelphia: Running Press Book Publishers, 1996), 72.

[33] Ibid., 72. Viewers wrote in and the winner was flown to New York to attend a Journey concert and visit with the band backstage.

[34] Laurie Anderson's video was made in opposition to what she thought about most music videos on MTV: "Much of it is just boys playing guitar on the roof, boys playing guitar in the shower."

[35] Slavko Vorkapich, "A Fresh Look At the Dynamics of Film-Making," *The American Society of Cinematographers* (February 1972). Reprinted in The Motion Picture Division of the UCLA Theatre Arts Department flyer for "The Visual Nature of the Film Medium," Ten Lecture-Seminars by Slavko Vorkapich. Box 1, "Biographical Information," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[36] Slavko Vorkapich, "The Meaning and Value of Montage" (21 September 1938). "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," Box 1, David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Langston Hughes, "Night Funeral in Harlem," *Langston Hughes* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1999), 225-27.

Chapter 2.
Colliding Forces in Film and Photo(montage) Sustain a Soviet Revolution

Introduction

Beyond serving as a starting point for a discussion of montage, the Soviet situation after the ousting of the Russian monarchy in 1917 reveals how artists played a central role in revolutionary circumstances. Faced with the reality of revolution and change, artists were called on to support ideologically the victories experienced by the state politically and militarily. Embedded within a State sanctioned industry, artists struggled with supply shortages and striking a balance between appeasing cultural guardians of the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, reaching a mass audience, and upholding the revolutionary imperative artistically. Experimenting with photography and film, two populist mediums, artists fostered new aesthetic and propagandistic impulses. An analysis of several photomontages and films exposes the rising tensions between ideology and aesthetics in the political and industrial context of the Soviet nation-state between 1917 and 1939.[1] Two images, along with the larger questions they raise, serve as catalysts for this discussion, Gustav Klutsis' photomontage, *Electrification of the Entire Country* from 1920 and a still from Dziga Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera* from 1929. Although primarily attributed to men, each piece was conceived in collaboration with their wives, the female artists Valentina Kulagina and Yelizaveta Svilova, respectively. Viewed together, these images, one an example of Soviet photomontage and the other an example of cinematographic Soviet Montage, portray a number of striking aesthetic similarities. Both are invested in perpetuating the ideals of the Russian Revolution. Both images accomplish this visually by exemplifying the social upheaval confronting Russians by radically transforming the viewer's sense of scale. In Klutsis' photomontage, a giant Lenin strides forward, while in Vertov's film, a gigantic film camera towers over its human operator. But what do the images convey about how art reflects and responds to revolutionary change? What kind of subject positions do they sustain in a moment of cultural upheaval? Not only do they represent the harnessing of populist mediums to political ends, they were also created under the watchful eye of a government that inspected their "usefulness" to the revolutionary imperative and eventually found them lacking.[2]

The October Revolution of 1917 marks the formation of the Proletkult institution (the Proletarian Cultural and Enlightenment Organizations) and serves as one bookend for an

investigation of the relationship between Soviet artists and the new government. With the Bolshevik's successful coup d'état, which wrested control of the country away from the Tsarist regime, the nation-state was thrust into the industrialized society of the twentieth century. The founding of the Proletkult was the manifestation of a government invested in art's inclusion of revolutionary ideologies. Despite a gradual tightening of state censorship from 1917 to 1932, which culminated in Joseph Stalin's decree espousing Socialist Realism, this period was accompanied by the flourishing of aesthetically innovative photomontages and films. In particular, Klutsis' photomontages conveyed educational themes in visually exciting new ways, and Soviet Montage films were praised for their distinction from the Hollywood and European productions that dominated global commercial distribution at the time. An examination of various photomontages by Klutsis in conjunction with Soviet Montage filmmakers Dziga Vertov, Sergei Eisenstein, Lev Kuleshov, Alexander Dovzhenko, and Alexander Pudovkin effectively illustrates how each artist embodied the aesthetic, theoretical and ideological collisions at work in the newly formed Union of Soviet Socialist Republics. This is not designed to erase the differences between artistic mediums, but to place their phenomenal artistic work adjacent visually to discern the similarities engendered within the nascent state.

In the aftermath of the Russian Revolution, much of the country, and especially cultural industries like the cinema, was in a state of disarray. Constrained by the strapped economy, young filmmakers were forced to develop progressive ideological and technological approaches to film while waiting for access to extravagantly expensive film stock. Printmaking, however, was the perfect medium for avant-garde artists who embraced the Revolution and wanted to portray its goals. Eddie Wolfram in *History of Collage: An Anthology of Collage, Assemblage and Event Structures* portrays artists "decorating streets and public squares, proclaiming and celebrating the Revolution, harnessing their visual skills to the propaganda machine of the Bolshevik ideology." The style of this 'Agit-Prop' art was determined by the Rosta, the Russian wire service, which recognized the expediency of spreading news, information, and revolutionary ideology through posters and street display.[3] Russian towns resembled three-dimensional collages decorated with numerous propagandistic photomontages pasted up by passionate artists.

One of these artists, Gustav Klutsis, was also a former member of Vladimir Il'ich Lenin's personal military guard. Politicized as a young man after his brother was arrested and exiled by

the Tsarists, Klutsis joined the Latvian Rifles and participated in the storming of the Winter Palace in Saint Petersburg. As an artist, Klutsis tried to convey the Bolsheviks' political goals through the construction of iconic images designed for a mass audience. Margarita Tupitsyn discusses the abstract painting *Dynamic City* in *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina: Photography and Montage After Constructivism*, the superb accompaniment to the International Center of Photography's exhibition on Klutsis and Kulagina. Tupitsyn describes, "Made on a wooden board rather than on canvas, Dynamic City uses subdued coloring that results in semitransparent planes, which project at various angles from a central flat circular shape, to form a very rational, even cerebral, image of an abstract urban space. This very tangible work is not merely an aesthetic exercise but a multidimensional conceptual model of the future communist city."[4] In his first *Dynamic City*, Klutsis envisions the urban and its transformation under Communism. The second iteration of his piece *Dynamic City*, made in 1919, participates in what art historian Yve-Alain Bois expresses as a "radical reversibility," in that the four photographs of construction workers disrupt "the spectator's certainty and the usual viewing position."[5] The construction workers all face different directions and are arranged at various points around the nonobjective space of a circle overlaid with geometric shapes. Interested in how photographs would contrast with the gouache and cut-paper, Klutsis collaged photographs onto the paper's surface. The four photographs encourage the viewer to consider the image from all sides, destabilizing a privileged viewpoint and instilling a sense of spatial reversibility. While *The Dynamic City* is graphically vigorous, urging the masses to examine a situation from multiple points of view would ultimately be discouraged under Stalin.

Between 1919 and 1922, Klutsis referenced architectural forms in his three-dimensional constructions. These constructions were often made from wood and industrial materials, which underlined their place as functional art. Klutsis' ideological aesthetic is discernible in the gelatin silver print *Electrification of the Entire Country* (1920). In this image, Lenin strides purposefully in front of a model of constructivist architecture, holding metal scaffolding as he himself towers over the small workers below. The reference to constructivist architecture and the three-dimensional scaffolding suggests the influence of an artist like Vladimir Tatlin on Klutsis, while this piece as a whole demonstrates the importance of Lenin as both an icon and a conceptual influence on Klutsis. In 1924 Boris Eikhenbaum, in the magazine *LEF*, exalted Lenin's use of practical language and "for introducing aspects of the everyday, including crude words and

expressions into his writings."[6] By utilizing everyday language, Lenin's agitational writings were overtly directed at the masses. *Electrification of the Entire Country* represents a similar impulse as Klutsis moves away from complete abstraction and towards the implementation of recognizable sociopolitical photographic representations. The poster, which was designed to celebrate Lenin's electrification plan at the Eighth Congress of Soviets on December 29, 1920, emphasizes Lenin's desire to transform Russia into a successful industrialized society.[7] Klutsis abandons the radical reversibility of the second *Dynamic City* in favor of a more discernible ideological content. He distorts the scale of the various photographs and drawings, making the heroic Lenin the focal point visually in order to emphasize his importance as a leader politically. As Tupitsyn points out, "Lenin here relies on the proletariat, who escort him into this utterly modern space."[8] The accoutrements of technology and architecture allude to the promise of modernization invoked by the Bolshevik government. One year later, in 1921, Lenin would implement his ambitious New Economic Policy (NEP) to alleviate the hardships facing the countryside by providing peasants with access to the free market. Klutsis envisioned a new way to motivate the proletariat with his diagrams for "agitational stands" in 1922. Beyond the stands, which simply merged image and text, Klutsis recognized the potential of the cinematic image for a successful productivist project. Upending the tradition of screening films in a darkened theater, Klutsis designed a *Screen-Tribune-Kiosk*[9] with a screen mounted atop the structure intended for assembly outdoors. Rather than project experimental films within a conventional theater, Klutsis hoped to present cinema outside, thus breaking the static relationship between the screen and the viewer. As in the two versions of *Dynamic City*, Klutsis experiments with space and disorients the viewer's experience of traversing the street as they encounter *Screen-Tribune-Kiosk* from multiple vantage points.

Klutsis' radical vision for consuming cinema[10] would have been perfect for the release of *Man with a Movie Camera: a Record on Celluloid in Three Reels* by Dziga Vertov in 1929. The film evokes the radical reversibility discernible in Klutsis' *The Dynamic City* in various scenes and furthers this notion of the "dynamic city" by presenting a symphony to the great cities of Russia composited from scenes of Moscow, Kiev and Odessa. Vertov, working in conjunction with his wife Elizaveta Svilova, pioneered some of the techniques of Soviet montage. In *Man with a Movie Camera*, Vertov self-reflexively films his brother, Mikhail Kaufman, as a documentarian shooting scenes for a film about the everyday life of the city. Vertov references

the artifice of filmmaking by juxtaposing both the cameraman capturing daily activities as well as those activities themselves. In these instances, Vertov refers obliquely to himself.

Svilova captures the essence of a "dynamic city" with scenes made active through the use of split screen and superimposition. The energetic pace of city life is effectively doubled when Svilova, who was Vertov's editor as well as his wife, takes a shot of a street full of pedestrians and splices it together at a Dutch angle. The shot's horizon line is tilted at an angle to the bottom of the frame and the left and right halves of the frame are canted towards each other. This joining of the same shot creates an optical illusion, which generates the feeling that the street is being viewed through a kaleidoscope. Numerous shots of buildings and street scenes feature a shot of the cameraman superimposed on top. At the end of the film, Svilova superimposes two shots of a building, but this time she implements the canted angle film trick for ideological purposes. The building is the Bolshoi Theater, a symbol of high art in Russia, which Vertov and Svilova successfully implode within the diegesis of the film. This recalls one of Klutsis' photomontages for *Children and Lenin*, which "depicts a fragment of the country estate in Gorki where Lenin spent most of his time after he was shot and became sick. But the artists have placed the smiling leader on top of the roof, overturning the reality of Lenin's incapacity in the years just before his death" (Tupitsyn 20). Both Klutsis and Vertov assume a viewer familiar enough with specific architectural spaces to comprehend the socio-political statements within their work. As in Klutsis' photomontages, Vertov is utilizing these moments to disrupt "the spectator's certainty and the usual viewing position" (Bois 174). At the same time, this disruption highlights the film's prescient subtext of cinema as a medium of manipulation.

Vertov alludes to the cameraman's ability to influence film footage in the opening sequence of *Man with a Movie Camera*. Similar to *Electrification of the Entire Country*, this scene plays with a sense of scale; however, unlike Klutsis' photomontage, the size of the human camera operator is miniscule in comparison to the machine of the camera. The shot is dominated by a large camera situated in the bottom three-quarters of the screen while the top quarter features a cameraman who hurries into the frame with his camera and tripod and positions it directly on top of the larger camera. The way he strides purposefully forward carrying his camera resonates with the iconic image of Lenin bringing forth scaffolding and, symbolically, technological progress. What is striking about Vertov's film is how he constructs the camera as iconic more so than any one political figure. Although Vertov does focus on images of Lenin

when documenting the Lenin Workers Club in Odessa, the shots of men playing chess and checkers within this scene draws attention away from Lenin and towards the malleability of film. By editing the scene so the film runs backwards, it appears the checkers and chess pieces are careening around the board out of their own volition. Thus, the dynamism within this scene is created through the application of trick cinematography. Because of Vertov's decision to animate the inanimate game pieces, the scene is energized through manipulation, which, in turn, depicts the Lenin Workers Club as a vital and exciting place. The transference of exuberance to the Lenin Workers Club is accomplished by Vertov's expressive use of camera machinery and Svetlova's editing.

David Abelevich Kaufman, who adopted the pseudonym Dziga Vertov, onomatopoeic for "whizzing top," began his career in newsreels, reporting from the front lines of the civil war, screening his work on Agit-trains and becoming the director of newsreels for *Narkompros* (the People's Commissariat of Education) in 1917. Throughout his career, Vertov developed a cinema concerned with presenting "life caught unawares."[11] "Montage was less a single technique than the entire production process: choosing a subject, shooting footage, and assembling the film all involved selection and combination of 'cine-facts'."[12] The editing serves "as a form of framing, highlighting, starring, and above all… revealing the visible," where the visible are these "cine-facts."[13] Vertov's notion of the "cine-fact" demonstrates his belief in "the social utility of documentary film."[14] Even the text at the start of the film reinforces this belief; it reads, "Film Presents an Experiment in the Presentation of Visible Events/A Page in the Diary of a Cameraman/Language of Cinema based on the total Separation from the language of Theater and Literature." Through a series of expository sequences of a utopian city and its inhabitants slowly waking and engaging in various activities such as work in an industrial plant and relaxing by the seaside, Vertov demonstrates his notion of "life caught unawares" as the basis of revolutionary cinema.

He achieves this by embedding an ideological subtext within the film. He chooses the subject of industry to highlight the importance of the economic base and who controls it, and then shoots footage of factories, machines, mines, smokestacks and dams. For Vertov, the camera as kino-eye, which sees more perfectly than the human eye, must show movement to capture the poetry of machines and engender revolutionary viewers. "In revealing the machine's soul, in causing the worker to love his workbench, the peasant his tractor, the engineer his engine

– we introduce creative joy into all mechanical labor, we bring people into closer kinship with machines, we foster new people" (Vertov 8). Politically, the shots of industrial development within the film are an explicit criticism of the NEP and an argument for the First Five-Year Plan, which emphasized rapid industrialization and the curtailing of free enterprise. Vertov depicts the overwhelming size and scale of a factory by showing the cameraman dwarfed by flames and smoke during their visit. At the same time, Vertov is suggesting the identity and power of Russia is defined by their industrial potential, which is greater than one man. The sparks, flames and steam in the factory form a light background against which the men silhouetted in front are bold, graphic shapes. This provides another link to Klutsis' photomontages where graphic cutout shapes often dominate a white background. When the cameraman is lifted above the giant dam, the intercut shots of water rushing symbolize the flow of industrial production. When Vertov focuses on the smokestacks, he also shows the worker stoking the fire, thus forging the connection between industry and labor. These scenes and many others depict manual labor as comprised of fast-paced action. Even female telephone-line operators and cigarette-box constructers are part of the new industrial project as their rapid, repetitive switching of phone lines and forming of cigarette packets echoes the manual labor in the mines and factories.

However, Vertov never loses sight of the aesthetics of Montage. Many of his shots within the film represent a doubling whereby the action in the image, like a group of people in a moving car, is simultaneously presented as the act of capturing the image by the cameraman shooting from an adjacent car. At times Vertov further highlights this doubling, as when the women in the car mimic the turning motion of the cameraman. This section further criticizes the NEP, where they are shown as wealthy and with servants. *Man with a Movie Camera* is structured as "the projection of a film whose subject is the construction and viewing of it," hence what is real and what is image is both different and comparable."[15] Through the use of montage, shots collide with other shots and the finished film is not only different from its documentary footage but also "capable of seeing beyond it to something that for Vertov was more real and true than any conventional (natural) view."[16] Even in Vertov's Kino-Pravda (Cinema Truth) films, which were assembled entirely "out of photographic documents set in dynamic and rhythmic sequences," Vertov is creating propaganda, "glorifying the deeds of the new Soviet Union."[17] Kino-Pravda's goal was to awaken the consciousness of the masses and unite their collective will to one goal – the fight for Communism. Vertov's formation of the Kino-Eye Group in 1922 and his emphatic

assertions that same year about the kino-eye in "WE: Variant of a Manifesto" further reflect his desire to educate the masses through dynamic film compositions. He writes, "Hurrah for dynamic geometry, the race of points, lines, planes, volumes."[18] Conceptually, Vertov's "WE" manifesto resonates within Klutsis' photomontages. Vertov, in defining his notion of "dynamic geometry" and "dynamic sketch," states, "Our path is from a dawdling citizen via the poetry of a machine to a perfect electric man. A new man, freed from weight and clumsiness, with the exact and light movements of a machine, will become a useful object of filming."[19] Klutsis' photomontages also embody the impression of "dynamic geometry," especially through his consistent use of strong diagonals like in the *Herald of Labor* illustration. The many instances of extreme angles depicting objects below or objects above in Klutsis' work are mirrored in Vertov's extreme angle camera shots gazing up and down.

  Man with a Movie Camera perfectly characterizes Vertov's theorizing in that it stresses the stylized compositions, special effects, and experimentation with montage techniques possible in film. Trains and buses stream out of their stations, creating conflicting lines of action during the "Locomotion" sequence; streetcars flow through crowded city streets and yet, the human element is always present. The life of the city is inseparable from the lives of the people filling Vertov's frame. In one propagandistic exposition, the series of close-ups on static machines changes to a series of close-ups on kinetic machines once the human element is present. Vertov even superimposes a close-up on a woman's face with a shot of a lively machine. Without the workers the machines are inert, but with them the shot is geometry in motion as different mechanistic shapes turn, move, and whirl in a celebration of industrial production. Vertov also attempts to situate *Man with a Movie Camera* within the concept of revolutionary production through the construction of a parallel editing sequence, which contrasts the ideal, productive Russian with the wasteful, bourgeois citizen. He juxtaposes severe close-ups of a woman's beauty regimen with shots of a peasant woman constructing a house. The primping provides a stark contrast to the woman dabbing plaster onto an exterior wall. Later in this sequence, Vertov intercuts a man shaving with a man sharpening an axe and a woman filing her nails with a shot of Svilova filing film frames.

  Vertov also utilizes parallel editing to emphasize the notion of film as intrinsically connected to rhythmic movement. He depicts a horse galloping in one scene and children smiling in the other, but then he freezes the frame so the shots resemble still photographs. These

stills are linked to the editing process when Vertov illustrates them as film negatives against a light table, with Svilova examining and splicing negatives as she assembles the film. By interspersing shots of the editor at work with the stills of the horse and children, Vertov self-referentially highlights the production of the film. Eventually, the two strands of action unite and the viewer is presented with the same stills animated so that the horse gallops and the children laugh and react to a magician. The stills, then, disrupt the rhythm of the film by stopping the pace and forcing the viewer to contemplate the differences between photography and film. This stoppage acts in the exact opposite way from the film's finale, where rapid cutting creates shots of shorter and shorter length. The editor works frantically, the cameraman is superimposed over a crowd of people (which echoes the first shot of the film and recalls Klutsis' penchant for playing with scale and repetition), and the cuts are hurried. The increasing momentum culminates in Vertov's visualization of the kino-eye – a human eye superimposed over the camera lens.

Vertov imbues his writing about film with a performative sensibility. Conveying a sense of immediacy in "WE: Variant of a Manifesto" from 1922, Vertov emphatically calls for the education of the masses through dynamic film compositions. "We call ourselves kinoks," he writes, as he plays with language, creating a neologism by playing "on the words *kino* ('cinema' or 'film') and *oko*, the latter an obsolescent and poetic word meaning 'eye.'"[20] For Vertov, to have an eye for film meant creating a Soviet cinema invested in movement. "We are cleansing kinochestvo of foreign matter – of music, literature, and theater; we seek our own rhythm, one lifted from nowhere else, and we find it in the movements of things," exclaims Vertov as he underscores his definition of revolutionary film.[21] A definition that brings to mind Jean Epstein's concept of photogénie especially when Vertov writes, "In revealing the machine's soul, in causing the worker to love his workbench, the peasant his tractor, the engineer his engine –

> we introduce creative joy into all mechanical labor,
>
> we bring people into closer kinship with machines,
>
> we foster new people."[22]

The poetic prose of Vertov's manifesto is inexorably linked to the sociopolitical situation he faced as director of newsreels for Narkompros (the People's Commissariat of Education). The ideological subtext is apparent within *Man with a Movie Camera*. He chooses the subject of industry to highlight the importance of the economic base. Scenes of manual labor are composed

of fast-paced action. Even female telephone line-operators and cigarette box constructers are part of the new industrial project as their rapid, repetitive switching of phone lines and forming of cigarette packets echoes the manual labor in the mines and factories. For Vertov, the camera as kino-eye must show movement to capture the poetry of machines and engender revolutionary viewers. Vertov depicts the overwhelming size and scale of a factory by showing the cameraman dwarfed by flames and smoke during his visit. Simultaneously, he forges the connection between industry and labor, suggesting the identity and power of the Soviet Union is defined by its industrial potential, which is greater than one man. The sparks, flames, and steam in the factory form a bright background against which the silhouetted men are bold, graphic shapes. Visually this image recalls Klutsis' photomontages where graphic cutout shapes stand out against a white background, and it provides a visual link to the aesthetics of Eisenstein.

In contrast to Vertov's rousing pronoun choice, Eisenstein's "Montage of Attractions, An Essay" adopts the tone of one professional artist writing for another. Both, however, are charged with a sense of social responsibility, as Eisenstein underscores when he writes, "The basic materials of the theater arise from the spectator himself – and from our guiding of the spectator into a desired direction (or a desired mood), which is the main task of every functional theater (agit, poster, health education, etc.)."[23] The essay points to a direction in Eisenstein's work that would not be realized until he started making films; however, it also suggests the power of art to influence the spectator's reactions. The essay originally appeared in the political magazine *Lef* in 1923 to promote Eisenstein's production of *Enough Simplicity in Every Wise Man.*[24] While Lenin's NEP promoted private enterprise; it was a move away from the mass-oriented spirit of the Revolution. "With this shift, formal innovations conceived for public space began to be scaled down to suit the intimate formats of book and magazine design."[25] The magazine *Lef*, founded in 1923 by the poet Vladimir Mayakovsky, established a broader venue for the publication of avant-garde art.[26] NEP was also seen as procapitalist, sparking debate amongst the leaders of the Party. Upon the death of Lenin in 1924, the less compromising elements within the government quickly reined in all NEP activities.

The rise of Stalin forced avant-garde artists to question their role as revolutionaries tasked with constructing political iconography. The Party under Stalin demanded iconographic specificity; forcing artists to further embrace more figurative than abstract images. However, Lenin's death was the death of an icon and called for an immediate response. Klutsis dedicated

himself to creating photomontages about Lenin for *Lef*. These two series, *Young Guard* and *Herald of Labor*, gained a popular foothold shortly after the Revolution by reaching a larger audience. The *Young Guard* issue entitled "To Lenin" contains various photomontages vividly depicting Lenin. Both Klutsis and Sergei Sen'kin, who also worked on the issue, included red, black, and white shapes inspired by constructivist themes from artists such as El Lissitzky and his *Beat the Whites with the Red Wedge*. However, Klutsis and Sen'kin, in their work, merged this legacy of constructivism with political typography and iconography. In essence, their photomontages "explicitly combined the propagandistic state agenda with the formalist achievements of the avant-garde."[27] In Klutsis' *RKP*, the image of Lenin atop an agitational grandstand is encircled by four tiny versions of Lenin. Surrounding the red diamond shape are documentary photographs that depict demonstrating workers and members of the Communist party. This image reflects another of Lenin's oratorical devices, namely, his use of repetition and parenthesis. The formalist critic Eikhenbaum noted Lenin's use of repetition and parenthesis "creates breaks and harmonies in rhythm and intonation… that energize the speech."[28] Klutsis echoes Lenin's rhetoric by repeating the photographs but changing the scale of Lenin each time. The small photographs divert the viewer's attention from the central composition like Lenin's parenthetical comments redirected the listener. The repetition in the *Herald of Labor* illustration, which reads, "The Rise of Labor Productivity Will Reinforce the Union Between Workers and Peasants," shows Klutsis' use of repetition to destroy the flow of continuous composition. By drawing attention to the disembodied hands bordering the image, Klutsis effectively highlights the clasped hands of a worker and a peasant visually and symbolically. These photomontages from *Young Guard* and *Herald of Labor* demonstrate the prominent use of political slogans in visual representation.

One of the strangest series of photomontages created by Klutsis and Sen'kin is for the book *Children and Lenin* by Il'ia Lin. Although these images also convey a desire to agitate the audience to a political consciousness, they attempt this through depicting Lenin with Russian children. In many of these images, Lenin is a benevolent father figure amidst adoring children. However, the repetition of smiling children contrasts surreally with Lenin lying in state. Floating above Lenin's dead body is the disembodied head of a bawling baby. While there is no overt narrative to the photomontage, the unhappy young children convey a feeling of utter depression and loss. This dramatic image is followed by another amazing photomontage from *Children and*

Lenin depicting two Lenin heads connected by a diagonal racetrack populated by children engaged in various sports. The image is accompanied by Lin's text, "Cheerful, strong, on the road of science and knowledge, running faster at the behest of Il'ich – toward communism."[29] This image again characterizes Lenin as a father figure, but adds athletic achievement as a metaphor for the realization of Communist ideals despite the absence of a corporeal Lenin. In *The Cinema as a Graphic Art*, Vladimir Nilsen writes, "The greatest expression of dynamism is achieved in those forms of diagonal composition of the movement in which the static background is composed along the contrary diagonal."[30] In *Children and Lenin*, the diagonal movement within the frame conflicts with the vertical and horizontal axes of the frame.

The practice of placing images together in collage brings to mind Lev Kuleshov's description of the process of composition within film. In *Film Technique*, Vsevolod Pudovkin describes how Kuleshov introduced him to the meaning of montage: "Kuleshov maintained that the material in film work consists of pieces of film, and that the composition method is their joining together in a particular creatively discovered order."[31] Although Pudovkin and Eisenstein later qualified Kuleshov's definition of montage as simplistic, he was one of the first to theorize the peculiar nature of film as an art. Another innovation credited to Kuleshov was the discovery of what he called "creative geography." Creative geography was Kuleshov's term for a narrative created from shots made at different times and in different locations. Besides being an elegant principle applicable to film production, creative geography brings to mind Einstein's theories of relativity; specifically, it recalls the concept of space-time, which states space and time should be considered together and in relation to each other. In 1920, Kuleshov performed an experiment where he assembled scenes of a young man and woman walking towards each other, the young man pointing, a large white building with a flight of steps, and the couple's ascension of the stairs. When Kuleshov projected the aforementioned scenes to an audience, the spectators experienced the sequence as uninterrupted action, when in fact each of the scenes was shot in different places! While the spectator perceived the sequence as a whole, the shots were taken at radically different times and locations, including a shot of the White House. Pudovkin wrote of Kuleshov's experiment, "By the process of junction of pieces of celluloid appeared a new filmic space without existence in reality."[32] For Pudovkin, the creation of filmic space, as opposed to spaces that existed in real life, was unique to film form and conceived in editing.

Both Pudovkin and Eisenstein were students of Kuleshov. "Unable to find enough filmstock to fuel their projects, they turned to reediting films already made, and in the process discovered a number of truths about the technique of film montage."[33] One analogy Pudovkin relied upon was between film and poetry, writing "To the film director each shot of the finished film serves the same purpose as the word to the poet. Hesitating, selecting, rejecting, and taking up again, he stands before the separate takes, and only by conscious artistic composition at this stage are gradually pieced together the phrases of editing, the incidents and sequences, from which emerges, step by step, the finished creation, the film."[34] Only in relation to other shots could a single shot be effective. For example, in *The End of St. Petersburg* (1927), Pudovkin decided to represent war through the visualization of a "terrific explosion."[35] He buried dynamite underground and filmed the resulting blast, but he was unhappy with the "slow, lifeless movement."[36] Undeterred, Pudovkin edited an explosion together out of clouds of smoke, flashes of a magnesium flare, and images of a river. In this sequence Pudovkin embarks on conscious artistic composition in order to bring the visceral scene of the explosion to life. Also in *The End of St. Petersburg*, Pudovkin demonstrated his use of associative editing. Early in their careers, Kuleshov and Pudovkin created an experiment where they intercut images of an actor with images of a dish of food, a dead man, and a beautiful woman. In each instance, the affect of association made it appear as if the man's expression as he looked at the three images had changed. Kuleshov's experiments with "creative geography" and montage-of-attraction illustrate how separate shots linked together through editing evoked geographic and emotional truths which in reality did not exist. In *The End of St. Petersburg*, Pudovkin intercut the shot of a titan of industry on the phone with a statue of Peter the Great. Although this scene depends on prior knowledge of the statue, Pudovkin thought it successful: "I claim that the resultant composition is effective with a reality quite other than that produced by the posing of an actor, which nearly always smacks of Theatre."[37] In this quote, Pudovkin rewards himself with high praise – he strongly desired to uncouple the medium from the theater. One way Pudovkin hoped to accomplish this was in the realization of filmic acting. Pudovkin describes the problem he faced in the scene from *Mother* (1926) where the Son receives word he will be set free the next day:

> The problem was the expression, filmically, of his joy. The photographing of a face lighting up with joy would have been flat and void of effect. I show, therefore, the nervous play of his hands and a big close-up of the lower half of his face, the corners of

the smile. These shots I cut in with other and varied material – shots of a brook, swollen with the rapid flow of spring, of the play of sunlight broken on the water, birds splashing in the village pond, and finally a laughing child. By the junction of these components our expression of 'prisoner's joy' takes shape.[38]

In this sequence, Pudovkin achieves filmic acting by intercutting the actor's expression of joy with scenes evocative of happiness.

For Pudovkin, symbolic images inspire intense emotions in the viewer. At the end of *Mother* (1926), Pudovkin uses rhetorical montage to visually link the surging strikers advancing to meet the cavalry with an ice floe breaking itself against the parapet of a bridge. It's possible to read the conceptual line within the association as symbolizing the inevitable destruction of the strikers. However, the strikers are also a force of nature that cannot be stopped, like the ice floes. Thus Pudovkin manipulates the material he has shot and printed on celluloid to convey not only the tragic demise of Mother and Son, but also the inevitability of the Revolution. In *Film Technique and Film Acting*, Pudovkin writes, "The elements of reality are fixed on these pieces; by combining them in his selected sequence, shortening and lengthening them according to his desire, the director builds up his own 'filmic' time and 'filmic' space. He does not adapt reality, but uses it for the creation of a new reality, and the most characteristic and important aspect of this process is that, in it, laws of space and time invariable and inescapable in work with actuality become tractable and obedient. The film assembles from them a new reality proper only to itself."[39] Pudovkin was concerned with how film affects the observer, and he recognized montage's ability to transcend space and time. Through the selection and arrangement of narrative details Pudovkin could guide the viewer's attention and associations.

The desire to form a new reality onscreen through the use of associative and parallel editing is also apparent in the films of Eisenstein, who, "as the prime theorist and practitioner of Soviet Montage," shared many similarities and also some fundamental differences with his fellow filmmakers.[40] While Pudovkin theorized about linkage, Eisenstein adhered to a definition of montage as collision. "Whereas Pudovkin had seen the techniques of montage as an aid to narrative, Eisenstein reconstructed montage in opposition to straight narrative. If shot A and shot B were to form an entirely new idea, C, then the audience had to become directly involved. It was necessary that they work to understand the inherent meaning of the montage."[41] The implementation of parallel editing is visible in the work of both Vertov and Eisenstein; however,

whereas Vertov rejected Hollywood film as "cine-nicotine," a drug that "dulled the viewer's awareness of social and political reality," Eisenstein appreciated and drew upon editing techniques from classical Hollywood cinema, including crosscutting, eyeline-match, and analytic editing.[42] Specifically, D.W. Griffith, who innovated various properties of film language, including camera mobility, inspired Eisenstein, various shot lengths (full, medium, close-up), lighting for dramatic effect, and intercutting to develop narrative complexity. Eisenstein extended Griffith's intercutting of parallel action, where there is a break in the narrative and the story shifts from one group of characters to another, into his own conception of montage. While Vertov hoped to supplant Hollywood films with Russian Kinopravda, Eisenstein, as David Bordwell has proposed, recognized he could "revise devices in ways that exploit possibilities minimized by American filmmakers. Thus the match on action, normally overlapped only a little in the Hollywood continuity system, becomes the prolonged overlapping we associate with Eisenstein's silent style. Eisenstein 'refunctionalizes' the received devices in order to fulfill a new task: the creation of a perceptually, emotionally, and cognitively engaging 'agitprop' cinema."[43] In the final sequence of his first feature *Strike*, for example, Eisenstein obliterates conventional continuity to create a conceptual link between events. Eisenstein intercuts the slaughter of a bull with the massacre of a crowd. The idea enjoining these two events must be discovered mentally by the viewer's awareness of a link between the two scenes of the spilling of blood.

This "refunctionalizing" of devices to produce an emotionally engaging cinema is also apparent in *Battleship Potemkin*, commissioned by the government in 1925 to celebrate the twentieth anniversary of the 1905 uprising in the town of Odessa. Unlike the parallel editing of Griffith where each shot is joined to the next in a consecutive, developmental logic, Eisenstein transformed montage by making every shot subject to non-diegetic interventions, effectively destroying the unity of the scene. Eisenstein fetishized canted angles in his paean to the revolution of Soviet sailors rebelling against terrible conditions. However, by dividing montage into fragments, every shot is free "to associate both within the motifs of the fiction and outside the fiction to ideas."[44]

In his erudite essay *Potemkin*, Stanley Kauffman cogently explains why he considers Eisenstein's films visionary. The chicken and the egg argument as applied to Soviet Russia in the 1920s raises the question which came first, a new revolutionary state or a group of revolutionary

artists? Kauffman posits the state made geniuses of at least three filmmakers — Vsevolod Pudovkin, Alexander Dovzhenko, and Sergei Mikhailovich Eisenstein.[45] While Kauffman acknowledges the artistic frustrations that ultimately defined Eisenstein's career, he also argues "absolutely congruent with his bursting film energies was his fervor for the Communist Revolution and the establishment of the Soviet state."[46] To this end Eisenstein was invested in creating a new kind of vision. Many filmmakers could tell the story of a ship's crew taking a stand against tyranny; Eisenstein captured the ideological insurrection on the Battleship Potemkin in an aesthetically revolutionary way. Kauffman sees the film as indicative of the influence of the *Communist Manifesto* on Eisenstein. Just as Marx and Engels believed man's consciousness "changes with every change in the conditions of his material existence," Eisenstein hoped to depict history, as it had never been shown before. Eisenstein portrays the mutiny aboard the Potemkin and the townspeople's sympathetic protest as it devolves into brutal repression by the Tsar's Cossacks. The impetus for the slaughter on the Odessa steps is the mutiny over rations and the cruelty of the officers aboard the ship Potemkin. An officer shoots Vakulinchuk, the leader of the mutiny, and his body "is fished out of the sea and lovingly taken up into the arms of his shipmates."[47] This act of lovingly picking up a body is repeated later during the slaughter on the Odessa steps when a mother lifts her dead son. The scene resonates because it uses the power of association to generate meaning, and these associations are distant both in time and space. Like Klutsis' photomontages and Vertov's *Man with a Movie Camera*, the repetition of images allows them to resonate in their collision with other similar images. Vakulinchuk and the dead boy are symbolically children of the Revolution; they gave their lives in the 1905 revolt to stand as a testament to the October 1917 Revolution. Although Battleship Potemkin is more akin to narrative filmmaking than the work of Vertov, it still reverberates with a socio-political message.

The famous Odessa steps sequence shows Eisenstein's ability to "refunctionalize" the close-up by using it to extend time and intensify the viewer's emotional involvement with the film. For Eisenstein, the close-up is a powerful tool for conveying emotion, and cinema is made vivacious and intense through its use. In *Battleship Potemkin*, the viewer's eye is drawn to the carefully framed wheels of the baby carriage teetering precariously at the top of the stairs. It is an overwhelming emotional indicator and the audience concentrates, transfixed on the fate of that carriage. The wheels, as they shift towards the precipice and then away, are unexpectedly

elevated to the utmost dramatic importance. In "From Theory of the Film: The Close-Up," Bela Balaz writes, "The greatest landslide is only the aggregate of the movements of single particles. A multitude of close-ups can show us the very instant in which the general is transformed into the particular" (314). Eisenstein constantly converts the general into the particular within the Odessa steps sequence through the inclusion of close-ups, which narrow the focus from the horrific general scene to the truly depraved particular storylines. The rifles are anthropomorphized in their close-up. They are menacing and aggressive and steadfast in their resolve to shoot all who stand in their way. Historical accuracy is an integral aspect of the emotional weight of the film, and Eisenstein heightens the impact of his dramatized history by crosscutting from the microphysiognomy of the old woman's face to the terrible slaughter on the Odessa steps. Her facial expression speaks volumes although she does not literally speak a word. Isolated from its surroundings, this close-up focuses the audience's attention on details. By interweaving between three storylines, Eisenstein personalizes the ideological narrative in order to intensify the emotional experience. The audience is emotionally tense as the Cossacks attack three women and two children, innocents in need of protection. Although the audience's sympathy is aligned with the townspeople gathered on the Odessa Steps, psychologically the audience is even more affected when the general tragedy becomes personal. Eisenstein creates a psychological association between these intertwined scenes, reinforcing three times over the notion of tragic, unnecessary slaughter. The individual storylines featuring women and children heighten the viewer's emotional experience with the film.

The Odessa steps sequence, as well as the movement of the sailboats across the screen, links Eisenstein aesthetically to Klutsis and Vertov through its construction of graphic lines of movement. This series of shots, like many of Eisenstein's "rapid montage sequences, is built on contrasting geometric patterns and dynamic diagonals."[48] As the Cossacks march down the steps from the upper left hand corner of the frame to the lower right hand corner, the mother of the dead boy carries her son diagonally towards them up the steps. Thus *Battleship Potemkin* contrasts with Klutsis' unifying use of the diagonal. Instead, it presents dialectic between shots that is emotionally evocative and carries political truths to the masses. For Eisenstein, the shot is the basic unit of intellectual montage and, hence, filmmaking; alone and linked with other shots, it is capable of dictating the audience's emotions. Cinema is potentially revolutionary because it can influence the masses to support political change. Another approach Eisenstein utilizes to

better evince change is through his casting of particular "types." Actors were chosen not for a complex individualized performance but because Eisenstein felt they fit their roles, they looked right. This "typage" approach to casting suggests his early career in experimental theater and can be seen in Klutsis' photomontages, which depict character "types" designed to appeal to the masses.

Klutsis was drawn to the technique of montaging photographs because it reminded him of film composition. As in photomontage, "combining a multitude of frames into an integrated work"[49] was a precept of film. Solidifying this connection were the covers Klutsis created for the magazine *Kino-Front*. In 1926, Klutsis designed a series of potential covers for *Kino-Front*, which included stills from Vertov's *One-Sixth of the World* and *Forward, Soviet!* as well as Eisenstein's *General Line*, and Kuleshov's *By the Law*. Klutsis' use of these stills demonstrates his interest in the theories of Soviet filmmakers. Since *Kino-Front* did not identify the films from which the stills were drawn, Klutsis' covers would pose a challenge to viewers who could only discern the film by attending the theater. Margarita Tupitsyn writes that by embedding actual filmstrips into his designs, "Klutsis suggested that filmmaking was not only an aesthetic endeavor but also one endowed with physical experiences. The physical encompassed both the management of equipment as well as a constant interaction with the people, objects, and sights being filmed." As Tupitsyn points out, this is exactly what Vertov accomplishes when he places the cameraman in industrial sites. Furthermore, it recalls Eisenstein's belief in "typage." One can imagine Eisenstein scouring his environs looking for exemplary faces capable of evoking sympathy or revulsion in close-up. Rather than only professional actors, *Battleship Potemkin* is populated by a furnace man to play the ship's corrupt doctor and a gardener as the ship's unsympathetic priest. The impetus behind choosing these men for these roles was Eisenstein's belief that their striking faces could convey almost everything the viewer needed to know at first glance.

In approaching Soviet montage as a transformation in filmmaking techniques, Eisenstein recognized that "transformations of reigning norms often draw upon earlier devices, often minor or subordinated ones" ("Eisenstein" 15). One of the ways in which Eisenstein demonstrates an altered approach to filmmaking is through his reliance on the axial cut, also known as the concertina cut. "This is a cut in or back straight along the lens axis" and it "became a minor stylistic convention of Soviet montage cinema" ("Eisenstein" 16). In 1926, axial cuts

were mentioned in S. Timoshenko's book on editing, which "labels axial cut-ins 'concentration cuts' and the axial cut-backs 'expansion cuts'" ("Eisenstein" 16). In 1929, Eisenstein's essay "Beyond the Shot" illustrates how Japanese artists use the frame to create a composition based in reality, and also "presents a diagrammatic equivalent of axial cutting" ("Eisenstein" 16). Eisenstein writes about a view of a lilac bush from his window as a child, "The branch was a typical Japanese foreground… And so I was aware of the beauties of foreground composition before I saw Hokusai or was entranced by Edgar Degas" ("Eisenstein" 18). The drawing of the cherry blossom branch plays with the scale of the various embedded frames, "yielding 'larger' or 'smaller' views of the object. More important, the angle of viewing does not change," all the framings are located "on the same axis perpendicular to the object" ("Eisenstein" 16-7). Eisenstein uses the concertina cut in *Battleship Potemkin* when Vakulinchuk rallies the sailors to rebel. A sequence of shots jumps towards and away from the viewer as well as shifting left and right, and yet each shot respects "a unitary axis linking picture and perceiver" (Bordwell 17). Therefore, this cluster of shots linked by axial cuts constitutes a "montage-unit." The concertina cut is also visible in *Man with a Movie Camera* when the film suddenly cuts in on the father of fascism shooting game. From one shot to the next, the cuts jump towards the target as the girls take aim. Once they shoot the bottles, an edit makes it appear as if the bottles disappeared from the box.

Alexander Dovzhenko also utilized the concertina cut to create striking montage units. Dovzhenko was raised in the Ukraine, joined the Red Army during the civil war, and later served as a diplomatic administrator in Berlin in the early 1920s.[50] Dovzhenko gained attention with his 1928 film *Zvenigora*, which thrust him into the limelight because of its distinctive, lyrical use of the medium. His next film, *Arsenal* (1929), a powerful painterly film, recounts a Ukrainian folk tale about the battle for Kiev during the Civil War. This battle is renowned for its six-day siege where Bolsheviks defended Kiev's munitions factory from the Tsarist "Whites." The film emphasizes the commitment of ordinary people in its treatment of the main character, but was met with criticism over the lack of glorified Party leadership present. Instead, Dovzhenko chose to build his story around a demobilized soldier, Timosh, who wants to become a plant worker. Timosh is denied a job, insulted, called a deserter, and subsequently becomes a revolutionary. The concertina cut is implemented by Dovzhenko to intensify moments of high tension in the film. When the train conductor refuses to start the train to return the Ukrainian home, he is in a

medium close-up, which jumps forward three times to end up in an extreme close-up. Dovzhenko also employs the concertina cut during the scene where the striking Bolshevik worker stares straight-ahead, waiting to be shot. The most powerful concertina cut, however, is the last scene of the film, in which the protagonist is symbolically impervious to bullets. The film cuts in from the point-of-view of the audience and the "Whites" attempting to kill the revolutionary. His invincibility suggests the inevitable success of the Revolution.

Arsenal also demonstrates the normalization of a second device within Soviet montage films, namely, wide-angle depth composition. Wide-angle depth composition allowed filmmakers to integrate various elements into one mise-en-scene, thus increasing tension by filling the frame, creating a monumental effect, and producing grotesque distortions by altering the viewer's relation to the image. In Arsenal, for example, a shot of a farmer and his horse is set against the wide-open space of the field he must sow. This wide-angle shot reinforces the absence of a generation of young men, lost to the war. The old man and the horse are made diminutive by the expansive shot. When Dovzhenko equates the farmer beating his horse to a mother beating her children through parallel editing, the scene symbolically resonates with the missing young men. The pain and tragedy of loss is also conveyed through a wide-angle composition of a winter skyline. The silhouetted crows symbolize despair and death right before the two sons return their brother's dead body to their mother. Another arresting shot from Arsenal captures an officer and a soldier backlit by a light sky, the officer's gun leveled directly at the soldier. The contrast between light and dark is reminiscent of the graphic cutouts of Klutsis' photomontages. In addition, Dovzhenko's implementation of movement within the frame recalls Klutsis and Vertov. In many ways, then, Arsenal emphasizes the shared aesthetics visible in the work of Klutsis, Vertov, and Eisenstein. Dovzhenko shoots a train with canted angles to create strong diagonal lines of movement. As the train proceeds from the lower left-hand corner of the frame diagonally to the upper right-hand corner, the camera demonstrates a radical spatial reversibility by jumping wildly from looking down on the train to looking up towards it. Right before the train crashes, Dovzhenko focuses the audience's attention on an accordion player and his friend. When the train crashes, the tremendous loss of life is exemplified by the symbolic destruction of the accordion, thus making a general sense of tragedy specific and personal. The notion of radical reversibility is also discernible in the depiction of the same shot from multiple angles; Dovzhenko makes a static sculpture dynamic through several

shots from different perspectives. In contrast to Vertov's optimistic parallel editing to depict the waking of the city, *Arsenal* portrays the strike by focusing on the machines as they stop turning.

