

An Essay Towards *Man with a Movie Camera**

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I Introduction

Vertov's career, writings and achievements have already been described in *Screen* by Masha Enzensberger.¹ We shall begin here with a brief reading of Vertov's 1920's writings as constituting proposals for a materialist theory of film. His initial premise, echoed later by Godard-Gorin in *Vent d'Est*, is that the film camera was appropriated by the bourgeoisie for its own ideological purposes:

'The camera was adjusted so as to penetrate more deeply into the visible world, to explore and record visual facts, to prevent forgetting what is happening and what it is therefore necessary to bear in mind. But the camera has had no luck. It was invented when there existed no country where capital did not reign. The bourgeoisie had the diabolical idea of using this new toy to entertain the working masses or, more accurately, to distract workers' attention from their fundamental objective, the struggle against their masters.'²

Such cinema took the form of 'acted cinema', the costumed fictional film which dominated Soviet screens and against which Vertov waged a life-long battle, describing it variously as the new

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10 'opium of the people', as working like a 'mawkish spider's web', like drunkenness, religion or hypnosis 'to stuff such and such ideas, such and such conceptions into the subconscious'.³ Well aware of the precarious political base of proletarian rule in Soviet Russia – 'Our revolution has not yet [1926] had the time or the chance to sweep out . . . the terrible heritage left us by the bourgeois regime'⁴ – Vertov promotes the vital importance of ideological struggle in and through cinema. Hence the terms of his virulent assault on all 'acted cinema' and particularly on such 'cine-Mensheviks' as Eisenstein, whose *Strike* and *Battleship Potemkin* he denounced as 'acted films in documentary trousers'.⁵ And hence his campaign for a 'Leninist film proportion' whereby cinema programming priorities would be reversed so that 45 per cent of the programmes would be documentary 'montages of actualities'.⁶ The basic aim here, as outlined in 1924, was 'to see and to show the world in the name of the world proletarian revolution'.⁷

Under the banner of Kino-Eye – which placed crucial emphasis on the 'dislocation and concentration of visual phenomena' through montage – this programme aimed 'to place at the centre of attention the economic structure of society', 'to open the working masses' eyes to the links (neither of the love story nor the detective story) uniting visual phenomena'; 'to expose to workers the bourgeois structure of the world', 'to show the worker that it is he/she who manufactures everything and that therefore everything belongs to him/her'.⁸ The Kino-Eye therefore disputes the human eye's visual representation of the world and thus engages in a struggle against the ideology of the visible, against the mystification that visual phenomena per se reveal the truth of the world. Of the work of all Soviet 1920s montage theorist-practitioners, Vertov's Kino-Eye 'montage of actualities' most radically develops the anti-realist and anti-psychological potential of montage. And this in the direct service of ideological struggle for the proletariat. Vertov's theory was often elaborated in terms of specific cultural intervention: theory as polemic.⁹ In 1929, the year of Eisenstein's major montage typologies,¹⁰ Vertov notes the danger of publishing such a typology, because of the 'absurdities' arising from its misapplication.¹¹ *Man with a Movie Camera*, released in the same year, is in a sense Vertov's alternative: it is less easily misapplied, and if it offers any model for subsequent films, those films must be as carefully located within their own historical conjuncture and be structured accordingly.

This article proposes a Marxist analysis of a film on the one hand variously written off as incomprehensible, as a meaningless compendium of trick effects or indeed as 'camera hooliganism' in Eisenstein's phrase,¹² or alternatively co-opted as sire of *cinéma-vérité* or of the American avant-garde. The inadequacy of such

purely empirical misreadings and non-readings – to be outlined in Part IV – stresses the need for a Marxist theoretical framework in analysing *Man with a Movie Camera* in particular and, indeed, any film. For only that theoretical appraisal is capable of understanding the ideological basis of cinema through its relationship to the mode of production as located within social formations. This enables theoretical explanation of a film's ideological operations as well as of the ideological determinants of its material conditions of existence. No other framework adequately explains the subjects with which all films – with varying degrees of awareness on the parts of those who produce them – necessarily engage: the ideological determinations of social relations and of cinematic forms, the dialectics of film as a process of construction and historical materialism with its relevance for the class division of social formations. The explicitness of Vertov's engagement with these subjects in his materialist theory of film underlines the signal relevance of a Marxist conceptual apparatus for the analysis of *Man with a Movie Camera*. 11

A starting point for this analysis can be found in the section on The Method of Political Economy in Marx's 1857 'Introduction to the Critique of Political Economy'. This text has been chosen not only for its intrinsic interest but because of its remarkable correspondence with positions assumed by Vertov both in his theoretical writings and (as we shall see) in his film-making practice.

In this text Marx counterposes his own theory and method to that of previous economists. His crucial distinction is between theorisation of a problem – itself a practice of production, a process of transformation – and explanations which fail to provide a foundation for their own abstractions. Marx's method proposes a double movement from concrete to abstract and back into the concrete. In this way, it advances beyond considering its object as a given aggregate or abstract. Instead of merely reflecting phenomenal reality, it deconstructs that reality and reconstructs it through its own conceptualisation. It allows, in other words, for the process of transformation. The explanations of classical economists, on the other hand, are rooted in abstractions having little substantive correspondence with any reality. Such abstractions are meaningless because they deny any understanding of the process by which they themselves have acquired meaning in the first instance. They proceed from an evolutionary model of history and are reified unless located within dialectical and historical materialism: 'Even the most abstract categories . . . are . . . themselves . . . the product of historic relations, and possess their full validity only for and within those relations.'¹³ Marx counterposes to this static model the conception of a complex unity founded in the material forces of history: 'The concrete is concrete because it is a concentration of many determinations, hence a unity of the diverse.'¹⁴ Whereas in untheorised, ideological thinking, this com-

- 12 plexity evaporates to leave only a set of abstract determinations which *appears* to constitute its essence, Marx's postulate proceeds through abstract determinations to reproduce the concrete by way of thought conceptualising the way the object can be thought: 'The method of rising from the abstract to the concrete is only the way in which thought appropriates the concrete, reproducing it as the concrete in the mind.'¹⁵

Thus for *Man with a Movie Camera* this necessitates the exposition and grounding of the film's problematics within the instability and uncertainty of the reigning political economy. (Agriculture will not be considered here because of the film's concentration on the urban rather than the rural.) Adopted by Lenin in 1921 following the ravages of World War, Civil War, blockades and famine, the Soviet Union's NEP (New Economic Policy) was a necessary compromise. The pressing needs for industrial and technological expansion and for full employment and education programmes accentuated the need for State-owned capital. While the State retained control of most heavy industry, it also endorsed projects designed to attract foreign investment capital – unsuccessfully – and internally placed major responsibility for increased production and trade in the hands of private enterprise. Such enterprises easily found ways around the registration etc requirements designed to control them. If they did help consolidate the economy, they soon also expanded into a considerable private sector commanding some 42.5 per cent of internal trade at its peak in 1924-25,¹⁶ at a time when such entrepreneurial concerns should have been eradicated. Private enterprise sought to maximise profit and personal wealth. In turn a consumer market was created which could absorb – indeed demanded – inessential, luxury commodities. This vicious circle of capital fast spawned a new bourgeoisie of NEP people. In the late 1920's, a new bureaucracy with its meritocratic career structure equally contributed to the newly competitive consumer market. The proportion of internal consumer trade in private hands declined during the second half of the 1920's, particularly as a result of increasingly stringent measures against it from 1927 on, 1928-9 marking its last fling. However, the differentials arising from the development of separate labouring and consuming sectors had already been instituted. From 1926 on, plans were being laid for the first Five-Year Plan (1929-34) which effectively, though not officially, displaced NEP and which further complicated the economic situation. There was a fundamental contradiction between the Plan's stated aims – to ensure collectivisation, full employment and a more egalitarian society – and the needs of the capital-intensive industrial programme it sought to implement. The resultant high rate of unemployment was just one of the politically undesirable consequences of this programme.