Besides *Arsenal*, exaggerated foregrounds and steep perspectives are also used to great effect in *Man With a Movie Camera*, *Battleship Potemkin*, *October: Ten Days That Shook the World* (Eisenstein, 1928), and several of Klutsis' photomontages, including a series for the front-page of the newspaper *Pravda*.[51] While Joseph Stalin's decree espousing Socialist Realism marks the official rejection of avant-garde art in 1932, Klutsis and Kulagina were devoted to pushing the boundaries of their art. Klutsis continued to incorporate surreal imagery in his photomontages and Kulagina wrote in her diary, "I've come to a decision... To make a mass picture using the new principles of montage. To unfold a wide panorama, show a big even in all its details, a whole history, a whole symphony."[52] At this time, Kulagina was working on the Dneprostroi poster alley and pressuring Klutsis to do more in painting. She thought that the poster and newspaper business produced ephemeral work, and the finished pieces were subject to change at the whims of others.[53] Feeling as if Klutsis had given up painting for the agitational needs of the state, Kulagina also worried about paper shortages and the politics behind any artwork gaining approval from the editorial council of the state. Klutsis' *Pravda* photomontages of 1933 perpetuate the Stalin cult in their depiction of several recognizable "types," including an airman, a soldier, factory workers, and peasants mid-stride. These industrious proletarians stretch back from the foreground creating a sense of depth. Towering above them is a large photograph of Stalin against a bold red rectangle. Klutsis drew a white silhouette of Lenin's profile behind Stalin, forging the link between the two. Portraying imagery advocating Socialism and Stalin's cult of personality in just the right way was important because the posters had to be approved by the Glavlit, the Russian censorship office. Kulagina describes the frustrating challenge Klutsis faced with *Glory to the Red Army of workers and peasants – loyal guard of Soviet borders!* when she writes, "I find such things outrageous - one moment it's this and that is bad, and Stalin doesn't look like himself - and then all of a sudden all is well."[54] Although the relationship between Klutsis and Kulagina began with mutual respect for each other as artists, their marriage was tempestuous – they were both involved in extramarital affairs.[55] Kulagina writes in her diary, "Unless there's a decree declaring that love is outmoded and liquidated 'as a class,' complications are inevitable even under socialism."[56]

The aesthetic and conceptual collisions between Soviet artists working within the medium of photomontage and the Soviet Montage filmmakers is also defined by the actual collision of bodies. Alexander Rodchenko, for example, designed film sets for Lev Kuleshov's 1926 film *The Lady Journalist*. His sets were planned as a working newspaper office and "furnished with the latest communications media similar to Rodchenko's utopian kiosks of 1919."[57] Soon after, Rodchenko began photographing individuals in the artistic milieu including Kuleshov, Esfir Shub, and Vladimir Mayakovsky. In addition to being influenced by Kuleshov, Rodchenko designed a film poster for *Battleship Potemkin* and a collection of Vertov's shorts. Theoretically, it was Vertov's Kino-Pravda newsreels that

> "served as Rodchenko's own point of departure as a photographer rather than the photographs of his predecessors and peers. Working on film titles for Kino-Pravda in 1922, he became interested in narrative sequences. From Vertov, he learned how a new kind of narrative could be constructed from separate pieces of film, each comprising a different visual relation to a subject. For Rodchenko, the sequence was the photographic equivalent of Vertov's new film grammar based on motion. Rodchenko's commitment to a sequential structure of representation was instrumental in his rejection of the traditional conventions of painting as well as photographs that imitated those conventions."[58]

This sequential concept is visible in Rodchenko's illustrations for Mayakovsky's poem *About It*, which encapsulate a mini-narrative visually. For example, one features a bold, graphic, diagonal line filled with a cityscape view, which links a man and a woman. This piece is a reflection on communication technologies, but fundamentally addresses miscommunication between lovers. With his wife, Varvara Stepanova, Rodchenko "argued that the whole point of the new art in the new society was to make it meaningful to the masses by harnessing it to fulfill practical needs" (Wolfram 63). As a result they were anxious to apply the new aesthetic knowledge in magazines with large circulations. Ideologically, Rodchenko believed it was possible to educate the masses about a "Marxist utopia through graphic visual propaganda" (Wolfram 63). Rodchenko adequately summed up the reason many artists turned to photography in their approach to collage or documentary within their approach to film when he wrote, "Fidelity to fact and documentary truth give the depiction a power to stir the viewer such as is simply not possible for painterly and graphic techniques" (Wolfram 66).

The development of Russian photomontage and Russian filmic montage resonates with the transformation of the political system of the Soviet Union, from the Revolution in 1917 to the implementation of Socialist Realism as an official state-sponsored policy. Despite their theoretical differences, all of the filmmakers discussed "saw in Montage the basis of revolutionary films that would inspire audiences" (Bordwell 129). Early on, Lenin recognized that film could be a didactic tool in the service of the new Soviet state for aligning the peasant population with urban workers, leveling out their differences, and showing the benefits of collectivism and socialism to a population that was mostly illiterate. The range of artistic and technological practices that sprung up were all designed to challenge and appeal ideologically to the audience. By colliding photomontage with examples of Soviet Montage and concurrent theories of montage it is possible to begin to comprehend how the various aesthetic strategies were harnessed for creating revolutionary propaganda. Ironically, Stalin subsequently attacked many of these artists as elitist. Both movements faced increasingly severe criticism from Soviet authorities, "who saw the need for a more glowing representation of life than this afforded, which could be better achieved through the stylistic devices of Soviet realist figuration" (Wolfram 66).

The introduction of sound in the 1930s posed new challenges for Soviet Montage, as it was difficult to reconcile rapid visual editing with rapid sound editing in a decipherable manner. However, Communist authorities were also increasingly negative about Soviet Montage because they disagreed with the directors' versions and visions of Communism and distrusted the medium of film. Sound brought script and dialogue to the forefront of the censor's attention as censorship of words was easier than monitoring the abstract associations of intellectual montage. At the same time, photomontage artists were attempting to divorce the conception of photography from its association with the fine arts in Russia. Because of the reorganization of the arts and the proliferation of Socialist Realism, artistic expression was potentially dangerous and both photomontage and cinematographic montage artists had to be careful with their dissemination of new ideological images. Soviet Montage film tactics were supposed to serve the people, but the decision of whether they achieved these ends was left up to bureaucrats. In 1932, Joseph Stalin's decree "On the Reconstruction of Literary and Art Organizations," officially endorsed Socialist Realism over non-representative forms of art. The goal of Socialist Realism was to glorify the life of the common worker, the factory worker, and the farmer, as well as

educate citizens on the goals of Communism. Avant-garde aesthetics, which dominated the previous period, were often deemed difficult to interpret clearly and hence could not be used effectively for state propaganda. The fear that avant-garde art created a space for disrupting the overt meaning of the art and subverting the state's censorship board resulted in a denouncing of experimentalism, formalism, impressionism, and cubism as bourgeois, degenerate, and anti-Communist. Those artists who veered away from the official party line were punished and many artists felt incapable of expressing themselves freely. For example, the advent of sound inspired Eisenstein to travel abroad and study various filmmaking techniques. When Eisenstein returned to Russia in 1932 he was criticized as being "formalist," a favorite term of abuse lobbed by Stalin's regime at directors who were more concerned with experimenting with film language than speaking to the masses. Eisenstein's 1938 trilogy *Ivan the Terrible*, unfinished at the time of his death, was a Shakespearean drama about Ivan's brutal rule and madness, but the film's daring critique of Stalin resulted in a re-edit and finally a ban. Vertov, whose his interest in capturing everyday life would later influence cinéma vérité and Direct Cinema, was also later charged with "formalism" by the Stalinist regime and relegated to editing newsreels. Eventually, the tightening of Stalin's iron fist dashed the aesthetic and ideological hopes of the Socialist experiment, replacing them with an oppressive autocracy.

Conclusion

The ebullience many Soviet artists felt immediately after the revolution soured during the Stalin era. Even as his films were cinematic champions of his beliefs, Eisenstein, like many other artists, ran into trouble with Stalin's regime as early as 1928 on his third feature film, *October*. Eisenstein originally outlined Leon Trotsky's role in the revolution of 1917 within the film, but during the final stages of its completion Trotsky was branded a traitor and forced into exile. Eisenstein chose to rework *October* along party lines and Stalin's revisionist history. Eisenstein's later career was defined by aborted projects and artistic frustration, including his time in Hollywood and Mexico in 1930, which yielded no finished films. Although he later taught at the Institute of Cinematography in Moscow and avoided criticizing the state, he only produced six completed films, one of which was "destroyed" by German bombs during WWII. In reality, *Bezhin Meadow* (Eisenstein, 1937) was terminated by the Soviet government in 1938. With the official rise of Socialist Realism, Vertov turned away from film direction, instead editing

newsreels for the state. Perhaps one of the bitterest endings was the secret assassination of Gustav Klutsis at Moscow's infamous Butovo prison. The man who had worked so tirelessly, albeit oftentimes with surreal imagery, to perpetuate the cult of Stalin, was ultimately murdered at Stalin's behest. Valentina Kulagina tried for years to discover what had happened to her husband. In her diary, Kulagina wrote, "We could have anticipated anything - illness, accident - other things - but this never even occurred to us."[59] Not until 1989 did the state admit what she had known for so many years. In a sad twist of fate, the last photo Klutsis would pose for was a mugshot at Butovo prison before his execution. He had embodied various roles for the photographs he staged with Kulagina for inclusion in his propagandistic photomontages and yet, the mugshot is perhaps the most fitting tribute to Stalin. Stripped of the accoutrements of labor he often donned for his own photos, Klutsis stares into the camera, representing, one last time, all Russians.

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[1] The October Revolution of 1917 as one bookend and 1939 as the other because it marks, roughly, the end of "the Great Purge" implemented by Joseph Stalin and marked by repression and executions.

[2] Margarita Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina: Photography and Montage After Constructivism* (New York: International Center of Photography, 2009), 73. Gustav Klutsis was arrested on January 17, 1938, following his designation as an enemy of the state during the Great Purge. It was just months after returning from installing a photo panel for the Soviet Pavilion at the Paris World's Fair in 1937. He was accused of being part of a Latvian fascist-nationalist organization called Prometheus and executed on February 11, 1938.

[3] Eddie Wolfram, *History of Collage: An Anthology of Collage, Assemblage and Event Structures* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1976), 57.

[4] Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina*, 17.

[5] Yve-Alain Bois, "El Lissitzky," *Art in America* (1988), 174.

[6] Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina*, 10.

[7] Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina*, 19.

[8] Ibid.

[9] See Figures for one of Klutsis' rendering of an agitational stands.

[10] Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina*, 38. A lack of funds stymied the realization of any of Klutsis' agitational stands.

[11] David Bordwell and Kristen Thompson, *Film History: An Introduction* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2003), 129.

[12] Ibid.

[13] Sam Rohdie, *Montage* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2006), 82.

[14] Bordwell and Thompson, *Film History*, 129.

[15] Rohdie, *Montage*, 83.

[16] Ibid.

[17] Wolfram, *History of Collage*, 65.

[18] Dziga Vertov, *Kino-Eye: The Writings of Dziga Vertov*, ed. Annette Michelson, trans. Kevin O'Brien (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), 9.

[19] Ibid., 11.

[20] Ibid., 6.

[21] Ibid., 7.

[22] Ibid., 8.

[23] Sergei Eisenstein and Jay Leyda, *Film Form: Essays in Film Theory* (Orlando: Harcourt Brace and Company, 1947), 229.

[24] Sergei Eisenstein and Jay Leyda, *Film Form*, xix. An aside inspired by David James: "What as-yet-unfathomed ontological warp caused the figure" of Yeats to be invoked because of *Leda and the Swan* and Miss Leda Swan to be the figure thanked in Jay Leyda's Translator's Note for the "unstinting contribution of her knowledge of the Russian language"?

[25] Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina*, 20.

[26] Ibid., 19.

[27] Ibid., 17.

[28] Ibid., 66. Boris Eikhenbaum quoted in *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina*.

[29] Margarita Tupitsyn, Matthew Drutt and Ulrich Pohlmann, *El Lissitzky: Beyond the Abstract Cabinet*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 20.

[30] Vladimir Nilsen, *The Cinema as a Graphic Art* (London: Newnes Ltd., 1937), 109.

[31] Vsevolod Pudovkin, *Film Technique* (London: George Newnes Limited, 1929), 138-139.

[32] Ibid., 60-61.

[33] James Monaco, *How to Read a Film: Movies, Media, and Beyond* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 401.

[34] Pudovkin, *Film Technique*, XIV.

[35] Ibid., XV-XVI.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., XVI-XVII.

[38] Ibid., XVII.

[39] Vsevolod Pudovkin, *Film Technique and Film Acting*, (London: Vision Press, 1968), 89-90.

[40] David Bordwell, "Eisenstein, Socialist Realism, and the Charms of Mizanstsena," *Eisenstein at One Hundred*, eds. Albert J. LaValley and Barry P. Scherr, (New Jersey: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 13.

[41] Monaco, *How To Read a Film*, 403.

[42] Bordwell, "Eisenstein, Socialist Realism, and the Charms of Mizanstsena," 129.

[43] Ibid., 15.

[44] Rohdie, *Montage*, 41-42.

[45] Stanley Kauffman, *Ten Great Films*, (Rhinebeck, N.Y.: Sheep Meadow Press, 2012) 17.

[46] Ibid., 18.

[47] Ibid., 31.

[48] Vida T. Johnson, "Eisenstein and Tarkovsky: A Montage of Attractions," *Eisenstein at One Hundred*, Ed. by Albert J. LaValley and Barry P. Scherr (New Jersey, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2001), 162.

[49] Gustav Klutsis, "Fotomontazh kak novyi vid agitatsionnogo iskusstva" in *Izofront: Klassovaia bor'ba na fronte prostrantvennykh: Shornik statei ob'edineniia Oktiabr* (Leningrad: Izofront, 1931), 119-33. Reprinted in Tupitsyn, Margarita, Matthew Drutt and Ulrich Pohlmann, *El Lissitzky: Beyond the Abstract Cabinet*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999), 38.

[50] Bordwell, "Eisenstein, Socialist Realism, and the Charms of Mizanstsena," 129.

[51] Tupitsyn, Drutt, and Pohlmann, *El Lissitzky*, 119.

[52] Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina*, 201. This quote is from Valentina Kulagina's notebooks, Notebook #3, covering the dates December 20, 1929-July 10, 1932.

[53] Ibid.

[54] Ibid., 216.

[55] Ibid. Gustav Klutsis with Natalia Pinus and Valentina Kulagina with Boris Fedorovich Malkin.

[56] Ibid., 205.

[57] Victor Margolin, *The Struggle for Utopia: Rodchenko, Lissitsky, Moholy-Nagy 1917-1946* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997), 98.

[58] Ibid., 127.

[59] Tupitsyn, *Gustav Klutsis and Valentina Kulagina*, 230.

Chapter 3.
Establishing The Parameters of American Montage:
Slavko Vorkapich and "Vorky Shots"

"The cinema is like a marvelously gifted child, whose parents exploit its genius for commercial purposes… The youngster is ambitious. It craves to conquer a place among the older Arts."[1]

Introduction

Slavko Vorkapich, in his montages and theories, was an instance of a modernist drive for medium specificity. It is fitting, then, that he brought montage into the industry and made it forceful and visible as a form. While classical Hollywood cinema adhered to realism, Vorkapich's montage interludes represent modernist moments in a medium that resisted modernism. His work in the studios illustrates formal experimentation taking place in the American industrial setting of the 1930s. Vorkapich's montage sequences, embedded in larger realist narratives typical of classical Hollywood cinema, threaten to tear the realist mode asunder. In form as well as content, montage demonstrates modernism puncturing the realism of classical Hollywood cinema. Formally, montage juxtaposed imagery through hyper-kinetic edits and superimposition. The content of Vorkapich's montages enact the compression of time and space. The narrative plods along until suddenly a succession of kinetic cuts implies the passage of time or the condensation of space. The rallying of the villagers by Pancho Villa in *Viva Villa* (Jack Conway, 1934), for example, would take an inordinate amount of diegetic time if told in a realist manner. However, Vorkapich links a succession of shots of villagers taking up arms to give the viewer a sense of simultaneous action. All across the country, men are preparing to fight. The depiction of simultaneous activity heightens the excitement of the scene, capturing in a few flashes what would be impossible to convey conventionally.

Ultimately, though, Vorkapich's montage interludes serve as a starting point for the examination of how modernist impulses were ultimately contained by the realist narratives surrounding them. Once the montage ends, the narrative continues to plod along to its inevitable resolution. The revolutionary impulses contained in Soviet montage would have to find their expression outside of the industry, particularly in labor films. Operating as a counterpoint to the industry, the films of the Workers Film and Photo League reverberated with the techniques of Soviet montage. Made and controlled by a working class, these films were interested in consciously applying the techniques of the Soviets to mobilize the masses. Rather than a desire

to foment the masses, what drew Vorkapich to Hollywood was a commitment to an artistic revolution. Vorkapich, who firmly believed film was an art, wanted to develop a body of artistic and theoretical work to articulate his ideas of filmic specificity. Vorkapich's early theorizing about film aligns with other modernists arguing forcefully for film specificity. He worried "the cinema has been borrowing so much from the other arts, especially drama and literature, and it has become so entangled in those uncinematic elements, that it will be very hard for it to get rid of the bad habit and to come into its own."[2] As David James discusses in *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles*, Vorkapich's lectures to the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC) in 1926 were turned into short articles in the trade magazine *The Film Mercury* and the ASC journal *American Cinematographer*. James writes, "These articles of the mid-1920s argued a modernist theory of film specificity, proposing that while the cinema was fully accomplished as an industry, it had yet to distinguish its intrinsic and unique expressive resources from those of other mediums, and so it had yet to find itself as an art."[3] For Vorkapich, film's possibilities lay in motion.

Akin to other early film theorists, Vorkapich saw filmic specificity as the means by which film would be elevated to the status of painting, writing, and dramaturgy. In the September 3, 1926 article, "Motion in Motion Pictures, Part Two" in *The Film Mercury*, Vorkapich asked the reader, "Why should not the movies express certain human feelings, thoughts, visions, dreams, etc., *in their own particular way*?"[4] His answer for what makes film different is "pictures in motion or motion in pictures." For Vorkapich, the uniquely cinematic way of expressing things visually was in dynamic motion and rhythm. Every time he attended the cinema he hoped to see images onscreen, which demonstrate that "the movie's own particular way of saying things is the way of motion: beautiful, expressive, significant, artistic."[5] One example he points to is slow motion. He describes how slow motion allows an actor like Douglas Fairbanks to defy gravity. Fairbanks in slow motion appears weightless, untethered to the rules of gravity. Vorkapich states, "Some slow motion pictures gave us something enjoyable that no other art before could have given us" and proposes developing these motions into a whole language of film.[6] Ultimately, Vorkapich asserts what he believes is a potentially revolutionary idea, "the motion picture camera should represent not the physical, optical eye, but the inward, THE MIND'S EYE, the eye with which we watch our dreams, our visions, the pictures on the screen of our imagination."[7] Rather than simply record things as they actually are, Vorkapich

advocated for inspired movement onscreen capable of swaying the audience by drawing the viewer into the action emotionally and physically.

Vorkapich's career in Hollywood reveals extant tensions between the studio system and the individual. Vorkapich was the industry outsider when he made *The Life and Death of 9413*, and Vorkapich remained marginalized even when he was inside the studio system. Vorkapich's sequences were highly stylized. While they epitomize the exhilaration of modernist filmic experimentation, they often sit uneasily next to the larger realistic narrative. They are anthologized as Vorkapich's "greatest hits" on *Unseen Cinema* because they draw attention to themselves. Vorkapich, in attempting to carve out a specialized niche for himself, was similar to many immigrant artists who entered the studio system after World War I. Vorkapich's vibrant interludes established the parameters of montage in the American industrial setting and even ushered in a short period in which montage directors were tenuously accepted as part of the production process. However, each film Vorkapich worked on provides a clue as to why montage departments were a fleeting part of the studio system. In part, montage directors were doomed to fail in a system invested in invisible editing. By virtue of their difference in a studio system that prized transparent editing, they were fated to be controversial. While Vorkapich wanted recognition for his contributions and eventually received a "Montages by" credit, the finished films did not include a subtitle alerting the viewer to the start and finish of his work. Besides potentially making himself a "nuisance" by swiping footage from the editing department, Vorkapich's sequences were always at the mercy of the editor of the film. How and when they were incorporated into the finished picture depended on the editor, director, and producer. In *Manhattan Melodrama* (W.S. Van Dyke, 1934), for example, Vorkapich utilized a series of static shots to capture the horror of a fire aboard a river steamer. The crowd of survivors stare at the line of dead laid out in a neat row. This shot was later excised from the film because it was deemed too melancholy.[8]

An Emigré Artist Breaks into the Industry

Lured to Hollywood by a love of film, Vorkapich initially operated on the margins of the industry. Vorkapich was born March 17, 1894[9] in Dobrinci, Serbia; an early photograph of Vorkapich at age ten shows the budding artist with pencil poised above paper staring pensively into the distance.[10] World War I made Vorkapich a refugee, and he travelled with the Serbian

army to Albania, Italy, and finally to France where he attended the Ecole des Beaux Arts to study painting. As an art student in Paris, Vorkapich spent his free time at the cinema, falling in love with the films of William Hart, Mack Sennett, Douglas Fairbanks, D.W. Griffith, Rex Ingram, and Charlie Chaplin. Vorkapich's fascination with the movies, which he called the "art of the century,"[11] and an aspiration to work in Hollywood led him to immigrate to the United States in 1920. Vorkapich was "discovered" by the director Rex Ingram when Ingram noticed Vorkapich's sketched portrait of his wife, the actress Alice Terry, in the photography studio of dance photographer Thomas Bouchard.[12] In Vorkapich's recollection of this fortuitous meeting, Vorkapich told Ingram he immigrated to Los Angeles for "the art of film" and Ingram's response was "Film is not an art, it's an industry!"[13] Struck by the Yugoslavian expatriate, Ingram gave Vorkapich his first work in the studios as an extra and assistant set designer on *Prisoner of Zenda* (Rex Ingram, 1922). Ingram also cast Vorkapich as a drunken artist on *Trifling Women* (Rex Ingram, 1922) and as Napoleon Bonaparte in *Scaramouche* (Rex Ingram, 1923).[14] In two photos of Vorkapich in his costume for *Scaramouche*, the bicorne perched upon a chin-length wig transforms Vorkapich into a believably supercilious Napoleon.[15] After a brief stint in Hollywood from 1921-22, Vorkapich moved to Santa Barbara and opened up his own art studio. Through his work as a portrait painter, Vorkapich earned enough money to buy a Devry camera and a projector. His artwork and his Spanish Costume Dance Party were reviewed in a Santa Barbara newspaper in 1922, but the thought of Hollywood and the Santa Barbara earthquake shook Vorkapich back to Los Angeles in 1925.[16] Vorkapich's burgeoning theories about film as art, however, were unshakeable.

For Vorkapich, the uniquely filmic way of expressing things was in capturing the world of motion. Rather than see film as an extension of other mediums, Vorkapich advocated the creation of a dynamic visual language. For film to be art, one had to liberate the medium from the confines of its ability to record an event, person, or performance. Vorkapich felt value should stem from a uniquely filmic structure about the subject. As David James points out, Vorkapich believed "Written language (as in intertitles) and still photography were already other mediums, so film's possibilities had to lie elsewhere, specifically in the production of motion."[17] Vorkapich, in his lectures to the ASC that were published in 1926, describes the opening scenes of F.W. Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924) as emblematic of film's potential to capture motion. For Vorkapich, Murnau achieved an artistic sense of organization from the natural movements

surrounding the life of a busy hotel. Murnau portrays the daily responsibilities of the Doorman (Emil Jannings) in the bustling lobby of the Atlantic Hotel as guests whirl in and out of the revolving doors. James quotes Vorkapich's description of *The Last Laugh*'s opening scenes:

> all these actions were composed into a real symphony of motions. It was not confusion. There were five or six distinct motions excellently orchestrated. Optically speaking, the movie patterns of black and white on the screen were pleasing and intriguing to the eye! Mentally speaking, they gave a convincing picture of a hotel. It was throbbing with life and artistically true.[18]

In this quote, Vorkapich employs an analogy for filmmaking to which he would constantly return, the act of musical composition as equivalent to constructing a film. In another ASC lecture, Vorkapich even suggested the use of musical terminology in screenwriting, like andantes, largos, lentos, and prestos.[19] Referencing a "symphony of motions" links Vorkapich to other filmmakers, including Dudley Murphy, Fernand Leger, Man Ray, and Viking Eggeling, engaged in the combination of film, music, and rhythm.[20] In 1930, in an article in the *Cinematographic Annual*, Vorkapich writes, "A perfect motion picture would be comparable to a symphony. It would have a definite rhythmical pattern, each of its movements would correspond to the mood of the sequence and each individual phrase (scene) would be an organic part of the whole."[21] Vorkapich always dreamed of acting as conductor to compose a filmic symphony and would realize this dream much later in life with his *Moods of the Sea* (1941).

The influence of German Expressionism was visible not just in Vorkapich's work but in Hollywood, in general. Tracing how Expressionism entered Hollywood, cameramen added "UFA shots" to their jargon and practice during the silent era. "UFA shots" were lap-dissolves frequently paired with superimposed camera effects made popular by European émigrés such as Ernst Lubitsch, Ewald Andre Dupont, and Emil Jannings. The impact of Expressionism is especially apparent in *The Life and Death of 9413: A Hollywood Extra* (1928), the experimental short film Vorkapich created with the help of Robert Florey and Gregg Toland.[22] The film depicts the subjective experience of an extra struggling to land a role in Hollywood. Florey, Chaplin's assistant at the time; Gregg Toland, a young cinematographer; and Vorkapich all existed on the margins of the industry when they constructed the film's unique structure. Marko Babac, who compiled Vorkapich's articles and essays into *Slavko Vorkapich: On True Cinema*, maintains the number assigned to the extra, 9413, refers to the year Vorkapich was born (1894)

and the amount of money Vorkapich had when he arrived in America (thirteen dollars). The film was cooked up on Vorkapich's kitchen table out of miniatures comprised of cardboard collected from cigar boxes and Vorkapich's laundry boxes. Toland photographed the shots at night using one 400-watt lamp and only two actors were used, Jules Raucort and Voya Georges, both friends of Vorkapich.[23] The impressionistic short gathered momentum as soon as Florey screened it for Chaplin. After the film gained traction around town, newspaper articles about "this little freak movie" were as impressed with how the picture only cost $97 to make as they were at how difficult it was to understand.[24] On the film notes for the DVD *Avant-garde Experimental Cinema of the 1920s and '30s*, Elliott Stein characterizes the film as a critique of industrialized society and especially Hollywood's star system, predicated on absolute success or failure.[25] In focusing on the life and tragic death of a Hollywood extra, Florey, Toland, and Vorkapich force the viewer to consider the dehumanizing nature of mass media. The dizzying effect of shapes merging and the repeated shot of 9413 emblazoned across the actor's forehead suggest a dystopian society where men become numbers to those in power. Only death and ascension to heaven will erase the number and restore the man's humanity. Stein connects the film to trends in foreign cinema but ultimately sees it as distinctly American. He argues, "Although influenced by German Expressionism, particularly *Metropolis*,[26] this seminal film's irreverent humor and Hollywood satire is American and found favor with Charles Chaplin and Douglas Fairbanks."[27] Chaplin even arranged private screenings at his home for other Hollywood luminaries[28] and accompanied the film on the piano with George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue."[29] At Chaplin's suggestion, Florey and Vorkapich considered renaming the film *The Blues Rhapsody of Hollywood*.[30]

Irreverence is an apt description of the film's lambasting of the dream factory by three (at that time) relatively unknown players. The film flippantly calls a Hollywood casting director "Mr. Almighty" and equates the city to a monster with tentacles. The disrespect the film conveys towards Hollywood must have resonated with Chaplin and Fairbanks, who often found themselves at odds with the studios. In a column called *Screenographs* from February 1928, author Harrison Carroll writes about the film, "In many respects, *The Life and Death of 9413* is the strangest film ever made. To begin with, it was photographed with an amateur camera in the kitchen and bedroom of S. Vorkapitch, a Serbian artist, who collaborated with Florey on the production."[31] Vorkapich, displaying a wry sense of humor in his scrapbooks, drew a line in ink

from Carroll's quote and wrote, "I get almost as much credit as my kitchen and bedroom."[32] Eventually United Artists bought the film and exhibited it in conjunction with *Sadie Thompson* (Raoul Walsh, 1928) as a one-and-a-half reeler called *An Extra's Nightmare*. In the 1920s, the new movie picture palaces often screened newsreels, comedies, and other shorts before the main picture. Florey, Toland, and Vorkapich had made the film in 35mm with the hope that it would find distribution. *The Life and Death of 9413: A Hollywood Extra* helped all three of its creators, who used it as a stepping-stone within the industry. Indicative of, as James mentions, "More or less independent filmmakers in Hollywood who produced a variety of innovative 'calling-card' films, expecting that their experimentation would facilitate, not preclude, the commercial distribution of their work and perhaps bring them contacts and contracts in the industry."[33] The film not only found commercial distribution but it also established connections for Florey, Toland, and Vorkapich that would lead to commercial employment.

For example, the film's judicious use of visual effects landed Vorkapich a contract at Paramount in the Special Effects Department. David James writes of Paramount, "Before its collapse into bankruptcy in 1935 and reorganization among more mainstream lines, Paramount, where the Marx Brothers did their best work, was known for its 'European' orientation and for providing a home to émigré Europeans."[34] The studio hired Vorkapich for his special effects knowledge, and it was at Paramount that Vorkapich began to shape Hollywood's adoption of montage as an aesthetic and narrative device. It was during his time at Paramount that Vorkapich began considering how the laws of perception can shape an understanding of film as a visual language. Called on to create a daydream sequence of a chorus-girl imagining herself as a big star on Broadway, Vorkapich spent a long night in Paramount's back lot setting up a dolly shot to capture the actress traipsing dreamily along. He instructed the cinematographer to use low-key lighting on the street. Happy with the shot, Vorkapich slept like a baby. Alas, the next day, the dailies revealed the actress's face "bobbing up and down like a lure in the Pacific."[35] Vorkapich, ignorant of the "perceptual principle of induced motion" of Gestalt psychology, had violated the rules without knowing first how to observe them. The rule states, "If a stationary object is surrounded by a moving background then the object appears as moving, and the background or framework as stationary."[36] In retrospect, Vorkapich realized by shooting a homogenous background he negated the actress's motion in ambient space. Instead, he should have shot the

lights of the surrounding marquees receding into the distance on both sides of the actress's close-up. Vorkapich felt viewers react bodily, kinesthetically, to visual change.

Around the same time Vorkapich started work at Paramount, Vorkapich's work began to resonate with Soviet montage filmmaking. This is especially evident in the montage sequence he completed for Dorothy Arzner's *Manhattan Cocktail* (1928). Although the film as a whole is lost, Vorkapich's montage sequence survived because Vorkapich kept prints of all his interludes. Included on the third DVD, "Light Rhythms," of the *Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant Garde Film 1894 – 1941* compilation, Vorkapich's "Skyline Dance" anticipates Dziga Vertov and Yelizaveta Svilova's *Man With a Movie Camera* (1929). Vorkapich animates a scene of Manhattan by playing the footage first forwards then backwards. This brings the birds-eye view of the city street alive, making it seem as if the cars are jumping and jiving. Superimposed over the city scene are nimble chorus girls in silhouette. The juxtaposition of the agile dancers and the city street combines to present a vivacious view of Manhattan. In contrast to Vertov's desire to portray the benefits of electrification, industrialization, and labor by the working class, Vorkapich enlivens the entire city in this brief sequence as a place for enjoying life through dance. This is a theme Vorkapich would return to throughout his career and he would later collaborate with the Jewish musicological archivist Corinne Chochem and the modern graphic design pioneer Alvin Lustig on the 1948 book *Jewish Holiday Dances*.[37] Vorkapich's arresting photography paired with Lustig's dynamic designs results in a joyous recreation of Jewish folk dances.

Vorkapich's exposure to Soviet cinema is apparent in an article he published in the *Cinematographic Annual* of 1930, entitled "Cinematics: Some Principles Underlying Effective Cinematography," wherein he lays out the interrelationship between filmic motions and specific emotions. Vorkapich writes, "The diagonal, dynamic motion suggests power, overcoming of obstacles by force. A battle sequence may be made very effective by using short sharp diagonal clashes of arms: flags, guns, bayonets, lances and swords cutting the screen diagonally, soldiers running uphill, flashes of battle shot with slanting camera."[38] This quote evokes Soviet cinema with its dynamic, diagonal lines. Specifically, it brings to mind the clash of soldiers and citizens in the Odessa Steps sequence. It also prefigures the battle sequences Vorkapich created at MGM for *The Firefly* (Robert Z. Leonard, 1937). These sequences employ short sharp clashes with guns, bayonets, swords, and soldiers running to lance across the screen diagonally. The energy of

the "Rebellion and War Montage" is indicated in Vorkapich's script, which lists in staccato succession the improvised weapons the Spaniards wield to attack the invading French army — "rifles, pistols, swords, clubs, pitchforks, axes, knives and spears gathered from the corners of their huts, shops, stables, and barns."[39] Vorkapich's affinity for battle scenes, however, began at Paramount on *The Vagabond King* (Ludwig Berger, 1930).

Vorkapich matches excitement with affectation in the scene of beggars marching to battle in *The Vagabond King*, for which he was not officially given credit. In his scrapbooks, Vorkapich amended the April 1930 review of the film in *The Film Spectator* to express his displeasure with the article's description of the film. While the review calls Berger's directing "stiff and cumbersome" it acknowledges the "one brief moment in the march of the beggars to battle outside the city's walls he soared into a freedom and strength of expression that was almost breathtaking."[40] In his scrapbook, Vorkapich underlined this quote and wrote "SV!!!" Faced with the dilemma of a collaborative medium, Vorkapich reconciled himself to editing the review so it reflected his involvement. Ironically, on at least one occasion Vorkapich did not receive screen credit even when Paramount was simultaneously touting his contributions to the studio. In a publicity photo by the studio, Vorkapich is portrayed directing a scene for a montage for the pre-Motion Picture Production Code *Girls About Town* (George Cukor, 1931). The photo shows the film's cinematographer, Ernest Haller, behind the camera and Vorkapich seated nearby. Both men gaze intently at the actress Adrienne Ames as she dons a sheer stocking. Ames, who played an uncredited party girl in the film, is presented as the object of desire. The photo recreates on a small scale the voyeuristic system of commercial cinema with Ames, the object of the male gaze, present only as a reflection in a mirror. The photo's accompanying copy reads, "Slavko Vorkapich is Paramount's trick shot director. Some of his handiwork appears in almost every Paramount picture for he is called in for all such work."[41] Despite the claim that Vorkapich had a hand "in almost every Paramount picture," Vorkapich was uncredited on *Girls About Town*.

This was partly because Vorkapich blurred the boundaries between creative and technical workers. With the industrialization of the production process throughout the 1920s along Henry Ford's automobile assembly line came a concurrent segregation of creative and technical workers. While Vorkapich was ostensibly one of the technical workers housed within the Special Effects Department, the publicity photo shows him directing Haller, akin to a creative worker,

the Director. One montage of note in *Girls About Town* echoes German Expressionism as it compresses time with quick edits set to the sounds of a party in full swing. Wanda (Kay Francis) and Marie (Lilyan Tashman) are showing two out-of-town businessmen a good time but privately complaining about it in the ladies powder room. When they return to their table, a shot of a waiter pulling champagne out of an ice bucket dissolves into a montage of the table getting drunk. The sequence recalls the Hotel Doorman's inebriated state at his niece's wedding in *The Last Laugh*. Superimposed over a moving shot of champagne glasses on a table, corks pop, champagne flows, bubbles explode, garish faces loom towards the viewer, and a tear runs slowly down Marie's face.[42] Throughout the 1930s, Vorkapich would work on three films directed by George Cukor, *What Price Hollywood* (1932), *A Bill of Divorcement* (1932), and *Romeo and Juliet* (1936). While *Girls About Town* echoes German Expressionism in its depiction of the subjective experience of falling under the influence, Vorkapich's work also drew on Soviet montage film and theory.

Besides borrowing the aesthetics of German Expressionism, Vorkapich's work reflected the influence of Soviet montage filmmakers and especially Eisenstein. Like the Soviets, Vorkapich felt strongly he was equal parts theorist and practitioner. Similar to Sergei Eisenstein, Lev Kuleshov, and Dziga Vertov, Vorkapich strove to create uniquely filmic compositions that resonated with symbolism. Like the Soviets, he was interested in producing an intellectual response in the viewer and saw film's true nature embodied in "composing visually, but in time."[43] From Soviet montage film and theory came Vorkapich's ideas about an omnipresent camera and analytical montage, the breaking down of an action or event into its component parts. Unlike the Soviets, who theorized editing as the basis of filmmaking, Vorkapich believed film's possibilities lay in the production of motion. For Vorkapich, capturing the "world of motions"[44] combined with editing would result in a dynamic visual language. He stated, "Beautiful photography is only surface embellishment, while cinematography is the gathering of visual-dynamic-meaningful elements, which creative cutting combines into living entities."[45] In this quote Vorkapich emphasizes the effect of forces upon the motions of material bodies, forging a direct link with Eisenstein and other Soviet Montage filmmakers. Despite a shared acknowledgement of the importance of kinetics, the divergent cultural and political contexts informing their work made other differences more profound. The Soviets designed films to provoke thought and inspire direct action. Vorkapich's interludes were dictated by the

parameters of the commissions he was given within the studio system. Employed predominantly by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Columbia, Vorkapich was called on to produce two kinds of montage: the illustration of traumatic experiences in melodramas and the condensation of narrative in various genres. Vorkapich examines tragic events with efficiency in the famine sequence in *The Good Earth* and the battle scenes in *The Firefly*. The compression of narrative transformed important events within the story, which could stretch decades, and squeezed them into a spectacularly small amount of screen time. This is the case in Jeannette MacDonald's rise to fame in *Maytime*, the outbreak of revolution in *Viva Villa*, and Edward G. Robinson's jail time in *The Last Gangster* (Edward Ludwig, 1937). Whereas continuity cutting tries to be as unobtrusive as possible to keep the audience from noticing it, effect cutting in montage draws attention to itself. In order to cut a montage effectively, Vorkapich believed in shooting for it. He said, "The filmic mind should really become an omnipresent mind, and it should try to visualize all action from every possible angle."[46] This is reminiscent of the radical reversibility apparent in the work of Klutsis and Eisenstein.

Vorkapich was also drawn to Eisenstein's ability to evoke emotion through editing. Vorkapich explained,

> Sometimes, in cutting, the movements are slightly overlapped, i.e., each new fragment begins a little back of the point already reached by the preceding fragment; in other words, in each new strip a small fraction of the preceding movement is repeated. Often surprisingly beautiful effects result. A sort of rhythmical time-stretching occurs. There are several striking instances of this effect in Eisenstein's earlier films.[47]

In the sequence where the sailor breaks his plate, Eisenstein intensifies the action by observing the event from multiple points of view. By linking multiple shots, Eisenstein creates one small yet ideologically powerful moment. The sailor and the broken plate informed Vorkapich's depiction of the murder of the heroine Margo and the unleashing of the Furies in *Crime without Passion* (1934). Vorkapich drew on Eisenstein's method of capturing several points of view in the creation of the montage sequence he was most proud of and, perhaps not coincidentally, was produced outside of the studios by the independent Hecht-MacArthur Company. This is the Vorkapich montage, above all others, which is more Soviet than American. "By making their own selections of shots or designs and intercutting them in various ways students become aware of a new purely filmic force: more or less intense visual impact that occurs at each cut."[48]

Shooting an action with as many simple motions as possible and from a variety of angles is the way to distinguish cinema from the simple act of recording. "This process is really a filmic liberation of bits of dynamic visual energies, extracted from a simple event in reality. Each angle is selected to take hold of a single clear visual note. None is intended for any individual display as a 'best shot' in the picture, not any more than a note is intended to be the best in a melody. In the recreation of the event in cutting, each filmic facet acquires value only by its place in the total filmic structure."[49]

Vorkapich wrestled with Eisenstein's "Cinematography Principle and Ideogram" and its assertions about how to build an intellectual film through editing. "Eisenstein's invention would not have any particular value, except decorative perhaps, if one would have first to learn by heart a whole system of combinations, a whole new language in order to be able to understand intellectual film."[50] Since Eisenstein wanted the connections to be understood by the viewer, Vorkapich attempted to visualize practically how to apply Eisenstein. In thinking through the associative possibilities between images, Vorkapich was clearly influenced by Eisenstein's connecting montage to Chinese ideograms. However, Vorkapich developed a uniquely American way to capture this concept in his description of montage's relationship to the American Indian. In his "The Meaning and Value of Montage," Vorkapich writes:

> The principle of Montage is not new. It is as old as human expression, language, or art. When an American Indian wants to tell another from a different tribe that he is happy he makes signs for 'Sunrise — in — the Heart.' He puts together two apparently unrelated images and lo! an expression visual and rich is born. A perfect Montage!"[51]

This quote evokes a picture of Vorkapich as the European immigrant besotted with an image of the American West partly created by Hollywood pictures. The ideogram is a useful analogy for considering superimposition as a technique. Superimposition forces the viewer to reconsider the object onscreen. If an object on a table appears by itself, it retains its identity and natural behavior. However, superimposing another object atop the first object changes both objects. The two objects must now be defined in relation to each other. Vorkapich's ruminations on how a close-up shot disassociates an object from its context echoes Kuleshov's editing experiments. Vorkapich writes of an object in close-up, "It is thus more or less liberated and made available for new combinations, both in respect of its visual values and of its meaning connotations."[52]

Kuleshov demonstrated how the same close-up of a face could result in different meaning connotations when juxtaposed with different objects.

Conquering RKO, 1932-34

The early 1930s saw Vorkapich crafting numerous montage interludes for various studios. Slotted into a variety of film genres, what unites these montages is their quick edits, the use of stock footage, and the desire to evoke a mood or theme in as little amount of time as possible. Vorkapich was also utilizing "certain types of visual changes, namely: lap-dissolves, fades, changes of focus, changes in iris, rhythmical cutting etc."[53] This coincided with Vorkapich's greater exposure to the optical printer, which produced a multitude of effects including dissolves, fades, multiple images, split screens, slow motion, superimpositions, and enlargements of parts of the frame to create close-ups. Vorkapich's process before he started constructing any montage involved first conveying his ideas in treatment form. Perhaps one of the reasons Vorkapich initially thrived within the studio system is what attracted Rex Ingram's notice in the first place — Vorkapich's ability to draw. Vorkapich would prepare to construct a montage by first ascertaining the central idea to be conveyed and then figuring out how to express it pictorially. At this stage, Vorkapich would draw detailed sketches of shots he wanted to use. The equivalent of a look-book today, these sketches captured the montage visually before Vorkapich even started work. Most importantly, the film's producer could approve his montage look-books.

Vorkapich's skill at conveying his ideas in treatment form is displayed in his drawings for the RKO film *The Conquerors* (William A. Wellman, 1932). The film, which encompasses life in the Standish family from 1870 to the early 1930s, suggests that America comes back stronger after periods of economic crisis. These black, orange, and white sketches expressed strong diagonal lines of action, embodying Vorkapich's ideas about creating motion in every shot. Like the work of the Soviets, the drawings play with a sense of scale. In one drawing, a man building a bridge appears gigantic and distorted when depicted from below. Vorkapich, using exquisite detail, embodies a feeling of industry by pairing the man at work with busy factory chimneystacks in the background. Another drawing foregrounds a test-tube beaker with boiling water and bears a hand-written note to "dissolve from test tubes to factory chimneys."[54] The links between science and industry are foregrounded in another set of drawings emphasizing

ingenuity as men at desks invent a steam engine. One finished montage sequence for *The Conquerors* evokes Hans Richter's work in the twenties. Vorkapich's encapsulation of the Great Depression contained motifs similar to the prologue for *Inflation* (Hans Richter, 1928). Vorkapich depicted chimneys smoking, the busy stock exchange, happy faces, growing stacks of coins, and finally, distraught faces. To capture the manic prosperity right before the Depression of 1873, Vorkapich used a reverse action shot of the coins. First, he constructed a brass tube and leaned it against the coins. When the brass tube was removed, the coins fell backward. Next, Vorkapich shot the sequence in slow motion and finally, reversed the footage in the optical printer. The resulting image has a magical quality as the coins fly exultantly onto the pile higher and higher.