Confusions and hardships arising from this economic situation were compounded – indeed, complemented – by an increasing poli-

tical repression of which the 1928 Shakhty trial and the banishment of Trotsky were symptomatic. The same repression was also responsible for the censorship of information on this period of Soviet history. This facilitated the glossing over of discrepancies between Party line and political practice, and is, for instance, one reason why Carr chose to stop his monumental *History of Soviet Russia* at 1929. By 1931 the political climate was such that open discussion of dialectical materialism was officially banned. Clearly enough, in such a situation, few could count on the security or permanence of the bases on which their daily lives rested.

There was a concomitant hardening in cultural policy. In literature – debates about which gave the lead for debates about other artistic practices – indirect political pressures led to the hegemony of RAPP (Russian Association of Proletarian Writers) with its promotion of a proletarian realism and to the demise of *Novy Lef*, organ of the politicised Futurists. In film journals open discussion of aesthetic issues disappeared as from 1927. The first-ever All-Union Party Congress on Film Matters, held in 1928, marked a similar narrowing of outlook, charges of ‘formalism’, for instance, being invoked against Vertov for *The Eleventh Year* and against Eisenstein for *October*. In 1928 too, Narkompros (Commissariat of Education) for the first time intervened to review the year’s production schedule and banned 36 per cent of previously authorised scenarios. The film industry had been moving towards centralisation since the establishment of Sovkino’s effective hegemony in 1925. It was fully centralised into Soyuzkino in 1930 under the industrial administrator, Shumyatsky. Censorship denies us access to many of Vertov’s writings of the period. The 1966 Moscow edition of these describes many of his public statements and articles, few of which were published until this edition, as being ‘abridged’, while his diaries contain not a single entry for the years 1928–32 inclusive except for an account of a week abroad.¹⁷ Similarly, Dovzhenko’s notebooks, published at the same time, begin only in 1941,¹⁸ while Eisenstein’s ‘Notes for a Film of *Capital*’ emerged only in 1973.¹⁹

If montage cinema peaked in the late 1920’s with such films as *Man with a Movie Camera*, *October*, *Zvenigora* and *The New Babylon*, this was against the context of official harassment outlined above. In 1965 Kozintsev himself aptly described the period as one in which ‘many things were attempted for the first time, and many things were attempted for the last time’. Eisenstein’s contemporary analysis is more acute: ‘The tragedy of today’s “leftists” [= LEFists?] consists in the fact that the still incomplete analytic process finds itself in a situation in which synthesis is demanded.’²⁰

Throughout the 1920’s montage cinema had in any case been the exception rather than the rule, which was perhaps epitomised by *Aelita*’s romantic extravaganza about converting the Martians

14 to Socialism, culminating in happy inter-planetary marriage. While montage was relatively acceptable to the cinema industry in its anthropocentric, narrative-oriented forms, as in the films of Kuleshov and Pudovkin, film-makers such as Eisenstein and Dovzhenko, exploiting more disjunctive, often non-anthropocentric forms of montage in fictional cinema, encountered greater problems. Vertov had greater difficulties still, since documentary was an area which officialdom deemed necessarily transparent and utilitarian and certainly not susceptible to disjunctive Kino-Eye montage treatment.

Thus Vertov was able to secure only one major project, *A Sixth of the World*, between 1924 and 1927. Sovkino sacked him on January 4, 1927 and ordered him to leave Moscow.²¹ He lost support from *Pravda* at the same time. His last article published there seems to be July 24, 1926, and letters by Editorial Board members of the paper calling for his reinstatement at Sovkino were denied publication. Vertov left for the Ukraine with Svilova, his editor and wife, and Mikhail Kaufman, his cameraman and brother: Kino-Eye's 'Council of Three' since April 3, 1922. Between 1926 and 1928 Vufku (Pan-Ukrainian Committee of Cinema and Photography) were engaged in a blockade of Sovkino-distributed films. The company took over the film which Vertov was to have made for Sovkino to celebrate the tenth anniversary of the Revolution – *The Eleventh Year* – and made it the condition for his making *Man with a Movie Camera*.²² Vertov's account of the prejudices of the Kiev and Kharkov studios of Vufku suggests that he had considerable difficulty gaining their backing for the film.²³ And his letters to Fevral'ski evince great anxiety about its ever being seen. Completed by Vertov by December 1928, the film was released on January 8, 1929. Fevral'ski assures us that *Pravda* both published Vertov's notes on the film – albeit heavily edited – and reviewed the film favourably. However, just in the light of the apparently very restricted exhibition of Vertov's earlier films and of *Three Songs for Lenin*, *Lullaby* and *Three Heroines*, it seems improbable that *Man with a Movie Camera* was seen by many Soviet viewers on its release.²⁴

The dichotomy mentioned above between stated political aims and actual social practices was fundamental through the late 1920s and beyond. The materialist dialectic demands the identification of the ideological determinants of this dichotomy and enables them to be re-integrated into a theoretical synthesis of everyday activities. It exposes the falsity of the dichotomy, and reveals its masking as an ideological operation with repercussions such that the wage-labourer is allowed – indeed, encouraged – to collude in his/her own oppression, hence perpetuating labourer/consumer differentials. Such collusion was fostered by the artistic practices which developed into the idealising, closed fictional models of Soviet socialist realism. Vertov's materialist theory of cinema, grounded in a concept of ideological struggle, countered such mis-

cognitions by arguing for a recognition of the relation of labour to production and the appropriation of the product.²⁵ The essential concomitant of this was Vertov's struggle against the forms of realist fiction as irredeemable vectors of the dominant ideology. *Man with a Movie Camera* accordingly treats in parallel the problematics of cinematic form and of labourer/consumer (rarely identifiable as separate individuals). The film aims to take the spectator from a position of unreflective consumption of cinema to one of actively participating in producing the film's meanings, and from a position of economic exploitation to one of recognising that situation and its means of operation. Such a recognition of the spectator's situation within the social relations of an increasingly capitalist mode of production can be seen as the essential pre-condition of class struggle.

Most markedly from 1927 through the 1930s, the censorship of Vertov's writings deprives us of empirical support for this account of the film's project (the foregoing summary of his theory of cinema draws almost exclusively on material written before 1927-28). The political censorship of the period of *Man with a Movie Camera* would in part explain the film's inexplicitness – indeed, ambiguity – about its project, an ambiguity enabling it to be presented as politically acceptable.

II The Film

Man with a Movie Camera is easiest approached in terms of a widespread 1920s genre, the city documentary, exemplified by Mikhail Kaufman's *Moscow* and by *Rien que les Heures*, *Berlin*, *Rain* and *A Propos de Nice*. The most consistent thread in the film's syntagmatic organisation is that of a Day in the Life of a Soviet City. Coupled with the Film Construction Process, which often cuts across, rather than parallels the Day in the Life structure, this authorises a breakdown of the film into seven sections:

- 1 A Credo, or, in Barthes' analysis of classical rhetoric,²⁶ an Egressio, designed to show off the orator's, or in this case the film's capacities (shots 1-4).*
- 2 Induction: The Audience for the Film (shots 5-67).
- 3 Section One: Waking. This comprises the whole series beginning and ending with the Waking Woman (shots 68-207).
- 4 Section Two: The Day and Work Begin. This concludes with the introduction of the first editing segment (shots 208-341).

* Shot numbers are given to indicate the placing of segments etc within the film. A shot-by-shot breakdown of *Man with a Movie Camera* has yet to be published. The breakdown used here is based on a conflation of the National Film Archive 35 mm print and the 16 mm British distribution prints.

- 16 5 Section Three: The Day's Work (shots 342-955).
 6 Section Four: Work Stops, Leisure Begins (shots 956-1399).
 7 Coda: The Audience for the Film (shots 1400-1716).