Vorkapich's time at RKO coincided with David O. Selznick's tenure as Head of Production. Although Vorkapich thought of himself as a Selznick protégé, he referred to Selznick as "a dictator on the whole" when it came to overseeing RKO's productions.[55] For *The Conquerors*, Selznick assigned Vorkapich a montage sequence which called for the expression of "Prosperity and Depression" in the year 1888.[56] In recounting the process, Vorkapich describes being "left alone," which fits with a specialized division of labor within the classical studio system. Vorkapich would first write and sketch a treatment for the producer to see what he intended. Vorkapich explained how Selznick gave him the freedom to direct the stars, set up camera angles, and suggest the lighting.[57] Simultaneously, Vorkapich admitted he couldn't touch anything because he was non-union.[58] Revealing the tensions between the individual and a collaborative working environment, Vorkapich takes credit for the overall look of the montage (lighting, shot selection, direction, and editing) at the same time that he explains he couldn't actually touch anything on set because he was non-union. Vorkapich clearly saw himself in contrast to the technical workers who helped enact his vision. Eventually, the merging of symbolism and spectacle in *The Conquerors* attracted attention from a reviewer in *Variety*, who singled out Vorkapich's work: "Best efforts are the symbolistic connecting sequences conceived and directed by Slavko Vorkapich. Slavish technician has done some pip stuff that will please the arty critics and average audiences alike."[59]

Although Vorkapich's "pip stuff" earned him a credit for "transitional effects" on *The Conquerors*, his work on *Turn Back the Clock* (Edgar Selwyn, 1933) was once again uncredited. However, Vorkapich's treatment alone for "Effects for the Anesthetic Transition" in the film

befits a descent into anesthesia. Despite its rather droll title, the treatment recalls Surrealistic dream sequences in its experimental visualization of Joe's (Lee Tracy) subjective trip. The treatment visualizes time as viscous in order to capture Joe's gradual loss of consciousness. Vorkapich recommends opening up the montage with an Eyemo close-up of Joe on an operating table. Slowly a shot of a pool of mercury should be superimposed over the image. As drops of mercury fall into the pool of liquid, centrifugal ripples radiate outward. Vorkapich writes, "Heavy fumes float across in slow motion while at the same time dizzily revolving whirlpools zoom up from the corners of the screen. Every angle is shot off balance and all sense of direction and up and down is lost. Drops change into large steel balls that fall and bounce off in slow motion. Balls change into heavy drumsticks beating large drums."[60] Vorkapich's dedication to rhythm and symbolism is conjured by the beating drums denoting the patient's slowing heartbeat. Unfortunately, the only aspect of this psychedelic sequence that ended up in the film was the drop of mercury rippling the surface to suggest Joe slipping under the ether.

Unleashing a Symphony of Motions in 1934

A dream turned nightmare is the feeling evoked by the unleashing of the Furies sequence in *Crime Without Passion*, which Vorkapich completed for the independent Hecht-MacArthur film shot at the Paramount Studios in Astoria, Long Island. Of all of Vorkapich's inventive montage sequences, this one best encapsulates his theories of dynamic motion. The sublime sequence is a symphony of movement and music exploring the theme of alienation in a morally bereft urban landscape. Vorkapich's agents had sent him to New York at the behest of Ben Hecht, who was told he would make a fantastic editor.[61] Vorkapich was adamantly against editing the entire film but amenable to Hecht's suggestion that they do something together. After Vorkapich described his work on other montages, Hecht gave him the theme of "furies flying over New York and laughing at human passion."[62] Although he was constrained by a budget, Vorkapich had a free hand to create whatever he wanted and later felt it was the best thing he ever accomplished.[63] Vorkapich discusses the Furies sequence in "The Meaning and Value of Montage," where he expounds on how montage "could become a true filmic form of expression."[64] Vorkapich describes, "mounting, assembling, putting together" as montage's general meaning but expands on this definition in articulating montage's special meaning:

Putting together two or more images, one next to another, one after another or one on top of (superimposed on) another to depict an event, to suggest a lapse of time, to convey an idea, to arouse an emotion, to express a state of mind, to create a mood or 'atmosphere.' This mounting of images, besides being expressive, must possess a certain visual rhythm.[65]

Vorkapich was interested in montage because through juxtaposition he could transcend the literal meanings of two shots to create poetic images. A successful montage sequence builds on the concerns of the poet – tempo, rhythm, visual change, and imagery – and adds the specifically filmic principle of movement. These elements are highlighted in Vorkapich's montage sequence for *Crime without Passion*, in which Vorkapich builds tempo and rhythm to a powerful climax.

The sequence starts with an open and terrified eye, which recalls the eye awaiting disfigurement as well as the visual disassociation of images in *Un Chien d'Andalou* (Louis Bunuel, 1929). Through a dissolve, Vorkapich moves from a frozen frame close-up of Margo's eye opened wide in fear to the revolver pointed at her. The graphic match from the circular shape of the iris to the barrel of the revolver establishes a disembodied eye staring at death. The link between the two shots is purely visual and thus different from Eisenstein's conceptual combination of slaughter shots in *Strike*. However, Vorkapich does employ the visually poetic graphic match to heighten the intensity of the interlude. The gun barrel places the terrified eye in context – the viewer is jarringly inserted into a horrific tableaux. Margo's eye twitches in close-up and alternating black and white frames convey the bullet's explosion. Vorkapich cuts to Margo's eyes wincing in pain and then cuts to an out of focus shot of smoke leaving the gun and a man's blurry figure silhouetted against an open doorway. The out-of-focus shot puts the viewer in the emotionally intense subjectivity of the woman about to be killed. As Margo falls in slow motion to the floor, Vorkapich stretches time slightly and imbues the shot with importance. Vorkapich writes, "Sometimes, in cutting the movements are slightly overlapped, i.e., each new fragment begins a little back of the point already reached by the preceding fragment... Often surprisingly beautiful effects result. A sort of rhythmical time-stretching occurs."[66] Vorkapich emphasizes a drop of blood hitting the floor and suddenly, Margo becomes one of the vengeful Furies. In the space of a few drops of blood, Margo is transformed from murder victim to a powerful force. Vorkapich superimposes an ethereal woman over the dark blood, emphasizing the moment she leaps into the air, ecstatic with rage, by repeating her ascent multiple times. The

subjective aerial shots as the Fury careens over the city are interspersed with quick cuts of a knife slashing downwards and another Fury taking flight from a drop of blood. The three Furies take to the skies over the city, their translucent dresses waving gracefully as they wreak havoc on the relationships of unfaithful men and women. The striking image of the stunning yet dreadful Furies in white set against a black background imagines the women as a force of Nature. Like a reversed white on black Rorschach, they resemble flames or comets or giant killer butterflies trapped in the moment of metamorphosis, too close to the chrysalis stage to be truly beautiful.

In the September 1937 Bulletin of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Vorkapich described how he created the special effects in the montage. To achieve the effect of the Furies coming up through the air toward the camera, Vorkapich first tried to suspend the actresses on wires. When that failed, Vorkapich engineered a practical effect to create the illusion of movement. He placed the camera on a boom and a black swath of velvet on the floor. The actresses were placed on a velvet-covered platform a few feet above the floor. The actresses were shot stationary from above, and the camera moved downwards past them.[67] In the sequence, the Furies appear to be flying towards the camera. In order to depict the Furies floating, Vorkapich shot the actresses with a wind machine and the camera above them, and then superimposed the shot onto a moving background to convey the impression of motion.[68] The money piling up was a reverse motion.

The destruction and death that accompanies the Furies is symbolized near the end by Vorkapich's equation of the face of the Fury with a skeleton laughing. This shot is linked to the film's narrative as falling glass forms the words "crime without passion." Vorkapich describes the technical problems he had shooting the glass breaking sequence in a 1938 lecture at Columbia University. Vorkapich's effects man was worried the actress would get hurt if she broke the window with her hand. However, remembering Eisenstein's plate breaking sequence, Vorkapich knew he could achieve the sequence by linking several shots in the cutting. He filmed the actress hitting toward the camera in one shot, a pane of glass broken with a piece of iron in the next shot, and a pane of glass hitting the pavement in the third. Vorkapich felt the end result was better than had they done it in one shot, for together the three shots capture "the breaking of the window much more vividly."[69] In his insightful, dense section on Vorkapich, James writes of the relationship between Vorkapich's Furies and the film it was embedded in:

As decorative embellishments of the fates of the characters that the diegesis recounts in detail, they are dependent, subordinate, and narratively superfluous. On the other hand, they are the narrative's condensed essence, its thematic and affective core. Though the narrative could dispense with them, they could equally well dispense with the narrative.[70]

This is exactly what has happened in the case of "The Furies." It has not only been extracted from the diegesis of *Crime without Passion* and uploaded to YouTube, but it is also included on *Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant Garde Film 1894 – 1941*, released by Image Entertainment. On the DVD, Bruce Posner's film notes state "Vorkapich had complete creative freedom in writing, designing, directing and editing his montage sequences for feature films."[71] Despite the leeway afforded Vorkapich to shoot montage sequences with his own crew, it did not eliminate the constraints he ultimately felt imposed on his work by the studio system. One problem Vorkapich constantly faced was getting montage budgets approved by the producer. He always faced an argument over how much money he would be allocated; eventually, he felt Rex Ingram was right that film is a business because of the consternation surrounding whether or not a film would make its money back. Even when Vorkapich was pleased with his finished montage, the versions he submitted were often altered before they were incorporated into the picture. Often the producer and director were unsatisfied with the length of the montage. After previewing the interlude, Vorkapich would hear a chorus of "it's too long." Either Vorkapich was forced to reduce the montage in length or he would discover it had been shortened once he saw the finished film.

Wreaking Montage Mayhem at MGM, 1934-1939

Achieving credit was paramount to Vorkapich when he began work at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Upon arriving, Vorkapich advocated for credit titles as a Montage Director and established the Montage Department in the days of Irving Thalberg. Housed in Bungalow 9 on the MGM lot,[72] Vorkapich's responsibilities for completing a montage from start to finish included sketching potential shots for a treatment, writing a script from his sketches, constructing the sets, shooting the setups, making a chart for the optical printer, and editing. Throughout the entire process, Vorkapich would confer with the film's producer. While he worked with his own crew, Vorkapich sometimes encountered a director who wanted to physically direct the star even during the montage filming.[73] In such instances, Vorkapich acted like a consultant suggesting

how the shots would fit into the montage sequence. Even with his own crew, Vorkapich needed approval from the director or producer; with sketches in hand; Vorkapich could get an ok to shoot from the producer, who would estimate the cost. Over the course of his career within the studios, Vorkapich thrived when the producer encouraged his vision. Otherwise, his work within the montage department was seen as not just separate from the editing departments of Paramount, RKO, MGM, and Warner Bros. but even a nuisance. Harold Kress, the editor on *The Good Earth,* described Vorkapich as an interloping troublemaker during the production, saying, "They thought they were running the whole show. They did background for main titles, time montages. I don't know."[74] Kress's dismissal reflects both the self-aggrandizement regularly occurring within Hollywood and the lack of a working relationship between the editing departments and the montage departments. Instead, in an industry with a highly specialized division of labor, each department guarded their part of the process.

The multiple treatments Vorkapich wrote out for the effects sequences in the David O. Selznick production *Dancing Lady* (Robert Z. Leonard, 1933), which starred Clark Gable and Joan Crawford, showcase the repertoire of filmic devices he hoped to utilize. In the "Cuban Sequence," for example, Vorkapich's script calls for composite shots, panning shots, close-ups, and dissolves. Vorkapich heightens the intensity of a gambling montage with a "fast montage" of "Hands shuffling cards. Cards being dealt. Hands shaking dice. Dice rolling on felt. Fortune wheel revolving. Roulette. Hands placing coins and chips on numbers. Chuck-a-luck cage turning."[75] This staccato description arouses the excitement of a gambling floor and brings to mind the analogy of musical composition, which Vorkapich often used to describe filmmaking. For Vorkapich, motion created in editing was akin to the creation of music. Motion created in editing is used to great effect in the association of imbibing alcohol and feeling light-headed in *Dancing Lady*. The "Analytical Montage of Rumba Dance" ends when Tod's Grandmother coquettishly drinks a glass of champagne and "The screen explodes into millions of bubbles."[76] This silly effect reflects a playful side of Vorkapich, who usually comes across as pedantic in his practice and writing. Vorkapich also completed a script for Janie (Crawford) chasing Patch (Gable) through New York traffic and a "Rhythm of the Day" dramatic recitation sequence for *Dancing Lady*.

Vorkapich once recounted an anecdote about MGM's Head of Production, Irving Thalberg, which exposes the tenuous position Vorkapich found himself in artistically within the

studio. On *Romeo and Juliet* (George Cukor, 1936), Vorkapich found himself arguing with Cukor about an effect he wanted to execute. Thalberg quickly terminated the argument by telling Cukor, "Let him do it. We can always cut it out."[77] Vorkapich had to set the stage for love visually with the threat of the cutting room floor looming over him. In a roundabout way, though, Thalberg acted as Vorkapich's advocate on set. One of the montage sequences from *Romeo and Juliet* shows Vorkapich's desire to convey mood through imagery. In the plague sequence in *Romeo and Juliet*, Vorkapich used a red filter to get a dream-like fantastic effect. Vorkapich links a succession of evocative shots — a starlit sky, a superimposed stream with light dancing on its surface, rose bushes, the lessening of shadows as dawn breaks, and a lark, the bird of love. The juxtaposition of these shots establishes an atmosphere of romance. On a lark, at a 1938 lecture to Columbia students, Vorkapich exposed the artifice of filmmaking with an avian anecdote. Vorkapich recalled they had hired a bird wrangler to get the shots of the lark, but on set, the bird would not come out of his cage. While the bird wrangler cajoled his errant actor, the blackbirds circling overhead heard it chirping and came down to investigate. This is how Vorkapich came to pull a fast one on *The New Yorker* – their critic specifically noted the film's lark, never knowing it was actually a shot of an inquisitive blackbird.

The mythologization of Vorkapich as lone genius that Posner suggests on *Unseen Cinema* is tempered by David James' analysis of the contributions of Gustav Machaty and Karl Freund on *The Good Earth* (Sidney Franklin, 1937). James highlights collaborative working conditions, complicating the desire to easily assign authorship. The tricky business of parsing Vorkapich's contributions to a picture are exemplified by a close look at the epic 1937 film *The Good Earth*, which Thalberg developed at MGM over the course of six years. The intricacies surrounding the creation of *The Good Earth* brings to mind the emotional and physical trials facing the Chinese peasant Wang Lung and his wife O-Lan in Pearl S. Buck's 1932 Pulitzer Prize winning novel. Just as locusts and loss plagued Wang and O-Lan, the film's fate was jeopardized by the suicide of George Hill and death of Irving G. Thalberg. Originally, his Scheherazade, Kate Corbaley, brought Buck's novel to the attention of Louis B. Mayer.[78] George Hill, initially given the project to direct, shot footage in China while MGM researchers sent back props of period Chinese furnishings to the studio. Upon Hill's suicide, the project languished for two years until Sidney Franklin took the helm. Although Thalberg and associate producer Albert Lewin originally envisioned the project shooting entirely in China, they later had 500 acres in

Chatsworth, California plowed, terraced, and transformed into Chinese farmland. The size and scale of these sets are captured in a two-page spread from the January 18, 1937 issue of *Life Magazine*. Paul Muni and Luise Rainer in yellowface played Wang and O-Lan, and Rainer's performance as the long-suffering wife was recognized by the Academy in 1937. Although Rainer had fewer lines than the average supporting performance, she relied on facial expressions and body language to become the first actor to win two Oscars back-to-back for *The Great Ziegfeld* (Robert Z. Leonard, 1936) and *The Good Earth*. Like the book it was based on, the film adaptation depicts Wang Lung's journey from farmer to prosperous lord over the course of decades. As a result, the film necessitated exciting montages to compress time and illustrate the challenges posed by farming, famine and war. As David James argues, Vorkapich's work on *The Good Earth* is powerful inasmuch as fits the vision of several talented artists who worked on the film, including cinematographer Karl Freund, composer Herbert Stothart,[79] and editor Basil Wrangell.

In addition, Vorkapich only completed the famine and exodus montages for *The Good Earth*. The film is an unusual example of classical Hollywood cinema because its stylistics are more aligned with Soviet montage. The famine and exodus montages for which Vorkapich was responsible stand out for their use of symbolism. Vorkapich wrote his own treatments for his montages, but the two montages by Wrangell in the film are alluded to in the screenplay by Talbot Jennings, Tess Slesinger, and Claudine West, which outlines what these transitional moments should convey. While all the montages are designed to condense narrative, they also express the major themes of the film. The couple's industriousness is highlighted in a straightforward montage towards the start of the film. The screenplay reads "The summer of 1903. Over music which suggests the slow, persistent rhythm of workers, a Montage unfolds the changing seasons, from spring blossoms into thickening summer leaves, from young wheat into maturing grain, with sun and rain and drifting wood smoke."[80] Following this is a description of a series of shots all separated by dissolves: a scene of Wang guiding his ox and plough, O-Lan struggling under the weight of water buckets, Wang weeding in his field, O-Lan in the rain. This sequence in the script outlines eight dissolves designed to convey the passing of the seasons. In the film, the montage captures the passing of time and highlights the young couple toiling over their land. The physical labor endured by Wang and O-Lan is conveyed through shots of them carrying heavy water buckets, milling the grain, washing and mending wet clothes, hoeing the

field, and planting the rice. Interspersed are close-ups of their stoic faces. Other close-ups emphasize the primitive tools they wield — a rough-hewn plough, a wooden wheel turned manually. Through the use of a variety of shots, the montage stays visually interesting and even pauses for a contemplative moment when O-Lan considers her reflection in the water.

The integral role of a successful crop in their lives is further emphasized in the opening of Part Three, where the script reads, "An AUTUMN MONTAGE of falling leaves, sun and rain fades in, and then in WANG'S COURTYARD are seen WANG and O-LAN beating out with flails their grain upon the threshing floor which is also the dooryard to the house. Faces, hands, bare feet are visible in flashes as the rhythmic, persistent beating continues over music." This montage description highlights how important the crop is in their lives and alludes to a desire for a rhythmic cutting style. In the finished montage, quick scenes feature Wang and O-Lan beating the wheat against the slats, winnowing the grain, pouring wheat onto mats, their son playing in the grain, and a close-up of the silver coins they have earned from the wheat. These scenes dissolve into a New Year's Day celebration in Wang's house where the family's current state of prosperity is denoted through the different kinds of food laid out around the house. When Wang and O-Lan experience the Chinese New Year on their way to the Great House, the rapid pace of the editing and repetition of imagery suggests the link to Soviet montage. The script reads "the streets are crowded with people making holiday. Well-dressed children are setting off firecrackers. Jolly, smiling young men pass, calling greetings, carrying emblems of the New Year." In the film, this scene begins with a string of fireworks smoking and spitting, a dragon's face whirling, strips of paper blowing in the breeze, lanterns swinging wildly, a man in a white mask shown three times, fireworks exploding, smiling faces, shots of villagers, old men and young girls watching a puppet man make two puppets fight each other, a dragon racing at the camera. As the dragon passes the camera, Wang and O-Lan walk across the frame. It is easy to imagine this montage was constituted out of recycled bits of film. The dragon shot is repeated three different times and it transitions the film seamlessly out of the montage. The shots of the masked man call attention to his repeated action but in a medium close-up to a close-up. Twice he turns away from the camera with his masked head and shoulders and then finally there's just a shot of his head flung backwards. The paper lanterns filmed from below evoke the masked man's point-of-view, as if he had thrown his head back to look at the lanterns. There is energy and

movement in this scene. The excitement of the Chinese New Year is conjured through the energy and movement of the villagers and the dragon, especially as it speeds towards the camera.

As famine befalls Wang's village, another montage shows various scenes of impending doom separated by dissolves. The moat is barely filled with water, the young rice is shriveled and dead in the cracked earth, the muddy water no relief for the parched earth, and villagers are caught trying to steal the ox. The tools that felt useful in the first montage are now stuck in the cracked dry earth, the wheat shriveled and dead, the ox digging in the one patch of mud in the caked earth, hands tossing mud into a barrel, a vulture eating a dead dog. Wang and O-Lan struggle with the buckets of mud; they talk for a bit, and then stop the villagers from stealing the ox. They debate killing the ox, which has been humanized throughout the film. The devastation wrought by the famine forces the Lung family to flee the countryside. Encapsulating the family's exodus south is a montage of the family leaving their land and traveling with other refugees. Several ominous shots heighten the emotional intensity. Shots of dead bodies, grandpa is flagging, a son pushing on his dead mother, a hand buried in the dirt, shots of marching feet, a skeleton in the dirt, vultures lingering overhead, and a mass of people barely putting one foot in front of the other. This interlude reinforces the divide between the country and the city. The train frightens the family, who are unfamiliar with modern technology. Riding atop the boxcar, they see the countryside flash by. Bringing to mind Vorkapich's quote about the dream-like quality of film shot from a moving train, the shots fly by in a blur of villages, rickshaws, and people. The montage compresses space as Wang's family quickly passes from the countryside to the city. Several shots reinforce how the overpopulated city is impersonal and fast-paced in contrast with village life. The exodus montage reflects how causality in *The Good Earth* is impersonal; the exodus from the North is the result of natural causes, drought and famine, and the threat at the end of the film is locusts. Vorkapich's exodus montage also recalls Lev Kuleshov's experiments linking together shots made at divergent times and places to create meaning. During the family's journey out of the countryside, Vorkapich intersperses the strenuous march with stock footage. By cutting away to this footage, Vorkapich elevates the extent of the fictional tragedy by equating it with documentary footage. When the film focuses on life in the city, history is obscured; the factions fighting disrupt the experiences of Wang and O-Lan without providing any political context. This impersonal causality is quickly subsumed and O-Lan's psychological

motivations take over; she risks her life to potentially save her family by grabbing the bag of jewels.

Fresh off *The Good Earth*, Vorkapich began editing the destructive battle sequence for *The Firefly* (Robert Z. Leonard, 1937) with the intention of creating a montage of sound *and* image.[81] Initially, Vorkapich borrowed the sound of lightning and thunder from a giant storm from the sequence he had already created for *The Good Earth*. When he screened the montage interlude, he found the effect of the battle paired with the sound of the storm evocative. Unfortunately, the producers were less entranced, telling the frustrated Vorkapich, "This is a musical, we have to use music."[82] The *Unseen Cinema* collection allows the viewer to compare Vorkapich's personal copy of the "Battle of Vitoria" montage with the version included in the final release version of *The Firefly*.[83] Both versions feature flags blowing in the wind, juxtaposed with animals, then men running towards outstretched bayonets. The soldiers' deaths are evoked through a skeleton head rushing toward the men. This trick shot was filmed upside down along with a shot of a wreath descending onto a sword. The two set-ups were shot upside down and the film was turned on its end to reverse the action. This reversal makes it look like the wreath or the skull is flying towards the camera.[84] Lightning strikes as the two forces meet and devolve into hand-to-hand combat, horses charge forward. A canon explodes and men go rolling down a hill as Vitoria on the mountain is destroyed. To close out the sequence a flag descends over the body of a dead soldier lying next to the eagle from the top of the flag. Vorkapich's finished montage expresses thought and emotion by means of image and motion. The imagistic power is toned down in the release version, which eliminated the skeleton head as well as the poetic close-up of the broken flag next to the soldier.

An article entitled "Montage Marches In" by Ed Gibbons in the October 1937 issue of the *International Photographer* exemplified a broader awareness of the role montage played within the production process. Gibbons maintains, "a middle course is being drawn between the banalities of formula picture making and the devious mysticisms of the 'cinema art form' fraternity, so that montage already has assumed a practical and essential role in Hollywood production."[85] Touting Vorkapich as achieving a compromise between "bread-and-butter and high blown theory," Gibbons surmises, "Vorkapich began advocating montage and sold it so well, that today he enjoys the confidence of the top executives and creators at one of the principal organizations in the industry; and today he and others with a similar bent are gradually

establishing for montage a definite bracket in the Hollywood formulae."[86] What Hollywood agrees on, according to the article, is montage's ability to solve story limitations by "compressing an over-abundance of story action into the limits of a picture." Budget restrictions are also solved by a judicious use of montage, especially in the depiction of battles, parties, riots, sports events, and similar scenes. "Montage today is used to prevent either the producer's money or the audience's time from being wasted. It is geared to the modern tempo. It is as terse, factual and to the point as today's crisp journalism." Vorkapich "gathers scenes, pictures of objects or action, or whatever he believes will convey the impression, obtains the negatives, superimposes and arranges them until the effect is a mixture of scenes dissolving into each other, one coming over the other, unusual and telling effects." Around the same time as this article, Vorkapich worked on a torture sequence for *The Last Gangster* (Edward Ludwig, 1937). There is a sheet containing Projection Room Notes including "Suggested Scenes for Mr. Vorkapich to Shoot for Torture Sequence" with an instruction from J.J. Cohn to get a shot of Edward G. Robinson being hit in the face "because of his reply in admiration to the kid's taking the torture."[87]

In the late 1930s, Vorkapich was aware of the main criticism leveled at montage — that it was all camera tricks with no substantive value. While Vorkapich agreed montage availed itself of the optical techniques of film at the time — lap dissolves, fades, rack focus, double exposures, slow-motion, reverse action — he argued for their visually expressive possibilities in service of conveying a mood or theme, or enlivening the larger story. He asked, "Who would accuse a musical composer of trickery for using all the possibilities of his instruments to best express his themes?"[88] Vorkapich believed the techniques "are tricks only when they are used for their own sake," but does caution against this sort of trickery. "To obtain motion it is not always necessary to put the camera on a truck, an elevator, or a trapeze and to swing it around all the time in a meaningless fashion."[89] Instead, the special techniques of cinema should be implemented to intensify the expression of a scene and its mood. He then distinguished between surface embellishments and creative cutting of "visual-dynamic-meaningful elements."[90] Despite Vorkapich's segregation from the editing departments within the studios, his entry into The Society of Motion Picture Film Editors suggests the industry, at least, saw him akin to an editor. On January 13, 1938, Vorkapich received a welcome letter from the Secretary, Edward Dmytryk, who closed with "We sincerely hope that your membership in this Society will help to form a sincere bond of understanding between the editor and the producer."[91] Ironically, Vorkapich

often found himself at odds with, producers arguing over how his montages should be integrated into the finished film.[92]

The *Maytime* (Robert Z. Leonard, 1937) montage encapsulating Marcia Monay's (Jeanette MacDonald) rise to fame garnered Vorkapich attention in the trade press for his skill at squeezing a decade of long arias into one brief arietta. Vorkapich proudly transformed a time lapse of ten years of Monay's travels across Europe with her mentor Nicolai Nazaroff (John Barrymore) into 350 feet of film.[93] Vorkapich achieved this by linking momentary glimpses of piano practice, ticking metronomes, opera appearances, cheering crowds, and Monay's arrival in America. Filming MacDonald's rise to fame montage for *Maytime* was difficult for Vorkapich because MacDonald would only allow her cameraman[94] to shoot her. Orson Welles was so enamored with this sequence that he paid homage to it in *Citizen Kane* (1941).[95] When planning out effects, Vorkapich would rely on the man who worked with the optical printer to expose the film according to Vorkapich's charts. Vorkapich marked out dissolves, wipes, superimpositions, and split-screens corresponding to each foot of film.[96]

Although he made no final decisions over music or sound, Vorkapich strongly believed in the union of impressionistic sound and images. While at MGM Vorkapich often worked with musical director Herbert Stothart, planning abbreviated compilations that harmonized with the montage sequence. In April of 1938, Vorkapich worked on the war montage from the *Shopworn Angel* (H.C. Potter, 1938), which presents Bill's (James Stewart) naïveté and idealism in stark contrast to the scenes of war exploding around him. In his treatment for the war montage, Vorkapich indicates he will utilize stock shots for the impressions of trench warfare. For his "Suggestion for the Birth of the Revolution Montage" in MGM's *Marie Antoinette* (W.S. Van Dyke, 1938) Vorkapich follows a conventional narrative of the French Revolution gathering steam. Rather than creating conceptual links between visual images as Eisenstein accomplished, Vorkapich sticks to exemplary events in the condensation of time between the birth of Marie Antoinette and Robespierre penning "liberty, equality, fraternity."[97] Vorkapich's treatment for the montage of the building of *Boys Town* (Norman Taurog, 1938) includes a description of "Flashes of effect headlines showing the press supporting Father Flanagan's campaign for financial help to build Boys Town."[98] Vorkapich's use of found footage is alluded to in a directive reading, "For the second part of the MONTAGE (boys at work and play) we shall try to cut the trailer material shot on location before we decide to shoot additional scenes."[99]

Vorkapich's ability to compress time stands out in the treatment he wrote for the "Road Show Montage" from *Sweethearts* (W.S. Van Dyke, 1938) with Jeannette MacDonald as Gwen Marlowe and Nelson Eddy as Ernest Lane. The two lovers have just parted ways when Vorkapich's montage illustrates their hearts torn asunder. Publicity posters and photographs of the two are ripped apart before Vorkapich depicts two trains pulling in to different locations. The trains travel through different countryside indicating the two lovers taking different paths at lightening speeds. The montage condenses story time as it depicts Gwen and Ernest forming new couples and performing in cities across America. The interlude exemplifies how Vorkapich wanted to make every shot dynamic through motion. He repeatedly returns to shots of trains traversing the country and moving shots of cities passing by. Extrapolated from the narrative, the montage captures the wonders of new technologies of transport. As a crucial element to the narrative, the montage conveys the alienation Gwen and Ernest experience apart from each other; effectively, strangers on a train. In "Motion in Motion Pictures" from *The Film Mercury*, Vorkapich discussed film taken from moving vehicles as "not exactly how the things appear when we actually ride on one of those machines, but it was more like weird motions of things in our dreams."[100] This appeals to Vorkapich as he asks, "What else should the great art be but the embodiment of our dreams?"[101] Vorkapich, along with John Hoffman, worked on another travel montage for *Idiot's Delight* (Clarence Brown, 1939) with Clark Gable and Norma Shearer. The montage encapsulates Harry Vin's (Gable) travels across America and Europe performing in various vaudevillian settings. Vorkapich and Hoffman hoped to find stock shots of Harry's Coney Island high-dive act.

In contrast to Vorkapich's many montages of war and destruction, the montages for *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington* (1939), starring James Stewart and Jean Arthur, build on the film's theme of patriotism. Vorkapich constructed several vivacious montages for director Frank Capra.[102] David James writes of Vorkapich's interludes in *Mr. Smith Goes to Washington*, "These are also motivated as transitional sequences, and their narrative compression is enriched by metaphoric connotation and affective eloquence."[103] The travel montage of American monuments Smith sees when he first arrives in Washington is especially effective. Vorkapich captures the solemn, wondrous tone of the script by constructing an "imaginative re-creation of the events they memorialize."[104] Vorkapich also wrote a six page "Contest Montage" to explain the typesetting and printing process of the newspaper as the story is dictated by Clarissa

Saunders (Jean Arthur). On August 10, 1939, Vorkapich and John Hoffman submitted suggestions for a new ending to the film to Capra. Their scenario has Jefferson Smith (James Stewart) and Saunders at the opening of the boys' camp in a beautiful countryside. It opens after the scene in the Senate, "with a gaping black opening of a TUNNEL. A train zooms out. Like a wild cry of victory the train whistle blows. The sound of the whistle dissolves to a bird cry. BIG CLOSEUP OF JEFF in open air, finishing the call. He listens: From the distance he hears a woman's voice answering his call."[105] Presiding over the idyllic setting is the camp's flag, and Vorkapich and Hoffman ended their treatment with a close-up of the flag superimposed with the words "Life.. Liberty.. And the Pursuit of Happiness."[106] Needless to say, Capra did not use this heavy-handed coda, preferring to finish on the rousing Senate scene and Jeff's moment of triumph. Reviewing the film in 1939, Otis Ferguson of *The New Republic* laments Frank Capra's film as a "mixture of tough, factual patter about congressional cloakrooms and pressure groups, and a naive but shameless hooraw for the American relic."[107] Ferguson summarizes the plot and refers to the montages… "So he gawps around lost for a whole day, throw in thousands of feet of what can only be called a montagasm, buildings, monuments, statues, immortal catch-phrases in stone."[108] To Ferguson, the orgy of images encapsulating American democracy seemed to fly by with no payoff. Although Ferguson meant it as a critique, and as unwieldy a portmanteau as "montagasm" is, it emphasizes the pleasurable aspects of viewing. The montage of Jeff touring the monuments asks the viewer to reflect on citizenship, democratic ideals, and patriotism.

The subject of democracy suffused a series of correspondences in June 1938 between Vorkapich and Charles J. Chic of the Production Department. These letters demonstrate Vorkapich's concern over MGM's treatment of the nascent Montage Department. Primarily, Vorkapich worried about personnel changes, credits, and footage counts. On June 6, Vorkapich wrote about MGM's inconsiderate snatching of his assistant cutters, who were continually taken from him without a word of warning, leaving him short-handed at inopportune times. Vorkapich wrote, "To my great disadvantage I so much abhor squaking and complaining that I never went to you to report these things and we just managed somehow, through nightwork and overtime, to make up for the time lost through this lack of cooperation."[109] Vorkapich asks to be put in charge of those employed as his assistant. This letter expresses the frustration and lack of power Vorkapich felt at the time. His letter dated June 10 builds upon these themes as Vorkapich responds to a request from Chic about the footage used for montage sequences and the length

ending up in the finished pictures. Besides counseling Chic not to trust anyone outside the Montage Department to supply these numbers, Vorkapich opens his letter with an accounting of recent work his department has done without proper credit. He expounds on how some of the work they complete is not limited to montage effects and mentions the flight sequence in *The Bad Man of Brimstone* and the opening of *Paradise for Three*. In regards to *The Bad Man of Brimstone*, Vorkapich writes "I had to re-shoot one of the most important STRAIGHT PRODUCTION sequences because at the preview it was laughed off the screen — In its new form it was then mentioned in several write-ups as 'one of the most exciting flight scenes ever filmed.' As I did not claim the screen credit for it, I suppose this is not going to count as work done in my department."[110] Here Vorkapich successfully reminds Chic of the good work the Montage Department does "saving" pictures.

In addition, he draws attention to the complications around calculating data on footage used for montage sequences. Vorkapich goes on to mention *The Girl of the Golden West* (Robert Z. Leonard, 1938) because he saved Leonard money by suggesting almost the entire montage could be cut out of stock material.[111] Vorkapich insinuates the Montage Department has actually saved MGM incalculable amounts of money right before he dives into why he should not be forced to supply footage counts. He argues his points by articulating the purpose of montage - "to convey a maximum of story or mood within a minimum of footage" - and montage's reliance on trick shots.[112] Since montages often called for superimposition, they regularly necessitated shooting various separate negatives, and Vorkapich cautions against counting that footage as superfluous. He also blames producers, directors, and screenwriters for dictating what the Montage Department will shoot without determining how it will work with the finished picture. Vorkapich asks, "But can you blame us for the footage (and money!) spent on this?"[113] Vorkapich closes his letter with a plea to take his points into consideration when judging the work and efficacy of the Montage Department. These two letters are interesting because they point to the uneasy relationship between the recently formed Montage Department and the studio as a whole. Chic's request may be a simple matter of bookkeeping in an economically depressed period, but it smacks of complaints from higher ups about the working process of Vorkapich's department. It is impossible to tell how these issues were resolved based on Vorkapich's scrapbooks, but at the end of November 1938 MGM decided not to exercise Vorkapich's option, which expired January 31, 1939. *The Hollywood Reporter* noted Vorkapich's leaving MGM in a

December 1938 piece in which Vorkapich says he left the studio after too many rote Civil War montages. Vorkapich added that his Hollywood experience would qualify him as a general, since he has completed a montage for almost every war in history.[114]

Beyond the Studio System

In late 1938, Vorkapich's frustrations with the studio led him to explore two alternative avenues of employment, advertising and teaching. Vorkapich kept scrapbooks of memorabilia covering 1929-1950, which comprises ephemera including contracts, telegrams, film reviews, studio identification cards, receipts, hotel bills, stock certificates, film publicity materials, copious amounts of correspondence, and even the Beverly Hills telephone directory! Of particular interest is Vorkapich's correspondence with the graphic designer Erik Nitsche. The exchange of letters reveals how, in November 1938, Nitsche and Vorkapich pitched a promotional film to Dole Food Company, Inc. and N.W. Ayer & Son, the advertising agency. The N.W. Ayer & Son accounts included Dole, American Container Corporation, Bell Telephone, Cannon Towels, and French Line, amongst others. Nitsche's playful personalized letterhead featured a cut-away side view of a worm poking out of a hole in the ground gazing through binoculars at his own tail poking out of another hole. Nitsche wrote to Vorkapich about the "Cedric Gibbons movie like" Art Deco conference room at N.W. Ayer & Son, where he met with Dole executives regarding the film-length commercial for Dole he hoped to complete with Vorkapich. In his account of the meeting, Nitsche mentions the N.W. Ayer & Son executives feared Vorkapich would shy away from the commercial nature of the project. Their worries were unfounded considering Vorkapich was well aware how montage was perfect for advertising. Earlier that year, in "The Meaning and Value of Montage," Vorkapich wrote, "When LIFE's advertising artist wants to convey the idea that LIFE is 'an eye that thinks — an eye with a brain!' he puts together a picture of a camera with a picture of an academic cap and achieves a striking expression."[115] Vorkapich saw the possibilities in advertising to wield symbolic juxtapositions. After reassuring N.W. Ayer & Son and Dole of Vorkapich's commitment to the project, Nitsche reminded the executives of their reputation for progressive ad campaigns including Cassandre's[116] evocative prints. Famous for his bold, graphic posters for the Dole Fruit Company from 1936-1938, Cassandre elegantly conjured a mysterious mood in many of his images for the banana behemoth.[117] Nitsche informs Vorkapich the project would shoot in May

and June because Dole "would want us to go to Hawaii at the climactically most favorable time, and of course they want the harvest to be shown."[118] The film, budgeted at $10,000-$20,000, would be shot on 16mm, as Dole hoped to show it extensively at schools equipped with 16mm projectors.[119]

From the letter it's obvious Nitsche was positioning himself, along with Vorkapich, as the perfect team to start a Motion Picture Department at N.W. Ayer & Son. Excited by a film he saw for Greyhound Lines, Nitsche believed advertising firms were quickly getting on board film production. While Nitsche hoped to open the N.W. Ayer & Son Motion Picture Department with Vorkapich, he also expressed amazement at the elaborate crew Vorkapich discussed. At the time Vorkapich, ensconced in the studio system, was used to having cameras and a crew at his disposal. Nitsche, on the other hand, knew he had to convince the N.W. Ayer & Son that they could accomplish wonders on a strict budget. Nitsche asks Vorkapich if the two of them could operate his Eyemo and if union membership is a necessity for free-lance filmmaking.[120] In response to Nitsche's queries, Vorkapich responded with a begrudging acknowledgement that promotional industrial films might be the only place to get paid to experiment. Expressing his exasperation with Hollywood, Vorkapich wrote, "If we intend to make industrials later on I don't think it would be good idea to make travelogues now. Personally I wouldn't find it as interesting as doing an industrial film. As an alternative I would prefer making an abstract film. But there is no money in it, you might say. If I wanted money alone I could stay in Hollywood. So the industrials would be the best solution both for money and the abstract rhythmic quality one could introduce into them."[121] Despite Vorkapich's assertion that he could stay in Hollywood, his plan with Nitsche was taking shape in November, the same month that MGM decided not to exercise his option for 1939, and the month in which Vorkapich wrote to Pathe expressing a desire to work in documentary and commercial films, "having lost interest in Hollywood type of pictures."[122]

In December of 1938, Vorkapich lectured at Columbia University, opening his remarks with a description of the difference between continuity editing and montage effects editing. He said, "Regular production cutting is supposed to remain invisible and smooth, and two scenes should be sufficiently similar; but in effective or creative cutting, two scenes should be sufficiently different."[123] For Vorkapich, planning for both kinds of cutting began in shooting. When focused on the unobtrusiveness of continuity editing, Vorkapich maintained, "A director

has to know how the picture is going to be cut, and he should shoot it in such a manner that the cutter will not have too much difficulty in putting it together."[124] To illustrate his point, Vorkapich described the axis of action and how to shoot a scene with two people talking. He also explained how to "cut on the movement" to hide the cut and keep the editing from being noticed.[125] Similarly, Vorkapich advised the audience that creative cutting used in montage should be planned out in shooting. To intensify any action within a scene, Vorkapich encouraged the development of an "omnipresent mind." For Vorkapich, "the filmic mind should really become an omnipresent mind," which "should try to visualize all action from every possible angle."[126] To illustrate his concept of an "omnipresent mind," Vorkapich analyzed the example of a train in motion. He commands his audience to first put themselves in the camera's POV from a distance, then from either side of the train, from a view of above and below the train, and a close-up of the train's churning wheels. By thinking through all the angles and visualizing each one in turn, it is possible to "get a much more direct impression of the event."[127] Vorkapich repeatedly returned to the problem of shooting a moving train to illustrate the efficacy of multiple points of view when capturing and editing an event. The different shots can be stretched, condensed, or overlapped to create suspense, excitement, or dramatic tension. Besides revealing Vorkapich's fetishization of movement, the train in motion example captures a modernistic concern with powerful new technologies.

Vorkapich screened *Ballet Mecanique* (Fernand Leger, 1924) as part of his Columbia lecture because he felt the film embodied the principles of montage through rhythmical cutting. Vorkapich lectured, "Each cut or scene was so visually different than the next that we rhythmically felt those cuts."[128] Vorkapich explicitly connects editing to composing music in his lecture. He analogizes the editing of a film to the creation of beats in a musical composition. Vorkapich advocates an awareness of every aspect of filmmaking, because each one has a different psychological value. He is especially poetic about techniques often used in montage including dissolves, slow motion, and superimposition. Vorkapich connects dissolves to thoughts when he says, "A new thought is born, and it dissolves from one to another."[129] He observed how slow motion induced a dream-like state in the viewer and how slow motion magically brings inanimate objects to life. During the lecture at Columbia, Vorkapich conceded his sequences for *Maytime* (Robert Z. Leonard, 1937) were "a little crowded."[130] However, he maintained, "it is because I have usually been compelled to condense a lot of story into short footage."[131] Although

Vorkapich admitted to his audience eventually "the story must go on," he also betrays a reluctance to ever move on from his montage sequences.

 As a lecturer and teacher, Vorkapich encouraged his students to follow in his footsteps and figure out how to make the screen come alive. He saw this as the chief creative problem of filmmaking, and he believed the solution lay somewhere in the organization of images rhythmically. His teaching methodology was predicated on making a point and punctuating his claim with film clips. To this end he relied on film libraries to provide him with excerpts from various films[132] and distributors or producers to give him permission to screen the excerpts.[133] Two of the filmmakers he almost always turned to were Sergei Eisenstein and Alexander Pudovkin. In his lectures, Vorkapich used the Soviet filmmakers to demonstrate the expressive possibilities of editing, and he would screen sequences from *Alexander Nevsky*, *The Old and the New*, *Ten Days That Shook the World*, *Battleship Potemkin*, *Storm Over Asia*, and *Mother*. Although Vorkapich never explicitly engaged with Soviet photomontages, his sage advice for those interested in learning how to create a montage was to collage. He advocated cutting pictures from magazines and building up entire sequences from a variety of points of view.[134] Here Vorkapich not only espouses an omnipresent viewpoint but a cut-and-paste method reminiscent of Soviet photomontage. Like Klutsis and Kulagina, Vorkapich is invested in evoking a physiological and psychological reaction in the viewer. Although the contexts were radically different, Soviet filmmakers and Vorkapich often struggled with a shortage of materials.

 An entry entitled "He Calls It Ideagraphy" from The New York Times Encyclopedia of Film 1937-40 suggests Vorkapich's montages "differed radically from the old Ufa shots."[135] The entry describes how Vorkapich "collects parts of scenes, pictures of objects, or whatever he thinks will express his ideas and goes to work with them in his laboratory."[136] The article also mentions Ray Mammes and Irving Reis as experts in the montage field. They conclude, "Today Hollywood recognizes the idea once scorned as 'arty' as highly practical. In condensation of footage alone it has proved of immense value, while its dramatic effect has been great."[137] Throughout his career as a filmmaker and teacher, Vorkapich argued for a filmic specificity predicated on what he saw as the "appropriate" use of montage. Vorkapich's time within the studio system reveals the challenges he faced attempting to bring his theories to fruition in an industrial setting. Vorkapich found himself at odds with the studio system, which quickly

recognized montage's potential for explicating narrative time and distance efficiently without recourse to symbolism. Vorkapich felt frustrated by this application of montage as an economic device to save money and bridge a story gap.[138] Unable to dictate how his interludes were encompassed into the finished film and constrained by the studio's dictate to compress time and distance, Vorkapich's montages are sometimes prosaic. However, even the most mundane compression montages are tasked with transcending space and time visually. This transcendence, in turn, reflects certain concerns of modernity that suffused the culture of the 1930s.

Conclusion

Vorkapich was one of many European immigrants who arrived in the United States fleeing the devastation of World War I, eager to be a part of the industry producing the films of Chaplin, Fairbanks, and Sennett, which had impressed him so much when he was a student in the Marais. This was in the mid-twenties, at the height of the studio system's consolidated powers. Studio heads and their producers were kings who dictated the direction each picture would take. Hollywood has always been a cannibalistic industry, swallowing new techniques whole. The studios, startled by different artistic movements, were eager to incorporate their aesthetics and tout them as revolutionary. German Expressionism, Surrealism, the French New Wave all influenced the look and feel of Hollywood. For the American studio system, explorations into experimental film form were for the purposes of making money through entertaining the audience. Vorkapich, on the one hand, helped Hollywood cannibalize montage and claim it as its own clever narrative device. On the other hand, Vorkapich rebelled at Hollywood's adoption of montage as merely a timesaving device and argued for intellectual montage as the basis of cinema as art. Vorkapich exemplified the conflict between art and commerce during 1930s Hollywood. Vorkapich shaped Hollywood's adoption of montage as an aesthetic and narrative device. Therefore, in many respects Vorkapich serves as the bridge from montage in the Soviet context to montage in the American industrial system. Drawing inspiration from German Expressionist and Soviet montage filmmakers, Vorkapich employed a hyper-kinetic editing style to evoke an emotional response in the viewer. His most successful and experimental montages transcended the films in which they were embedded and are anthologized in avant-garde compilations. Vorkapich helped codify a form that was, in essence, fundamentally engaged with modernity in its transformation of time and space.