However, in accordance with Vertov's Kino-Eye theory, *Man with a Movie Camera*, perhaps more than any other film ever made, refuses any empiricist construction of given phenomenal reality. As Vertov noted in a posthumously published article from 1928: 'This complex experiment brutally contrasts "life as it is" seen by the eye armed with a camera ("Kino-Eye") with "life as it is" seen by the imperfect look of the human eye.'²⁷ Much of dominant cinema is content to concentrate on only the *latter* of these two, to abstract from phenomenal reality and in so doing to assign an assumed coherence to it, that is, to treat the social totality as a given aggregate. Its operation corresponds, therefore, to the untheorised operation of abstraction attacked by Marx in the 1857 Introduction. Beyond this, Marx proposes the further movement from the unexplicated nature of the abstraction, through theoretical conceptualisation of the components of this abstraction, back into concrete reality. Vertov suggests the necessity for a similar double movement: 'The analysis (from the unknown to the known) and the synthesis (from the known to the unknown) were not . . . in contradiction but on the contrary were found to be indissolubly linked to each other.'²⁸ Whereas dominant forms of cinema tend to proffer the construction of a false coherence out of the chaos of phenomenal reality – a descriptive process – *Man with a Movie Camera* engages in a process of synthesis – a theoretical practice of explication. It does so by reconstructing its objects in terms of theory (there are two objects here: more accessible to us now, cinematic forms, and less accessible to us now, the social formation obtaining in Soviet cities in the late 1920's). This is the process of the dialectic mentioned above based on the opposition of Kino-Eye and human eye. The synthesis of this dialectic is the terminate object, the film in the can. In its turn, this object presupposes an addressee, the notionally ideal spectator/reader. The dialectic of discourse based on these two finds its synthesis in the potentiality of an ideal reading situation. Reading thus becomes the final part of the film's process of transformation. In order to make the film intelligible – not in the commonsense terms of a dominant ideology – the reader is forced to read meaning back into the text of the film precisely because of its own theoretical practice. As Vertov proclaims, 'not Kino-Eye for the sake of Kino-Eye, but for the truth',²⁹ truth here being envisaged neither as immanent nor as transcendent, but as something discovered only in *process*. Crucially, this politicises the act of reading. The formal determinant of this is the film's montage 'intervals', the gaps, the discontinuities between the individual shots, its disjunction of its representations of phenomenal reality: 'Everything depends on this or that juxtapositioning of visual

features. Everything lies in the intervals.' Montage is thus conceived as 'the organisation of the visible world' and not 'the collage of separately filmed scenes' and hence as a means of dispersal of meaning through and across the film.³⁰ This de-familiarisation generates a kind of *ostranenie* (making-strange) working through-out the film. More specifically, what is activated here is an invocation of the paradigmatic. This entails theorising the gaps, of an 'inadequate', 'incomplete' series of shots, thus becoming cognisant of the ideologically determined constructions of reality and of our perceptions of it. This work is activated by the multi-dimensional framework of ideas constituting the paradigmatic. The spectator is then able to choose which meanings to confer upon specific combinations of images, whilst recognising that both framework and choice are ideologically informed. This activity differs radically from that engendered by films giving primacy to the syntagmatic, which occludes the choices already made and their ideological determinations. This distinction corresponds closely to Lenin's 1901 distinction, cited by Vertov himself, between the 'popular' and the 'vulgar' writer. Whereas the 'popular writer . . . teaches [the reader] to go forward independently', the 'vulgar writer . . . hands out "ready-made" all the conclusions of a known theory, so that the reader does not even have to chew, but merely to swallow what he is given'.³¹ *Man with a Movie Camera* effects the transformation proposed by Stephen Heath, who adopts Vertov's term, 'intervals': 'The relations of the subject set by film – its vision, its address – would be radically transformed if the intervals of its production were opened in their negativity, if the fictions of the closure of these intervals were discontinued, found in all the contradictions of their activity.'³² The 'intervals' of *Man with a Movie Camera* reintroduce, in Heath's terms, heterogeneity, contradiction and history. Since the processes of signification determine any apprehension of signifieds, the film's theoretical reconstruction of cinematic forms will be examined before its theoretical reconstruction of the contemporary social formation.

IIA The Film's Theoretical Reconstruction of Cinematic Forms

Vertov's publicity for *Man with a Movie Camera*'s première announces the film's primary concern as the theoretical investigation of film language:

'*Man with a Movie Camera*, recording in six reels. Spectators are advised that this film is an *experiment in the cinematic transposition of visible phenomena, without titles, without sets, without studio*. This experimental work aims to create an absolutely

- 18 cinematic language, authentically international, based on a total departure from the languages of theatre and literature.³³

Crucially, this 'theoretical and practical operation on the front of cinematic documentary'³⁴ does *not* expel signified and referent to concentrate exclusively on the material substrate of film.³⁵ *Man with a Movie Camera* confronts the problematics of signification from which the bulk of 'structural' film retreats. This differentiates Vertov's project at the outset from that of the 'structural' film branch of the avant-garde. And as indicated in Part IV, it makes highly suspect any attempt to read back into Vertov the concerns of current avant-garde practices. At the same time, clearly, *Man with a Movie Camera* distinguishes itself even more radically from the dominant cinematic modes, both documentary and fictional, of 'realist representation', with their disavowal of the processes of signification in favour of transparency.

The film's theoretical reconstruction of cinematic form is principally realised in its elaboration of an indeterminate structure with few parallels in the history of cinema. *Cahiers du Cinéma's* remarks about the structure of Vertov's films in general apply with particular aptness to *Man with a Movie Camera*. The film is thought of *not* 'as an expressive totality composed of indiscriminately permutable parts', but, as in Althusser's concept of complex unity:

'as a differential and contradictory structuration such that each shot, without ever having value as a part for the whole, stands as a disaligned [décaté] and provisional representative of all the others, each shot of the film taking on this role of active reflection. . . . Each "view" comprises all the rest, but without totalising them: it is the card in play in an interminable game, the provisional effect of a discontinuous process.'³⁶

The key determinant here is the film's invocation of the paradigmatic. This is most clearly evidenced – many other examples will emerge throughout this article – in the film's editing segments. For editing is the most obviously paradigmatic stage of film-making, the point at which shots are included or discarded (contrast Vertov's stress on the selections determining *every* stage of film-making: 'Every "Kino-Eye" film is in montage from the moment one chooses a subject until the final appearance of the celluloid'³⁷). Even in films ostensibly dealing with making films, it is the part of the overall process which is invariably *omitted* – an act of editing itself, of ideological self-censorship. *Gimme Shelter* stands as one of the few exceptions, though its investigation of the work really involved in editing is cut short by its obsession with film as evidence and by its narrative context celebrating the Rolling Stones. *F for Fake* entraps itself differently: in Welles's self-conscious auteurism. Of paramount importance here is the fact

that such films never posit the question of the editing of the films they themselves constitute. *Man with a Movie Camera*, to the contrary, makes fully explicit through its own practice the paradigmatic nature of editing. The clearest instance is its first editing segment (shots 336-74). This comprises three kinds of image apart from those of Svilova, the actual editor of *Man with a Movie Camera*, herself: filmstrip images, still images filling the screen and moving images filling the screen. In terms of their use or otherwise elsewhere in the film, these images fall into five groups:

- 1 Images on filmstrip or filmstrip and stills which are activated in the editing segment and incorporated later in the film.
- 2 Images from earlier in the film which are frozen to stills and reactivated later.
- 3 Images on filmstrip or stills which may or may not be activated but are incorporated earlier or later.
- 4 Images on filmstrip and/or stills which are merely activated within the segment but not used elsewhere in the film.
- 5 Images on filmstrip or stills which are neither activated within the segment nor appear elsewhere in the film.