One half-hidden item in Vorkapich's scrapbooks stands out in the sea of banal mementos. A manila envelope affixed to the back of the first scrapbook contains three articles about the labor film *Millions of Us* (American Labor Productions, 1936).[139] Produced anonymously by technicians working in Hollywood, the dramatic pro-union short film by American Labor Films, Inc. depicts an unemployed starving machinist who becomes a scab but later understands the necessity of the labor movement. In September 1936, the *New Theatre* published an article on the film and wrote, "We are tempted to surprise our readers with the familiar names associated with the production, but the makers request anonymity; less out of modesty than out of a disconcerting knowledge of the methodology of Hollywood blacklisting."[140] The film makes effective use of montage especially in the first scene where the unemployed machinist dreams of a delicious dinner while he lies sleeping on the street. His desperate situation is juxtaposed with the sumptuous dinner as the shot of him sleeping is superimposed over the entire sequence. Besides a lack of money to produce independent labor films, American Labor Films, Inc. was faced with the problem of distribution. Other than organizing trade union halls and fraternal societies as theater halls, productions like *Millions of Us* were met with hostility even when shown at art cinemas. A December 1936 article from *The Newspicture Weekly* described the film's exhibition in a New York art cinema as a "scene for contrapuntal hisses and applause: a miniature war of taste and political opinion was fought in the darkness of the theater."[141] The last article Vorkapich collected was a *Life Magazine* excerpt from August 1937 with a picture of a tarred and feathered socialist named Herbert Harris who attempted to show the film in Dallas to its cotton-mill workers. Discerning Vorkapich's interest in *Millions of Us* is impossible, however it brings to mind labor films of the thirties, which employed montage for political ends.

Vorkapich forcefully believed the cinema was equal to painting, literature, and dramaturgy. His commitment to elevating cinema to the same level as the other arts spurred his theories of what made the cinema unique. Vorkapich's fetishization of motion in pictures aligns with his argument about filmic specificity. A concern with motion also reflects one of the primary concerns of his time, namely new technologies capable of transporting people rapidly across continents. In Vorkapich's montages, one can see the encapsulation of the challenges and opportunities presented by modernity. Vorkapich's most compelling montages reflect the legacy of war, new technologies, and feelings of alienation saturating early twentieth century culture. In his montages, Vorkapich often captured this spirit of modernity by depicting new technologies of

transport, such as trains, automobiles, streetcars, roller coasters, elevators, and airplanes, which radically altered America's conception of travel time. Vorkapich believed, "It is within the power of the cinema to create its own space and time. It can tie fragments of several different objects, situation in distant points of space, into one organic unity; it can stretch one tragic moment into unbearable suspense. This ability of the motion picture to recreate, expand, contract and transform space and time to its own purposes makes it very much in keeping with the theory of Relativity."[142] Simultaneously, the montages themselves transcend cinematic time in their condensation of events such as war, famine, and extended periods in the characters' lives. In addition to playing with time, Vorkapich emphasized motion onscreen as capable of transforming a sense of space. Static shots remind the viewer they are watching images projected onto a two-dimensional screen, however, "as soon as motion is introduced, you get the feeling of space, of three dimensions."[143] For Vorkapich, "The power of the cinema to embody the principles of rhythm makes it a truly dynamic form of art."[144]

[1] Slavko Vorkapich, "The Motion Picture as an Art: Part I," *Film Mercury* 4.22 (29 October 1926), Box 1, "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[2] Slavko Vorkapich, "The Motion Picture as an Art: Part II" *Film Mercury* 4.23 (5 November 1926), "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," Box 1, "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[3] David James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde: History and Geography of Minor Cinemas in Los Angeles* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 70.

[4] Slavko Vorkapich, "Motion in Motion Pictures, Part Two." *Film Mercury* 4.14 (3 September 1926), Box 1, "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[5] Ibid.

[6] Slavko Vorkapich, "Motion in Motion Pictures, Part One" *Film Mercury* 4.13 (10 September 1926), Box 1, "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[7] Ibid.

[8] Slavko Vorkapich, "Montage - A Look Into the Future with Slavko Vorkapich," *Cinema Progress* 2.5, (Dec-Jan 1937-1938), Box 1, "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[9] Box 2, "Slavko Vorkapich Photographs," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Or 1895, depending on whether you believe

Vorkapich's obituary in the trade presses or his CV. An early studio portrait from a Budapest photographer's studio captures Vorkapich as serious and self-assured even as a young boy dressed in a jaunty sailor suit.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Slavko Vorkapich, "Toward True Cinema," *American Cinematographer* 54.7 (July 1973): 18.

[12] James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 70. Vorkapich was working as a painter and retouching photographs at the time.

[13] Slavko Vorkapich, interview by Ronald L. Davis, August 11, 1975, Southern Methodist University Oral History. Box 1, David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. In his obituary for Vorkapich, the editor John Hoffman, who worked with Vorkapich at Pathe, also recounted this story.

[14] Box 2, "Slavko Vorkapich Photographs," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. As Napoleon he was featured in *Photoplay* magazine in December 1923.

[15] Ibid.

[16] Ibid.

[17] James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde*, 70.

[18] Slavko Vorkapich, "The Motion Picture as an Art: Part II" *Film Mercury* 4.23 (5 November 1926). Also quoted in James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde*, 71.

[19] Slavko Vorkapich, "Motion and the Art of Cinematography," *American Cinematographer* 7.9 (December 1926), Box 1, "Biographical Information," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[20] Dudley Murphy's *Soul of the Cypress* (1920), Fernand Leger, Dudley Murphy, and Man Ray with *Ballet mecanique* (1924), and Viking Eggeling's *Symphonie diagonale* (1924).

[21] Slavko Vorkapich, "Cinematics: Some Principles Underlying Effective Cinematography," *Cinematographic Annual* I (1930). Box 1, "Biographical Information," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[22] Box 1, "Biographical Information," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Later in life, Vorkapich was especially proud of the film mentioning its presence in the Museum of Modern Art Film Library permanent collection on his CV.

[23] Elliott Stein, "Film Notes," *Avant-Garde: Experimental Cinema of the 1920s & 1930s* (Kino Video, 2005).

[24] New York News and New York Telegram Articles in Slavko Vorkapich Folders in Box 2 David Shepard Collection USC.

[25] Elliott Stein, "Film Notes," *Avant-Garde: Experimental Cinema of the 1920s & 1930s* (Kino Video, 2005).

[26] The reference is to *Metropolis* (Fritz Lang, 1927).

[27] Elliott Stein, "Film Notes," *Avant-Garde: Experimental Cinema of the 1920s & 1930s* (Kino Video, 2005).

[28] Ibid.

[29] Slavko Vorkapich, *Slavko Vorkapich: O Pravom Filmu = On True Cinema*, trans. Marko Babac (Beograd: Fakultet dramskih umetnosti, 1998), 22.

[30] Box 2, "Slavko Vorkapich Folders," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde*, 22.

[34] James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde*, 69.

[35] Box 1, "Biographical Information," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[36] Slavko Vorkapich, "A Fresh Look At the Dynamics of Film-Making," *The American Society of Cinematographers* (February 1972). Reprinted in The Motion Picture Division of the UCLA Theatre Arts Department flyer for "The Visual Nature of the Film Medium," Ten Lecture-Seminars by Slavko Vorkapich. Box 1, *Biographical Information*, David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[37] Corinne Chochem, *Jewish Holiday Dances* (New York: Behrman House, Inc., 1948). The title page of *Jewish Holiday Dances* stresses its formation as a collaborative undertaking listing by Corinne Chochem as well as poems by Alfred Hayes, music arranged by Trudi Rittman, photographs by Slavko Vorkapich, and book designed by Alvin Lustig.

[38] Slavko Vorkapich, "Cinematics"

[39] Slavko Vorkapich, "Film Montages Scripts," Box 1, "Biographical Information," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[40] *The Film Spectator* (12 April 1930), Box 2, "Slavko Vorkapich Folders," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[41] Box 2, "Slavko Vorkapich Photographs with Others," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[42] See Figures for a still from *Girls About Town* (George Cukor, 1931).

[43] Slavko Vorkapich, "Film: A Montage of Theories," *Film Culture* 19 (March 1959): 175.

[44] James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde,* 71.

[45] Vorkapich, "Film: A Montage of Theories," 173.

[46] Slavko Vorkapich, "The History of the Motion Picture," (lecture, Dept. of Fine Arts at Columbia University, December 20, 1938), Box 1, David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[47] Vorkapich, "Film: A Montage of Theories," 178

[48] Ibid., 177-178.

[49] Ibid., 178.

[50] Vorkapich, *On True Cinema*, 192.

[51] Slavko Vorkapich, "The Meaning and Value of Montage" (21 September 1938). "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," Box 1, David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[52] Slavko Vorkapich, "Creative Use of the Motion Picture," *Educational Theatre Journal* 2.2 (1950): 142-147.

[53] Vorkapich, "Cinematics."

[54] Vorkapich, "Film Montages Scripts."

[55] Vorkapich, interview for SMU Oral History.

[56] Ibid.

[57] Ibid.

[58] Ibid.

[59] *Variety*, November 4, 1932. Slavko Vorkapich Folders in Box 2 David Shepard Collection USC.

[60] Vorkapich, "Film Montages Scripts."

[61] Vorkapich, interview for SMU Oral History.

[62] Ibid.

[63] Ibid.

[64] Vorkapich, "The Meaning and Value of Montage" (21 September 1938).

[65] Ibid.

[66] Vorkapich, "On True Cinema," 117.

[67] Slavko Vorkapich, Description in "Bulletin of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences," September 1937. Box 1: Biographical Information in the Cinematic Library David Shepard Special Collections at USC.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Slavko Vorkapich Box 1: Biographical Information in the Cinematic Library David Shepard Special Collections at USC.

[70] James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde*, 75.

[71] *Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film 1894-1941* (Los Angeles, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005) DVD.

[72] Slavko Vorkapich, "Montage - A Look Into the Future with Slavko Vorkapich," *Cinema Progress* 2.5, (Dec-Jan 1937-1938), Box 1, "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Mentions interview with Vorkapich took place in Bungalow 9.

[73] Victor Fleming insisted upon directing Ingrid Bergman even in the montage sequences for *Joan of Arc* (Victor Fleming,1948).

[74] Gabriella Oldham, *First Cut: Conversations with Film Editors* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1992), 86.

[75] Vorkapich, "Film Montages Scripts."

[76] Ibid.

[77] Vorkapich, interview for SMU Oral History.

[78] Otto Friedrich, *City of Nets: A Portrait of Hollywood in the 1940s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 16.

[79] Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 33-34. According to Otto Friedrich, Irving Thalberg, Hollywood's wunderkind, tried to hire Arnold Schoenberg, the composer of *Verklarte Nacht* and *Pierre Lunaire*, to write the score for *The Good Earth*, but Schoenberg's demand for complete control of the sound (including the actors' dialogue) along with his asking price of $50,000 was too steep for Thalberg, who nonetheless admired his chutzpah.

[80] Margaret Herrick Library, Special Collections, Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Beverly Hills.

[81] Vorkapich, interview for SMU Oral History. Vorkapich recounted how the montage sequences for *The Firefly* cost $200,000.

[82] Ibid.

[83] *Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film 1894-1941* (Los Angeles, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005) DVD. Vorkapich's complete montage is contrasted against MGM's finished film version courtesy of Turner Entertainment Company.

[84] Vorkapich, "The History of the Motion Picture."

[85] Ed Gibbons, "Montage Marches In," *International Photographer* (October 1937), Box 1, "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[86] Ibid.

[87] Slavko Vorkapich. "Film Montages Scripts."

[88] Vorkapich, "The Meaning and Value of Montage" (21 September 1938).

[89] Vorkapich, "The Motion Picture as an Art."

[90] Slavko Vorkapich, "Toward True Cinema," *Film Culture* 19 (April 1959).

[91] Edward Dmytryk to Slavko Vorkapich, 13 January 1938, Scrapbook 2, Box 2 David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[92] Scrapbook 2, Box 2 David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. In a letter to "Vorky," Louis Clyde Stoumen, one of Vorkapich's former students, writes, "I know you've had in the past more than one melancholy relationship with motion picture producers." Despite these "melancholy relationships," Stoumen hoped to foster a positive producing relationship with Vorkapich and envisioned a market of film students, professors, and enthusiasts for Vorkapich's filmed lectures. In his role as proactive producer, Stoumen corresponded with William Friedkin in 1974, writing, "He'll need all the help his friends and we former students, can give him." Stoumen assured Vorkapich that Friedkin would put up $50,000 to fund a series of ten 90-minute films. But when Stoumen wrote excitedly to Friedkin about The National Endowment of the Arts pledging $25,000 to assist the project, Friedkin later declined "at this time." Undaunted, Stoumen exchanged missives with Daniel M. Selznick in the fall of the following year about the possibility of getting MGM's consent to footage. Selznick responded by mentioning he had talked to Frank Davis the Vice-President in charge of Legal Affairs for MGM and believes his long-standing relationship with Davis is the leverage necessary to get the process started. In the brochure for an American Film Institute Theater presentation of "Understanding Cinema," William Friedkin described Vorkapich's lecture style: "Sometimes he's hard to listen to, he's stubborn, pedantic, unwavering in his principles and his principles are often harder to accept than the flat, unpretentious manner in which they're delivered." A note written by Vorkapich on the AFI Flyer reads, "At Webb's request (I assume) Friedkin wrote this test manual. At our only meeting August 8, 1973, when F. Pledged $50,00 toward videotaping lectures, he promised to let me look at a rough cut of his film 'after Labor Day'… never saw him again." Vorkapich was understandably upset at Friedkin for rescinding his financial pledge and took it out on the AFI manual, which he called "Lousy!"

[93] Vorkapich, "The History of the Motion Picture."

[94] Vorkapich, interview for SMU Oral History.

[95] Bruce Posner, "Commentaries," Disc 3, *Unseen Cinema: Early American Avant-Garde Film 1894-1941* (Los Angeles, CA: Sony Pictures Home Entertainment, 2005) DVD.

[96] Vorkapich, "The History of the Motion Picture."

[97] Slavko Vorkapich, "Film Montages Scripts."

[98] Ibid.

[99] Ibid.

[100] Vorkapich, "Motion in Motion Pictures, Part Two."

[101] Vorkapich, "Motion in Motion Pictures, Part One."

[102] Frank Capra to John Hoffman, 1977, Box 1, "Biographical Information," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Capra

laments not being present at a memorial program celebrating Vorkapich's life and work at the Leo S. Bing Theater. Capra writes, "I certainly want the world to know how much I appreciated your unique endowments to the cinema. You brought us something new, something imaginative to the film; a magic that polished the dull films, and burnished the great ones." In the letter, Capra refers to Vorkapich as Vorkie.

[103] James, *The Most Typical Avant-Garde*, 74.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Vorkapich, "Film Montages Scripts."

[106] Ibid.

[107] Otis Ferguson, *The New Republic* (1 November 1939): 369. Box 2 David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[108] Ibid.

[109] Slavko Vorkapich to Chas J. Chic, 6 June 1938, Scrapbook 2, Box 2 David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Ibid.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid.

[114] December 29, 1938. *Hollywood Reporter* in Scrapbook 2 in Box 2 David Shepard Collection USC.

[115] Vorkapich, "The Meaning and Value of Montage," (21 September 1938).

[116] Cassandre is the pseudonym for the Ukranian-French Adolphe Jean Marie Mouron.

[117] See Figures for one of Cassandre's Dole advertisements.

[118] Erik Nitsche to Slavko Vorkapich, 11 November 1938. Scrapbook 2, Box 2 David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Ibid.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Vorkapich, "The History of the Motion Picture."

[124] Ibid.

[125] Ibid.

[126] Ibid.

[127] Ibid.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

[130] Ibid.

[131] Ibid.

[132] Slavko Vorkapich to Tom Brandon, 7 March 1963, Box 1, "Biographical Information," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Vorkapich wrote to Brandon of Brandon Films, Inc. inquiring about using films from his film library for lectures at MoMA.

[133] Later in life, Vorkapich dreamed of creating a teaching film interspersed with film clips. One of Vorkapich's former USC students, Louis Clyde Stoumen, who later taught film at UCLA, gave Vorkapich a photomontage depicting four editors looking into an early Moviola. Stoumen

double-exposed a small picture of Vorkapich lecturing into the bottom right corner of the 8x11 photo, suggesting Vorkapich's legacy as a teacher and practitioner. The photomontage also conveys Stoumen's staunch support of Vorkapich's idea to create a series of teaching films comprised of his lectures and punctuated with film clips. See Figures for the Stoumen's photomontage.

[134] Vorkapich, "Montage - A Look Into the Future."

[135] *The New York Times Encyclopedia of Film 1937-40*, Edited by Gene Brown and Harry M. Geduld (New York: New York Times Company, 1984), Box 1, "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid.

[138] Vorkapich, "The History of the Motion Picture."

[139] *Prelinger Archive*, *Millions of Us*, accessed September 12, 2013. http://archive.org/ details/millions_of_us. The twenty minute labor film *Millions of Us* (Jack Smith and Tina Taylor, 1936) employs effective use of montage and demonstrates the legacy of German Expressionism and Soviet montage.

[140] *New Theatre* (Spetember 1936). Box 2, "Slavko Vorkapich Folders," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[141] *The Newspicture Weekly* (16 December 1936). Box 2, "Slavko Vorkapich Folders," David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[142] Vorkapich, "Cinematics."

[143] Vorkapich, "Motion in Motion Pictures."

[144] Vorkapich, "Cinematics."

Chapter 4.
Infiltrating the Studio System: Don Siegel at Warner Bros.

"Slavko Vorkapich looked like a montage slightly tilted."[1]

Introduction

Descending into the rabbit hole of montage often leads to a sense of propinquity. Nowhere is this more literal than the actual collision of bodies that took place in 1939, when Don Siegel was working under the special effects guru Byron Haskin at Warner Bros. While Hal Wallis was responsible for giving Siegel his first job at Warner Bros., it was Haskin who steered Siegel towards montage. Haskin convinced Siegel montage could be more than "something slapped together for a lapse of time."[2] Haskin explained to Siegel,

> The director shoots a few inconsequential shots of principal players, let's say walking. The editor gets some stock close shots of feet walking. They dump the film on one of my optical printers, who mishmashes it into a montage. He doesn't even know what he's supposed to be getting across, and couldn't care less.[3]

In contrast, Haskin recognized an opportunity for the Special Effects Department at Warner Bros. to assume control of producing the studio's montages. Before Siegel could start, however, Haskin commanded he pay homage to the king of montages, Slavko Vorkapich.

Venturing off Warner Bros. Burbank lot and proceeding south to MGM's Culver City location, Siegel was struck by how "Slavko Vorkapich looked like a montage slightly tilted. He was pedantic and took himself and montages very seriously. I listened, looked and absorbed."[4] This recollection of their encounter comes from Siegel's autobiography, *A Siegel Film*. Written partly in dialogue form and tending towards exaggeration, Siegel's colorful version of the meeting does corresponds with Vorkapich's theories of montage. Siegel came away impressed by Vorkapich's belief in how the juxtaposition and superimposition of images could evoke an intellectual response in the viewer. For Vorkapich, montage worked best when it was more than the sum of its parts. He lectured to Siegel, "The use of symbolism stirs the imagination of the viewer. One can show the invisible or intangible by means of visible impressions. The whole film can be made more vivid and given more pace by the proper use of montage technique."[5] Vorkapich's merging of optical effects and quick editing impressed Siegel, who found himself drawn to the symbolism inherent in Vorkapich's montages. In his description of the montages

Vorkapich screened for him, Siegel writes, "Superimpositions were everywhere. The photography was at times exquisite, at other moments, phantasmagoric, somewhat obtuse and confusing. But the overall effect, the quick staccato cuts, was exciting."[6] In using the term "staccato," Siegel echoes Vorkapich's analogy of musical composition to convey the shortened duration of each image in his montages. In musical notation, staccato notes are followed by a moment of silence. The infinitesimal pause after each note allows the next note to punctuate the brief silence. In montage, the images are the notes and the cuts the silence — only in conversation with each other does the entire piece start to take shape.

Similarly, juxtaposing Vorkapich and Siegel is like slotting in the corner pieces of the puzzle of montage within classical Hollywood cinema; the meeting between Siegel and Vorkapich as an entertaining transitional montage with rapid-fire cuts of two larger-than-life personalities bonding over an optical printer. The transitional aspect is especially important because the meeting takes place towards the end of Vorkapich's career within the studios and at the beginning of Siegel's. Vorkapich, the artiste, passing the torch to Siegel, the ambitious studio player. Siegel likened Vorkapich's montages to dream sequences with haphazardly associative images conjuring an obtuse phantasmagoria.[7] Ultimately, the encounter with Vorkapich inspired two feverish dreams in Siegel's mind: the promise of further creative control and a position of greater power at Warner Bros. Siegel, who had already worked shooting inserts and in the film library as an assistant editor, was immediately struck by the possibilities of montage. Familiar with the personalities and inter-workings of the film library, the editing room, and insert department, Siegel was perfectly suited to bring this knowledge to bear on montages. He saw how Vorkapich transformed a series of stock shots and original footage shot by the director of photography into a sequence capable of transcending the "mundane film as a whole."[8] Montage was a way for Siegel to apply the knowledge he had already gleaned working in various departments at Warner Bros. and gain creative control over something new. No longer would Tenny Wright be able to complain about Siegel's second-unit shooting, montage was going to be Siegel's mandate to write, direct, and edit. The tensions between "A" players in the classical studio system and the "B" montage director precluded a copacetic relationship; however, over the course of his early career at Warner Bros., Siegel successfully leveraged his knowledge of montage to achieve the formation of a montage department under his control and, eventually, his dream of directing.

Cambridge, Ping-Pong, and Inserts: Siegel's Start

Born October 26, 1912, Siegel grew up in a predominantly middle-class Jewish neighborhood on Chicago's West Side. His parents, Sam and Anne Siegel, who had toured as a vaudeville comedic/musical act moved the family from Chicago to New York and finally to London, where Sam Siegel had gotten a job with the Parker Holiday Company. Siegel acquired an English accent, a proficiency in ping-pong, and a degree from Cambridge where, as a self-professed atheist, he studied the New Testament. After a brief stint as a drummer on an ocean liner, Siegel arrived in Los Angeles in 1934. He got in touch with his uncle Jack Saper, a film editor for Warner Bros., who introduced him to Hal Wallis, then production head of Warner Bros. Despite Siegel's inexperience, Wallis gave him a job in 1934 as a film librarian assembling, marking, and organizing stock shots used in various pictures. Eventually Siegel's boss at the film library, DeLeon Anthony, recommended Siegel for a job as an assistant editor with Warren Lowe. Siegel, however, spent most of his time chasing women, playing tennis and ping-pong, and a little time with the Contemporary Theater acting.[9]

Bored with his duties as an assistant editor, Siegel applied for a position as the assistant head of the insert department housed within Special Effects. Siegel felt it would be "great to have control of a camera unit, no matter how small."[10] When Warren Lowe convinced Siegel to apply for a job in the insert department, Byron "Bun" Haskin[11] was the Head of Special Effects and Robert "Bobby" Agnew, the former child star, was Unit Manager. Haskin and Agnew were looking for someone to shoot inserts – close-ups such as an article in a newspaper or a wrench turning a bolt. If the director did not shoot the insert on set, the editor would send a snip of film to the insert department and explain what was needed. A prop man provided the prop for the insert and Siegel shot on Stage 5 with the camera operator Archie Dalzell, who shot as a first cameraman without the union's knowledge. When they shot outside with actors or stuntmen the union would require a first cameraman to accompany Dalzell.[12] Siegel quickly realized he could manipulate directors into giving him more responsibility by convincing directors he would save them time. Siegel recollected, "Any shot the director was too lazy to shoot automatically became an insert."[13] It was in the insert department shooting close-ups, working with stars, and overseeing an entire camera crew that Siegel fell in love with working in the movies.

Siegel's transition into the insert department coincided with a busy time for the Special Effects Department. During the late 30s through 1940s, Special Effects operated as a studio

within a studio. In an interview with Stuart Kaminsky in *Don Siegel: Director*, Haskin described the Warner Bros method of troubleshooting as relying heavily on Special Effects. Haskin felt the studio solved many of their problems in the late 1930s by saying, "Let's throw it into Stage 5. We were busy. We became a picture company within a picture company. We rescued films, embellished them and we were completely autonomous with laboratories, cutting rooms and our own sound department." (Kaminsky 28) Haskin and Siegel often joked they could shoot their own independent feature with Warner Bros. biggest stars on Stage 5 simply by convincing producers to send down Davis, Cagney, Robinson, and Muni for "second-unit shots."[14] Haskin recalled, "Late in the 1930s strikes began to delay things and we started to do all the second units. Making a Warner Bros. picture was a cinch for a director during the studio's heyday. Mike Curtiz would start to do something, and we'd say: 'We'll do that,' and that was it."[15] Here Haskin is referring to Warner's workhorse director, Michael Curtiz,[16] the Hungarian whose unusual way with the English language made for some infamous quotes.[17] While Curtiz might have been happy for the help, Siegel's clandestine forays into second-unit work were not always received kindly. Tenny Wright, the production manager of the studio and, according to Siegel, a "former boxer and a tough guy with a foul tongue" reprimanded Siegel for shooting a scene of Joan Blondell for the director Lloyd Bacon.[18] This encounter spurred Siegel to complain to Haskin he was sick of begging directors for work. In response, Haskin asked him if he knew anything about montage. His advice to Siegel was, "When you read a script, and you read them all, whenever a montage is called for – like a ten-year lapse of time, a boy and a girl falling in love, a train wreck, etc. – rewrite it and shoot it. Nobody will know what you're doing except yourself and maybe me. I'll even let you have Bob Burks[19], who is fantastic at photographing anything in special effects."[20] But first, Haskin suggested Siegel visit Slavko Vorkapich at MGM to learn from Vorkapich, who was known for his use of symbolism within montage sequences.

Becoming a Champ at Montages

Armed with a new enthusiasm for juxtaposition, superimposition, symbolism, and large sheets of lined paper commandeered from Vorkapich's cutting room, Siegel was ready to exercise his mandate to write, edit, and direct. Although at first, this mandate was entirely self-appointed. Siegel recalled, "With no-one at the studio even being aware of what I was doing, I would write montages… Nobody really knew what I was doing because the indication in the

script would be that there was a lapse of time of 10 years or there would be a man looking for work and not getting it."[21] This is where Siegel, Burks, and Jim Leicester, who Siegel recruited as assistant editor, stepped in. With the lined paper Siegel had swiped from Vorkapich's cutting room, the team sketched blueprints for the finished montage by marking the footage of each shot required.[22] Together with Leicester and Burks, they developed a plan for constructing montages in the following manner: "Each line of the montage paper represented one foot of film. We carefully drew each shot to show its length clearly. The dissolves going in and out were indicated exactly. We drew in superimpositions along the shot or shots it was superimposed over. Sometimes the montage sheets were 3 feet wide and 5 feet long. We could read and understand them as a composer reads his musical score."[23] The analogy between montage and music is particularly apt. A well-executed montage could be judged by its rhythm and pace, just like a piece of music. Siegel, along with Leicester and Burks, was orchestrating a change in the way Warner Bros. produced pictures, and their actions reverberated throughout the studio. Siegel "would give the lined sheet to the optical printer, who would have to do it exactly as drawn on the lined sheet."[24] However, Siegel was in unchartered territory, pushing at the rigid boundaries dictating studio workflow, which often resulted in antagonism. As Siegel remembered, "The assistant editor at the optical printer would pay no attention to what I wanted and he'd use his own inimitable, dreadful style. I would look at what he'd done, check it against my work sheet, and find that he hadn't followed the footage guidelines."[25] Nevertheless, Siegel was invigorated, his job exciting. As montage director, Siegel worked directly with the studio's stars. There he was in his early 20s, telling Cagney, Bogart, Huston, and March what to do when they came to Stage 5.

In addition, montage allowed him to be innovative and original. Describing his work Siegel says, "As soon as I took over montage, I got the scripts and began to rewrite the montage sequences. I would even do terrible, filthy things that were unheard of in montage, like using sound. As I became successful, the montage became more and more complicated. I'd superimpose feet over doors opening, show giant ticker tape machines falling on Wall Street, have guns melting."[26] As he would do later as a B-movie director, Siegel took advantage of the lack of oversight by studio heads to be creative and efficient. Furthermore, montage was a technique Siegel believed in because it forced him to devise ingenious sequences, and it also enervated viewers. Siegel describes, "Montage gives credit to the audience, is creative, does not

assume the average viewer's mental age is 12. We used symbols. The pace was fantastic, and we attempted to do the montage in the style of the picture we were shooting."[27] Like a ghostwriter penning an autobiography or a painter forging a Picasso, Siegel wanted the montage to fit seamlessly with the aesthetic choices of the picture as a whole. This was certainly in line with the ethos of Warner Bros. where turning in a wildly different montage sequence would have resulted in the dissolution of the montage department. Siegel was savvy enough to realize this but also self-assured and impatient enough to demand respect for the work he was doing. Slowly but surely, Siegel's montage work began to be recognized in a formal way.

Warner Club News and Legitimizing the Work of Stage 5

An article entitled "The Impossible Becomes Possible" by Fred Terzo and George Fenaja in the September 1939 issue of the Warner Club News reads like an upbeat advertisement for the Special Effects Department housed on Stage 5. Terzo and Fenaja outline what Special Effects could do for Warner Club readers, "who are charged with the task of turning out Warner Bros' fine pictures and who might not be familiar" with the work of the Special Effects Department. The article describes the responsibilities and inner workings of the Department of Special Effects as directed by Haskin and Agnew. According to Terzo and Fenaja, the department makes "all process shots, miniatures, matte shots, glass shots, art titles, fades, dissolves, inserts, montages and many straight production shots." In other words, except for sound and casting, Stage 5 was a fully functioning studio churning out footage for almost every picture released. Echoing the theme of the impossible becoming possible, the article details the cost-saving expediency of using the department for shooting chase sequences and utilizing miniatures for long shots. In particular, Terzo and Fenaja include a technically detailed description of how the Special Effects Department built a miniature amusement pier for sequences in the Paul Muni drama *We Are Not Alone* (1939). Throughout the article, there is an emphasis on the money to be saved by utilizing Stage 5 with descriptions of their work as efficient and quick.

The article also conveys the organization of the Department of Special Effects, which oversaw the Glass Department, the Optical Department, the Insert Department, and the Montage Department. These various subdivisions worked together to produce anything ongoing productions demanded. The Optical Room was responsible for turning out dissolves, fades, and other trick shots and featured a new optical printer, which took two years to build and cost

$20,000. The optical printer was built in-house by the Optical Department and Camera Machine Shop with the expressed purpose of turning out effects in one print rather than two. The new printer saved floor space, which made it possible to add a second machine in the same space previously occupied by the old machine.

Terzo and Fenaja's article is also the first mention of the Montage Department in the Warner Club News. They refer to the Montage Department as under the supervision of Siegel, a "Ping Pong Champ, who is also a champ on Montages." They go on to describe how Siegel "is responsible to Mr. Haskin for cuts establishing time lapses and otherwise creative atmosphere with a minimum of footage – from what we've seen of his work we would say it is in very capable hands." Besides articulating Siegel's relationship to the Montage Department, this quote shows how montages were formally integrated into the hierarchy of the studio beginning in 1939. The article closes with a pithy plug for Stage 5: "the Special Effects done by this department are always of a character to justify our pride in our boss and our department, and our Motto: 'If it's trick photography you want, we do the best for less.'" While this article from 1939 highlights the presence of the montage department from the perspective of those working within the Department of Special Effects, that same year, neither credit sequence for *The Roaring Twenties*[28] (Raoul Walsh, 1939) or *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*[29] (Anatole Litvak, 1939) mention Don Siegel.

However, the cutting file for *The Roaring Twenties* at the Warner Bros. archive does highlight how integral debates about the montages were to the production of the film. In addition, a behind-the-scenes look at two conversations involving montage point to the connection between film and social mores of the time. The first example reflects concerns about filmic violence. In an Inter-Office Communication from July 19, 1939, Walter MacEwen of the Story Department writes to Wallis about a controversy brewing over the use of machine guns in *The Roaring Twenties*. MacEwen writes, "At a meeting with Sam Bischoff some time ago, Breen apparently indicated some sort of approval of the use of machine guns in the montages for this picture, but he never confirmed it in writing – and when Tenny Wright raised the issue again because of his specific instructions not to provide machine guns for any crime picture, I called Breen for a letter."[30] MacEwen also informs Wallis that Bischoff is confident they can use the machine guns because of "the way they will be handled impressionistically in montages."[31] The second example exposes fears about explicit sexuality in film. In an Inter-Office Communication

from July 24, 1939, Bischoff writes to Wallis over Priscilla Lane's objections to Cagney's character, Eddie Bartlett, buying her clothes. Lane worried her fans would balk at her character accepting clothes from a man. Bischoff writes, "Of course I know that you don't care what she or her fans think, but on the other hand, there may be something to what she says, and I think it might be better that the clothes he is buying should be for her to wear in the café or in her work as an entertainer."[32]

Throughout August of 1939, Wallis and Bischoff discussed the montages for the film and provided Haskin with very specific instructions. On August 2, 1939, Wallis writes to Bischoff, "One very important thing that still has to be written and figured, is the time lapse to be covered by a montage to cover Cagney's downfall after the stock market crash."[33] Wallis complained to Haskin that the montages were taking too long to complete. This is a sentiment he voiced on August 5, 1939 when he asks Haskin to "please put all possible speed behind the preparing of montages for *The Roaring Twenties*."[34] Wallis mentions the commentator's voice will be recorded in the back of the montages and he wants them completed by the time the picture is finished. Then on August 16, 1939, Wallis complains to Haskin that he has not seen any of the montages for a picture with a release date of October. Wallis writes, "As you know, [the montages] are very important in the story-telling of this particular picture, and unless they are right when we see them and if we happen to have to make any of them over, we are going to be seriously delayed."[35] Wallis adds that most of the montages were in the script when it came out, and he expresses frustration over why they are taking so long. Since the film whirls through "the dizziest decade in American history,"[36] it fell on the montage sequences to help move the film along, encapsulating entire years at a time.

While Wallis complained about the montages interfering with his production schedule, he also offered suggestions about content. On August 18, 1939 Wallis advised Haskin that Cagney should be dressed down in the montage where he hocks his cuff links. This theme is reiterated in another Inter-Office Communication from Wallis to Haskin on August 23, 1939, which reads, "In making the montage showing Cagney's disintegration, be sure that through the progress of the montage he gets shabbier so that at the finish we see him in a worn suit, cap and flannel shirt. This is so that when the audience sees him after the montage the shock is not so great and we have built up or rather down to his fall."[37] Comments about content came from Walsh as well, who wrote Wallis on September 12, 1939, "I think you can eliminate the scene where Jimmy

takes Pricilla into the room and shows her where they make the liquor. To me the montage in front of this scene shows how liquor was made."[38] The conversations around the montages suggest that after they were delivered by the Montage Department, how they were used was determined by the producers and implemented by the editor. For example, Wallis writes to the editor Jack Killifer on September 12, 1939, "On this new montage of Cagney looking for a job, we want to end it where the commentator's voice ends, and don't go into the last little scene where the girl says 'Sorry, nothing today,' and Cagney says 'Thanks again.'[39] This suggests the montages were always in danger of ending up on the cutting room floor.

Both Haskin and Siegel are nonchalant in their recollections about working on *The Roaring Twenties*. Haskin received credit for the Special Effects of the film in the title sequence and talked about the film in an Oral History by the Directors Guild of America, "Siegel was my montage director at the time. On *Roaring Twenties*, he and I alternated – there were so many to do. About six or eight major montages for the period/era changes in the story."[40] Siegel described the montages as "boring" and characterized them as full of "whirling papers, newsreel shots, narration announcing the end of World War I" or another world event.[41] Frustrated by the lack of creativity of these montages, Siegel decided without clearing it with anyone but Haskin "to do the Wall Street crash using symbolism to get over the disaster; not using newspaper headlines or newsreel shots, and, if possible, no narration."[42] Siegel recalled, "We built a huge ticker-tape machine, which spewed tape over hordes of people trying to climb steps to reach the machine looming over them. We had wind machines blowing full blast against the sprawling mob, forcing them tumbling, sliding and falling. It was exciting to shoot and somewhat scary too. Haskin pointed out that not only did we not have any money to pay for the shots I was making, but no one, including the director and producer (Wallis and Warner), had the slightest clue what we were doing."[43] Siegel was relieved to find that Wallis liked it, and Walsh and Hellinger, the man credited with the Original Story, agreed.

This disjuncture between Siegel's description of his montage work and his lack of inclusion within the production decisions is also apparent on *Confessions of a Nazi Spy*.[44] The Special Effects were again credited solely to Haskin, but in his autobiography Siegel reminisces about rigging an airplane board from the roof of a building so he and Dalzell could shoot Nazi propaganda pamphlets fluttering down onto the street. Rather than bother with a permit or studio approval, Siegel and Dalzell haphazardly inched out onto the board and littered Burbank with

Nazi propaganda to capture shots of the angry reactions of surprised pedestrians below. For dissolves in the film, Siegel used a traveling matte shot of goose-stepping Nazi legs, which bring to mind Dmytryk's observation about Hollywood montages as moving collages. The Pressbook for the film highlights a collage aesthetic as it reveals how the studio sold the film as a look at the underground menace of the Nazi spy in America. One spread entitled "Thanks for Opening our Eyes" contains a collage of letters received from audience members who wrote to Warner Bros praising the film. This collage was carefully edited and does not include any letters from the "Crank Letters" file in the archives, which lambasts Jack Warner for anti-German propaganda. By 1940, Siegel was begging Warner to let him direct but Warner felt directors were a dime a dozen and besides he got Siegel on the cheap. In response, Siegel started shooting more second-unit work for inclusion in his montages.

"Strike up that band! Yell out the news!"[45] Siegel and the Four Horsemen Impress

Shortly after *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* criticized American isolationism, Warner Bros released *Knute Rockne* (Lloyd Bacon, 1940) an ode to America's gridiron love. At Rockne's passing, Will Rogers eulogized, "Notre Dame was your address, but every gridiron in America was your home."[46] Siegel's montages amplify the action in the film, showing montage's ability to make a game exciting before the days of instant replay and slow motion. Today, football on television is one continuous montage but this was 1940, thirteen years before instant replay would confuse some viewers into thinking Army scored twice in a December 1963 game against Navy. Early in the film, Rockne's father expounds on the opportunities Knute would have in America. Not just by ascribing to hard-work, discipline, and thrift, but by being tough. The Titles Department had some tough decisions to make as well, and while the film's title credits list both Notre Dame's Four Horsemen and those actors who portrayed them[47], it lacks any specific mention of Don Siegel. Instead, it attributes Special Effects to Byron Haskin. However, Siegel discussed the montages in his autobiography, and specifically the challenge of capturing Notre Dame's athletic and technical skill at football. He wanted to highlight Notre Dame's famous backfield, the Four Horsemen – James Crowley, Elmer Layden, Donald Miller and Harry Stuhldreher – as they went through their intricate and balletic formations. Siegel's goal was to emphasize their speed and grace under pressure. Siegel orchestrated a complicated montage designed to show the proficiency of the Four Horsemen during an actual game. Siegel placed the

football directly into the matte box and covered the lens so the image appeared black. "When the ball was thrown away from the camera, it fell into the arms of a running back, who was immediately tackled."[48] Siegel then cut to a shot of a Notre Dame player falling onto a camera, which was totally blacked out and transformed into the back of a Notre Dame player as he runs away from the camera and toward his ultimate goal, the end zone. "As he ran across the goal line, we saw him fall to the ground and, in a closer shot, fight his way towards another camera, blacking it out. Then we came to a most difficult shot. From the blackout we saw a close shot of a football boot kicking a ball towards the goalposts. From that, we went on a high parallel behind the goalposts. Below was a Notre Dame player drop-kicking the football over the goalposts and, hopefully, into the matte box, blacking it out" (Siegel 61). The technical director on the film was Nick Lukats, who had played for Notre Dame and was tasked with kicking an expertly placed drop kick into the camera. According to Siegel, it took fifty-eight takes but finally the football hit the lens and blacked out the camera. The number of takes, although probably exaggerated, speaks to how little direct oversight Siegel experienced. At a time when Jack Warner would personally send notes to his directors about wasting film with ten takes [49], fifty-eight would have made Warner apoplectic. The montage scenes are so effective at conveying the action on the field they appear in the film's trailer.

Revised changes to the script on March 19, 1940 detail two montage sequences, but it's unclear from the script changes whether they describe a montage already created by Haskin and Siegel or if this was given to the Department of Special Effects originally. There is a description of the montages used to encapsulate Notre Dame's seasons in 1917, 1918, and 1919 with Rockne, played by Pat O'Brien, and George Gipp, famously portrayed by Ronald Reagan, scoring touchdowns. The script reads, "The Great American Public has found its first popular hero of sport, and we HEAR THE CROWDS ROARING his name – 'Gipp!' 'Gipp!' 'Gipp!'"[50] The script also mentions a montage encapsulating the Rockne family journey from Norway to Chicago: "Over a background-effect of the Atlantic Ocean, blending into the skyline of New York, then Chicago, as those cities appeared in the 1890's" with a superimposed title about hard-working immigrants following a "new road of equality and opportunity" to America.[51] Haskin, who changed the way the title department assigned credit, paved Siegel's road of opportunity. In the Directors Guild Oral History, Haskin claimed, "When I took over the department, I tried to

break the pattern of the department taking screen credit for special effects camera work… I didn't want credit for work I didn't do. But it had become automatic in the title department."[52]

"The fair-haired Montage expert and rhumba dancer" carves a space for montage.

The congenial atmosphere fostered by the Special Effects Department is conveyed in Joseph Westheimer's May and November 1940 columns for the Warner Club News. In both articles Westheimer adopts an air of jocularity and singles out Siegel for laughs. In May 1940, under Jottings, Westheimer reports, "The fair-haired Montage expert and rhumba dancer, Don Siegel, notified the bank after losing his check book, and also stopped payment on all checks. Chum Bob Burks found said book and Don resumed business at the old stand without taking the bank into his confidence – soon our favorite ping pong player was hauled in for forging his own name."[53] The November story recounts Siegel's adventures registering for the draft stating it "conclusively proves that all practical jokers have a mustache."[54] Westheimer tells the story of Siegel visiting his polling place with "his not unusual air of complete confidence and super superiority"[55] to register for the draft. When asked, he told the woman helping him fill out the forms that he was thirty-six, which she informed him was too old. "Whereupon Don loudly proclaimed that he would stand on his constitutional rights as a patriotic citizen and demanded the right to register." When he told the woman to write that he was twenty-seven she was horrified and told him this would open him to prosecution for perjury; Siegel told her he would take his chances and was reluctantly registered. Westheimer reports there was nothing to worry about aside from "Don's grandstanding" because he was actually twenty-seven.[56]

Besides keeping the readers of the Warner Club News abreast of all relationships, marriages, births, and practical jokes happening on Stage 5, Westheimer would praise the accomplishments of his colleagues. For example, in a May 1940 column, Westheimer dissected the intricacies of the firing equipment on the miniature boats for the *Sea Hawk*. The July 1941 column is especially pertinent, as Westheimer writes,

> "It has been said that Don Siegel is a genius without talent. If this is true one may be sure that the latter part refers to his news-making ability. At last, however, this month he enters the domain of headlines with the transfer of his offices to larger quarters above the Technical office. The Montage Department now has an Executive office (housing Mr. Siegel) an

Assistant Executive office (housing Mr. DuBrul) a cutting room for Mr. Leicester, and an outer office for Assistant Director Fred Taylor and Prop Man Pat Patterson."[57]

Westheimer's description highlights how the organization of the Montage Department mimicked Special Effects. Like a series of Russian nesting dolls, the Montage Department was essentially a studio within a studio within a studio. In addition, the Montage Department's move into new offices validates the formal recognition of the Montage Department taking place apart from Special Effects.

This new recognition is established in *Blues in the Night* (Anatole Litvak, 1941), which marks the first film Siegel is integrated into the production process officially and given title credits for his montage work. Various documents related to the film mention Siegel explicitly, including Inter-Office Communications, notes from the Research Department[58], and the Production Notes. There is an especially detailed Inter-Office Communication dated July 9, 1941 from Wright to Wallis about confusion over the montages for *New Orleans Blues*.[59] The letter details the difficulty in getting the different departments to work together. Wright writes,

> In answer to your letter asking me why, after you had OK'd the first two Montages for the above picture to Don Siegel, he didn't go ahead and shoot them, for your information he took these Montages to Blanke and Litvak to show them that he had gotten your OK, and Blanke told him not to go ahead with these two Montages, but to prepare the third, as what developed in the third might have some bearing on the first two. Since that time, Siegel has tried to see Blanke many, many times so that he could go ahead on the first two Montages, but Blanke told him not to do this, but we would have to do the third one first.
>
> This is quite a routine, and I would suggest that you get Blanke and Siegel in your office and settle it once and for all, that after you have OK'd Montages then Siegel is to go ahead and shoot them and not show them to Directors or Supervisors, as this is what causes all the confusion.
>
> I have told Siegel not to figure writing any long, involved Montages where we use the cast for a week, as per your instructions, so when you have the two of them in your office Siegel is going to take up with you the matter of the third Montage to get the idea that YOU want.