The last two categories are the most fascinating. The fourth raises questions – examined more fully later – of what constitutes the film's diegesis; mere activation or incorporation into a defined series of shots? and if the latter, defined by action, continuity or what? And the final category enables the film to include shots which it edits out. This paradox is neither flippant nor inconsequential. For in a vital sense the editing of the film – indeed, of any film – is incomplete within it; it is 'completed' only by the spectator's reading of it. Significant here is the reintroduction of Svilova into the Coda's final crescendo (shots 1580-1669), especially in the segments whose montage complements her eyes with the projector beam in the auditorium. The editor, as it were, oversees the film's presentation of fragments of the phenomenal world to the spectator, while refusing to dictate any reading of these montage fragments.

In such ways, *Man with a Movie Camera* virtually defines the closure of dominant cinematic forms as a disavowal of the paradigmatic. The film reduces the syntagmatic to a minimum: there is little possibility of fantasising about what happened before its beginning or after its ending – only of thinking through the paradigms of its construction. To this end, the film refuses closure and continually dislocates any conventional syntagmatic patterns. Apart from the Man with the Camera, played by Mikhail Kaufman, none of the figures shown in the Waking Section, for instance, is ever seen again in the film. The Coda refuses to gather up any substantial reprise of the film's preceding images. Even in its final segment (shots 1701-15) the film introduces two new objects, the more remarkable being a car driven along railway tracks.

20 Committed to investigating, not relaying ideological constructions, *Man with a Movie Camera* implacably bars the wholesale importation of any such constructions into it. Right from its opening shots – the exact function of its Egressio – it proclaims its own capacity for the production of meaning. This process of meaning-production diffuses ideological constructions so that they can be read as such. Meanings are read from the film not through any simple re-presentation of an anterior reality in the form of a closed history, but through the film's placing of shots within itself. It is in this sense – and no other – that Vertov refers to the film as an 'indissoluble organic whole'.³⁸ One index of this organicism is the film's explicit phasing-in of *énonciation* in the form of transitional shots or segments used as punctuation – or rather, articulations – between segments. Vital in all of these is their refusal of the straight cut, dissolve or whatever device is conventionally used to switch us directly from one segment to the next and thus to spirit away the processes of construction of the film before us. Most notable here are the iris in and out, the static filmstrips on the editing table, the lowering of the camera lens and the introduction of the self-demonstrating camera which separate off the main sections of the film. Shots of the camera filming itself (eg shots 598 and 615, stills 22 and 24) – long before Godard's dream of it – similarly break up segments of the film. The film's internal generation of meaning is again pointed up through the recurrent motif of filming as activation (much as in those parts of *Tout Va Bien*'s factory segment where characters begin to move only as the camera tracks past them): the Egressio activating the whole film, the cinema orchestra poised ready to play in the Induction and activated only when the projector's carbon arcs ignite (shots 50-4), the camera waking the homeless (eg shots 167-74 and 221-2), the fountain in front of the Bolshoi Theatre which spouts only as it begins to be filmed (shot 284), the generation of light only as the Man with the Camera starts to film in the mine (shot 730) and so on. And beyond these instances are the insistent irruptions through the film of the Film Construction Process: the processes of shooting, editing and viewing of the film.

Man with a Movie Camera therefore builds up its own memories in and through itself. This is why, in a critical sense, it is an *eminently forgettable* film. It defines its signifiers only by means of its own syntagmatic – and far more, its paradigmatic – chains. As will be amplified later, these paradigmatic chains frequently rework and redefine the film's signifiers. This operation parallels twinned emphases in Lacan's work: his noting that meaning is fixed only at the last term of a sentence³⁹ and his concomitant use of wordplay and intentional obscurity to indicate an unease even with that fixing of signifiers. The film's radical play with signifiers demonstrates *ad absurdum* the fallibility of trying to impose on it any system of signification which denies heterogeneity

and contradiction. Almost as soon as the film establishes a recognisable 'system' for its ordering of shots, another 'system' undercuts that categorisation. Vertov's 1937 remarks on his editing procedure are pertinent to *Man with a Movie Camera*: 'All the images find themselves in a state of continuous transferment right through to the end of the montage process.'⁴⁰ This ceaseless displacement of one pattern by the next is the film's overriding structural principle (the mechanics of this process are better seen in diachronic rather than in synchronic analysis, as in Part III).