The reason this confusion all started is because I keep after the different departments to get work done, and Siegel came into my office last night in desperation to get me to move in on this Montage situation so that he could go ahead."[60]

This letter exposes the difficulty Siegel faced in 1941 with an ill-defined chain of command. Wright displaces the blame for unfinished montages Wallis directed at Siegel onto Litvak and Associate Producer Henry Blanke. The last two paragraphs offer Wright's indirect critique of directors and supervisors for throwing wrenches in what he feels should be a well-oiled production line and suggest how Siegel felt comfortable going over Litvak and Blanke in order to get the work done. The letter also conveys how Siegel's Montage Department is responsible for working with other departments to achieve a successful finished picture.

Another conversation surrounding *Blues in the Night* references the use of found footage often implemented in montage. In an Inter-office communication from August 29, 1941,[61] DeLeon Anthony contacts Wallis about Fox Legal Department's refusal to sell footage from a Fox Film Library short called *Modern Dixie*.[62] Anthony was worried they might not get access to the stock footage because of fears over how African-Americans would be represented. Anthony insinuates Siegel already has film stock to work with but is worried about Fox signing off on its inclusion in the finished film. That same day, Wallis sends a telegraph message to Wilk asking him, "Will you please contact Truman Talley point out to him all we want is 70 or 80 feet of cotton growing, cypress swamps farming in the south, etc. for use in montages in our picture New Orleans Blues."[63] Wallis goes on to say the "Negroes portrayed in film will not be identifiable but in any case willing give Fox News legal release for use of footage in question."[64] For Anthony and Wallis it was imperative to get the Fox Film Library's release of stock shots of Southern plantations and anxiety over the issue of African-American representation was unfounded.

Siegel's official integration into the production process results in more explicit oversight from Wallis. On September 5, 1941, Siegel sends an Inter-Office Communication to Wallis about the timeline for finishing two montages for *Blues in the Night*. Siegel writes,

> I understand from Owen Marks that you gave your O.K. on the 'Travel' montage. This is the montage showing the various members of the band hitchhiking and playing their different instruments. Mr. Litvak wants me to take out the shot of Pat Lane singing. This is a very short flash, which I shot with sound in case you want to hear her voice. I feel we

should at least see her singing in order to establish her part in the band. If you want this shot out of the montage it will necessitate remaking the montage optically – a delay of two days. For the montage following the jail sequence I have all the stock scenes. Yesterday I shot the close shots of negroes working which we shall use in superimposition. Mr. Forbstein just informed me that I can't have the music before next Wednesday. This means we shall have the montage out two days later – a week from Friday."[65]

Siegel's letter showcases the shooting experience he gained in charge of montages. His appeal to Wallis to preserve a shot of Priscilla Lane singing is accompanied by his threat of a delay if Wallis forces Siegel to eliminate the shot. Siegel also mentions shooting close-ups of African-Americans for superimposition over the stock scenes from Fox.

While Siegel was encountering increased oversight in practical ways, his description of the actual montage process demonstrates his continued creative freedom. For the film, Siegel was tasked with showing how Richard Whorf as jazz pianist Jigger Pine was losing his ability to play. Siegel focused on the five musicians who formed a jazz quintet around the piano player. "Each finger of a hand represented a musician. In montages we showed the 'hand' in split screen, playing their music against a map of the States as the 'hand' traveled across the map."[66] To convey the pianist's waning ability, Siegel had a piano built with keys made of marshmallows. When Jigger struck the keyboard his fingers stuck to the keys effectively immobilizing his playing; representing the mental and physical challenges facing the pianist. While Haskin loved the montages when he saw them, he was worried because both Litvak and Wallis had clauses in their contract stating they each should be the first to see the montages. Haskin and Siegel's ingenious solution was to make a duplicate print and screen at the same time, albeit in separate projection rooms, the finished montages to Litvak and Wallis. After the separate screenings both men simultaneously demanded the other see the montage, unaware this had already taken place. "Wallis instructed Haskin to have Litvak see the montages as soon as possible. Litvak thought that, when convenient, I should run with Wallis" (Siegel 64-5). Siegel learned there were creative ways to work around the strictures of the studio and took to heart Litvak's criticism of the montage, in which he advocated for decisive camera movement. Litvak argued Siegel should have shot someone walking past the poster to create a reason for the camera movement through a dolly or a pan.

The Production Notes for *Blues in the Night* also reflect Siegel's formal role in the production process. Robert S. Taplinger, Publicity Director, writes, "After a month's search, 44 extra and bit players resembling Betty Field were obtained for a series of Montage shots which will give the effect on the screen of forty-four Betty Fields."[67] Taplinger extols the work that went into the picture, writing, "During two weeks of production, Litvak became a roving director and supervised four separate units at four different locations. Priscilla Lane, Carson, Kazan, Halop and Whitney worked in the studio's train shed. The montage department photographed Richard Whorf. Wally Ford worked in a rain sequence. Betty Field recorded two numbers in the recording room."[68] While Taplinger emphasizes Litvak's role as director, he also refers obliquely to the work Siegel describes shooting with Whorf at the marshmallow piano. Siegel's increasing prestige within the lot was also noted outside the lot in *The Hollywood Reporter*, which praised "the imaginative montage by Don Siegel" on October 30, 1941, in its review of the "strange and interesting combination of hot music and straight melodrama" that is *Blues in the Night*. On the same day, *Variety* also mentions "Don Siegel's montages are effective."[69] Perhaps Siegel's innovative use of marshmallows impressed the reviewers.

"I would just as soon see him go through the whole picture without wearing a hat." [70]

In *Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage*, Umberto Eco calls the film "a very modest aesthetic achievement" in comparison to the films of Sergei Eisenstein. Rather than dismissing *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942), however, Eco explains why he finds it "a great example of cinematic discourse, a palimpsest for the future students of twentieth-century religiosity, a paramount laboratory for semiotic research in textual strategies" and moreover, a cult film.[71] As a palimpsest, the film also reveals the trust Hal Wallis placed in Don Siegel to execute a competent montage. From his consternation over Humphrey Bogart in hats to his tweaking of the first and last scenes of the film, Wallis was instrumental in overseeing the production of *Casablanca*. His vision and influence over the film is indicative of the importance of the producer in the studio system. An Inter-Office Communication from Tenny Wright to Carl Jules Weyl, the film's art director, outlines how the producer was the ultimate authority during this time.[72] If Weyl needed approval, clarified Wright, he should seek out Curtiz first and then move up the hierarchy to Wallis.

After seeing editor Owen Marks' rough cut, Wallis decided to finesse the beginning and ending of the film. In addition, he assigned to Siegel the film's opening montage of a globe spinning and refugees crossing a map of the world.[73] Wallis wrote to Siegel in an Inter-Office Communication from August 1, 1942, "For the opening of the picture, immediately preceding the montage of the refugees, we would like to have a spinning globe – an unusual, interesting shot, sketchily lighted. As the globe's spinning slackens and stops, the camera zooms up to the general vicinity of our locale, and at that point you can dissolve to your montage. Will you please discuss this with Mike Curtiz before you shoot it."[74] The memo refers explicitly to Siegel shooting footage for the montage that ends up in the film, which started as an unproduced play entitled *Everybody Comes to Rick's*.[75] Jack Warner purchased the play with an eye to casting George Raft as Rick and Hedy Lamarr as Ilsa.[76] After Raft declined the role, Warner briefly considered Dennis Morgan for Rick, Anne Sheridan for Ilsa, and Ronald Reagan as Victor Laszlo, the Czech underground leader. This trio was announced in a press release in January 1942.[77]

Initially the screenplay was assigned to the Epstein twins, Julius and Philip, who were also eventually tasked with getting David O. Selznick to loan Ingrid Bergman to Warner Bros. Although the Epstein brothers visited Selznick before writing the script, their assurances that "it's a lot of junk like Algiers" supposedly won him over.[78] While the play originally featured the tough American, Rick Blaine, aided by Sam, a black piano player, Wallis was so impressed after seeing Hazel Scott perform at the Uptown Cafe Society in New York that he wrote Trilling about changing the role of Sam to a woman. In a conversation across Inter-Office Communications in early February 1942, Wallis and Steve Trilling traded thoughts on which female African-American singers could play Sam. Trilling suggested Ella Fitzgerald and Lena Horn, who he described as "an excellent talent - a very pretty light colored girl" although he also expressed consternation over why MGM "would want to sign her for a term."[79] Despite Wallis's desire to pursue Scott, they ultimately cast Dooley Wilson on loan from Paramount at $500 a week for seven weeks.[80] Peter Lorre, who although owned by Warner Bros., was on loan to Universal and had to be retrieved at $1,750 per week.[81] When the Epstein twins were put to work on Frank Capra's *Why We Fight* series, Warner assigned Howard Koch to finish the script. Curtiz started shooting before the production had a scripted ending and Koch was later surprised to find the Epstein brothers, recently returned from Washington D.C., also churning out pages for the

project.[82] Curtiz continued pulling pages from different directions; this chaos may have ultimately helped Casablanca as Bergman was unsure how to play her feelings for Rick and Victor.[83] After principal shooting was complete, Wallis realized the film needed a better start and finish. This confusion over how to end the film was reflected in the two different last lines recorded by Bogart. In an Inter-Office-Communication on August 7, Wallis asked Owen Marks to record Bogart saying, "Luis, I might have known you'd mix your patriotism with a little larceny."[84] However, in an IOC two weeks later Wallis told Curtiz, "The new line to be spoken by Bogart when we get him is as follows:

<div style="text-align:center">

Rick:

OUR expenses – (pause) – Luis, I think this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship.[85]

</div>

Just as Rick's last line acknowledges a newfound faith in Captain Renault, *Casablanca* marks the moment when Warner Bros. officially recognized Siegel in his capacity as head of the montage department. On June 15, 1942, a Change Payroll Notice issued for Don Siegel switched his $135.00 per week plus $65.00 bonus rate from the Special Effects Department to the Montage Department and from Technical to General Payroll.[86]

Casablanca may or may not have served as the germinating point of a prank so wild two men have been given credit for the dastardly deed while others have refuted it actually took place. On the fifth day of filming, May 29, 1942, word reached the cast that John Barrymore had died after an appearance on Rudy Vallee's radio show. Barrymore's funeral was held in East Los Angeles on June 2, 1942. Lorre, Heinreid, and Bogart concocted a bizarre scheme to kidnap the deceased John Barrymore from the funeral home and prop him up at Errol Flynn's house. In his autobiography, Heinreid admits to giving Lorre money for bribing the funeral home but denies laying in wait to see Flynn's shocked reaction. However, in his autobiography *My Wicked, Wicked Ways*, Flynn fingers Raoul Walsh as the ringleader of the whole charade.[87] Looking back at *Casablanca*'s daily production and progress reports, Bogart started work at 1:45pm on June 1 and 9:00am on June 2, and Lorre started at 9:30am on both days. If they were architects of the prank, their nocturnal activities would certainly have made for long shooting days. Walsh recounts his version of the story in the documentary *The Men Who Made the Movies* (Richard Schickel, 1973) and Gene Fowler claims to have maintained vigil over Barrymore's body the night before the funeral.

***The grandest story of the naughty "Nineties" becomes the gayest picture of the fighting "Forties"!*[88]**

One adventure of the "fighting forties" director Raoul Walsh unequivocally was in charge of was *Gentleman Jim*, which follows the conventional narrative of a protagonist whose desires catalyze the story. Jim Corbett, played by Errol Flynn, wants to achieve success in the boxing ring. The overall editing of the film emphasizes Corbett's love of the sport as pure and untainted by base economic concerns although all the obstacles he faces stem from his working-class Irish roots. These include Corbett's transparent attempts to conceal his lower-class status at the Olympic Club, the discrimination Corbett and his friend Walter Lowrie (Jack Carson) experience at the hands of the elitist Olympic Club members, and the seemingly insurmountable sum of money the Corbett camp must raise to meet John L. Sullivan's (Ward Bond) purse. As a light-hearted Horatio Alger story centered on the real-life figure of "Gentleman Jim" Corbett, all it takes to make it, according to Father Burke (Arthur Shields), is "the right hand of God and the help of a very good left." One of the more entertaining themes of the film is the development of the contentious Corbett family dynamic. All three of the Corbett brothers are amateur pugilists and any perceived slight is an excuse to head to the barn. The editing by Jack Killifer highlights the humor in the Corbett definition of conflict resolution by foregrounding a character yelling, "The Corbetts are at it again!" before each fight. The comedy maintains its blithe tone by playing every scene for laughs. Even boxing's unruly past – boxers fighting with steel pipes clenched in their fists – becomes a moment of humorous exposition.

For the most part, the montages by Don Siegel in *Gentleman Jim* adhere to classical Hollywood conventions in their compression of information and time. While the primary narrative function of the montages is to convey the passage of time and the corresponding changes in the characters' lives, they also highlight the creativity of Siegel's approach. Three of the montages are particularly striking. The training sequence montage initially feels like a haphazard collection of shots of Corbett jabbing and dancing around the ring. However, it soon becomes clear they embody Corbett's strengths as a boxer. The challenge facing was how to express Corbett's character through a training montage. The solution is a series of close-ups of Corbett's feet hopping, skipping and setting up to deliver a punch interspersed with shots of Corbett throwing jabs and punches. Finally, Corbett is shown smoothing out his hair, suggesting a self-conscious habit born out of not quite belonging. The training montage joins the

components that make Corbett a successful fighter and, in Siegel's hands, becomes the filmic expression of hard work and skill (unsurprisingly, Flynn looks good too!).

After Corbett's illegal fight at the wharf, a montage encapsulates the progression of Corbett's career. Shots of a moving train dissolve into newspaper headlines, which are superimposed with crowds of boxing fans. While they resemble other montages and the compression of time, they call attention to the way montage breaks with continuity editing patterns. The montage sequence chafes against the overall classical paradigm of invisible seamless transitions by assertively, energetically calling attention to its editing. In the montage detailing Corbett's progression through the boxing ranks, Siegel assembles a rapid cutting style dominated by dynamic movement within the frame of the shot. Siegel's editing also challenges the spatial orientation reinforced by classical continuity editing. David Bordwell writes about continuity editing, "From shot to shot, tonality, movement, and the center of compositional interest shift enough to be distinguishable but not enough to be disturbing."[89] Although Siegel's montages are not "disturbing," they do evoke Viktor Shklovsky's concept ostranenie or defamiliarization. In Siegel's montage, the audience is invited to perceive everyday objects – a train, a newspaper – in unfamiliar ways. This defamiliarization enhances the viewer's perception of the scene. The train wheels charging forward are no longer just pieces of machinery; they symbolize Corbett traveling all over the country and also his progress in the ring. As an interlude, which stands out stylistically because of its rapid-fire juxtaposition of shots of train wheels, excited fans, and rotating newspaper headlines, the montage also disrupts the spatial orientation maintained throughout the rest of the film. In fact, it invites the viewer to refocus him or herself within the space of the montage. Usually, this space is unmoored from the conventions of crosscutting and eyeline matches to present an expressive, subjective space. This is apparent in the first part of Siegel's montage. However, in the second half the acceleration of clips suddenly stops and pauses in a bar for a quick debate between Corbett's manager, Billy Delaney (William Frawley), and a patron skeptical of Corbett's caliber. The patron grudgingly admits Corbett's skill against his last opponent but points to a still photograph of boxer Charlie Mitchell on the wall of the bar as a "real" threat. The camera slowly moves in for a close-up of the still photograph when suddenly, Siegel's editing breaks through the static image and the viewer is suddenly plunged into the ring mid-fight. After Corbett delivers another crowd-stunning

knockout, the film freezes on his features and the camera slowly pulls out to reveal Corbett as the new photograph on the wall of the bar where Delaney collects money from side-bets.

While this scene is elegant and exciting, it takes dramatic license with history around two issues - when Corbett actually fought and the degree to which they were staged. On p.115 of the Final Script this montage with its repeated use of newspaper headlines is called "Corbett's Rise to Fistic Fame," and the script reads:

> The exact details of this MONTAGE will be worked out in detail with the Special Effects boys, but the purpose is to dramatize briefly and colorfully Corbett's rise in the boxing ranks of America. CORBETT KNOCKS OUT KILRAIN IN 6 ROUNDS – AL DALY IN 3 – MIKE McGUINNESS IN 4 – CHARLIE MITCHELL IN 8 – then DRAWS WITH THE GREAT PETER JACKSON, greatest of all negro fighters, in 61! These fights are dramatized with newspaper and Police Gazette headlines, perhaps INTERCUT with FLASH SHOTS or SUPERIMPOSED SHOTS of Corbett fighting and the roar of crowds (STOCK). We see photographs of Corbett's opponents on the canvas, knocked out, and photographs of Corbett with admiring crowds, receiving big purses, etc. There should not be too much actual fighting in this MONTAGE.[90]

While the details depended on the "Special Effects boys," Producer Robert Buckner requested the Research Department on July 7, 1942 to generate a list of Corbett's fights leading up to the Sullivan fight. These fights were to be encapsulated in a montage and the Head of the Research Department, Herman Lissauer, informed Buckner that there was only one real fight between the time Corbett fought Jack Kilrain and the fight against Sullivan. In contrast, "the montage – as written in the script – includes the fight with Charley Mitchell which did not occur until 1894 – two years <u>after</u> the Sullivan fight. Only by taking dramatic license could that fight be included in this montage."[91] Lissauer continues, pointing out the other fights during this time were exhibitions or "carefully fixed by Corbett so that he couldn't lose. Such a fight was that with Mike McGuinness… Mike McGuinness is actually a fictional name used by Corbett in his autobiography as he had been threatened by the lawyer of the original McGuinness."[92] Regardless of his reservations, Lissauer provided Buckner with a list of seven fights for the montage on July 9, 1942. Lissauer writes, "Most of these were exhibitions – many of them faked, but they should serve to build the montages you want."[93] As the finished montage shows, the actual timeline and staged quality of Corbett's fights was disregarded in favor of dramatizing his

rise to prominence. The loose approach to historical accuracy in the film was noticed by The Philadelphia Inquirer on November 26, 1942, which writes, "unless you're a sports fan and a stickler for unadorned truth, Vincent Lawrence and Horace McCoy (screenwriters) have put together a better-than-average prizefight yarn that gives muscular, handsome Mr. Flynn ample scope for his talents."

Another montage punctuates Corbett's highly anticipated fight with Sullivan. The scenes quickly transition from the space of the boxing ring to the fans waiting eagerly to learn of the outcome of the fight. The importance of the boxing match's result is emphasized by the depiction of fans all over the country waiting eagerly. Every socioeconomic walk of life is represented and each new group is accented with dissolve shots of telephone poles. The montage stresses the power of technology to connect the nation at the same time, and as the images in the montage change, the clicking of the telegraph operators unifies the interlude. In their statement on sound film, Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov argue for the contrapuntal use of sound. While the aural sound of the telegraph clicking does stem from the visual image at the start of the montage, it also embodies what Eisenstein, Pudovkin, and Alexandrov viewed as the enormous power of sound when approached as a "new montage element (as a factor divorced from the visual image)."[94] The sound of the telegraph clicking drives the entire montage, adding a sense of urgency and immediacy to the broadcast of the fight reports.

Hollywood and D.C. Mix Politics and Propaganda

The cheerful pugilism at the heart of *Gentleman Jim* in 1942 contrasts with the somber and didactic tone of *Mission to Moscow* (Michael Curtiz, 1943) based on the book by Joseph E. Davies, Ambassador to Russia from 1936 to 1938. Siegel shared credit with Leicester for the montages in the credit titles and the records from the film indicate the increasingly active role the Montage Department played throughout the film's production process.[95] The compelling context surrounding the production and reception of *Mission to Moscow* (Michael Curtiz, 1943) represents the intersection of international politics, popular culture, and wartime diplomacy. The film, an uncritical adaptation of Former U.S. Ambassador to the Soviet Union Joseph E. Davies eponymous book, reflects Davies' embrace of Soviet-American relations as a way to win the war and ensure a stable peace. In fact, despite a denial by White House officials that any such meeting ever occurred, Jack Warner had insisted in his 1965 ghostwritten memoirs that President

Roosevelt implored him in a secret meeting to make the film.[96] Regardless of which high-ranking Washington player encouraged Warner, then a lieutenant colonel assigned to public relations, the film certainly embodies the recommendations contained within the "Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry" issued by the Office of War Information (OWI). Given to studios in June 1942, this OWI manual called on the studios to include pro-Allied and pro-Soviet themes in upcoming releases. *Mission to Moscow* begins with a prologue where Davies speaks directly to the camera and by extension to viewers about Soviet leaders and their commitment to world peace. In her book *Running Time: Films from the Cold War*, Nora Sayre discerns that "in no other film have I seen so many spinning globes. Again and again, world leaders pensively twirl the spheres while asserting that peace (or war) is possible."[97]

Aside from its pro-Stalin stance, *Mission to Moscow* showcases the increasing importance of Siegel and the Montage Department within the studio.[98] The Montage Department was integrated into the production process early, which is reflected in the Research Department's careful accounting of who asked for information and when. The increased attention the Montage Department received at this time stems from two factors. First, the good work Siegel and his team churned out for the previous three years was finally achieving recognition beyond Special Effects. Second, the film's subject matter and setting were perfect for the aesthetics of montage. More than any other technique, Russian film is associated with the practice of montage. The films of Eisenstein, Kuleshov, Pudovkin, and Vertov were familiar to American filmmakers and mimicking the style of Russian montage lent the film a sense of aesthetic authenticity. Siegel was in the perfect position to capitalize on this fact looking to increase recognition for his department and prestige for himself. This is clear from the attention his work received from heads of other departments, the film's producer, Robert Buckner, its director, Michael Curtiz, and even Jack and Harry Warner.

Siegel's interactions with Herman Lissauer, the Head of the Research Department, suggest that Siegel and company were slowly being accepted as just another cog in the production machine. An Inter-Office Communication from December 28, 1942 from Lissauer to "Siegel and Leicester – Montage Dept" cautions against depicting mastheads from real newspapers, *Paris Soir* and *London Daily Mail*, in one of the montages. Lissauer suggests changing the names because of a sentence in the script, "The newspapers are lying to us," and it was studio policy not to use mastheads of newspapers without their permission.[99] Lissauer

communicates constantly with Siegel about the montages for *Mission to Moscow* throughout January and February. On January 8, 1943 there is an Inter-Office Communication from Lissauer to Siegel regarding the Parliamentary scene and the proper procedure in which the House comes to Order.[100] Another Inter-Office Communication from January 22, 1943 reads,

> I would like to emphasize the importance of not designating the Senator as coming from any state in particular. The Chairman should simply say, "The Chair recognized the Senator", even if this is not the exact form used in the Senate. But I am afraid that if you designate the state, you will do two things: 1. You will identify the Senator, which we want to avoid. 2. You may run into difficulties with the Censorship Board of the state (New Jersey) and there may be delay in getting the picture exhibited in that state. I repeat this merely because I think it is important.[101]

Lissaeur refers to montages explicitly in an Inter-Office Communication from January 28 and 29 where he references "Montage: European Tour Page C" and "Montage Scene 250-259." He also provides small corrections, like pointing out that Delbos was misspelled throughout and noting the mistake in the phrase "As Von Ribbentrop and Stalin's signatures are affixed," as Stalin was present but Molotov actually signed the non-aggression pact. Aside from direct communication between Siegel and Lissauer, other members of the Montage Department were keeping the Research Department busy as well.

Siegel's integration into the production process is clear from an increase in appearances in Inter-Office Communications regarding the picture. On January 21, 1943 producer Robert Buckner wrote to Jack L. Warner and ccd Tenny Wright, Steve Trilling, and Don Siegel. In the memo, Buckner outlines what needs to be completed for the picture with an emphasis on the montages. The copy of this memo in the archives includes a hand-written Siegel or S in a circle after Buckner's points about montages.[102] For example: Point 5 reads "The Industrial Tour Montage, an important montage to cover Davies' inspection of Soviet resources; also includes brief scenes with dialogue between Davies and Soviet workers, American engineers. This is being worked out in careful detail with Siegel;" Point 7 reads "The Isolationist Montage, an extremely important montage now being worked out in minute detail. Siegel picked up today some shots for this in the House of Representatives set;" Point 8 says "Montage of America listening to the President's quarantine speech, as in script;" Point 9 reads "Montage of Davies tour of European capitols just before his return to America; visits to Paderewski in Poland,

Schussnig in Austria, Benes in Czechoslovakia. Brief scenes in offices;" and Point 11 outlines "Shooting Walter Huston's section of all montages; mentioned here in view of Huston's date to report to Goldwyn for another picture." This was important to stay abreast of when they were shooting Huston since montages operated independently from the principal cinematography. Point 12 reads "Sound track of Huston's voice to cover all montages in which he does not personally appear;" and Point 13 confesses "Exact final shots and dialogue of the picture, to be decided upon after conference. Koch and I have definite ideas on this and will present them;" and finally Point 14 mentions "Special Effects, already taken up with Roy Davidson and work begun; map for montage at end, miniature of League of Nations, Pearl Harbor bombing, etc. Other possible special effect requirements will be determined when all montages are detailed in final form."[103] Buckner closes his letter by highlighting the role of montage in the finished film,

> The vital importance to the final picture of this work remaining to be done must not be underestimated or hastily pressured. The montages carry an enormous amount of the story itself and its total effectiveness is largely dependent upon their being perfect. The documentary nature of the scenes already shot demand smooth connections and the clear exposition of political points, which only these montages can carry across. Every shot, line of dialogue, key, miniature, and special effect in these montages is being prepared in exacting detail for their absolute necessity and nothing more. When they are submitted with a budget to the Production Department they will be a blueprint for what is essential to the final picture, and these are being prepared with all possible speed.[104]

Buckner's plea to Warner and Wright elevates Siegel's role in the production process by calling his work "essential to the final picture" and insinuating he should be given leeway in terms of budgeting as well.[105]

The following month, in February, various members of the Montage Department fact-checked information, including Leicester's inquiry about the "source and complete verse from bible which contains beating swords into plough shares." The Research Department responded that the phrase comes from Isaiah Chapter 2 Verse 4 – "… nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more."[106] The Montage department also borrowed a copy of the book *Mission to Moscow* and asked who accompanied Davies on the stand when he made a speech at Madison Square Garden.[107] Leicester submitted a German and Russian version of the nonaggression pact for checking on February 12, 1943 and the next day, Lissauer asked

Pat Patterson of the Montage Department to go over the Russian-German nonaggression pact with Mr. Jay Leyda.

Leyda was hired as a technical advisor on the film in a roundabout way: Ambassador Litvinov suggested to Davies that Warner Bros. get in touch with Artkino Pictures, Inc. in New York to obtain more recent film from Russia. In turn, Nicholas Napoli, the representative of Artkino, offered all their film material and the technical assistance of a qualified associate - Jay Leyda - in a letter to Davies.[108] Leyda's contract was for $150 a week for six weeks, including round-trip railroad fare.[109] Aside from technical advising, primarily for the Research Department, Leyda provided certain stills from Sovfoto.[110] His duties for the Research Department involved correcting cast lists,[111] suggesting the film adopt titles like Premier Molotov instead of difficult given names like Vyacheslav Molotov, and the translation of Russian passages.[112] Leyda's consultation on the Russian-German nonaggression pact exposed translation errors. Thus Lissauer sent a curt Inter-Office Communication on February 15, 1943 to Siegel, which reads "I learn that in the Montage involving the German and Russian versions of the NONAGGRESSION TREATY, Earle Hayes has made a number of mistakes in spelling and in text, and if there is the slightest likelihood that any part of this will be legible, these mistakes should by all means be corrected."[113]

In contrast to the abrasive tone of most of Lissauer's missives, his letter to Davies on February 3, 1943 is effusive.[114] Rather than simply send Davies a copy of his book with autographs from those involved in the production, Lissauer writes a letter which reads, "I consider it a great privilege to have had a part in the work on this motion picture which will, I anticipate, have a markedly beneficial effect upon American public sentiment towards our great ally Russia. Your book, it seems to me, is one of the soundest and most important works of the period."[115] This moment calls attention to the turmoil lingering under the surface of the film industry over Communism, loyalty, and patriotism. Just three years earlier, in July 1940, the Warner Club News reported on an address by President Harry M. Warner to over five thousand employees gathered in the carpenter shop. Warner proclaimed, "We don't want anyone in our employ who belongs to any Bund…. Neither do we want any Communists, Fascists, Nazis or other un-American believers."[116]

His speech also included a plea to weed out enemies from within the business in order to be prepared for an enemy from without. Warner cautioned, "If there are any enemies among you

– enemies that affect your job, your company, your faith or your country, you should know them. Weed them out. In union there is strength. Don't let anybody say anything about anybody's faith as long as that is a Christian faith."[117] Warner further mentioned Arthur Cornelius of the FBI who would "gladly look into" any "misled" workers.[118] In response to the meeting an article entitled "3,411 Strong" responded, "We must act and continue to act. This does not mean that we must go out and prosecute and persecute. But instead to teach and lead those who are slightly 'pink' into the right way of thinking and acting for GOD and COUNTRY."[119] The article calls on Warner Club Members to support democracy just like the studio, announcing, "Just as Warner Brothers gave to the motion picture world 'Juarez,' a purely propaganda picture to show the Mexican again that there was an idol in his history who fought for the principles of democracy – as they also gave to the people of this country 'The Confessions of a Nazi Spy' to point out to all of us the danger of the enemies within; and as they continue to give to the nation and its public schools those remarkable patriotic shorts – not for profit but for the good they accomplish, so must we carry on, in our own meager way, the story of Americanism."[120] Three years later, Americanism would be conflated with support for Russia, then still an ally. All three films - *Mission to Moscow*, *Juarez*, and *Confessions of a Nazi Spy* exemplify Warner Bros. foray into politics, which often resulted in a clash between fact and fiction.

The impetus to clear everything ultimately with Jack Warner is apparent from an Inter-Office Communication from Robert Buckner on February 5, 1943. Buckner writes, "Dear J.L. Herewith, as promised, the ending of Mission to Moscow. I believe it's an excellent job, which contains every element we wanted to have and also satisfies everything, which was on Davies' mind. Don Siegel is equally enthused as I about it and says he can stage it with great dramatic effect. He will take this ending, if it meets with your approval, and do his breakdown in full detail. He has described it to me and it sounds excellent. I will appreciate your reaction to it as soon as possible."[121] Siegel's desire for increased responsibility is discernible between the lines of this memo. Not only is Siegel handling the montages throughout the film, now he is actually shooting the film's ending. Buckner also obliquely refers to Davies, who commented on the film's progress throughout its entire production. Davies even went so far as to send a Western Union Wire suggesting the use of a "male Cossack chorus in the ending as it would be most effective."[122] On February 9, 1943 J.L. Warner wrote to Messrs. Trilling, Buckner, Forbstein, and Siegel, "Please be at my office at 6:00 o'clock Wednesday for a short conference on the

montage finish for Mission to Moscow."[123] Buckner sent an Inter-Office Communication on February 16, 1943 to Jack Warner regarding the ending in the map room scene. Buckner recounts a discussion with Siegel, who assured Buckner he could film the scene without using Oscar Homolka or Walter Huston, and Buckner asks for J.L.'s approval. He ends by saying "The Montages are coming along in great shape and very fast."[124] This memo emphasizes aspects of the montages that Warner would approve of including the efficiency with which they were being completed and Siegel's ability to work around calling Homolka and Huston back for a day of work. The story file includes a revised continuity for the film's ending from March 9, 1943. The last scene intercuts from the map room between the large map and stock shots of the Nazi army in retreat as Davies intones the defense of Moscow by the Red Army paid for time – "Time for the Fascist tide to shatter its strength against the iron wall of human freedom."[125]

Harry Warner's comments about the film further reveal the importance placed on the montages in *Mission to Moscow* and the increasing recognition the Montage Department received within the studio. The political ramifications of *Mission to Moscow* were at the forefront of Harry Warner's mind when he made a list of suggestions focused solely on the montages on March 20, 1943. His recommendations include the depiction of the German army as too strong and commented, "Too much German might in montages first half of film, particularly opening scenes in Berlin prior to the Schacht scenes when Davies first arrives in Germany."[126] In general Warner felt there was "too much German might displayed throughout the picture."[127] Warner worried the American army looked weak in contrast. Warner's concerns about the montages stretched from a large-scale worry - the American army looking weak in comparison to the Germans - to small-scale issues. Specifically, Warner requested "a small cut in montage of long trucking shot with Germans heiling Hitler coming to an officer in brown shirt and hat."[128] Warner wanted the person eliminated from the scene because he claimed to have noticed the person in stock shots and other pictures.[129] In response, there is a note[130] typed into the document, which reads, "We feel this is possibly one of our stage scenes and he might mean an actor used in Siegel's montage. H.M. was vague and we will have to run with him to spot this particular shot."[131] This annotation to Warner's suggestions is particularly interesting because it attributes Siegel as responsible for the montages. While the Germans could not be portrayed as too strong, Warner was perturbed because the American Bund members looked too soft. Warner felt the Bund members should come across as nefarious and hoped the production could "get the

stock shot from Capra's "Nazis Strike Back" in which we see Bund members beating up heckler at Fritz Kuhn Madison Square Garden meeting."[132] The annotated response considers this impossible from a technical standpoint. Not only would it be hard to match the timing of the film to the stock shot but they "would have to hold the entire section to make action clear where our stock shot is merely a three or four foot flash."[133] Finally, Warner was concerned about the isolationist montage, which he felt did not do enough to "build up the isolationist speakers opposing Davies."[134] Instead Warner wanted someone to reference "the Soviet Air Force being weak and inadequate."[135] In 1943, Davies exchanged letters with Franklin D. Roosevelt's Press Secretary, Steve T. Early, concerning how the film's perpetuation of amicable Soviet-American relations would result in victory and mentions the especially enthusiastic work Harry Warner was doing to convey this message.[136]

In retrospect, despite the film's adherence to its source material, its lackluster reception hints at the coming conflict of the Cold War. While *Mission to Moscow* embraced the mandate of the OWI's "Government Information Manual for the Motion Picture Industry," and is unabashedly pro-Soviet, the film was met with critical condemnation. *The Nation* and *The New Republic* both panned the film, arguing the pervasive use of stock shots in the film, which were culled from Moscow-made films, represented a tacit endorsement of communism. In particular, the film failed to address Russia's relationship with Poland, Joseph Stalin's purges, and the Moscow Trials. Dr. Sidney Hook of New York University wrote: "What we are witnessing in *Mission to Moscow* is a propaganda buildup for conducting purges and frame-ups in this country on the Moscow style. It is a blow to democratic unity in America and effectively plays into Goebbels' hands."[137] This sentiment was echoed in a letter to *The New York Times* dated May 6, 1943, from the philosopher John Dewey and Suzanne La Follette. Their letter lambasts the film's distortion of history writing, "The film Mission to Moscow is the first instance in our country of totalitarian propaganda for mass consumption - a propaganda which falsifies history through distortion, omission or pure invention of facts, and whose effect can only be to confuse the public in its thought and its loyalties."[138] Dewey and La Follette state the inaccuracies are "alarming in a film presented as factual and documentary and introducing living historical personalities."[139] One personality unable to defend himself, since he was assassinated on Stalin's orders three years earlier, was Leon Trotsky. During the film's pre-production, there arose a debate about whether to portray Trotsky in Adolph Hitler's pay. A letter from Trotsky's widow,

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Natalia Trotsky, urging them to change this plot point, complicated this decision.[140] On October 21, 1942, R.J. Obringer wrote to Morris Ebenstein in Warner Bros. New York that "Presumably Col. Warner is willing to take the risk, somewhat along the lines of the risk involved when we made "Confessions of a Nazi Spy". Buckner claims this matter is one of the high dramatic scenes of the picture and would materially affect the script by its deletion."[141] On November 13, 1942, Ebenstein warned Obringer the Trotsky sympathizers were planning to attack the picture to examine in public the question of Trotsky's guilt.[142] In addition, Ebenstein sketched out the possibility of Mrs. Trotsky suing for libel.[143] Ultimately, *Mission to Moscow* links Trotsky with Hitler, playing into the reasons critics attacked the film.

The press scion William Randolph Hearst also printed the letter by Professor Dewey and Suzanne LaFollette as a presentation of the facts obscured by the film. Hearst argued this was the democratic thing to do, defend American democracy against Bolshevism.[144] In response, Warner sent a telegram to Hearst stating, "Warner Bros is not in politics. We made the picture as a contribution to the war effort… Far from advocating communism we show the purge trials in a manner that will make most Americans shake hands with themselves that our legal procedure is so different and so much fairer. Naturally we have no objection to legitimate criticism but to condemn a picture on basis of an attack by Trotsky partisans seems a startling thing for papers to do. Trotsky's gospel was revolution not only in Russia but throughout the world."[145] Fans of the film counseled Warner to ignore the film's unfavorable press. One supporter wrote to Warner, "The large and overwhelming majority of Americans despise Hearst and have not the least regard for his views and opinions."[146] This letter further mentioned that Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* did not suffer because Hearst panned it. Other letter writers echoed this sentiment calling Hearst pro-Nazi and referring to *Mission to Moscow* as a weapon against fifth column propaganda emanating within the United States.[147] This was a belief shared by the lyricist Yip Harburg[148], who wrote personally to Jack Warner on MGM letterhead on May 19, 1943, "I'm even more appreciative of your effort because you are the only Studio that is doing more than making just the greatest pictures in the industry. You are doing something for mankind."[149] Harburg signed his missive "Not a Communist."[150] To which Warner responded, "Not only not a Communist but as the late Will Rogers said 'my folks did not come over on the Mayflower – they met it."[151] Ironically, eight years later Harburg would be blacklisted for suspected sympathy with the American Communist Party.[152]

Dat ol Debbil Montage

Unlike the embarrassment that was *Mission to Moscow*, *This is the Army* (Michael Curtiz, 1943) represented Warner Bros. doing its part for the war effort in an uncontroversial way. It played on the anxieties of a war film but avoided any gore in favor of unabashed patriotism. Released in August, *This is the Army* was based on Irving Berlin's stage show "This is the Army: A Soldier Show in Two Acts" of 1942. In December of 1942, Jack L. Warner, who was now addressed as Colonel in Inter-Office Communications[153], and producer Hal Wallis[154] sent the Epstein brothers, Julius and Philip, to Detroit to see the show and converse with Berlin.[155] Wallis had already raised the possibility of a film in a series of telegraphs to Berlin care of the Book Cadillac Hotel in Detroit.[156] Warner's relationship with the Epstein brothers was famously contentious but they were adept at adaptations leading the charge on the screenplay for *Casablanca* from the play *Everybody Comes to Ricks*. Warner gave the Epstein brothers' names to HUAC in 1952 and on a HUAC questionnaire the brothers responded to the query of whether they ever belonged to a subversive organization with "Yes. Warner Bros."[157]

For the film, Colonel Warner requisitioned Lt. Ronald Reagan back from training at Fort Roach to star along with George Murphy and Joan Leslie. This was a request the military was happy to comply with and a great deal of correspondence in regards to *This is the Army* demonstrates the cooperation between Hollywood and Washington D.C. around the war effort. This synergy is established in a telegraph from Warner to the War Department Bureau of Public Relations[158] requesting permission for Reagan to appear as a narrator in a fifteen-minute program on the Blue Network for a Veterans Foreign Wars annual program.[159] The War Department Bureau of Public Relations also screened the film and found nothing objectionable to the national release or export of the film, Latin and South American countries excluded.[160] The War Department asked Warner Bros. if they could use the sound track for a film entitled "War Comes to America."[161] The reissue of the film by the "God Bless America" Fund Trustees Herbert Bayard Swope, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Gene Tunney, raised $7,000,000 in licensing fees for the treasury of the Army Emergency Relief, which was set up to alleviate the hardship suffered by families of the men of the Service.[162] Apart from patriotic fervor and business acumen, part of Berlin's excitement over the proposed film was due to the plans to shoot in Technicolor. A Western Union Wire on October 2, 1942 from Wilk and Ebenstein to Warner explains Berlin[163]

is "a very practical man because he says if there are difficulties getting Technicolor cameras and machines he agrees picture is to be made in black and white but he is relying upon you to do best you can under circumstances in view of your conferences with him in which you assured him you would use Technicolor."[164] Since Technicolor took longer to process, every department working on the film would feel the time crunch including the montage department.

Transforming Berlin's show from stage to screen was eventually assigned to screenwriters Casey Robinson and Claude Binyon and on November 13, 1942, Wallis informed Robinson of his displeasure with the changes to the montage. Presumably Curtiz agreed as Wallis writes, "Mike, too, feels that we should get a better idea for this – something that can be done cleverly and with a lot less footage. The thing that I am afraid of in the Montage is that we are not going to be able to get stock shots in Technicolor for the World Events portions. Consequently, everything would have to be staged, including the historical events – and this automatically rules the whole idea out. Will you give this some thought, and in the meantime I will put the script through with changes and a not indicating that there will be a Montage to cover the time lapse from 1918 to 1939."[165] Here Wallis voices his fear that the montage as originally written would be cost prohibitive. His memo highlights the important role stock footage played in keeping costs down especially in montages encapsulating a great deal of time. For Wallis, the new technology of Technicolor was wreaking havoc on a straightforward compression of time montage. In response, Robinson proposes a more expressive montage to Wallis on November 18, 1942. Robinson writes, "In reference to dat ol' debbil Montage, Scene 65, is this idea to replace it too screwy?"[166] What follows is a description of a montage covering the escalation of tension from 1919-1939. Robinson uses the dove in flight as a metaphor for peace as the sky it flies against slowly darkens and grows stormy symbolizing the increasing hostility of world events: "Thunder and lightning. The dove flies frantically whirling and darting, vainly trying to find a place to light."[167] This is followed by an announcer's voice discussing world events leading up to World War I. Robinson's idea echoes the symbolism of Vorkapich's work. It's unclear from these two memos whether Curtiz, Robinson, Siegel and Wallis were on the same page. However, the reliance on stock footage to cut down on costs was reiterated in an Inter-Office Communication Wallis writes to Lee Anthony. Wallis tells Anthony, "For our picture "THIS IS THE ARMY", we will have several sequences in Army camps and several montages where we need long shots of masses of tanks, men marching, airplanes, etc., as

photographed and used in the Hollingshead Service shorts. Mike Curtiz is anxious to begin selecting suitable material for our picture, and I will appreciate it if you will consult with Mike some time next week, run some of the stuff you have with him in order to get his ideas, so that we can begin to plan on just what we will use from stock and what we will have to shoot."[168] This memo reveals how concerns over cost were solved by the careful selection of the appropriate stock footage.

While the place of Siegel and his montage department is murky throughout these memos, the title credits do include "Montages by Don Siegel and James Leicester."[169] However, the Second Unit Staff and Cast List for the film does not mention either Siegel or Leicester suggesting their montage work was considered separate from the first and second units.[170] The Weekly Production Costs for the film contains no category specifically for montage but instead called for $21,822.74 for Trick, Miniature, and Glass shots.[171] These costs must have been attributed to the Processing Department, which handled technical effects and glass shots, trick camera, mechanical and optical scenes. While there is no budget specifically for montage, Siegel is referred to as a Director of Montages in a 1942 Change Payroll Notice. Additionally, in a 1943 letter from W.G. Wallace to R.J. Obringer, Wallace asks about exercising Siegel's option in the Montage Department proving that when it came to finances, the Montage Department was considered it's own entity in 1943.[172] In other respects too montage work was treated as just one more cog in the machine of the picture. This is demonstrated by an April 8, 1943 query from Leicester to the Research Department about the exact date of the German invasion of Poland. As with every other question fielded by Research, Herman Lissauer primly responded with an Inter-Office Communication saying "This is to confirm information given by telephone: The date Germany invaded Poland was September 1, 1939."[173] Although Siegel was making a name for himself on the lot, many still considered the Montage Department in conjunction with Special Effects. For example, Harold McCord[174] sent an Inter-Office Communication to Byron Haskin on May 17, 1943, which reads, "As you know, we have our work cut out for us to meet a July 23 release date on THIS IS THE ARMY. This means that all montages, glass shots, etc., must be finished and cut into the picture by no later than June 15, as Technicolor takes longer to get prints away than our black and white pictures." As the film's August release date neared, there is an interesting memo suggesting how montages were often used as "a fix" when scenes from a film were proving problematic. In a Western Union Wire from New York on July 19, 1943,

Warner writes to Wallis about complaints over "I Wish This is a Long War so I can Get in It." Warner's wire reads, "Believe we can paint this dialogue out and let scene remain. See if this cannot be done. Know we cannot replace this scene and do montage over or we would never get this picture opened."[175] Here Warner expresses a tendency to see montages as a technique capable of fixing scenes that were not working right, but dismisses the montage solution because of a lack of time.

One number that needed no fixing was the exemplary "What the Well-Dressed Man in Harlem Will Wear" featuring Sgt. Joe Louis. The boxer, who was commandeered by the military to elevate *esprit de corps* through his work in the Special Services Division, performed with a group of African-American soldiers and even squeezed in a few rounds with a punching bag. The *Daily Variety* singled out the Louis number while the Negro Press Bureau[176] wrote to Wallis commending him on his "outstanding production." Lawrence F. La Mar of the Negro Press Bureau finished his letter with, "More power to you in all your efforts."[177] Besides receiving positive reviews for the inclusion of boxer Joe Louis, The *Daily Variety* review lists "Montages by James Leicester and Don Siegel" under Cast and Crew. In addition, the review mentions how "Montages cover tour of the show to various cities throughout the country, and at this point, footage picks up a few story threads to keep things welded together."[178] Although it's not exactly glowing praise, it suggests reviewers were knowledgeable of the versatile role montages were expected to play in classical Hollywood.

The Golden Rule of the Montage Department… Brevity in Entertainment

As opposed to Vorkapich's montages, which drew attention to themselves, Siegel's department was more concerned with integrating the montages into the narrative flow. Reading through the articles of the Warner Club News consistently exposes the lot as an overwhelmingly masculine space in the late 1930s and early 1940s. Many of the writers even dedicate half their columns to surmising about the women their colleagues are chasing or dating. For example, the February 1943 Special Effects column by Towne D. Hayes muses, "Why were the kewpie dolls on Don Siegel's Christmas tree half red heads and half blondes?"[179] Casual objectification aside, the Warner Club News is an invaluable resource in discerning the evolving role of Don Siegel and the montage department within Warner Bros. The Montage Department, and especially Siegel, were foregrounded in an article entitled "Montage" in the August 1943 Warner Club

News, which provides a few clues as to why Siegel was successful setting up his own independent department. The August cover of the Warner Club News is a photomontage with the word "montage" written diagonally in bold flourishes.[180] Underneath is a film strip with each square filled with pictures of the men who made up the montage department including from left to right: Fred Tyler, assistant director, Weldon Patterson, first Property man, Don Siegel directing Gary Cooper in the mob and train wreck scenes of *Saratoga Trunk*, Jim Leicester, co-director and montage writer, and Bill Du Brul, cutter pictured with his Moviola.[181] The middle frame of the film strip reads "Don Siegel Presents" and the film negative is overlaid on top of the Warner Brothers logo mimicking the superimposition the department often used. Within the newsletter is the article itself, which is "by the Department" and accompanied by six illustrative photos of the montages for *This Is The Army*, *Mark Twain*, *Mission to Moscow*, *Devotion* (Curtis Bernhardt, 1946), and *Saratoga Trunk* (Sam Wood, 1945).

For readers unfamiliar with the term montage, the article defines the French word as "building up, mounting, or putting together."[182] However, they quickly amend this definition by clarifying what montage means to Warner Bros. Specifically, "Montage as we understand it is best described in the words of Hal Wallis as 'a sequence told as briefly and crisply and entertainingly as possible.' This definition received on a casual inter-office communication has become the golden rule of the Montage Department."[183] Although the "golden rule" was be brief and entertaining, the article reveals how the department followed one other guideline. Principally, the seamless integration of their montages into the finished productions. The article explains, "The word Montage has been associated for so long with super-imposition that the majority of picture people, as well as the public do not recognize the average straight forward Montage for what it is. This is no great sorrow to the Montage Department as our object is to make a Montage flow so harmoniously with the tempo of the picture that the audience is not aware of any change of pace. The greatest compliments that we have been paid have been by this lack of recognition of our work."[184] Thus, even if the article is part public relations exercise, it demonstrates how the montage department strove to replicate the invisible editing prized during the classical era.

The article also provides some clues about how the department fits into the studio structure. For example, a hierarchy is revealed with Hal Wallis dictating demands, Byron Haskin mentoring the department, but also Siegel firmly established as the head in charge of the

department. The article even credits Siegel with constructing Warner Bros. first montage. "Legend has it that Don, while in charge of the Insert Department, became impatient to see his work completed and edited it himself thereby completing the first individually constructed montage on the lot. It was an instant success and the practice was continued."[185] This is distinguished from the way Slavko Vorkapich worked. Rather than the one-man approach favored by Vorkapich, Siegel utilized a whole team when he was given a montage assignment. As recounted in the article, "Montage had already been specialized in by Vorkopitch, Ball Busch, and others, but had always been considered a one man project. Don Siegel changed all that. It is not certain whether this was a pre-meditated conclusion or a force of circumstance, but whichever it was he has achieved an organization which is capable of pooling its various talents into an individual perspective."[186] In this quote, the article refers to Siegel assembling a department that mimics the specialized division of labor in the studio as a whole.

Taking a cue from Special Effects, Siegel recreated a studio within the studio. Emphasizing the multiple talents mobilized to bring a montage to fruition, the article highlights the haphazard process of Siegel assembling a team:

> The personnel of this organization came into the Montage field casually and without premeditation. Fred Tyler was loaned by the Production Department for a brief interval, which has extended itself over a 5-year period. Jim Leicester entered the field when Don Siegel stopped by his cutting room to borrow a flange. They began a discussion about Montage, which has lasted for better than four years. Pat Patterson took time out between Dieterle productions to prop a Montage Unit. Three years later Pat asked, 'What ever became of Dieterle anyway?' Bill Du Brul erstwhile cutter for the eastern studios took a quick visit to California. His wife and family followed him West when Bill failed to return. He had gotten tangled up in the Montage Department."[187]

In case any directors or producers reading the Warner Club News wanted to utilize the talents of the montage department's diverse team, the article includes a description of their working process. Reinforcing the sense of a studio within a studio, the article outlines, "When such a sequence is indicated in a script a continuity complete with dialogue is written by the Montage Department and when accepted by the producer is scheduled and budgeted in the same manner as an individual production. This is necessary since 75 per cent of Montage work involves principals."[188] Not only did montage provide Siegel with the leeway to direct and edit his own

interludes, but it also afforded him the opportunity to shoot with studio stars. The article continues, "After the action is shot, it is then edited and transferred to an optical sheet. Here honorable mention should be made of Russ Collings, optical room chief, who greets the appearance of the optical sheet with the enthusiastic moan, 'What! Another blankety blank Montage?' He then cooperates by turning out optical work superior to any other in the industry. The optical print is then shown to the producer, and when accepted is inserted into the picture as a unit."[189] While the article does not reflect on the compression of time and space montage achieves within the diegesis, it does refer to time in more pragmatic terms. Particularly in a discussion of how much footage a montage usually comprised in the film, "A conception of the amount of work done can be realized when the total Montage footage in such productions as "Twain" and "Moscow" ran from 1500 to 2500 feet."[190] This encompasses several montage sequences, which tended to be anywhere from 50 to 200 feet in length.[191] Here the article emphasizes the overall importance of the montage department in terms of total montage footage included in certain pictures. The article closes with a good-natured poke at Wallis as it proclaims, "If this article seems brief, we refer you to Mr. Wallis' definition of a Montage."[192]

The Golden Rule of Biopics… As Many Montages as Possible!

One of the films ostensibly containing over a thousand feet of montage footage was the biopic *The True Adventures of Mark Twain* (Irving Rapper, 1944) starring Fredric March and Alexis Smith. A fictional account of Samuel Clemens, whose long life coincided with two appearances of Halley's Comet, necessitated the compression of time and space afforded by montage.[193] As a result, Siegel and the Montage Department played a prominent role constructing montages to encapsulate highlights from Mark Twain's escapades. A June 17, 1942 word count lists six separate montages including a "Jumping Frog Montage," a "Tom Sawyer Montage," a "National Progress 1877-1887 Montage," a "Bankruptcy Montage," a "Whirlpool Montage," and a "World Tour Montage."[194] With so many montages to create, there was an understandable reliance on stock footage as a cost-cutting device and to authentically evoke Twain's life. For example, The "National Progress Montage" captures Twain's ill-fated investment in James W. Paige's typesetting machine, the Paige Compositer. The final script describes the interlude, "In this montage no one is seen actually to speak. The SOUND TRACK is entirely independent of the screen. Everything but Mark Twain and the typesetter are supposed

to evolve from film stock."[195] Proposed images for the montage include Mark Twain's hand writing furiously, a shot of General Grant delivering a speech, shots of power lines and telegraph lines, and shots of Paige working over a typesetter. The way the montage is described is through shots listed on the left hand side of the page a. b. c. etc. and voiceovers described on the right hand side. The most interesting moment symbolically occurs in scene h. and i. As Twain's racing pen appears, Twain recites, "So I scribble, scribble, to feed a mechanical stork's neck that won't even lay eggs."[196] The pen racing symbolizes Twain churning out work to stay afloat financially while feeling stymied by not having the time to write something serious.[197] The typesetter is depicted as a "row of silly looking steel storks behaving absurdly"[198] and the script includes a drawing of a three-headed mechanical stork.

Figuring out how to contextualize Twain's life in images began with research by Siegel and his team. On June 9, 1942, Jim Leicester requested "Events showing progress in Industrial Sciences, Arts, etc. between 1877-1887 in U.S.A."[199] The Research Department supplied the montage department with a list including 1877, the first date a telephone was installed in a home; 1879 the first street light; 1883 for railroad signals; and 1886; the Statue of Liberty unveiled.[200] On September 1, 1942, Leicester asked for images of printing presses of 1895 and received one clip from files. The "World Tour of Mark Twain" montage, which transforms two years of speaking engagements into a brief interlude, also drew heavily from stock footage. An early script reads, "We see Mark Twain speak against far-scattered world background from stock, and hear fragments of the lines with which he won the world; playing the transitions over applause, laughter, and cheering. In the course of his superhuman feat of conquest and endurance, Mark Twain tires and ages under the all but impossible strain; but the bright unbeatable blaze of his spirit survives to the very end."[201] Besides condensing time, the montages serve as transitions from one period of Twain's life to the next. This is the case during the "Bankruptcy Montage," where the transcript "prepared by Don Siegel and James Leicester"[202] uses quick dissolves, superimposition and voiceover to evoke Twain's bankruptcy. The montage conveys Twain's subjective state after deciding to publish and market Ulysses S. Grant's memoir. The mounting pressure of unpaid bills and Twain's descent into debt is symbolized by Twain turning the leaves of the book like he's shuffling a flurry of bills.[203]

In perhaps the most colorfully named montage, "Jumping Frog," Siegel was asked to reference the Civil War without offending the South. A detailed Inter-Office Communication

from Herman Lissauer to producer Jesse L. Lasky on June 11, 1942, weighs in on the notes made by Mr. Beymer on the script. "In relation to Mr. Siegel's JUMPING FROG montage: In scene 3 of the montage – "UNION TROOPS ROUTED AT MANASSAS", Mr. Beymer's suggestion that Manassas should not be used is legitimate in that it is but the Southern name for the Battle of Bull Run already used in scene 1. Beymer suggests the battle of Fredericksburg instead. If this is used the headline could still read the same "UNION TROOPS ROUTED AT FREDRICKSBURG." In scene 7, Beymer suggests that Sherman and Atlanta are sore points with Southerners and had best not be mentioned. He suggests RICHMOND EVACUATED instead. If this is used, it would have to be Scene 8, allowing GRANT AND LEE ETC. to become scene 7, since the surrender of Richmond came after the Battle of the Wilderness. Otherwise the montage jibes with Beymer's suggestions except for Brandy Station, which still seems all right to us."[204]

In response, Siegel changed Scene No. 3, switched scenes 7 and 8, and used "Richmond Evacuated" so as to accommodate Southern sentiments. A flurry of correspondence in July 1942 established concerns over using the names of extant businesses in the montage. R.J. Obringer and Lasky wanted to eliminate the need for considerable correspondence clearing rights and asked Lissauer to suggest fictitious names for newspapers to Siegel. On July 16, 1942, Siegel received a list including newspaper names pertaining to St Louis, San Francisco, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New Orleans.[205] Two days later, Lissauer sent Siegel the subsidiary headlines to accompany the "Jumping Frog" montage. Accompanying the communication was a series of pages that correspond with the montage scene numbers including "the main headlines as now contained in the script or in that memo, and apropos sub-heads as well as the beginning of a likely text for the body of the news items."[206] The jumping frog contest Twain captured in "The Jumping Frog of Calaveras" was re-enacted for the film and forty-seven frogs hailing from Angels Camp, California, were brought to Hollywood with their handler/technical adviser Alfred Jermy, chairman of the Angels Camp Frog Jubilee. According to the production notes, in a trial heat for the film jump, staged in accordance with Angels Camp rules, a husky frog cut loose with a mighty leap of 15 feet, 10 ¾ inches exceeding the previous world record by three quarters of an inch.[207] However, Jermy deemed the jump unofficial and thus exempt for consideration in the record books.[208]

It is only fitting that *The True Adventures of Mark Twain* was the sight of many tall tales including one that pits Siegel against Jack Warner. In Stuart Kaminsky's *Don Siegel: Director*, Leicester reminisced about working as Siegel's editor and screenwriter. For one montage for *The True Adventures of Mark Twain*,

> Siegel had found five camels, took their picture in dozens of poses, printed the pictures, cut them out and mounted them on a camshaft to have them move. Then he set up a scene with Fredric March projected on a miniature screen on a miniature minaret. As the camera pulled back it picked up the camels and came through a cut-out crowd of Arabs to stop at two of the five real actors who turned to each other and laughed at Mark Twain's joke.[209]

Supposedly when Jack Warner saw the sequence, "he blew his stack," said Leicester.[210] Warner was angry because "He thought hundreds of extras had been hired and he blamed Don for wasting a fortune."[211] Siegel's ingenuity actually saved Warner a fortune on the picture, which would have been financially and logistically impossible to complete without the use of montage.

Devotion to a Trunkful of Junk

Although *Saratoga Trunk* and *Devotion* were released in 1945 and 1946 respectively, their inclusion in the Warner Club News article suggests the montage department began work on the two pictures before August of 1943. The main titles for both films include a "Montages by" credit for Don Siegel.[212] Both films follow realistic narratives punctuated by montages that compress time. *Saratoga Trunk* is particularly interesting because of the problems surrounding its reception. Adapted from a book by Edna Ferber, Casey Robinson's script quickly generated controversy. Whereas Joseph Breen of the Motion Picture Producers & Distributors of America, Inc. objected to the scene where Clint (Gary Cooper) dines in Clio's (Ingrid Bergman) apartment without his coat on suggesting they are living together. "Such a flavor, of course, is unacceptable from the standpoint of the Production Code, and hence could not be approved," wrote Breen in one of many letters lamenting the illicit sex alluded to in the script.[213] Further problems arose in April 1943, when a discussion amongst Lissauer, Obringer, and Wallis revolved around whether Southern sentiment would resent the negro servant Angelique eating with her maid as it appears in the script. Obringer first writes, "People of the Southern states may very strongly resent the inference that colored people are permitted to co-mingle with white people in restaurants and

public places, and, above all, it is not unlikely that the proprietors of the Begue restaurant will attempt some claim of libel based on the argument that the reputation of their restaurant and their business is materially damaged and held in disrepute."[214] Obringer later writes, "In checking, I also find that the State of Louisiana does have a civil rights law which restricts discrimination on account of race or color but I also find that the practice in the State is contrary to the law."[215] Wallis responds with "everything has been shot and that unless they tell us definitely that we are in trouble we would not want to retake it, as it will mean considerable expense… In view of that fact and the fact that our Begue's is shown in a period some 75 years ago, I do not see that the present operators could prove that we were damaging their reputation."[216] Wallis let the scene stand primarily because it would be financially cumbersome to replace it, however, the trouble over the film's treatment of race were not over.

The film's publicity clippings include the December 1, 1945 issue of *The Daily Worker*. In a review of the film, author David Platt condemns *Saratoga Trunk*'s portrayal of African Americans and especially Angelique. He writes, "Gary Cooper almost breaks the Negro maid's arm off in an attempt to find out why she dislikes him. After this revolting incident they become good friends. Insult is added to injury by having Flora Robson, a white actress, play the part of the Negro maid. Everything that's wrong with Hollywood is in this trunkful of junk."[217] *The Daily Worker* issue also includes a piece entitled "Aftermath on the Studio Strike." The column announces, "Film Front hears that Warner Bros. are through making "liberal" pictures. Jack L. Warner, vice-president of the tear-gas studio is reported to have told friends that he was the "victim of a gigantic communist conspiracy." He said he would never make another "liberal" picture, "since liberalism was just a disguise for communist propaganda." This from a character who was violently redbaited for producing "Mission to Moscow" and "Action in the North Atlantic." Warner is also reported to have said he was going to "vote Republican" from now on. Home at last! Buy why stop there? Why not put out a sequel to "Confessions of a Nazi Spy" saying it was all a mistake, that Warner Bros. were the 'victim of a gigantic communist conspiracy?' Isn't that what Hitler and his gang told the world every time they used tear gas and mustard gas against anyone who uttered a decent thought? If 'liberalism' is just a mask for 'communist propaganda,' then Hitlerism must be God's gift to American monopoly. Isn't that what Jack Warner is trying to say?"[218]

Conclusion

While Siegel may not have entered the studio system nursing a secret desire to direct, his trajectory reveals an ambitiousness and hunger for control and recognition that precluded his happiness with being a lifer in Special Effects. In Siegel's own words, the origination of his desire to be a director comes from working on a montage with James Cagney for *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (Michael Curtiz, 1942). Siegel had planned out the shot but Cagney wasn't comfortable and suggested something different, which Siegel felt was much better. When Siegel admitted to Cagney he felt stupid for not thinking of it, Cagney laughed and reassured him by saying "What do you think it's like working for Mike Curtiz?"[219] Cagney was convinced Curtiz never planned out his shots. This exchange planted the seeds of a new ambition in Siegel, to be a director.[220] This was a logical step since by 1942, Siegel was already joking that as head of the montage department, he "actually had more film in Warner Bros pictures at that time than any other director."[221] *Star in the Night*, released in 1945, was the "first large piece of film that I did totally on my own," says Siegel. He chose to do the modern parable on the birth of Christ primarily to annoy Jack Warner. Siegel had been sure Warner would not allow him to do the picture, that being Jewish, he would veto it. Warner liked the idea." Shot in five days, the film won an Academy Award.

Schooled at the Warner Bros of Raoul Walsh and Howard Hawks, Siegel was familiar with scenes of action and violence. As a director, his films are often tense, violent and packed with action. Byron Haskin, Head of Special Effects, who went on to direct in the 1940s and 50s, felt Siegel's second unit work taught him how to say things clearly, to finish each action you begin with, and to introduce him to cinematic violence. According to Haskin, Siegel learned to work autonomously as early as 1939 on his montage work for Raoul Walsh's *The Roaring Twenties*. "Don spent eight or ten weeks on it with all sorts of wild, symbolic things like Wall Street melting. It was cartoon-type graphic, Andy Warhol shit. We managed to keep Walsh and the producer from seeing any of it and we started mounting a bill far over anything that had been estimated."[222] Thankfully for Siegel and Haskin, Wallis liked the montages. Siegel also ruminated on how comfortable he was working without supervision. Siegel recollected, "During my tenure at Warner Bros. as Head of the Montage Department, the studio became trained to look upon those situation in the script that called for montage, whether it was spelt out or not, as being my problem. I would take the script and write the montages. They wouldn't dare mess with

my scripts because they were always very complicated. Where it ran 1 line in the script, my montage might run 5 pages. Of course, it was a most marvelous way to learn about films, because I made endless, endless mistakes just experimenting with no supervision."[223] A feeling of experimentation and an economy of imagery are apparent in Siegel's later directorial work.

His pictures often feel like B pictures even when big stars are involved. Siegel's background in editing is demonstrated by his concise style with the sparse editing lending each film a sense of forward momentum. Siegel was trained in efficient storytelling and his films convey a lot of information with imagery in a short amount of time. Siegel presents the narrative economically and just as he did as a montage director, Siegel strove for creativity and efficiency. This economy with images attracted French New Wave directors and Jean-Luc Godard named a character after Siegel. Siegel excelled at making B movies, his montage work prepared him for the experiences of a B-movie director, who worked in a less constrained atmosphere because he dealt with smaller budgets thus garnering less attention from studio heads. Peter Bogdonavitch asserts, "Siegel has managed, often against stifling odds, to bring distinction and a disquieting ambiguity as well as a unified viewpoint to assignments which, in other hands, could easily have been routine."[224] Siegel, musing about the legacy of his montage work to Stuart Kaminsky, maintained, "I think the good influence it has on my work today is that I don't strain with the camera now. In fact I try very hard not to do exercises in camera technique except when they are directly helping me tell the story."[225]

Although I do not have a clear-cut answer for why the montage department disappeared from the studio system structure, research suggests the answer can be found in a combination of the following theories. At MGM and Warner Bros., the departure of Vorkapich and Siegel left a power vacuum other studio players could exploit. There was never a clear place in the studio hierarchy for montage specialists. While Vorkapich joined the Editor's Guild, Siegel entered the Director's Guild despite the Guild's recalcitrance over new members. Both men made a name for themselves as montage directors, but there was not a system in place to replace them upon their departure. As the articles of the Warner Club News demonstrate, Siegel proved himself a force to be reckoned with at Warner Bros. and there was no love lost between the montage department and the editing department. A situation Siegel acknowledged in his anecdote about assistant editors ignoring his guidelines prior to manipulating the footage on the optical printer.[226] Then again, the decline of the designated montage department coincided with a general decline in the

stature of the studios post World War II. This was a period when independent companies specializing in various aspects of filmmaking gained traction within the industry. These specialty companies were attractive financially because they could be hired as independent contractors and did not need a long term contract. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, the decline of the segregated montage department corresponded with the rise of television.

[1] Don Siegel, *A Don Siegel Film: An Autobiography* (London: Faber and Faber, 1993), 56.

[2] Ibid., 56.

[3] Ibid., 56.

[4] Ibid., 56.

[5] Ibid., 57.

[6] Ibid., 57.

[7] Ibid., 57.

[8] Ibid., 57.

[9] Stuart Kaminsky, *Don Siegel, Director* (Philadelphia: Curtis Books, 1974), 35.

[10] Alan Lovell, *Don Siegel: American Cinema* (London: British Film Institute, 1975), 50.

[11] Byron Haskin started working in Special Effects in the 1930s and went on to direct in the 1940s and 50s, most notably *I Walk Alone* (1948), Burt Lancaster's first starring role, and Disney's *Treasure Island* (1950).

[12] Siegel, *A Don Siegel Film*, 53.

[13] Lovell, *Don Siegel, American Cinema*, 50.

[14] Kaminsky, *Don Siegel, Director*, 33.

[15] Kaminsky, *Don Siegel, Director*, 29.

[16] Otto Friedrich, *City of Nets: A Portrait of Hollywood in the 1940s* (New York: Harper & Row, 1987), 132. Curtiz ended up making seventy-four pictures for Warners. Supposedly, when he first arrived on American shores from Hungary he was grateful for the flags and fireworks welcoming him, until Harry Warner informed him it was the fourth of July.

[17] Ibid., 133. David Nevin borrowed a Michael Curtizism after he shouted for a herd of riderless horses, "Bring on the empty horses!" on the set of The Charge of the Light Brigade in 1936.

[18] Siegel, , *A Don Siegel Film*, 55.

[19] Worked his way up through the ranks at Warner Bros. and later became Alfred Hitchcock's favorite Director of Photography.

[20] Siegel, *A Don Siegel Film*, 56.

[21] Lovell, *Don Siegel, American Cinema*, 51.

[22] Siegel, *Don Siegel, American Cinema*, 57.

[23] Ibid., 57.

[24] Ibid., 57.

[25] Kaminsky, *Don Siegel, Director*, 26.

[26] Ibid., 26.

[27] Ibid., 26.

[28] Folder 2878, Serial F000476, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[29] File 2871, Serial F015505, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[30] Folder 2360, Serial F000483, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[31] Ibid.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid.

[34] Ibid.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Calendar of Roaring Twenties Publicity 689, Serial F000487, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[37] Folder 2360, Serial F000483, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[38] Ibid.

[39] Ibid.

[40] Byron Haskin, Interview, *A Directors Guild of America Oral History: Byron Haskin*, Joe Adamson (Metuchen and London: The Directors Guild of America and Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1984).

[41] Don Siegel, *A Siegel Film*, 60.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid.

[44] The film is based on articles in the L.A. Times and the Los Angeles Examiner from October 6 and 7, 1939 about ties between the Los Angeles bund and the Nazi party in Germany reported to the Dies committee in Washington D.C. Highlights of the articles include the reports of Neal Howard Ness, who admitted visiting German boats in Los Angeles with Hermann Schwinn, head of the Pacific Coast bund, who exchanged "sealed envelopes" with the German stormtroopers. The Legal file also contains a copy of the sworn testimony of Neal Ness, who answered questions on September 28, 1939 in the County of Alameda. In the sworn statement, Ness talks about an exchange student at USC named Prince von Lippe who was a member of the Bund. Lippe was the contact man at USC for the Bund and the German Consulate, in charge of all German exchange students. On page 51 of the statement, Ness recalls how Lippe "was very proud of the fact that he was an important link in Germany's propaganda machinery in Southern California." Ness discussed spreading Nazi propaganda at the universities on the West Coast on February 26, 1936 with Prince Lippe. Lippe associated with Dr. Von Koerber, dean of the Oriental Department, and Dr. Kleinsmith, professors who knew of Lippe's connection to the Friends of New Germany and permitted Lippe to write essays on the Hitler Youth Movement to serve as propaganda for the Nazi Party among the students at the university. Lippe had also met Mr. Robert Meyer, representative of Agfa films in the area.

[45] "*Knute Rockne* Trailer," *YouTube*, accessed September 3, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CZ7RAIOzRME.

[46] File 2248A, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. The quote is from Will Rogers.

[47] Nick Lukats, Kane Richmond, William Marshall, and William Byrne.

[48] Don Siegel, *A Siegel Film*, 61.

[49] F015514, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. In a note from Jack Warner to Michael Curtiz, while working on *Mission to Moscow*, Warner complains (on November 11 and 19) about the number of takes Curtiz is shooting. The letter on November 11 reads, "Dear Mike, You cannot take 10 takes. You know there is a war on, Mike, and you must conserve film, so why don't you do this?" Curtiz's response on November 20 closes with the line "Jack, of our 130,000,000 Americans, I am foremost in the desire to win this war."

[50] File 2248A, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[51] Ibid.

[52] Byron Haskin, Interview, *A Directors Guild of America Oral History: Byron Haskin*, Joe Adamson (Metuchen and London: The Directors Guild of America and Scarecrow Press, Inc., 1984).

[53] *Warner Club News*, May 1940, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[54] *Warner Club News*, November 1940, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[55] Ibid.

[56] Ibid.

[57] *Warner Club News*, July 1941, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[58] File 1010, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. In "Research Department Notes" there is a record of Siegel asking the name of a diagnosis for a disturbed mental condition and Research came back with "nicotine acid-intramusculary in right hip, high caloric diet."

[59] The film was originally called *Hot Nocturne*, then *New Orleans Blues*, then *Blues in the Night*.

[60] File 1974, Special Serial F015445, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[61] Baiano and Terzo, "Baiano Wins Tennis Championship," *Warner Club News*, August 1941, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. On August 17, 1941, Siegel was putting his ping-pong skills to the test on the tennis courts. The *Warner Club News* August 1941 Issue contains an article about the Warner Club Tennis Tournament. Of note is the article's referance to Don Siegel, Director Montages. Only slightly less interesting, is the fact that Siegel lost in the first round of the singles and lost a hard fought match in the finals of the doubles round.

[62] File 1974, Special Serial F015445, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Anthony writes, "I can't understand why it's legal for them to release Negro scenes in a short and illegal for us in a feature. Possibly they're getting ethical and want to be assured the Negro race is properly represented by us – which they are. I'd handle this but it's a rush and believe you can get a quicker and more satisfactory reply. I have a dupe for the montage boys taken from release print so am only in a hurry for okay to use."

[63] Ibid.

[64] Ibid.

[65] Ibid.

[66] Don Siegel, *A Siegel Film*, 64.

[67] File 682, Special, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[68] Ibid.

[69] Ibid.

[70] In an Inter-Office Communication from May 21, 1942, Hal Wallis watched the dailies for *Casablanca* and wrote to director Michael Curtiz with concerns over Bogart wearing a hat.

[71] Umberto Eco, *Casablanca: Cult Movies and Intertextual Collage*

[72] May 21, 1942.

[73] Aljean Harmetz, *Round Up the Usual Suspects: The Making of Casablanca - Bogart, Bergman, and World War II* (New York: Hyperion, 1992).

[74] File 1881A, Serial F005186-001, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. This Inter-Office Communication was CC'd to Michael Curtiz and Tenny Wright as well.

[75] Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 133-139.

[76] File 1881A, F005189-001, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. As late as April 2, 1942, Warner asked Wallis about Raft in an Inter-Office Communication but Wallis stuck to his belief that Humphrey Bogart should play Rick.

[77] File 683, F000750, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. A Hollywood news release from January 7, 1942, mentions Ann Sheridan, Ronald Reagan and Dennis Morgan will star as the trio in *Casablanca*.

[78] Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 136. *Algiers* was the 1938 Walter Wanger produced remake of the French film *Pepe le Moko* directed by John Cromwell and starring Charles Boyer and Hedy Lamarr.

[79] File 1881A F005189-001, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. From an Inter-Office Communication to Wallis from Trilling on February 7, 1942.

[80] Harmetz, *Round Up the Usual Suspects*, 128 and 141-142. The sound was recorded onstage and although Dooley Wilson was a professional drummer he wasn't adept playing the piano. Instead he would pretend to play as another actor who had tested for the role of Sam, Elliot Carpenter, sat offscreen where Wilson could see his hand movements. Paramount pocketed $150 a week for Wilson's work.

[81] Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 136. Friedrich says $2,750 per week but Dooley's contract reads $1,750 per week.

[82] Wallis also called on writer Casey Robinson to work on Paul Henreid's role as Laszlo.

[83] In *City of Nets*, Otto Friedrich argues, "It may be, in fact, that the unhappiness of the whole cast was what made Casablanca such a triumph."

[84] File 1881A, Serial F005186-001, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[85] Ibid.

[86] Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[87] Errol Flynn, *My Wicked, Wicked Ways: The Autobiography of Errol Flynn* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 1959), 304-306.

[88] "*Gentleman Jim* Trailer," *YouTube*, accessed on August 5, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nTZIjUa-Jzg.

[89] David Bordwell, Janet Staiger, and Kristen Thompson, *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960* (New York: Routledge, 1985), 55.

[90] File 2196, Story – Final Script, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[91] File 1012B, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[92] Ibid.

[93] Ibid.

[94] Pudovkin, Vsevolod. *Film Technique and Film Acting London* (New York: Vision Press, 1968), 259.

[95] Legal File 12691, F002522, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[96] Friedrich, *City of Nets*, 154 and 313.

[97] Nora Sayre, *Running Time: Films from the Cold War* (Ann Arbor: Bantam Doubleday Dell Publishing Group, 1982).

[98] Legal File 12691, F002522, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. The archive also contains an entertaining signed letter to Warner Bros from Lily Norwood, who later adopted the moniker Cyd Charisse. In the letter, Norwood consents to Warner Bros use all of the scenes in which she appeared dancing for *Mission to Moscow*. She was paid $500.00 for one week of work.

[99] Folder 2785, F002526, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[100] Research File 1015, F015474, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[101] Ibid. Inter-Office Communication from January 22, 1943 from Lissauer to Siegel.

[102] F015514, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[103] Ibid.

[104] Ibid.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Research File 1015, F002525, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[107] Ibid.

[108] Folder 2785, F002526, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Letter dated July 10, 1942.

[109] Picture File 2808, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[110] Ibid.

[111] Leyda corrects the cast list in an Inter-Office Communication on March 3, 1943 to Miss Orbison of the Publicity Department and Herman Lissauer.

[112] Research File 1015, F002525, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[113] Ibid.

[114] There is also a funny letter from Lissauer to Mrs. Curtiz asking her to check her bookshelves for six books that Michael Curtiz borrowed from the research department. Research File 1015 F002525, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[115] Research File 1015, F002525, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[116] *Warner Club News*, July 1940, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[117] Ibid.

[118] Ibid.

[119] Ibid.

[120] Ibid.

[121] Folder 2785, F002526, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[122] Folder 2085, F002528, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Western Union Wire on March 20, 1943.

[123] Ibid.

[124] Folder 2785, F002526, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[125] Folder 2085, Story File, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[126] A copy of the Harry Warner comments appear in File 2785 F002526 as well as File 2085 F002528, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[127] File 2785, F002526 as well as File 2085, F002528, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[128] Ibid.

[129] Ibid.

[130] It's unclear who annotated Warner's suggestions.

[131] File 2785, F002526 as well as File 2085, F002528, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[132] Ibid.

[133] Ibid.

[134] Ibid.

[135] Ibid.

[136] Joseph E. Davies to Stephen T. Early, January 6, 1943, Davies Files box 3, Early Papers, Franklin D. Roosevelt Library, Hyde Park, New York, http://www.journalofamericanhistory .org/teaching/2001_09/sources/daviesletter.html, accessed November 1, 2012.

[137] Folder 2085, F002527, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[138] John Dewey and Suzanne La Follette, "Several Faults Are Found in 'Mission to Moscow' Film," *The New York Times*, May 9, 1943, Sec. 4, 8.

[139] Ibid.

[140] Picture File 2808, F015477, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. The letter was from Albert Goldman, Attorney on behalf of Natalia Trotsky.

[141] Ibid.

[142] Folder 2785 F002526, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Interesting letter from a Trotsky supporter decries Hollywood as propaganda and suggests Warner Bros. interview Professor John Dewey to get a different opinion than Davies.

[143] Ibid.

[144] Folder 2085, F002527, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[145] Folder 2085, F002527, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.Telegram on May 21, 1943, from Jack Warner to William Randolph Hearst.

[146] Ibid. From a letter dated May 30, 1943, from Louis G. Reynolds, M.D. to Jack Warner.

[147] Ibid.

[148] The lyricist Yip Harburg won the 1939 Oscar with composer Harold Arlen for Best Music, Original Song for *The Wizard of Oz*.

[149] Folder 2085, F002527, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[150] Ibid.

[151] Ibid.

[152] During his blacklist, Yip Harburg wrote the musical *Jamaica*, featuring Lena Horne.

[153] File 2881, F015020, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[154] File 2304, F015057, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Throughout the film's production, Wallis was pestered by multiple postcards from the Gene Autry Friendship Club urging him to get Autry into the picture and use him as a Warner Bros star.

[155] Folder 6 of 9, F015059, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. A Western Union wire on December 23, 1942 from Julie aka Julius Epstein to Hal Wallis says, "Arrived in Detroit had conference with Berlin pray for us = Julie." In a telegraph response dated December 28, 1942, Hal Wallis writes, "Both Mike and I are praying for you. Lighting candles tonight and Mike going to shule. Hope you both not too battle scarred when you finish conferences. Please wire or phone me at home over weekend as naturally anxious to know how matters proceeding. Merry Christmas to you both if that is possible. Regards."

[156] Ibid.

[157] Ibid.

[158] Folder 3 of 9, File 2304 F015057, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Although the War Department Bureau of Public Relations was happy with the film, on March 31, 1943, Joseph Breen objected to the line "But never give all to a soldier" stating it is "sex suggestiveness."

[159] File 2304, F015057, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[160] File 2881, F015019, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Letter from Curtis Mitchell Colonel A.U.S. Chief, Pictorial Branch and Allyn Butterfield Executive Motion Picture Board of Review sent to Warner on July 31, 1943.

[161] Legal Picture File, F002700, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[162] File 2881, F015019, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[163] Ibid. Berlin weighed in on the production throughout even complaining when he discovered singer Katie Smith was uncredited.

[164] File 2881, F015020, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[165] File 2304 F015060, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid.

[168] Ibid.

[169] Legal Picture File, F002700, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. The credit titles as of May 5, 1943, for Irving Berlin's *This is the Army* in Technicolor include Montages by Siegel and Leicester.

[170] File 2881, F015018, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[171] Legal Picture, File F002700, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[172] Box 2849, Legal Files, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[173] Research File 1018, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[174] Hal McCord was an editor at Warner Bros. and worked on *The Jazz Singer* amongst other films.

[175] File 2304, F015057, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[176] File 2304, F015057, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Letter on August 18, 1943 From Lawrence F. La Mar of the Negro Press Bureau located on East 32nd Street in Los Angeles, CA. The Negro Press Bureau was the "News and Photo Service to Negro Newspapers, Periodicals the World Over," founded in 1933 and providing the Chicago Defender, the N.Y. Amsterdam News and the L.A. Sentinel amongst others.

[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid. *Daily Variety* from Thursday July 29, 1943.

[179] *Warner Club News*, August 1941-July 1943, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, 14.

[180] See Figures for the *Warner Club News* August 1943 Cover featuring the Montage Department.

[181] *Warner Club News*, August 1943, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid.

[184] Ibid.

[185] Ibid.

[186] Ibid.

[187] Ibid.

[188] Ibid.

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid.

[191] Ibid.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Folder 685, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Mark Twain aka Samuel Clemens was born in 1835 and died April 21, 1910.

[194] File 1714, Story Misc., Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. The June 17, 1942 word count details 200 words in the Frog-War Montage, pages 121-3 of the Tom Sawyer Montage have 75 words, the Progress Montage on pages 149-151 included 255 words, the Whirlpool Montage on page 168 had 100 words, and the World tour montage on page 175 included 500 words with the film as a whole totaling 14,925 words.

[195] Alan LeMay, *The True Adventures of Mark Twain*, Final Script June 12, 1942, 149 line 355. This version is slightly different than the script from May 12, 1942, which includes a slightly longer and more extended National Progress montage with an added shot of a shelf of Twain's books tipping over and dissolving into a heap of stock certificates that blow away in the wind.

[196] Page 149. *The True Adventures of Mark Twain.*

[197] File 1714, Story Misc., Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[198] Alan LeMay, *The True Adventures of Mark Twain*, Final Script June 12, 1942, 149.

[199] File 1010, *The Adventures of Mark Twain* Research File, 1 of 5, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[200] Ibid.

[201] Alan LeMay, *The True Adventures of Mark Twain*, Script August 29, 1942, 175 line 405.

[202] This was written on the upper left-hand corner of the page.

[203] File 1714, Story Misc., Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[204] File 1010, *The Adventures of Mark Twain* Research File, 3 of 5, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[205] File 1010, *The Adventures of Mark Twain* Research File, 2 of 5, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[206] Ibid.

[207] File 1010, *The Adventures of Mark Twain* Research File, 1 of 5, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Contains Production Notes by Alex Evelove.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Kaminsky, *Don Siegel: Director*, 41-42.

[210] Ibid.

[211] Ibid.

[212] File 1017, 2 of 2 for *Saratoga Trunk* and Folder 2871, Picture File for *Devotion*, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. The *Devotion* credit includes James Leicester.

[213] File 2249, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles. Letter from July 22, 1943, by Joseph Breen to J.L. Warner.

[214] File 1017, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[215] Ibid.

[216] Ibid.

[217] File 686, Publicity Clips, Warner Bros. Archives, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Kaminsky, *Don Siegel: Director*, 27.

[220] Ibid.

[221] Ibid.

[222] Ibid., 29.

[223] Lovell, *Don Siegel, American Cinema*, 51.

[224] Kaminsky, *Don Siegel: Director*, 7.

[225] Lovell, *Don Siegel, American Cinema*, 51.

[226] Kaminsky, *Don Siegel: Director*, 26.

Chapter 5.
MTV Killed the Soviet Star:
Music Television and the Propagation of a Montage Aesthetic

Introduction

In retrospect, the rise of music videos on television seems preordained. However, a look
at the rise of MTV reveals how a continuous flow of music videos was actually quite
improbable. Furthermore, it never would have happened without the proliferation of home
recording devices and cable. MTV's place in the evolving cable industry of the early 1980s
illuminates what challenges and changes cable brought to television. As a fledging media outlet
when the legendary adman George Lois crafted the shrewd "I Want My MTV" campaign, MTV
encouraged cable subscribers to demand the expansion of MTV's reach and demonstrated the
cable channel's ability to exploit teens and young adults. Playing on a desire for choice, MTV
conflated citizenship with consumerism. Elaborated in this chapter are several canonical
moments in the evolution of music television as analyzed through the lens of iconic music video
montages of the past thirty years. I privilege case studies in the history of televisual montage that
occur during periods of technological innovation, market restructuring, and challenges to
traditional representational practices.

Each of the following canonical moments reveals how music television developed and
propagated a montage aesthetic on television. MTV's ascendancy was accompanied by a flurry
of scholarship on the music video form as exemplary of postmodern pastiche. While montages of
the classical Hollywood era were modernist interventions into realist films, music video
montages of the 1980s and 1990s embodied postmodernism on television. An awareness of
visual culture is necessary in order to analyze the complex borrowings apparent in music videos.
Inspired by the success of music videos, narrative television appropriated a montage aesthetic.
Emblematic of this embrace is postmodernism's pastel poster child, *Miami Vice*. Eventually,
musicians who were women and minorities challenged the predominantly white patriarchal space
of MTV. Female pop divas like Madonna experimented with their image throughout their music
video oeuvres while hip-hop artists carved a niche separate from disco and rock programming.
The popularity of hip-hop and R&B videos set the stage for a long form video, R. Kelly's
Trapped In The Closet, which blurred the boundaries between broadcasting and the Internet. The
remixing of R. Kelly's "soap opera cum sex farce"[1] by video artist Michael Bell-Smith elevated

Trapped In The Closet into gallery art. While the broadcast networks struggle to retain viewers, credit sequences highlight how television has most recently taken up the mantle of montage in service of cable distinguishing itself as "quality television." Beyond the landscape of television, montage is significant as a lens for analyzing contemporary visual culture.

The story of MTV is inextricably intertwined with the rise of cable in the United States and abroad. Without cable, it is impossible to envision the advent of a twenty-four hour music video channel. This is partly because, from the networks perspective, rock and roll was not a natural fit with television. Ever since *The Ed Sullivan Show* framed Elvis Presley from the waist up (those hips whoa!) the broadcast networks were leery of rock and roll's rebellious energy. While the networks appealed to a mass audience in their programming choices, rock and roll in the late 1970s was decidedly niche. MTV, however, as part of the first wave of cable channels broadcast in the U.S., needed to appeal to a niche demographic to stake its claim to viewers and advertising dollars. By targeting teens and young adults, MTV believed they could attract advertisers to their channel to exploit a hitherto untapped market. Their brand identity was pure rock and roll, all rebellion and irreverence. Throughout the 1980s, American consumers rapidly adopted cable with more than 50% of homes signing up by the end of the decade.[2] Examining the formation of MTV highlights three important aspects of the cable industry: Madison Avenue grew to love cable; those channels on the air first through satellite distribution and traditional broadcasting had the best chance of success; and American cable network content had the potential to dominate television screens globally. Before MTV became infamous for its reality television fare, the channel was synonymous for fast moving images set to music. At its infancy, however, MTV's programming was undetermined. Instead, an all-day music channel was the dream of a few executives who possessed experience working in radio and television and recognized cable's potential for broadening content choices on television.

Stretching back further than the 1970s, however, there is a long history of short musical media, often categorized as proto-MTV, leading up to the arrival of the cable music channel. Music video's antecedents include Vaudeville's illustrated songs, Vitaphone film shorts from the 1920s and 1930s, Panoram Soundies in the 1940s, post WWII Scopitone films in the 1950s, avant-garde films such as Bruce Conner's *Cosmic Ray* (1961), Kenneth Anger's *Scorpio Rising* (1963), Nam June Paik's *Beatles Electroniques* (1966-69) and performance based films such as the Beatles' *A Hard Day's Night* (Richard Lester, 1964) and *Help!* (Richard Lester, 1965),

Monterey Pop (D. A. Pennebaker, 1968), *Woodstock* (Michael Wadleigh, 1970) and *Gimme Shelter* (Albert Maysles, David Maysles, and Charlotte Zwerin, 1970). The legacy of the Hollywood musical is also apparent in videos today. In particular, Busby Berkeley musicals of the thirties, such as *42nd Street* (1933), *Gold Diggers of 1933* (1933) and *Footlight Parade* (1933), where Berkeley arranged precisely choreographed musical numbers. These exist within the larger narrative as stage shows but also function as appealing visual spectacles in their own right. This is due, in part, to the interaction between the performers and the music. As precursors of performance music videos, Lester's *A Hard Day's Night* deserves special attention because of its stylistic black and white cinematography and its incorporation of hits like "A Hard Day's Night," "Can't Buy Me Love," and "She Loves You." These filmed numbers are embedded within the narrative and set the stage for later performance music videos. *A Hard Day's Night* is also important because of its intended audience and irreverent mode of address. The film's novel use of camera techniques and cinéma vérité style captured the Beatles blithely singing their way from Liverpool to London. "Taking the piss" out of the older generation, the band is harassed throughout their journey by Paul McCartney's grandfather (played by Wilfrid Brambell) "a villain, a real mixer."[3] E. Ann Kaplan writes in *Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture*, "The British Youth responded with glee to the Beatles, who finally introduced joy, exuberance, and fun into the traumatized post-World-War-II British landscape."[4] The Beatles' ebullience did not conform to the rules of stuffy, class-conscious British society. In the scene in the train compartment with the British businessman, the Beatles not only poke fun at class conventions and an older generation, but they also draw attention to the medium by suddenly appearing outside the train. This reflexive, cheeky scene both speaks to and for youth culture, commenting on everyday life as part of youth culture.

Beatlemania in the 1960s spurred television executives to recognize audience desire to see rock and roll on television and music shows debuted on both sides of the Atlantic. There was *Top of the Pops*, *Ready Steady Go!*, and *Oh Boy* in Britain and *Shindig!, Hullabaloo, Album Tracks*, and the previously running *American Bandstand* in America. Starting in the mid-1960s, record companies began to produce promotional clips to air on these shows when bands could not make a live appearance. Promotional clips assisted the transnational flow of music and musicians across national boundaries. Television shows were happy to get the clips and record companies were even more excited about the financial potential of the clips. From the

perspective of the record company, the promotional clips resulted in more exposure for their acts, and by extension, more record sales. The 1970s saw an increase in musicians approaching the promotional video clips creatively. Musicians such as the Beatles, Queen, The Who, the Rolling Stones, Devo, Todd Rundgren, David Bowie, Michael Nesmith, and Blondie were all experimenting with promo clips. These 1970s proto-MTV productions were innovative because they moved away from the band-in-the-studio lip-synching concept favored by the record companies. Instead, musicians dreamt up exuberant promotional films like the Beatles' *Penny Lane*, and *Strawberry Fields Forever* directed by Peter Goldman[5] or outrageous, fantastical situations like the Stones' 1967 spoof of the Oscar Wilde trial for *We Love You* with Mick Jagger as Wilde and Keith Richards as the Marquis of Queensbury. Bowie, in particular, established the form's potential with his 1972 clip for *Space Oddity*. For MoMA curator Barbara London, *Space Oddity* demonstrated music video could be "a kind of privatized conduit for rock-star fame, superseding rock magazines as the place where fans could connect with their idols."[6]

The ability of innovative promo clips to drive record sales was proven by Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody" directed by Bruce Gowers in 1975. When the song reached No. 30 on the British charts the promo clip was featured on *Top of the Pops*. After this broadcast of *Top of the Pops*, "Bohemian Rhapsody" shot from No. 30 to Britain's Top 5 on the charts.[7] Proving exposure is the best sales tool, the answer to Queen's "Is this the real life / Is this just fantasy?" was a resounding yes as audiences bought the record after viewing its corresponding promotional clip. Eventually, MTV's success at attracting audiences convinced artists to advertise themselves through music videos designed to sell LPs, cassette tapes, and CDs. Tune into MTV today and a plethora of reality shows espouse the very different idea that video can save the festering career of the former (if only briefly) radio star. My, how programming choices have changed! And yet, the very basic form that spurred the formation of MTV remains a constant. Music videos, in all their various incarnations, are still a source of consternation for cultural critics and citizens alike. Informed and intelligent writing on the genre tends to be primarily concerned with defining the form of music videos and determining their social and artistic merits. Historically, theorists have come to music videos from one of three positions; the film studies approach that concentrates on the visual, the paradigm of postmodernism, and detailed textual analysis interested in issues of production and consumption. Writers Blaine Allan, John Fiske, Murray Forman, Andrew Goodwin, Lynne Joyrich, E. Ann Kaplan and Tricia Rose laid the theoretical groundwork for

future generations of music video scholars. Despite their potential differences, scholars who write about music videos are ultimately all interested in proving to music video's detractors that the form, as a complex collision of visual and aural elements and an amalgamation of formal influences, is worthy of critical attention. In the David E. James essay "Avant-Garde Film and Music Video: A View From Zurich," James interrogates how avant-garde film and music video are mutually exclusive for "avant-garde film is the dream of socialism" and "music television is either partly responsible for or synchronous with the final demise of this revolution."[8]

Popclips Popularize the Form: "Hopin' to Promote a Dream Somewhere Along the Way"[9]

In 1977, Michael Nesmith, a former member of The Monkees, released his eighth studio album as a solo singer/songwriter called *From a Radio Engine to the Photon Wing*. Nesmith's European record company, in an attempt to popularize *From a Radio Engine to the Photon Wing*, suggested filming a promotional video for the song "Rio." At that time, European weekly chart shows on television, such as *Top of the Pops* in Britain, were a better place for showcasing new music than radio.[10] For $25,000, Nesmith and director William Dear dreamed up a surrealistic universe inhabited by Nesmith and three women dressed like Carmen Miranda. Positioning Nesmith in an intergalactic setting, the camera's slow descent past Nesmith with the ladies creates the illusion of a human Halley's comet blasting into space. Even after they've left the frame, Earth slowly recedes suggesting the comet's continued progress. Suddenly, a superimposed image spins clockwise blurring the stars and evoking a record rotating on a turntable out of the galactic scene. A wipe slowly brings Nesmith, donning a cowboy hat embellished with stars into the frame. The imagery of Nesmith and the Carmen Mirandas untethered to the Earth as well as the celestial focus of the video recalls Slavko Vorkapich's interludes for *What Price Hollywood?* In contrast to Vorkapich's interludes, which emphasize fame's fickleness, the "Rio" clip draws on the contingent nature of slapstick in its spectacular, enjoyable silliness. At one point, Nesmith struggles to reunite his foot, clad in a red sock, with an all-white shoe and later his dancing partner runs towards the camera and out of the frame only to drop unannounced from the sky into Nesmith's waiting arms an instant later. The video's end playfully contemplated fame in its reveal that Nesmith, as a grip on set, imagined the whole thing. In comparison to other promo clips of the late 1970s, which were inexpensively produced performance videos of musicians lip-synching, it's no wonder Nesmith's fantastical "Rio"

inspired London record company executives to give him a standing ovation.[11] While on tour promoting *From a Radio Engine to the Photon Wing*, Nesmith discovered Australians called music video clips "popclips." Besides highlighting the global nature of the recording industry, the international spread and success of "popclips" demonstrated there was a large market for music videos.

Believing fans would eventually collect "popclips" and play them repeatedly just like records, Nesmith made another video in 1979 for the song "Cruisin" from his album *Infinite Rider on the Big Dogma*. "Cruisin" parenthetically titled "Lucy and Ramona and Sunset Sam" tells the story of Lucy from Compton, Ramona from Brooklyn, and Sunset Sam from the Arizona desert all trying to make their way in Los Angeles. The "Cruisin" popclip alternates between depicting the narrative of Lucy, Ramona, and Sam cruisin' Hollywood and a close-up of Nesmith lip-synching. The video, equal parts sincere and dream factory, is quintessentially L.A. Shots of Lucy and Ramona, "with their blemish free complexions,"[12] donning silver winged roller-skates to carouse down Hollywood and Sunset Boulevard. During their travels they meet Sunset Sam, a bodybuilder played by the wrestler Steve Strong.[13] Sunset Sam, who looks like he just finished several hundred reps of bicep curls, represents Venice Beach culture of the late 1970s with his red bodybuilding bikini clinging tightly to his golden, oiled loins. Venice Beach's most famous boardwalk musician, the roller-skating-turban-wearing-guitar-playing Harry Perry, also has a cameo in the video for "Cruisin." Primitive video effects distort the imagery and add to the surrealistic spin Nesmith puts on Hollywood, especially when the Hollywood sign changes neon colors. Although the video has more of a narrative arc than "Rio," it retains the self-reflective wit Nesmith demonstrated in his first "popclip." Opening with a close-up of a man's bare legs as he pulls on red bikini underwear, the camera pushes in and tilts up into dangerous territory, but instead of revealing male genitalia; a bright backlight obscures the view. The scene quickly changes to fingers tying roller-skate laces and the man slathering body oil over his flexed biceps. Once Nesmith starts singing and the video takes on a narrative dimension, it becomes clear these quick cuts in the beginning are Lucy, Ramona, and Sam as they prepare for "cruisin thru the jungles of L.A. / Hopin' to promote a dream somewhere along the way."[14]

One sequence of the video, which replicates the imaginary geography of earlier montages, links shots of Lucy and Ramona roller-skating through various different streets of L.A. This element of *Criuisin*, which became a staple of later music videos, is what Blaine Allan

in "Music Television" explains as "spatial incoherence."[15] The camera moves freely, unburdened by the constraints of the human eye. Allan affirms, "From one shot to the next, the musicians may appear in different costumes, different lighting and visual styles, different hairstyles, or totally different locations, yet they continue to appear to be performing the same song without any corresponding aural changes. In fact, the music video has made such extreme visual discontinuity, married to the aural continuity of the music itself, one of the most characteristic parts of its stylistic stock-in-trade."[16] The video constructs the feeling of one continuous journey even though the shots feature disparate areas of the city shot at different times during the day. With arms joyfully linked in the California sun, the ladies skate towards the camera with the now-shuttered Tower Records on Sunset Boulevard in the background. Suddenly, the scene switches to night and Lucy and Ramona are skating in front of the marquee of the Pussycat Theater on Hill Street advertising the adult film *The Ecstasy Girls* (Gary Graver, 1979). Quasi-mystical elements suffuse the video and the song, referencing obliquely the city's history with new religious movements.

Despite the visual brilliance of "Rio" and "Cruisin," there was no place to show these clips on American television. Initially undaunted, Nesmith and his former manager, Jerry Perenchio, created a pilot for a half-hour show entitled *Popclips* and shopped it at the National Association of Television Program Executives (NATPE) convention in 1979.[17] The NATPE convention is an annual gathering where producers and syndicators attempt to sell their shows to stations around the country. Unfortunately, *Popclips* failed to generate enough interest at the convention forcing Nesmith to contact Warner Records executive, Jac Holzman. In turn, Holzman connected Nesmith with John Lack, who was at the recently formed Warner AMEX Satellite Entertainment Company (WASEC). As early as 1968, cable operators had preached passionately about the content choices cable would create.[18] The biggest obstacle to this new frontier was the Big Three broadcast networks, ABC, CBS, and NBC, who sued cable operators and lobbied the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to impose strict regulations on cable. Following a relaxation of regulations in 1972, major media players entered the cable business, such as the Time Inc. backed Green Channel, which broadcast through underground cable lines even before satellite distribution was in place.[19]

In 1979, intrigued by cable's possibilities, Bill Rassmussen started ESPN, Ted Turner started CNN, and Warner Communications joined with American Express with the goal of

expanding into the cable universe. Warner/AMEX promptly divided into two divisions, Warner AMEX Cable Communications (WACC) and WASEC. WACC would oversee acquisition of cable franchises and run Qube, which programmed children's shows, sporting events, talent shows, and adult films in an effort to penetrate lucrative urban markets. In 1980, "with the demand for HBO and other cable services greater than ever, many of America's unwired cities had once again begun soliciting franchise bids, and the big cable operators, WACC included, were vigorously pursuing them."[20] On the other hand, WASEC was envisioned as a programming division in charge of further developing two channels inherited from WACC, Nickelodeon and the Star Channel.[21] The former head of television and radio operations at CBS, Jack Schneider, was hired as head of WASEC.[22] Schneider tasked his second in command, John Lack, to develop several new channels organized around a coherent topic and targeting a specific audience segment.[23] Lack, who was immediately excited about *Popclips*, had Nesmith make an episode to broadcast on Nickelodeon to measure audience response in Columbus, Ohio. WASEC had been experimenting with audience research to determine viewer's tastes.[24] Although both men were enthusiastic about *Popclips*, their visions diverged. What Nesmith delivered to Lack was risqué for a kids' channel and Lack preferred radio deejays to the comedians[25] Nesmith used. Nesmith made the requisite changes Lack required and *Popclips* was a hit when it aired on Nickelodeon in March of 1980. Its success strengthened Lack's resolve that WASEC's next service should be an all music channel. However, when Lack tried to bring Nesmith on board for the project, Nesmith declined. Not only was Nesmith busy working on the album *Elephant Parts*, but he perceptively feared the music video medium he viewed as full of artistic possibilities would be relegated, in corporate hands, to merely commercials for record companies.[26]

MTV's Beginnings: "Color me your color baby / Color me your car."[27]

Like an orchestra building to a roaring crescendo, the increasing numbers of promotional clips made by musicians throughout the 1970s made the development of a twenty-four hour music cable channel feel like a foregone conclusion. Although they were convinced, Schneider and Lack of WASEC still had to sway the parent company, Warner/AMEX to invest $25 million to start a twenty-four hour music channel.[28] Their confidence that Warner Communications would finance the deal stems from a belief in corporate synergy, namely, the music channel would help the company's record label. The new service mimicked the same model as radio

where record labels provided stations with music for free in exchange for exposure. Not only would the channel help Warner Records sell more records, but the content, the promotional video clips, were acquired for free.[29] WASEC also convinced Warner Records its video department, could exploit the commercial potential of promotional clips by packaging them for VCR and Videodisc in the home. Finally, a music channel fit a corporate vision of cable narrowcasting because advertisers, eager to tap the market of twelve to thirty-four year-olds, would flock to a rock and roll channel appealing to a youth demographic.

As soon as Warner/AMEX approved the twenty-four hour music channel, WASEC realized they were facing challenges unique to the nascent cable industry. For starters, the proliferation of cable channels offering similar content convinced them they had to launch a fully operational channel in six months. This was because getting on the air first was the most effective way to eliminate the competition. By 1981, HBO was broadcasting *Video Jukebox*, USA featured *Night Flight*, and other music video networks were on the horizon.[30] Although this was before competition from the Internet and other digital technologies, WASEC wanted to be first to grab viewers and advertising dollars in an increasingly fragmented media environment. They were also facing technical issues shared by other cable networks in the early 1980s. Specifically, they opted to build a new uplink for transmitting the channel's signal to a satellite. Rather than overburden the Buffalo facility servicing Nickelodeon and The Movie Channel, WASEC constructed a brand new uplink on Long Island.[31] Another technical innovation WASEC executives hoped to embrace was broadcasting the channel in stereo. From the 1950s to the 1980s, an increased awareness of stereo and multichannel sound drove consumers to recreate the cinema experience at home. In the October 2012 *Journal of Sonic Studies*, David Sedman discusses how, "The consumer electronics industry took advantage of this growing awareness of stereo and multichannel sound, as terms like "cable-ready" and "stereo-compatible" began to appear on consumer electronic devices aimed at the growing home theater consumer marketplace."[32] WASEC understood telecasting in stereo would make their channel appeal to both consumers concerned with the best aural experience and cable operators who could charge for stereo hookups.[33] It also made sense to convert to stereo as the music videos were on stereo videotape.[34] Lastly, WASEC executives could capitalize on stereo as a selling point for their channel because they would emphasize optimal sound for the music in their promotional materials. However WASEC not only had to attract viewers but advertisers as well. Tweaking

the *Field of Dreams* (Phil Alden Robinson, 1989) mantra to "If we build it, they will come," WASEC decided to create a channel teens and young adults would identify with in order to attract advertisers. Just like Blondie singing "color me your color" in "Call Me," WASEC wanted their channel to attract suitors willing to pay for a product. WASEC executives set out painting their music channel in neon brushstrokes certain to capture a youth demographic.[35] Since television is a dual product marketplace, their suitors formed two very different groups. One was the teens and young adults they hoped to court with a music channel that looked and acted authentically rebellious. The other was advertisers eager to exploit the spending power of those teens. If WASEC failed to attract the attention of teens and young adults, advertisers would flee and MTV would fail.

Tensions between authenticity and capitalist motivations have always surrounded rock and roll. MTV's striving for authenticity, however, was not simply pecuniary, it was also predicated on a desire to embody the irreverence of the music. Alongside programming videos from New Wave bands like Blondie, WASEC executives designed MTV to be radically different in content, attitude, *and* form. How to embody rock and roll's rebellious energy? The answer, in terms of programming, was simple. From its inception, television was organized around regularly scheduled shows. In contrast, MTV exploded the industry standard rhetoric espousing thirty, sixty, and ninety minute time slots in order to surprise viewers with one song after another.[36] Akin to radio programming, with its constant stream of songs, MTV's schedule was a stark departure from the preordained time slots every television viewer in America had learned to expect. Other than a Saturday night concert, Sunday night movie, and occasional rock-star documentary, MTV premiered as a sort of visual radio with a continuous flow of music videos. Besides establishing the channel's rebelliousness, there was a practical reason to break from regularly scheduled shows. Specifically, MTV did not have enough videos to fill up their airtime let alone organize content into thematically coherent programming blocks. As an added bonus, WASEC executives believed the flow of videos would appeal to Generation X, viewers who grew up with the medium of television and took it for granted. In particular, they "theorized that the older generation's minds worked linearly, like print; but TV babies had brains that were non-linear; like TV."[37] Whereas the older generation would do one activity before moving onto the next, MTV envisioned a younger generation simultaneously talking on the phone, reading a book, and watching television. This idea aligns with how television was theorized as a distracted

medium. Shows even started incorporating aural elements, such as the *Law & Order* gavel, to draw viewer attention back to the show. The distracted television viewer was most often conceptualized as a woman watching daytime television while simultaneously keeping her house in order. Despite patriarchal fears that women would become so engrossed in television they would neglect their household chores, programmers geared their daytime schedules around women. This vision of a distracted viewer diverges from MTV's idea about distracted viewing by teenagers. From the outset, MTV conceptualized their viewers as distracted but saw promotional music clips as capable of capturing the audience's attention. Labeling teens and young adults as thinking non-linearly is especially apropos in light of music video montages, which encouraged the viewer to make sense of disparate images often arranged in an incoherent, non-linear fashion. From this moment, it is possible to glance back at the montages of Vorkapich and Siegel that were constructed non-linearly out of various pieces of footage as well as gaze forward to the explosion of random and brief video memes, which comprise the cultural miscellany dominating the Internet.

In line with MTV's irreverent brand image, the music video chosen to open MTV's initial broadcast was the cheeky "Video Killed the Radio Star."[38] In the video, which is a performance punctuated by early video effects, the Buggles lip-synch "I'm lying awake intent at tuning in on you,"[39] Ironically, only a couple of thousand people actually watched MTV at midnight on August 1, 1981.[40] This was partly because the cable channel, "rewritten by machine and new technology,"[41] was only rolled out to rural markets and was experiencing technical difficulties. Like the Death Star, MTV's Long Island uplink station was not yet fully operational. During the opening broadcast, the MTV vee-jay segments aired completely out of order destroying any sense of continuity between Mark Goodman, Nina Blackwood, Alan Hunter, J.J. Jackson, and Martha Quinn. The Buggles singing "Pictures came and broke your heart, put the blame on VTR" (video tape recorder) was actually a prognostic first choice as the carefully considered order of clips and commercials proved too much for the staff at the uplink facility frantically trying to discern what was going to be played in the first hour and in what order.[42] Despite the chaotic nocturnal start, the channel's first day on air succeeded in conveying a sense of MTV as visual radio. Contributing to this feeling was a constant stream of videos often without any graphic titles to identify the song title, artist, album title, and recording company. The graphic titles also serve as a form of address to the viewer. In the lucid "Music Television,"

Blaine Allan writes, "If music television is organized in such a way that viewers may tune in and out or attend to the broadcast with only partial or distracted attention, then the broadcaster has devised ways for viewers to continually reground themselves."[43] Along with drawing attention back to the program, graphic titles include the information that sells records. Without graphic titles then, the succession of music videos resembled what Raymond Williams would call "a single irresponsible flow of images and feelings."[44] The decision to open MTV's broadcast with "Video Killed the Radio Star" exposes how the WASEC executives viewed what they were doing as revolutionary in terms of the recording industry. As Allan asserts, "Recalling the Hollywood myth that silent-era stars would not survive the transition to sound cinema, the title seems to predict that television would supplant radio as the more important medium to the pop music industry."[45] Not every musician would initially benefit from the exposure afforded by music videos on television.

Collision of Art and Commerce: "It doesn't matter who's wrong or who's right"

Initially, for example, there was almost no space for black artists on MTV. While the executives at MTV believed they were fomenting a channel dedicated to youth rebelliousness, it was a rebellion comprised largely of white rockers. The first eighteen months on air, MTV showcased only a handful of black artists including Joan Armatrading, Prince, Tina Turner, and the Bus Boys, who loosely fit into MTV's conception of rock music. Journalists and musicians alike were beginning to criticize MTV, but none so vociferously as Rick James, who had just scored a hit with his funk album *Street Songs* (1982). MTV passed on promotional clips for "Superfreak" and "Give It to Me Baby."[46] It would take the global success of Michael Jackson's album *Thriller* (1982) to usher in changes to MTV's programming. Initially, though, MTV resisted; even debating the merits of "Billie Jean," which was climbing the Top 10 charts on its way to number one and "Beat It," which featured Eddie Van Halen's virtuosic guitar solo and was designed to appeal to album rock radio. Although they were unsure whether MTV would play Jackson's music and CBS decided not to finance the videos for "Billie Jean" and "Beat It," Jackson and Epic Records committed to both, investing $150,000 on the production for *Beat It*. The video casts Jackson as a mystical power conquering the divisions between gang members through the power of dance. When executives at MTV saw "Beat It," they realized the powerful, polished video had to go on air.[47] Additionally, the music video montage for "Beat It" represents

the collision of art and commerce, which would come to dominate popular music's relationship with television.

As the music video production process standardized, two of its defining characteristics were location shooting in Los Angeles and hiring a director housed at a commercial/music video production company. Production houses maintained a roster of commercial/music video directors effectively destroying any sense of boundaries between the two forms. *Beat It* established this precedence and signals the calcification of art and commerce because it was written and directed by a commercial director, Bob Giraldi. Giraldi, who had caught Jackson's eye with a commercial showing a white couple throwing a block party for children in their predominantly black neighborhood, also directed commercials for Miller Lite's "Tastes Great, Less Filling" advertising campaign. In *Beat It*,[48] Giraldi constructed an exciting montage, which compresses space in its depiction of simultaneous action. As two groups of gangs spill out of pool halls and bars into the streets of Los Angeles, Jackson lip synchs, "The fire's in their eyes and the words are really clear."[49] The switchblade fight and several other flourishes of the choreography by Jackson and Broadway choreographer Michael Peters for *Beat It* reference *West Side Story* (Robert Wise and Jerome Bass, 1961). Through quick cuts, Giraldi enlivens the action and provides the viewer with multiple points of view. Jackson is conceived as a red-leather-jacket-wearing mystic capable of transcending the two gangs differences and ensuring narrative resolution. The members of the Los Angeles Crips and Bloods hired as extras add authenticity to the video. Breaking up a switchblade fight, Jackson leads the professional dancers through an acrobatic synchronized routine establishing mass choreography as a hallmark of Jackson's music video style.

The mass choreography also conjures Busby Berkeley musicals in its emphasis on the physicality and synchronization of the performers in determining the finished look of the sequence. In *Footlight Parade* (Lloyd Bacon, 1933), for example, the viewer derives pleasure by watching groups of women become zippers unlocking and locking or flowers blooming, swaying and turning assembly line of movements and patterns. From military drill marching to synchronized swimming, these choreographed spectacles are predicated on the performers' physical actions. The synchronized movement of the dancers brings to mind Siegfried Kracauer's writings on the mass ornament. Kracauer writes,

> The girl-units drill in order to produce an immense number of parallel lines, the goal being to train the broadest mass of people in order to create a pattern of undreamed-of dimensions. The end result is the ornament, whose closure is brought about by emptying all the substantial constructs of their contents. (Kracauer, 77)

The women in the fantastic Berkeley musical numbers have no meaning as individuals; rather it is their ability to work together to create "undreamed-of dimensions" that animates them. One of the primary ways that the Berkeley musicals suggest Kracauer's mass ornament is through the use of the bird's-eye view shot. The unfamiliar view afforded by this shot, where the camera is positioned directly above the scene, further distances the viewer from the performers onscreen. Towards the end of *Beat It*, the dancers are filmed from above, simultaneously recalling Berkeley musicals and the mass ornament. The twist, of course, is the dancers are all male. As their hips thrust and fingers snap in a choreographed spectacle, their lack of individuality contrasts with Jackson, who, as the star of the video, dominates the center of the frame. To accentuate Jackson, a single spotlight casts a glow around his lithe body. While the legacy of Berkeley musicals is evident in this scene, the contemporary twist is that the male performers are a multi-ethnic group dressed in street clothes. Commercial directors like Tim Newman, who directed ZZ Top's videos and Jay Dubin, who directed Billy Joel's early 1980s videos were attracted to the medium after seeing the creativity and production values of *Beat It*.

Beat It was also significant in the marriage of art and commerce because it was quickly taken up by various advertising campaigns, including Pepsi commercials and even a National Campaign Against Teen-age Drunk Driving public service announcement. President Ronald Reagan even honored Michael Jackson at the White for his contribution to the Presidential Commission on Drunk Driving. In 1984, Reagan told the crowd, "Michael Jackson is proof of what a person can accomplish through a lifestyle free of alcohol or drug abuse. People young and old respect that. And if Americans follow his example, we can face up to the problem of drinking and driving, and we can, in Michael's words, beat it."[50] As an album, *Thriller* was historic for its staggering sonic *and* visual success. Not only did the album sell over forty million copies, the singles were repurposed in a myriad of commercials. The music videos drove sales of the album and were sold as videocassettes leading Greil Marcus to wax poetically about Michael Jackson as "capitalist demi-god."[51] *Beat It* was also the first video played on NBC's *Friday Night Videos*, which premiered on July 29, 1983 as a music video compilation show designed to capture the

youth demographic MTV was already tapping. *Friday Night Videos* was NBC's attempt to capitalize on MTV's success since not all American homes were wired for cable. *Thriller* also broadened the scope of music played on MTV. Jackson's success as an artist broke down racial barriers on the channel and eventually, MTV adopted genre curated programming such as YO! MTV Raps, Headbangers Ball, Club MTV, and 120 Minutes. Each of these venues was a location for encoding how a subculture looked, dressed, acted, and talked. In turn, viewers could curate their own lives along the guidelines provided by the videos.

Miami Vice Showcases a Montage Aesthetic: "I've been waiting for this moment all my life"

The meteoric success of MTV and its popularization of music videos played a large role in propagating a montage aesthetic on television. Emblematic of this process is the video for Phil Collins' *In the Air Tonight*, which also aired during MTV's inaugural broadcast. Directed by Stuart Orme, the video evokes German Expressionism and especially *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (Robert Wiene, 1920) with its stylized sets and jagged lines. Through superimposition and video effects, Collins' face in close-up is transformed into a canvas were water is projected and later a distorted mask. In 1984, the song was featured in the pilot of *Miami Vice*; one of the first times a pop song was foregrounded within a show's narrative. *Miami Vice* was borne from a combination of NBC Head, Brandon Tartikoff, scribbling "MTV cops" on a napkin and showrunner Anthony Yerkovich researching Florida's thriving drug trade. The confluence of these two ideas resulted in the sartorial duo of James "Sonny" Crockett (Don Johnson) and Ricardo "Rico" Tubbs (Philip Michael Thomas). Tartikoff hoped to capitalize on the success of MTV, which had quickly become a tastemaker for the youth demographic. The show's pilot, "Brother's Keeper," uses "In the Air Tonight" to evoke an atmosphere of unease as Crockett and Tubbs make their way to avenge the death of Eddie Rivera (Jimmy Smits). The inclusion of "In the Air Tonight" on *Miami Vice* exemplified a montage aesthetic seeping from MTV onto the broadcast networks. Operating as a montage interlude, which condensed time and space, the song's driving rhythm suggests the pulsing heart of the city at night. Shots of Miami streetlights reflected off the car's jet-black hood and hubcaps are punctuated by Tubbs loading a shotgun and Crockett calling his ex-wife.

Clive James praising Michael Mann, executive producer of *Miami Vice*, in his book *Cultural Amnesia*, writes, "His years in the glossy sweatshop of *Miami Vice* gave him a feeling

for compressed narrative and a mastery of pastel composition transferable to any setting, including the morgue."[52] Here James obliquely refers to the cop show's reliance on montage as an aesthetic and narrative device. In fact, along with decrying "no earth tones" to the show's set and costume departments, Mann pushed for a cinematic style and convinced Tartikoff for bigger budgets to secure rights to popular music and to shoot extra footage for montages constructed to those songs.[53] Mann also hired Edward James Olmos to play Lieutenant Martin Castillo and composer Jan Hammer, who brought an edgy, synthesized sound to each episode. Montage permeates the visual style of the police procedural including its opening credit sequence set to the music of composer Jan Hammer. A rapid succession of images provides a glimpse into the "good-life" in Miami: bikini-clad beauties, flamingoes, art deco architecture, the beach, jai alai, and racetracks. A discordant note sounds at the end of the sequence as the scene switches to Miami at night insinuating there's a dark side to the city. Reminiscent of the Scarface (Brian De Palma, 1983) montage set to "Take it to the Limit." Signaling the convergence of *Miami Vice* and MTV, both Don Johnson and Philip Michael Thomas launched recording careers with music video singles that saw rotation on MTV.[54] Like MTV, the show was broadcast in stereo appealing to early adopters. A large roster of musicians even guest-starred on the show cementing the connection between *Miami Vice* and pop music. The show felt different than other police procedurals like *Hill Street Blues* and *Lou Grant* because of its style. Not just the montage aesthetic but also the casual chic fashion of Crockett in a t-shirt, jacket, and loafers and the ethnically diverse cast. The pop culture revolution of *Miami Vice* was predicated on the show's sense of style. From pink ties to New Wave culture to a montage aesthetic, *Miami Vice* appealed to the MTV generation. Solidifying the merger of *Miami Vice* and music video was NBC's decision to program the show before *Friday Night Videos*.

In her 1996 book *Re-Viewing Reception: Television, Gender, and Postmodern Culture*, Lynne Joyrich discusses how the typical music video spectator is conceptualized as part of youth culture. In general, Joyrich foregrounds gender and generational differences in a discussion about television spectatorship. In terms of music videos, Joyrich makes the important point that they are a form that appeals to "a culturally devalued but economically desirable audience" and as such they "dissolve the distinction between program, product, and ad by serving... as their own commercials."[55] This was the case in *Miami Vice*, which incorporated pop music, musicians, and television before synergy was a corporate strategy. At the same time, Joyrich notes that music

video programming is often attacked for being "childish" and "infantile."[56] It is precisely for these reasons, according to Joyrich, that music television was worthy of study. Joyrich helped establish that there was a strong relationship between the medium of music videos and a youth audience. In her discussion on the portrayal of masculinity on *Miami Vice*, Joyrich emphasized the connection between postmodernism, consumerism, and style. In her discussion, she borrowed heavily on John Fiske's analysis in *Reading Television*. Fiske and by extension Joyrich contend that *Miami Vice* is heavily concerned with representing the hyper masculine detectives, Crockett and Tubbs, through "the essentially liberating language of style."[57] This set up an immediate contradiction in that the male performer's body becomes a spectacle, something pleasurable to look at, something feminized and thus capable of destroying rigid notions of gender. Thus, displaying an awareness of style "invites the viewer-consumer to construct his / her own image, permits us the pleasure of making spectacles of ourselves as we toy with new meanings, and rejects all traditional categories and the judgments they contain."[58] "Real men wear pink" was Crockett's mantra and his uniform of Armani jacket, t-shirt, and loafers has become the quintessential marker of eighties masculinity.

Postmodern and the Color Pink: "If they don't give me proper credit / I just walk away."[59]

From Crockett's pink ties to Florida's pink flamingoes and pink art deco architecture, *Miami Vice,* like many music videos from the same time period, is appreciated today as quintessential eighties kitsch. Postmodernism and a flair for pink connected *Miami Vice* to an iconic music video from 1985, Madonna's *Material Girl*. E. Ann Kaplan, in arguably the first book on music television, *Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Postmodernism, and Consumer Culture*, labeled *Material Girl* "the penultimate postmodern video." Kaplan classifies all music videos under one of five categories: "romantic," "socially conscious," "nihilist," "classical" and "post-modernist."[60] Within her schematic, a postmodernist video is defined by pastiche, non-linear imagery, simulacra, and ambiguity. Kaplan highlights *Material Girl* as a postmodernist text pointing to director Mary Lambert's use of pastiche, the rapid shifting from one diegetic space to another, and incoherent shot constructions. The most visible characteristic of postmodernism *Material Girl* demonstrated was an intertextual relationship with Howard Hawks' *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (1953). Madonna recreated the scene where Lorelei Lee (Monroe) performed "Diamonds are a Girl's Best Friend" on the ocean liner lounge replete with

a similar red set, pink dress, black fan, male dancers, and diamond accoutrements. As she performs, Monroe is the object of desire for both Gus Esmond (Tommy Noonan), the male spectator within the diegesis, and for the spectator watching the film. *Material Girl* reconfigured the famous number recasting Madonna as a modern Monroe, the object of the gaze, but also an active seductress. Kaplan described this dichotomy between passive object and active temptress as distinguishing Madonna as "the new postmodern feminist heroine in her odd combination of seductiveness and a gutsy sort of independence."[61]

As Kaplan articulated, *Material Girl* does not inform the viewer of its attitude towards the referenced text. Instead, all the music video offers is pastiche or "blank parody." As Frederic Jameson wrote in *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture*,

> Pastiche is, like parody, the imitation of a peculiar or unique style, the wearing of a stylistic mask, speech in a dead language; but it is a neutral practice of such mimicry, without parody's ulterior motive, without the satirical impulse, without the laughter, without that still latent feeling that there exists something normal compared to which what is being imitated is rather comic.[62]

Although Madonna's *Material Girl* made use of costuming, set design, and spectatorial position to refer to *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes*, it did so in the interests of style rather than any sort of narrative commentary. *Material Girl* set the stage for many videos to follow, which uncritically reenact iconic film moments.[63] Hollywood musicals from the fifties such as the exuberant barn-raising scene in *Seven Brides for Seven Brothers* (1954), the vibrant interaction between Louis Armstrong and Bing Crosby in *High Society* (1956) and the energy of Gene Kelly, Danny Kaye and Debbie Reynolds in *Singin' in the Rain* (1952) informed the look of videos in general. These iconic musical moments formed a visual framework admired, emulated and reworked. However, oftentimes, "the main shots and use of diegetic spaces demonstrates the ways in which conventions of the classic Hollywood film, which paradoxically provided the inspiration for the video, are routinely violated."[64] Interspersed with Madonna's focus on material wealth within the space of the performance, is a conflicting narrative about a director (Keith Carradine) wooing Madonna with daisies and the promise of true love. The disorientation the spectator experiences throughout the video is due to its "spatial incoherence" as Madonna continues to lip-synch regardless of whether she is in the performance or narrative sections of the video. The fetishization of Madonna lip-synching is what David E. James sees as "the key moment in

enforcing the aesthetic and commercial closure that sustains the advertising function" of most videos.[65] Throughout *Material Girl*, Madonna is foregrounded as the diva demanding attention and the brazen spectacle of Madonna as Monroe helped elevate the singer to pop culture icon.

In response to music video scholarship, like Kaplan's, grounded in the established discourses of film studies, Andrew Goodwin lamented textual readings that privileged the visual at the expense of the aural. Throughout the erudite *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture*, Goodwin emphasized a need for scholars to address the role of music in music television. Goodwin hoped to shift critical attention away from a focus on visual aesthetics and towards an engagement with the aural properties of music videos. For Goodwin, the references to *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* in *Material Girl* were irrelevant because Madonna's average viewer would be blind to the elements of pastiche. Instead, Goodwin wanted to highlight music videos as the interaction between sound *and* image when he wrote, "The neglect of music in music video analysis has been so pervasive that few writers seem to have noticed that a cultural form centered on its aural component has been analyzed by critics without ears."[66] Part of the problem as Goodwin saw it was "the practice of constructing textual readings not on the basis of a theorized relation between text and production, or between text and consumption, but rather between text and theory."[67] His insistence on contextualizing music videos socially, institutionally, and economically is reiterated in *Sound & Vision: The Music Video Reader* edited by Goodwin, Simon Frith and Lawrence Grossberg. Alongside thinking about the aural in conjunction with the visual, each of these books shared concerns about the paradoxical way music videos create spaces promoting "countercultural and antiestablishment points of view" yet inherently fixed in the clutch of corporate power.[68]

Cahiers du MTV? Rise of the Auteurs: "It's the new weapon, weapon of choice"[69]

It's no coincidence MTV hoped to capitalize on Madonna's star power by having her perform "Like a Virgin" at the first annual Video Music Awards (VMAs) held in 1984 at the Radio City Music Hall and broadcast live on the channel. The polished, carefully orchestrated, and overly produced MTV Video Awards of later years were an unimagined dream when MTV debuted its service. The early VMAs hastened the creation of music video auteurs out of both directors and performers. Auteur theory, in contrast to the ideological approach, celebrates the individual filmmaker and how their personal decisions, thoughts, and style manifest themselves

in the material. Just as Francois Truffaut in Cahiers du cinema ascribed auteur theory to redeem the art of film and filmmakers who were looked down upon by mainstream critics, the establishment of the VMAs was a way for MTV to advocate music videos (and by extension, the channel as a whole) were as important as other televisual forms. Not to mention, as MTV rewarded music video auteurs, it instituted an awards show with the concurrent boost in ratings and advertising dollars accompanying live television. Just as in film, the concept of a music video auteur is both useful and misleading. On the one hand, it acknowledged the role of performers and directors in shaping the look of the finished videos. On the other hand, it downplayed the collaborative element of any production while ascribing control to artists in a complicated media landscape where various corporate actors weigh in on the look and feel of the videos. Certain female performers like Madonna, Whitney Houston, Björk, Missy Elliott, Beyoncé, and Lady Gaga had enough clout to determine their personas across multiple videos. These female musical personalities staked their claim to authorship based on exercising control of the music and its corresponding imagery.

An interest in the work of male music video auteur/directors is at the heart of more recent scholarship on music video. One example of a male director, Chris Cunningham, working in concert with a female performer, Björk, dominates part of the beautifully illustrated *Thirty Frames Per Second: The Visionary Art of the Music Video*. Almost every page is dominated by intense color pictures, which offer a glimpse into the world of music video alongside interviews with a number of auteur directors. In the Cunningham-directed *All is Full of Love* video, Björk literally becomes the human-machine hybrid that according to Donna J. Haraway constitutes "a machine/human construct that challenges dichotomies of identity and carves out new hybrid spaces of being."[70] Cunningham observes,

> "With some music, the emotional impact is so strong that you're busy experiencing the emotion and not seeing pictures. But other tracks put images in your head and almost have a sequential quality to them. I try to translate the emotional resonance of those songs into pictures."[71]

The video lavishly shows a pair of robotic arms constructing a cyborg with the face of Björk. The technologically advanced construction of the cyborg is visualized through a succession of lush close-ups of Björk 's body slowly being pieced together while sparks fly and milky water flows over her joints. The natural elements add warmth to the realization of the perfect hybrid of

female and machine, the cyborg. Towards the end of the video, the Björk cyborg is greeted by its mirror image and the two kiss and embrace. The video blurs the line between humans and machines as well as presenting an autoerotic world in which Björk's visuals caress the listener as the cyborgs caress each other.

Similar to Don Siegel, a crop of ambitious male music video directors made their mark on the outskirts of the industry in the late 1980s and throughout the 1990s. Concurrently, a slew of scholarship and attention paid to these male directors resulted in Hollywood's increased awareness of male auteurs including David Fincher, Chris Cunningham, Spike Jonze, Michel Gondry, Hype Williams, Mike Mills, Jonathan Glazer, and Mark Romanek. These men were considered seminal in the articulation of music video because of the coherent visual style they brought to each production. Their filmmaking prowess and technical innovation appealed to viewers as much as the music. The release of Directors Label DVD compilations demanded recognition for the directorial contributions and paved the way for these directors' entre into filmmaking. Treating music videos as highly polished director reels, they eventually moved into feature film directing. Drawing on their experiences in music video, the rhythm and structure of music in their films played a large role in determining the look of certain sequences. For example, the montage of Jerry and Mike (Jack Black and Mos Def) remaking cult films in Michel Gondry's *Be Kind Rewind* (2008) or David Fincher's montage opening credit sequence for *The Girl with the Dragon Tattoo* (2011). Set to Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross' version of Led Zeppelin's "Immigrant Song" featuring Karen O of the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, the disturbing opening sequence alludes to key elements in the film, especially through the imagery's violent and unsettling integration of biology and technology. Much of the scholarship specifically concerned with music videos and music television was written in the mid 1980s and early 90s. The art form was brand new and influencing youth popular culture in exceptional ways. Now it would be inconceivable to imagine a musician's branding strategy without music videos. The Internet allows viewers to act as curators, searching and watching music videos based on their tastes rather than as a continuous flow as pioneered by early MTV. In addition to the branding of musicians, music video directors are invested in creating a name for themselves.

Blaine Allan analyzed the Fatboy Slim video *Weapon of Choice*, with a focus on the directorial style of Spike Jonze. Allan points out how Jonze's experimentation with space evokes the musical numbers in *Singin' in the Rain*. Within the video, through the power of music and

dance, an everyday space becomes an extraordinary dimension where rules of gravity do not apply. While any video is collaborative, *Weapon of Choice* truly belongs to its protagonist, Christopher Walken. Walken's individualistic charisma is certainly one of the reasons the video was so popular; cleaning house at the 2001 Video Music Awards with "Best" honors in Art Direction, Breakthrough Video, Choreography, Cinematography, Direction and Editing.[72] The video opens with a shot of Walken slumped in a chair, a nondescript executive rundown from traveling and stuck in another nondescript hotel lobby late at night. Suddenly, the music starts and Walken, piquing the viewer's attention, glances off-screen, presumably towards the source of the music. The next shot, an AM/FM radio atop a housecleaning cart, positions "Weapon of Choice" as an element of the diegetic universe. The camera then returns to Walken who breaks the fourth wall by staring directly at the audience with a look that demands attentive anticipation. Walken surprises the viewer by unexpectedly transforming into a quirky vision of gracefulness dancing and flying through the hotel's elevators, lobby, and corridors. Walken's transformation, in turn, completely alters the audience's sense of space. Initially, the hotel confines a beaten-down Walken to a chair but as soon as he starts dancing, the space opens in new and unexpected ways. Mirrored elevator doors become windows into infinity and the atmosphere of a two-story atrium defies gravity. Allan writes,

> Visually, there are few requirements or strict conventions in videos. In fact, part of the force of music videos resides in their capacity to flout conventions and run contrary to expectations. This is because video producers acknowledge the status of the television as image, not exclusively a representation of the real world.[73]

The climax of the video, Walken's seamless leap into the atrium destroys any remaining sense of the "real world" and invites the viewer into an extraordinary world where mundane moments are full of creative possibilities. *Weapon of Choice* also demonstrates the role music videos play as promotional tools. Despite attempts at classification, music videos are usually a convoluted amalgamation of performance, narrative, and non-narrative elements. Unlike most videos, which foreground a musician's performance, the only time the Fatboy Slim is visible within the diegesis is as a painting decorating one of the hotel's walls. In fact, a greater sense of authorship is bestowed on the director, Spike Jonze, and the protagonist, Christopher Walken, then on the musician. The fantasy world of the video, however, would also not have been possible without

the aid of the editors, the aerial coordinators and the effects house that eliminated the wires from the video.

Another recent publication on music videos, Carol Vernallis' 2004 book *Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context*, takes great pains to insert musical concerns into existing patterns of music video analysis. The majority of *Experiencing Music Video* focuses on the music's relationship to various aspects of videos such as editing, actors, settings, props, costumes and time. Within her discussion on editing she addresses the dissolve as a fundamental part of the music video work of Hype Williams. Vernallis discerns in the videos directed by Williams the consistent use of "a slo-mo, low-angle, long tracking shot followed by a dissolve."[74] Regardless of whether the video is in black and white, such as Craig Mack's *Flava In Ya Ear*, or color, such as LL Cool J's *Doin It*, the visual rhythm of the video is often determined by slow fades. The dissolve is akin to visual rhyming as the gradual transition from one image to another evinces excitement over the moment of transformation between the two. In the slow blink of an eye, Williams takes the viewer from one image to the next, sometimes within the delivery of one word. Rather than use the dissolve to signal a passing of a period of time, Williams employs the technique stylistically to lend his videos a lethargic seductiveness. Partly because of these slow fades, Vernallis suggests the performers are imbued with "a degree of warmth, self-possession, and pride, regardless of circumstance."[75] In Williams' videos, and even in his 1998 film *Belly*, the dissolve is utilized as a sensuous editing technique. "It's virtue lies in its power of suggestion; the soft almost imperceptible link it can imply between the two shots momentarily married on the screen."[76] The gradual change from one shot to another occasions a moment when the two images are joined onscreen.

Vernallis, in her discussion of how the space of the video often reflects aural elements of the song, commends director Michel Gondry for Daft Punk's *Around the World*. Gondry plays on the song's lyrics to provide context for the images. As Vernallis suggests, "The music cannot define the meaning of objects, but it can surely suggest the animating desire that characters bear towards objects or others."[77] The space is a confined black box with a multicolored background that brings to mind flashing disco lights. The setting resembles an old-fashioned jukebox with the record spinning inside. The dancing characters of the video – mummies, skeletons, bathing beauties, b-boys and astronauts – represent different elements of the song: the bass is the b-boys, the staccato chord progressions are the synchronized swimmers, and the manipulated "around the

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world" is the astronauts. The robotic astronauts, with their space suit costumes and jerky movements, also resemble the band Devo in the video *Whip It*. Gondry's video never leaves the space of the jukebox but it still manages to fascinate the viewer. This is partly due to the song's progression, which actually choreographs the characters' movements, and as the melodies build, the dancers' performances evolve. Throughout the video, the characters revolve around a fixed center spot, which is revealed to be the center of a spinning record upon the completion of the song. The repetition of the lyrics "around the world" is the "animating desire" that Vernallis talks about and as the song fades, the lights dim and the jukebox switches off.

Vernallis argues persuasively that it is irresponsible to analyze music videos without deconstructing the aural properties of the song in conjunction with the visual images. Yet in concentrating on the aural and visual properties of music videos, she omits the actual business of production. Just as films cannot be analyzed without a clear knowledge of the interplay between budget, production team, writer, director and performer, music videos cannot be judged purely by their end product. There is a need for analysis that looks specifically at the production history of music videos. Many of the same production houses that are responsible for commercials also produce music videos. In order to truly demonstrate the cross-fertilization that occurs between videos and commercials, it is necessary to delve into the production histories of both mediums that at the very least, determines their high production values. Although Vernallis throughout her book focuses on male auteur directors, she utilizes the feminine pronoun to stand in for both masculine and feminine. Thus "she" is both she and he and "hers" is both hers and his. This is problematic because it suggests that women are participating to a greater extent in the wide range of activities that the book encompasses. While it is true that women can and should be a part of all aspects of music and music video pre-production, production and post-production; it is important to be forthright about the status of their current participation. By using the feminine pronoun, Vernallis effectively elides a conversation about where women are agents within the realm of music videos.

Trapped in the Computer: "You're not going to believe it but things get deeper as the story goes on"[78]

While Bell-Smith works in the idiom of montage across his oeuvre, three pieces in particular articulate how montage remains a vital lens for examining visual culture. The first is

his remixing of Sergei Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* into a hyper-kinetic piece entitled *Battleship Potemkin Dance Edits* (2007). Reconfiguring Eisenstein's film as danceable, Bell-Smith speeds it up to 120 beats per minute. Even as the driving rhythm of the beat becomes monotonous over the course of the twelve-minute video, Eisenstein's filmmaking remains affective. Over a couple of beers with Bell-Smith, he talked about wanting to "punk montage" in *Battleship Potemkin Dance Edits*.[79] Drawing on the language of MTV ("You just got Punk'd"), Bell-Smith envisioned the video while teaching a film editing class where he assigned a metric montage assignment. As a demonstration, he set up markers to the beat of a song and cut the footage according to the beat garnering collective amazement in the class. Impressed by the reaction he received cutting on the beat, Bell-Smith decided to choose something everyone has seen, the Odessa Steps sequence, and restructure the footage. Rather than downplay the power of montage, his inversion highlights how montage is still relevant for considering how digital media is always competing with other art forms. This competition for attention exposes the duality between the art world and Internet culture.

Bell-Smith, in thinking about how to position himself in relationship to this duality, envisioned the perspicacious *Chapters 1-12 of R. Kelly's Trapped in the Closet Synced and Played Simultaneously* (2005). When the first twelve chapters of Kelly's hip-hopera debuted in 2005, Bell-Smith was intrigued by the conversation in music criticism around whether Kelly is a genius or completely naive. Cognizant of the class and racial element of the conversation, Bell-Smith was excited by how *Trapped in the Closet* dovetailed with Internet culture and its interaction with mash-ups, DJ techniques, and fanboy/fangirl supercuts. Each chapter features the same melodic theme and Bell-Smith realized he could capitalize on Kelly's consistent beat and progression by layering each chapter on top of the next. In doing so, Bell-Smith exposed the genius of layering and created an entirely new surface layer seductively commingling with the layered audio. Describing his piece as "not a music video and also just a music video," Bell-Smith explored how the principles of visual and sonic rhythm dictate the organization of images.[80] Bell-Smith's layering technique results in a barrage of visual and aural information. This audiovisual density underscores how Kelly continually bombards the viewer with numerous narrative revelations – Rufus is sleeping with Chuck, Cathy's name is Mary, Gwendolyn is sleeping with James, Twan was shot in the shoulder, Bridget is allergic to cherries, and Big Man is the father.[81]

Using montage to consider the audiovisual appeal of *Trapped in the Closet*, Bell-Smith's piece reveals how Vorkapich's dream of temporal, rhythmic cutting may have been realized by a figure who would appear alien to Vorkapich if he were alive today: R. Kelly. In fact, R. Kelly himself has called *Trapped in the Closet* "an alien" and admitted, before unveiling Chapters 23-33 to an audience in New York, "I'm glad to be one of the astronauts to take this trip to a place unknown."[82] Describing R. Kelly's "place unknown" to the uninitiated is equivalent to speaking Vulcan in a room full of Klingons. What is certain is the universal translator's version of *Trapped in the Closet* would emphasize how the piece both resonates with the tropes of hip-hop (hyper-masculine, narcissistic, braggadocios, foregrounds sexual relationships) and subverts them (melodramatic, embraces gay and lesbian characters). R. Kelly's piece provides the audience with a multitude of melodramatic cliffhangers to sustain their interest. An escalation of events is accompanied by concurrent crescendos in the music.

Chapter 1 establishes the location of Chicago as the "L" train passes by and a time-lapsed sky overlaid with the sound of birds chirping suggests dawn is breaking over the city. The camera slowly pulls back, seamlessly transitioning from a view of the city to the interior of an apartment bedroom where a fully clothed man sleeps soundly. Still moving seamlessly, the camera pans across the bed and zeroes in on the closed closet door to the left of the bed. As the camera pushes in towards the closet and the music builds, viewer suspense heightens. What lurks in the mind of Kels and what does he have in store for the audience? R. Kelly's opening shot brings to mind Orson Welles' long tracking shot at the start of *Touch of Evil* (1958). Perhaps it is an inadvertent homage, but it evokes the ticking time bomb in Welles' film. The viewer intrinsically understands that whatever or whoever is behind the closet door will motivate the rest of the narrative. What follows is an insane chain of events put in motion by the character of Sylvester oversleeping. The camera, continuing its seamless path from the Chicago skyline to the interior of the apartment, continues unhindered through the closet door and suddenly exposes R. Kelly with eyes downcast. With exquisite dramatic effect, R. Kelly raises his eyes and breaking the fourth wall, sings directly to the viewer, "Seven o'clock in the morning and the rays from the sun wake me."[83] This marks the first of innumerable "oh shit" moments in *Trapped in the Closet*. By using the first person pronoun, R. Kelly establishes himself as a first person narrator. As narrator, he describes the thought processes of the character Sylvester, who is navigating the diegesis. When Sylvester attempts to extricate himself from his lover's house because her

husband arrived home, R. Kelly/Sylvester sings "shit think, shit think, shit, quick put me in the closet and now I'm in this darkest closet trying to figure out how I'm going to get my ass out this crazy house."[84] Despite what the title insinuates, this line quickly demonstrates R. Kelly's heterosexuality. He is not gay and "trapped in the closet," or afraid to reveal his sexuality; instead, he is literally, physically trapped in a closet to avoid an embarrassing confrontation.

At the denouement of several chapters of *Trapped in the Closet*, R. Kelly employs an almost comical level of repetition to create suspense. Pushing the audience to the edge of their seats with an exaggerated cliffhanger in Chapter 1, R. Kelly sings, "He walks up to the closet / He comes up to the closet / Now he's at the closet / Now he's opening the closet."[85] The anxiety R. Kelly creates sonically stems from the audience's awareness visually that Rufus, Cathy/Mary's husband, has no idea that Sylvester's Beretta is pointed at his head. The first Chapter ends with the viewer waiting breathlessly to discover whether Sylvester shoots Rufus. In Chapter 2, rather than kill Rufus, Sylvester is shocked to learn that Rufus is metaphorically "trapped in the closet." The disclosure of Rufus' homosexuality is occasioned as a moment of surprise and betrayal and yet, it creates a space for a storyline involving a black man on the "down low" to develop over the course of *Trapped in the Closet*.

As the story progresses, R. Kelly blurs the distinction between a first person and an omniscient narrator by divulging information about the other characters populating *Trapped in the Closet*. Playing with his status as a first person and omniscient narrator symbolizes *Trapped in the Closet*'s sophistication on two levels. First, it reinforces R. Kelly as an egotistical narrator and performer both within and outside of the diegesis. While the narrator has access to Sylvester's thoughts because he is Sylvester, he is also untethered to that character and privy to information Sylvester knows nothing about. This casts suspicion on the reliability of the narrator but also reminds the viewer of R. Kelly's superhuman powers. He actually does know everything going on with the characters and storylines of *Trapped in the Closet* because, as writer, singer, and co-director, he created the universe! Second, blurring the boundaries between first person and omniscient narrator allows R. Kelly to self-reflexively comment on the proceedings. Therefore it demonstrates, as Douglas Hofstadter would say, R. Kelly "going meta."[86] This is especially apparent at the end of Chapter 9, when R. Kelly implores the audience, "Now, pause the movie, 'cause what I'm about to say to y'all is so damn twisted – not only is there a man in his cabinet, but the man is a midget. Midget! Midget! Midget!" R. Kelly self-referentially

demands the viewer pause *Trapped in the Closet* to appreciate the extraordinariness of the latest narrative reveal. It's as if R. Kelly anticipated a chorus of "oh no he didn't" and emphatically underlines how "yes, he did." Through repetition of the word "midget," R. Kelly highlights just how outlandish he thinks the dramatic revelations have become. In the world of *Trapped in the Closet*, a married man dallying with a married woman who finds himself literally trapped in a closet so as to escape detection by the woman's husband only to get caught and discover the woman's husband is gay, is nothing compared to finding out your wife is pregnant by a stripper and little person named Big Man.

Contemplating the nuanced relationship between media, politics, and the audience, entails the recognition that ideologies can disappear into a naturalized world of common sense. Hegemony persists by winning consent, which brings forth the power of the text and the social and political context of its production and reception. In "Encoding and Decoding," Stuart Hall condemns the idea that communication is a direct line from sender to receiver. In so doing, Hall creates a space for multiple decoding positions occupied by any audience of mass culture. The dominant-hegemonic position, negotiated position, and oppositional position expand an understanding of resistance by potentially drawing attention to the internal instabilities of how meaning is constructed and understood. Ultimately, for Hall, contested meanings at the heart of the dynamic between power and resistance can also create significant moments ripe with political change. One of the ways *Trapped in the Closet* is regularly consumed is through interactive sing-a-longs held on college campuses, in homes, and in independent theaters venues like the Alamo Drafthouse in Austin, the Music Box Theater in Chicago, Freemont Outdoor Movies in Seattle, and The Castro Theater in San Francisco. All of these venues foster an interactive environment where viewers can adopt a multiplicity of reading positions just so long as they sing along to R. Kelly.

Throughout each chapter, the sonic properties follow a distinct pattern, where Kelly presents a scenario and, after several narrative reversals occasioned by the surprise of betrayal, ends with another cliffhanger punctuated by an elongated word in Kelly's distinctive vocal delivery. Sonically, the end of each chapter is cathartic as the repeated word stretches out giving the listener an opportunity to recover from the onslaught of melodramatic revelations. This catharsis is accentuated in Bell-Smith's *Chapters 1-12 of R. Kelly's Trapped in the Closet Synced and Played Simultaneously*. Kelly's tripartite role within *Trapped*, as simultaneously, the

narrator, Sylvester, and the singer who delivers the other characters' lines, is emphasized in Bell-Smith's piece. The superimposition of the chapters also evokes Nam June Paik's *Beatles Electroniques* (1966-69) in its distortion and reimagining of the performer. While Bell-Smith wants the video to encapsulate the narcissism of R. Kelly, he also treats the video as highlighting "how the Web has changed (and continues to change) the way much of society thinks about media, information, and social relations."[87] R. Kelly's *Trapped in the Closet: Chapters 1-12*, originally released in 2005, dovetailed with the launch of YouTube in February of 2005 and the popularity of *Trapped* convinced IFC to broadcast *Chapters 13-22* on its website in 2007. The Bell-Smith video, in its recirculation of *Trapped* online and in traditional art venues, points to the intersections between music video, video art and the diversified paths of the contemporary media landscape.

Finally, Bell-Smith's 2010 three channel video piece N.e.w. Y.o.r.k. / M.i.a.m.i. / L.a.s. V.e.g.a.s. grappled with appropriation strategies in light of how prevalent they have become online. In conversation, Bell-Smith mentioned he had Dara Birnbaum's *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman* (1978-79) in mind when he conceived the piece. Birnbaum, who appropriated the CBS footage of the series *Wonder Woman* (1975-79) to expose television's stereotypical construction of male and female, was less interested in hijacking footage once everyone could. While Bell-Smith does not engage with identity politics, his piece queried how to position oneself as an artist against the widespread mobilization of appropriation. His answer was to control the audience's interaction with the work. Borrowing another show from CBS, *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation*, Bell-Smith created three supercuts from the helicopter shots of the three CSI franchises: New York, Miami, and Las Vegas. Looped on three separate monitors was an entire season's worth of helicopter shots for the three cities, effectively creating a montage out of the juxtaposed screens. For every shot, Bell-Smith inserted a hand-drawn layer. These minimalist neon squiggles are superimposed over the cityscapes evoking the momentary blindness experienced after looking too closely at the sun. Simultaneously, the neon lines recall the neon lettering of *Miami Vice*, which appeared in the opening credits over the fast-moving helicopter shot of the ocean below.

Conclusion

Whereas montage in the classical era was corseted by the larger diegesis, music television ushered in the moment when montage was freed from the constraints of a surrounding narrative. While the conflation of art and commerce on MTV highlighted the appeal of a montage aesthetic, the impulse to use montage for political ends could not be quelled. For Slavko Vorkapich, montage was a film style of its own, "which uses purely visual means, including all the possibilities of the camera, of movement, of rhythm, and of cutting, to express feelings and thoughts and to tell stories."[88] Ironically, perhaps the most perfect realization of kinetics in film is also the form most aligned with capitalism's imperatives, the music video. Stylistically, music video montages borrowed freely from past sonic and visual experiments like German Expressionism, Soviet Montage, Surrealism, and American avant-garde film. Music video montages have a deeply layered quality that takes multiple views to dissect. Similar to avant-garde films engaged with popular music, the most interesting music videos force the viewer to consider the meanings and questions integrated into the art form. Since the inception of MTV, however, the form's revolutionary impulses were curtailed by its adherence to capitalistic ends. No longer punctuating a larger narrative in film, music videos foregrounded montage for montage's sake. In many ways, television was the perfect medium to appropriate and unleash montage. What better way to captivate a distracted viewer than with short, kinetic, visually arresting sequences set to music?

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[1] Kelefa Sanneh, "Outrageous Farce from R. Kelly: He's In on the Joke, Right?," *The New York Times*, August 20, 2007, accessed March 31, 2009, http://www.nytimes.com /2007/08/20/arts/music/20trap.html.

[2] Gary Edgerton, *Columbia History of American Television* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009).

[3] Alun Owen, *A Hard Day's Night*. 35 mm. Directed by Richard Lester. London: Walter Shenson, 1964.

[4] E. Ann Kaplan, *Rocking Around the Clock: Music Television, Post Modernism and Consumer Culture* (London: Routledge, 1987), 6.

[5] Both *Penny Lane*, and *Strawberry Fields Forever* were broadcast on American television in 1967. Goldman mixed stop motion animation, jumpcuts, and reverse film effects with footage of the Beatles.

[6] Barbara London, "Interview for Cover Versions," *Artforum International*, No. 7: 209.

[7] Tom McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution* (Philadelphia: Running Press Book Publishers,1996), 37.

[8] David E. James, "Avant-Garde Film and Music Video: A View From Zurich," *Power Misses: Essays Across (un)Popular Culture* (New York: Verso Books, 1996), 234.

[9] Michael Nesmith, "Cruisin," *Infinite Rider on the Big Dogma*, 1979 by Pacific Arts Records & Tapes, LP.

[10] McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution*, 27.

[11] Ibid., 28.

[12] Michael Nesmith, *Infinite Rider on the Big Dogma*.

[13] Steve Strong's real name was Steve Cepello. Eventually, Cepello retired from wrestling to pursue an art career and was later hired to paint Governor Jesse Ventura's residence.

[14] Michael Nesmith, *Infinite Rider on the Big Dogma*.

[15] Blaine Allan, "Music Television," in *Television: Critical Methods and Applications*, ed. Jeremy G. Butler (New Jersey: Erlbaum, 2007), 292.

[16] Ibid.

[17] McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution*, 28.

[18] At the National Cable Television Association Convention in 1968.

[19] Edgerton, *The Columbia History of American Television*. 300. Started by cable entrepreneur Charles Dolan in 1971. The Green Channel, which became Home Box Office (HBO) and leased a transponder on Radio Corporation of America's SatCom I, successfully convinced viewers to pay for sporting events and commercial-free films delivered to their homes.

[20] McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution*, 26.

[21] Ibid. The burgeoning cable business was possible because of increasingly effective satellite distribution. However, the rapid proliferation of new networks altered the power balance between cable system owners and cable programmers. Now programmers were desperate for cable operators, who acted as gatekeepers, to carry their shows. While WASEC had to convince cable operators to put Nickelodeon and the Star Channel, recently renamed The Movie Channel, on their systems, business was profitable enough for WASEC to start planning their next network.

[22] Ibid., 18. When Jack Schneider was head of television and radio operations at CBS, his phone was tapped by President Richard Nixon.

[23] Ibid. The other individuals involved at WASEC were Bob Pittman as head of programming, Bob McGroarty as vice president of marketing, and Jordan Rost as head of research. The WASEC approach to research involved determining people's tastes in order to be ready to give viewers what they wanted when the channel went on the air. Armed with new ideas about how to use audience research effectively, WASEC opened regional sales offices across the country.

[24] Ibid., 46.

[25] Ibid., 29. Including Howie Mandel.

[26] Ibid., 29.

[27] Debbie Harry and Giorgio Moroder, "Call Me," *American Gigolo*, 1979 by Polydor Records, LP. "Call Me" was used as the main theme song for *American Gigolo* (Paul Schrader, 1980).

[28] McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution*. WASEC executives were pretty confident they could convince Warner Communications CEO Steve Ross but they worried AMEX CEO Jim Robinson would balk at the hefty price tag.

[29] Ibid., 38.

[30] Ibid., 45.

[31] Ibid., 46.

[32] David Sedman. "The Legacy of Broadcast Stereo Sound: The Short Life of MTS, 1984-2009," *Journal of Sonic Studies* 3.1 (October 2012), accessed June 7, 2013, http://journal.sonicstudies.org/vol03/nr01/a03

[33] McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution*, 46.

[34] Sedman, "The Legacy of Broadcast Stereo Sound."

[35] McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution*, 48. Initially, they called the new channel TV-1 only to learn the name had already been trademarked. TV-1 became TV-M for Television Music until a programmer named Steve Casey rearranging the letters on a piece of paper realized MTV was more attractive graphically.

[36] Ibid., 47. Not everyone agreed with the constant flow of music. Head of WASEC, Jack Schneider, balked at the schedule when it was proposed to him believing the unwritten compact between channel and viewer was based on the presence of scheduled programs.

[37] Ibid., 48. Especially Bob Pittman and John Lack.

[38] Ibid., 63.

[39] Bruce Woolley, Geoff Downes, and Trevor Horn, "Video Killed the Radio Star," *The Age of Plastic*, 1979 by Island Records, LP.

[40] McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution*, 65.

[41] Bruce Woolley, Geoff Downes, and Trevor Horn, *The Age of Plastic*.

[42] McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution*, 63.

[43] Allan, "Music Television," 298.

[44] Raymond Williams, *Television, Technology, and Cultural Form* (New York: Routledge, 2003).

[45] Allan, "Music Television," 287.

[46] McGrath, *MTV: The Making of a Revolution*, 100.

[47] Ibid. Although there is some suggestion that CBS Records boss Walter Yetnikoff had to threaten MTV by saying he would pull all CBS artists off the air if MTV didn't play "Billie Jean" and "Beat It."

[48] "Beat It," *YouTube*, accessed July 25, 2013, http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oRdxUFDoQe0.

[49] Michael Jackson, "Beat It," *Thriller*, 1983 by Epic Records, CD.

[50] Ronald Reagan, "Remarks at a White House Ceremony Marking Progress Made in the Campaign Against Drunk Driving," *Ronald Reagan Presidential Library and Museum*, accessed May 18, 2013, http://www.reagan.utexas.edu/archives/speeches/1984/51484a.htm.

[51] Greil Marcus, *Lipstick Traces: A Secret History of the Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989), 97.

[52] Clive James, *Cultural Amnesia: Necessary Memories from History and the Arts* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008), 434.

[53] Noel Murray, "How *Miami Vice* launched the '80s on TV Then Died with its Decade," *A.V. Club*, August 2, 2012, accessed July 29, 2013, http://www.avclub.com/articles/how-miami-vice-launched-the-80s-on-tv-then-died-wi,83262/.

[54] The two music videos released by the heartthrobs of *Miami Vice* were "Heartbeat" by Don Johnson and "Just the Way I Planned It" by Philip Michael Thomas.

[55] Lynne Joyrich, *Re-Viewing Reception: Television, Gender, and Postmodern Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press,1996), 78. Belying corporate synergy strategies, music videos eventually became one part of a film's promotional package. Like a "Coming Attractions" trailer, the videos borrow footage, presenting visual and narrative highlights. In Bruce Springsteen's *Streets of Philadelphia* for the film *Philadelphia*, scenes of Springsteen singing are intertwined with scenes of Tom Hanks, as the lawyer Andrew Beckett, struggling against homophobia and discrimination.

[56] Joyrich, *Re-Viewing Reception*, 22.

[57] Ibid., 93.

[58] Ibid., 93.

[59] Peter Brown and Robert Rans, "Material Girl," *Like a Virgin*, 1984 by Warner Bros. Records, CD.

[60] Kaplan, *Rocking Around the Clock*, 54.

[61] Ibid., 117.

[62] Hal Foster, ed., *The Anti-Aesthetic: Essays on Postmodern Culture* (New York: New Press, 2002), 114.

[63] A small sampling includes Paula Abdul's reenactment of *Rebel Without a Cause* (Nicholas Ray, 1955) in *Rush Rush*; Jennifer Lopez remakes the erotic dance scene from *Flashdance* (Adrian Lynne, 1978) in *I'm Glad*; Ja Rule and Ashanti poach the basic narrative of *Grease* (Randall Kleiser, 1978) in *Mezmerize* and *Goodfellas* (Martin Scorsese, 1990) in *Foolish*.

[64] Kaplan, *Rocking Around the Clock*, 123.

[65] James, "Avant-Garde Film and Music Video," 247.

[66] Andrew Goodwin, *Dancing in the Distraction Factory: Music Television and Popular Culture* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1992), 5.

[67] Ibid., 20.

[68] Ibid., 154.

[69] Norman Cook, "Weapon of Choice," *Halfway Between the Gutter and the Stars*, 2001 by Skint, Astralwerks, CD.

[70] Donna J. Haraway, *Simians, Cyborgs, and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1990), 113.

[71] Neil Feineman and Steve Reiss, *Thirty Frames Per Second: The Visionary Art of the Music Video* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 2000), 70.

[72] "MTV Video Music Awards 2001," *MTV.com*, accessed on April 14, 2013, http://www.mtv.com/ontv/vma/2001/.

[73] Allan, "Music Television," 237.

[74] Carol Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video: Aesthetics and Cultural Context* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 297.

[75] Ibid., 93.

[76] Roger Manvell, *Film* (Middlesex: Pelican Books, 1944), 36.

[77] Vernallis, *Experiencing Music Video*, 41.

[78] *Trapped in the Closet: Chapters 1-22*, DVD, directed by Jim Swaffield and R. Kelly (Jive and Zomba, 2005 for 1-12 and 2007 for 13-22). The first twenty-two chapters are available on IFC's website and VEVO.

[79] Michael Bell-Smith, Interview by Ghia Godfree, New York, February 11, 2011.

[80] Ibid.

[81] These are a sampling of the earth-shattering revelations R. Kelly unveils throughout *Trapped in the Closet*.

[82] Kyle Anderson, "R. Kelly's 'Trapped in the Closet' Premiere: On the Scene," *Entertainment Weekly*, accessed August 25, 2013, http://music-mix.ew.com/2012/11/20/r-kelly-trapped-in-the-closet-premiere/.

[83] R. Kelly, *Trapped in the Closet: Chapters 1-22*, DVD, directed by Jim Swaffield and R. Kelly (Jive and Zomba, 2005 for 1-12 and 2007 for 13-22).

[84] Ibid.

[85] Ibid.

[86] "Meta," The Oxford English Dictionary, accessed on August 8, 2013, http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/us/definition/english/meta. The Oxford English Dictionary defines meta as "referring to itself or to the conventions of its genre; self-referential." The term was popularized by Douglas Hofstadter in his 1979 *Godel, Escher, Bach*.

[87] Michael Bell-Smith, "Interview for Cover Versions," *Artforum International*, No. 7: 204.

[88] Slavko Vorkapich, "The Meaning and Value of Montage" (21 September 1938). "Slavko Vorkapich Articles," Box 1, David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

Conclusion:
"Art Breaks" Meets "Salt Peanuts"

Dream within a dream,
Our dream deferred.
Good morning, daddy!
Ain't you heard?

       The "dream deferred," in the case of montage, is how the form linked with revolution in Russia was appropriated by music video stylistically but, in such a way, that the political urgency evaporated. The original "Art Breaks" on MTV and its 2012 reincarnation is the perfect example of how the Internet levels the relationship between artists engaged in critiquing, parodying, or deconstructing the commercially motivated music video form. Furthermore, it's indicative of how the YouTube generation potentially treats all videos the same, whether they're from a label like RCA starring a salacious pop diva and directed by a famous fashion photographer to coincide with an album release, or a fan wielding iMovie to craft a supercut of Dean and Sam, or a performance/visual artist mashing-up the tradition of European heraldry with hip-hop swagger. Starting in 1985, in an attempt to continue to attract a youth demographic, MTV commissioned a collection of short clips for a series called "Art Breaks" by a vanguard of New York's downtown artists including Jean-Michel Basquiat, Doug Aitken, Keith Haring, Richard Prince, and Dara Birnbaum. Played in between music videos, the "Art Breaks" clips were announced by a graphic with MTV's logo, an "Art Breaks" logo, and the name of the artist responsible for the clip. Josh Kun's poetic chapter "Basquiat's Ear, Rashaan's Eye" from *Audiotopia* provides a lyrical lens for imagining different ways to combine thoughts about sound and image. Undoing the dichotomy of eye vs. ear, Kun focuses on the painter Jean-Michel Basquiat and the musician Rashaan Roland Kirk as "ideal figures for beginning to approach American race and racial difference as sonic constructions as much as visual ones, two of the great keepers of the keys that unlock the audio archive of race."[1] Treating the artistic practices of Basquiat and Kirk as acts of resistance, Kun demonstrates that popular music is one of the most "valuable sites for witnessing the performance of racial and ethnic difference against the grain of national citizenships that work to silence and erase those differences."[2] Throughout his discussion of Basquiat's and Kirk's life and work, Kun discusses the way in which visuality is privileged within critical theory. By resisting the privileging of eye over ear, Kun is able to show how this hierarchy "limits knowledge formation to visual vocabularies of interpretation and meaning and

marginalizes sound and music in the study of race and nation-formation."[3] Kun's ability to link Basquiat's art and Kirk's music inspires a new conception of the way scholarship can move beyond the theoretical deadlock between the emphases on either the visuals or the music.

Bridging the gap between the aural and the visual, Basquiat constructed a thirty-second art video for MTV.[4] Basquiat's video calls attention not only to his artistic process but to the constructed nature of film as well. Shots of Basquiat working a canvas are interspersed with the canvas itself and quick jumpcuts of a cadre of friends goofing off. A shot of a man playing a guitar accompanies the discordant sound of a guitar. At multiple points, hand-drawn neon squiggles and shapes are superimposed over the video. Some of the neon drawings are familiar elements of Basquiat's iconography. For example, a line of animated crocodile heads snap their way to posterity as they travel from right to left in the lower third of the frame while Basquiat jokes with a friend in the background. The previous year, in 1984, Basquiat had incorporated the crocodile head motif in a piece made with Andy Warhol, *Crocodile*. The last shot of the video is a close-up of the smiling Basquiat next to a boat and crocodile head accompanying the words "AFRO" and "CROCODILE" seemingly scratched onto the surface of the video in neon green. Basquiat's use of the word "crocodile" recalls Langston Hughes' repetition of the word in his poetic critique of Hollywood's treatment of African-Americans, "Movies." Like Hughes, Basquiat drew on the legacy of bebop in his art, embodying bebop and its musicians in pieces such as *Syncopation*, *Horn Players*, and *Discography*. In *Audiotopia*, Kun writes about what drew Basquiat to bebop: "The way it used repetition, reproduction, and improvisation to transform, or 'artistically other,' the shape and meaning of somebody else's originals, and to do so in the name of black protest against the restrictive social structures of American racism."[5] Three years after Basquiat's "Art Break" clip aired on MTV, Fab 5 Freddy would remix the Langston Hughes poem "Genius Child" at Basquiat's funeral to read "Free him and let his soul run wild."[6] As the first host of *Yo! MTV Raps*, Fab 5 Freddy serves as a symbolic bridge between Basquiat and R. Kelly.

Basquiat's "Art Breaks" clip is startling in its expressiveness and the fact that it was embraced by MTV around the same time the corporation abandoned its haphazard beginnings and solidified itself as an industry player. Twenty-seven years later, the revival of "Art Breaks" in the spring of 2012 featured work that eschews the slick commercialism of pop acts pushed by the mainstream recording industry. Instead, the new crop of art videos commissioned by MTV,

MoMA PS1, and Creative Time recall past sonic and visual experiments. Creative Time curator and director of consulting, Meredith Johnson, believes "People understand MTV is a venue for contemporary culture. The fact that MTV is commissioning and screening new works of art means that they consider visual art as integral to that role. Projects like 'Art Breaks' begin to break down the often perceived barriers that contemporary art is only something you experience in a sacred white cube."[7] Each uses rhythmic movement creatively in quick sequences expressing a theme, a mood, or a mini-narrative. The idiosyncratic SSION piece "PSY-CHIC" brings to mind Laurie Anderson's *O Superman (*as fed through a Flash animation by someone hopped on pixy sticks and Mt. Dew) with its white orb and distorted vocals. The Mickalene Thomas video "ReVay" recalls Cindy Sherman's conceptual portraits and Thomas elicits a seventies aesthetic by shooting in Super 8, using an orange color palette, and donning a white-blonde afro. Rashaad Newsome's "SWAG The Mixtape Vol. 2" contains a visual nod to Basquiat in the form of a black crown. Reminiscent of the painter's repeated crown motif, Newsome tweaks the image by crafting it out of a New Era baseball cap. The updated urban crown is placed atop a blinged-out fish collaged together from diamond rings, black diamonds, gold chains, and human hair, arms, with a grille-encrusted mouth urgently rapping, "I know you feel that power, You don't know my plight." Newsome's clip harnesses hip-hop's adoption of traditional status symbols and its contradictory desire to remake/redefine those symbols.

As opposed to the 1985 version of "Art Breaks," which flew by as a series of fills between mainstream music videos, the most recent incarnation of "Art Breaks" is available in various places. The series airs globally on MTV, the clips are accessible on demand at MTV.com, MTV's Facebook page, and a dedicated Tumblr page. Within the MTV website, "Art Breaks" exists as a curated program. Once you click on any of the art videos, the website will continue to upload a new video in a preordained order. However, on the interactive "Art Breaks" Tumblr page, the viewer acts as curator choosing which videos to watch and in what order. Pertinent to the contemporary "Art Breaks" series is artist Michael Bell-Smith's ruminations on the leveling that takes place when videos are accessible online. Bell writes, "Many of the strategies artists have traditionally employed in the critique of culture — amateurism, appropriation, and humor — have become the customary language of YouTube and Internet culture. While the democratization of these techniques also seems utopian, with their spread comes their adoption by the very culture they were initially employed to critique, which brings their efficacy into

question."[8] In response, artists are forced to negotiate the contemporary media landscape in three ways. They can engage directly with new relations between art, technology, and the user, they can place work online allowing it to become a part of Internet culture, and they can distance their work from the digital landscape through installation and performance. Bell-Smith and Rashaad Newsome are two artists, who have opted to do all three.

One of the consequences of the success of music video, its subsequent propagation of a montage aesthetic on television, and the eventual leveling of all music video clips online has been the rise of ornate cable television credit sequences. In contrast to the compression of time and space within the montages of the Classical Period, the quality cable sequences distill the show's themes into deeply layered sequences, which convey a mood or atmosphere. While *Miami Vice* signaled montage's move from cable to broadcast, recent credit sequences demonstrate the form's migration back to cable. The opening credit sequence for *True Blood* on HBO distills the key themes of the show into contradictory images evoking blood, life, death, religion, immortality, desire, sex, bigotry and decay. Permeating the entire sequence are shots that evoke the United States Deep South including an underwater shot of a catfish, a Baptist church service, black-and-white footage from sit-ins during the Civil Rights Movement, a child in the Klu Klux Klan "glory suit," and a stereotypical redneck bar. The viewer watching carefully will catch a glimpse of a church's sign at night proclaiming "God Hates Fangs," which is the only clue that *True Blood* is a vampire show. A subtle visual connection between a rattlesnake striking and two boys with their mouths stained with berries refers to showrunner Alan Ball's treatment of vampire mythology, which treats vampire fangs like retractable snake fangs. Set to country musician Jace Everett's "Bad Things," the credits crescendo with time-lapse footage of a fox decaying interspersed with quick flashes of entwined limbs, and a black congregation "catching the holy spirit." A very different tone suffuses the credit sequence for *Homeland,* Showtime's spy drama. Dissonant trumpets simultaneously allude to Carrie Mathison's (Claire Danes) fragile mental state and the perversion of Nicholas Brody (Damian Lewis), marine turned sympathetic terrorist.

These cable shows are distinguishing themselves as "quality television" by offering a montage credit sequence at the beginning of their shows. The montage sets cable apart from the shows on broadcast networks, which have almost completely done away with credit sequences. Instead they "hot switch" or "cold roll" from one program to the next to keep viewers tuned to

their channel. For the broadcast networks, rather than waste valuable airtime eligible to be sold, the focus is on content and commercials only. Within broadcast shows, montage is subsumed into the very structure of most fictional programs. During an interview with television writer Micah Shraft about his use of montage on broadcast television, he asked, "When is TV not a montage?" and described how the classic episodic structure of television, with its teaser and four act breaks for commercials, makes it feel like he is always writing montages. Montage is employed to create the cliffhangers episodic television demands in order to cut to a commercial break and leave the audience wondering what will happen next. The commercial demands of advertising-supported television necessitate crafting a flurry of activity right before the commercial break taking the viewer out on a cliffhanger to ensure they return. In ensemble pieces especially, the scenes are shorter as there are more characters to follow. This leads to a tendency to write a montage in the episode's last act, which "checks-in" with all the main characters. This "summation montage" establishes for the viewer what's at stake in each character's storyline.

One of the most compelling cable credit sequences is for *Dexter* on Showtime. The show recalls *Miami Vice* in its treatment of the city as a pastel-infused character rife with sin. In season three, the show even cast Jimmy Smits creating a direct link to *Miami Vice*. *Dexter*, however, is *Miami Vice* for a postmillennial quality cable audience. The show revolves around a complicated anti-hero, Dexter Morgan, who is a blood splatter analyst with the Miami Police Department by day and by night, turns the city into his own personal Grand Guignol. The graphic violence of Dexter, the serial killer who hunts and kills serial killers is established in the opening credit sequence. Microscopic shots of Dexter killing a mosquito on his arm, shaving, and cooking breakfast elevate the mundane to the grotesque. Each shot is presented out of context to suggest a visual double entendre. A meal of ham and eggs evokes the slicing of human flesh and the splatter of blood. Throughout the sequence, the music is visualized in clever ways. When Dexter cuts himself shaving, bells accompany drops of blood hitting a sink and as blood seeps into Kleenex, the sound radiates outwards. The cable sequences not only distinguish cable's product as different from broadcast but they act as advertisements for the programs online in many of the same spaces inhabited by music video.

Writing in 1972 about television commercials, Slavko Vorkapich criticized the way they work "from outside in: that is, borrowing (usually from New Wave and 'avant-garde' cinema)

techniques which may have been suitable to the original subjects, and forcing the same techniques, photographic or editorial, upon themes where they do not belong."[9] Specifically, he was aware of advertising's potential for depicting motion but bothered by quick, choppy editing and use of the hand-held camera when the cameraman is not revealed as witness to the event. Encapsulated in this critique is the tension embodied within postmodernism and the empty borrowing of aesthetics, which defined the time. For Vorkapich, "expressive form must arise from inside the subject matter."[10] Vorkapich believed film should affect the viewer viscerally and commercial filmmakers pursuing speed, brevity, and maximum effect adopted his techniques. What would Vorkapich think of a recent Nissan ad? It's the antecedent of the opening sequence of *The Last Laugh* on cocaine. Rather than the revolving doors of the hotel lobby, the camera takes the viewer on a visual ride through the open trunk, the Nissan interior, and finally the front windshield of several Nissans in various locales. The car is the focal point in each idyllic yet visually stimulating setting from stadium revelry to wilderness barbeque to wind surfing at the beach. Vorkapich would probably have called it a "cacophony of motions."

Montage can condense familiar story action in original and inventive ways or present a cacophony of motions in stylistically exciting ways. The deep layering possible in montage inspires active viewership. This was the goal of Soviet artists who wanted to perpetuate the ideals of the Russian Revolution in their work. This was also the goal of music television albeit in the service of selling a product. Finally it has also the goal of visual artists committed to critiquing popular culture. Dara Birnbaum saw her "Art Breaks" clip as filling in the gaps created by cable but she always wanted to engage a mass audience. She reminisces, "I didn't want to translate popular imagery from television and film into painting and photography. I wanted to use video on video; I wanted to use television on television… in video we finally had an eminently reproducible medium that could get out into the hands of many." Even as the Internet has flattened the differences between media, it has made clips like *Technology/Transformation: Wonder Woman* accessible. As a culture, we are saturated with visual stimulation and montage is a powerful lens for interpreting and understanding how contemporary visual culture affects us emotionally, psychologically, and aesthetically.

[1] Josh Kun, *Audiotopia: Music, Race, and America* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2005), 115.

[2] Ibid., 11.

[3] Ibid., 117.

[4] Basquiat, Jean-Michel, "Art Breaks" *MTV*, Viacom Corporation, last modified March 30, 2013. http://www.mtv.com/videos/misc/753897/art-breaks-jean-michel-basquiat.jhtml.

[5] Kun, *Audiotopia*, 125.

[6] Kun, *Audiotopia*, 130.

[7] Matthew Kim-Cook, "Art Breaks 2012: MTV, MOMA PS1, and Creative Time in Conversation," *Dirty Magazine*, accessed on October 9, 2013, http://dirty-mag.com/v2/?p=13528.

[8] Michael Bell-Smith, "Interview for Cover Versions," *Artforum International*, No. 7: 204.

[9] Slavko Vorkapich, "A Fresh Look At the Dynamics of Film-Making," *The American Society of Cinematographers* (February 1972). Reprinted in The Motion Picture Division of the UCLA Theatre Arts Department flyer for "The Visual Nature of the Film Medium," Ten Lecture-Seminars by Slavko Vorkapich. Box 1, *Biographical Information*, David Shepard Collection, School of Cinematic Arts, University of Southern California, Los Angeles.

[10] Ibid.

Photo of Langston Hughes in Soviet Central Asia, 1933

Gustav Klutsis, "Maquette for Radio-Announcer," 1922

Gustav Klutsis, Electrification of the Entire Country, 1920

"Under the Banner of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin!" by Gustav Klutsis, 1933
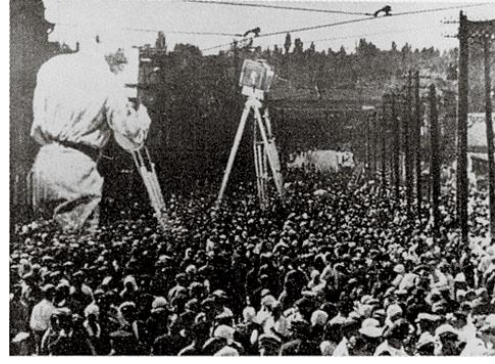
Man With a Movie Camera (Dziga Vertov, 1929)

"Long Live Our Happy Socialist Land! Long Live Our Beloved Leader, the Great Stalin!"
Gustav Klutsis, 1935

Photographs by Slavko Vorkapich, Book Design by Alvin Lustig for
Jewish Holiday Dances by Corinne Chochem, 1948

Paramount Publicity Photo of Slavko Vorkapich, 1931

Lilyan Tashman as Marie in *Girls About Town* (George Cukor, 1931)
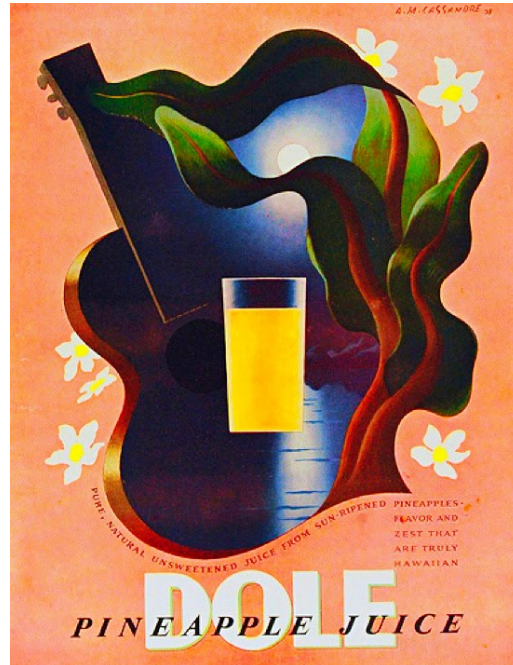
Cassandre, Advertisement for Dole, 1938
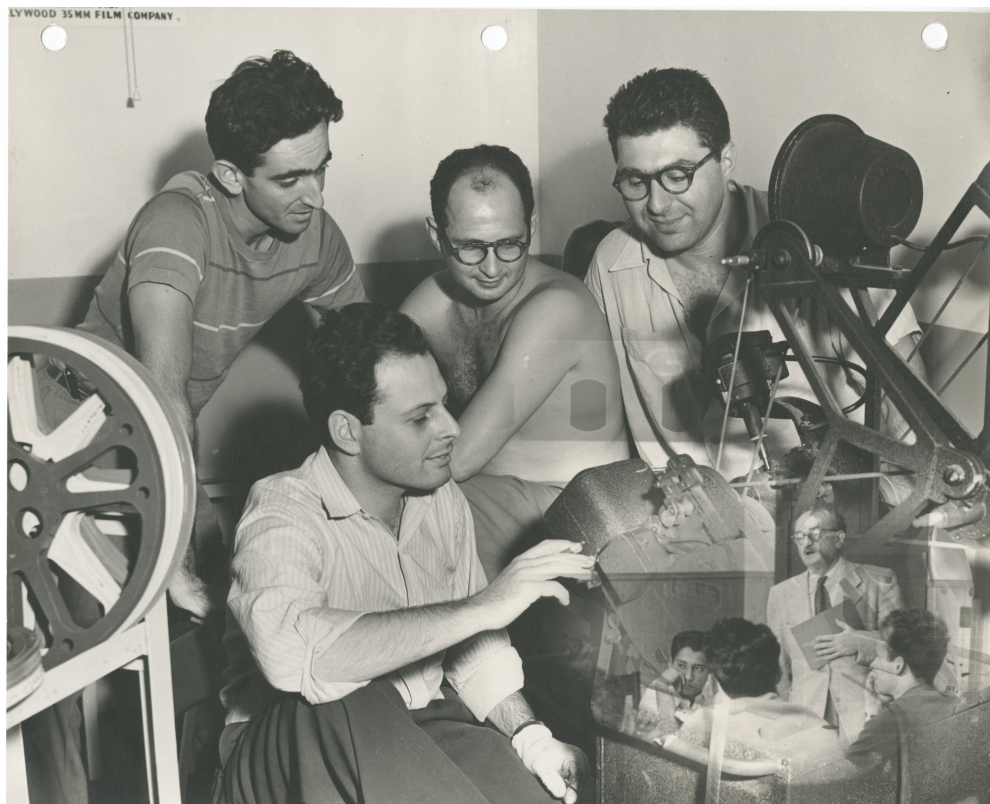
Photomontage for Slavko Vorkapich from former student Louis Clyde Stoumen

Don Siegel, Ping-Pong Champ

Knute Rockne Script, 1940

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Warner Club News Cover Featuring the Montage Department, 1943

Warner Club News Article Featuring the Montage Department, 1943

Michael Nesmith's Stellar *Rio*

Infinite Rider on the Big Dogma

Graphic Effects from Michael Nesmith's *Cruisin*

Michael Nesmith Plays with the Hollywood Sign in *Cruisin*

Jean-Michel Basquiat's Video Scraffiti

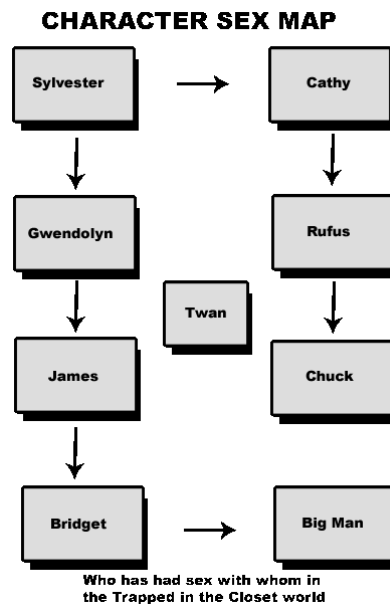Jean-Michel Basquiat's Crocodile Iconography

Layering in Michael Bell-Smith's *Trapped*

Big Man from R. Kelly's *Trapped in the Closet*

One of R. Kelly's personas in *Trapped*

Mapping the Sexual Relationships in *Trapped*

Michael Bell Smith's
N.e.w. Y.o.r.k. / M.i.a.m.i. / L.a.s. V.e.g.a.s.

Rashaad Newsome's "SWAG The Mixtape Vol. 2"

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