The film's theoretical reconstruction of cinematic forms necessitates the exposure and reworking of dominant cinema's denial of its own processes of transformation, or in other terms, its soldering of *énonciation* onto *énoncé*. The film's reworking of the formal assumptions underlying such cinematic modes can be ranged in a spectrum from absolute rejection (eg of notions of character) to qualified acceptance (eg in the Day in the Life structure). The purpose of the former will be clear from the preceding paragraphs. The latter end of the spectrum principally serves the interests of structural coherence. Without such supports the film would in all probability be totally unwatchable. To include them, obviously, is neither a cop-out nor an instant recipe for recuperation. The current analysis will examine first the film's refusal of the assumptions underlying certain formal components of dominant cinema. Of these, the central assumption is that of diegetic coherence, which the film rejects but which it also radically – in the word's fullest sense – reworks. Three other components the film has no or very little truck with: character and humanist identification, narrative structures and consistent motivation of actions. The second group includes elements used as syntagmatic props – even if in a highly irregular and disrupted manner – most of which serve to focus the film's critique of the contemporary social formation: the Day in the Life structure, thematisation and the use of certain figures as syntagmatic threads. The last group again supplies structural coherence but comprises components of dominant cinema which are inflected so as to focus on signifiers instead of on character or plot, and as such are mostly used consistently throughout the film: climactic rhythm, rhythmic balances, marking and anchor shots. These terms will be explicated in the ensuing analysis of their operations. The reworking they effect provides the foundation for the film's generation of forms of signification very different from those of dominant cinematic modes. Examples will emerge throughout both this part of the article and in Part IIB.

As already implicit, *Man with a Movie Camera* does not simply expel diegesis, as do many 'structural' films. Nor does it sheer off from it into a painterly abstractionism, as does *Berlin* with its whirling circles, spirals and diagonal patterns. Nor, moreover, does it limit itself to the occasional departures from a dominant diegesis

- 22 characterising more politically pointed 1920s city films than *Berlin* such as *Rien que les Heures* and *A Propos de Nice*. *Man with a Movie Camera* on the contrary retains diegetic elements, but reworks them in such a way as to expose their means of functioning as well as to open up forms of signification capable of raising an enormous range of questions both about the conventions of cinematic forms and about the contemporary social formation.

The construction of diegetic space and time is perhaps the principal cinematic means of fixing representations of the phenomenal world as some inviolable reality. It is a construction which coherently organises, but rarely challenges, our ways of seeing the world. In an unpublished note on *Man with a Movie Camera*, Vertov writes: 'The conflict between the space and time of ordinary vision and the space and time of cinematic vision constitute the motor force of the documentary *Man with a Movie Camera*.'⁴¹ As early as 1923, and in contradistinction to the fictionally-oriented homogenisations of Kuleshov's 'creative geography', he asserts space and time in cinema to be purely cinematic constructions: 'I . . . the Kino-Eye . . . have set you down in a most amazing room, which did not exist until now. . . . In this room are twelve walls filmed by me in various parts of the world. . . . The mechanical eye experiments by stretching time, breaking up its motions, or vice versa, absorbing time into itself, swallowing up the years.'⁴² *Man with a Movie Camera*'s 'montage in time and space' constructs such dissociations of 'normal' perception of reality so as to demolish any notion of the film having a single, multiple or even dominant diegesis.

To this end, the film eschews all forms of diegetic spatial organisation used in contemporary documentary films. First, its refusal of intertitles entails a rejection of any verbal 'explanation' and homogenisation of groups of shots, such as the moving water/bobbins montage of *Turksib*. Second, its montage 'intervals' entail its ousting of continuity between shots within any specifically defined scene in favour of its predominant, but still irregularised, principle of alternating montage. Hence also its refusal of such rhythmic/lyrical continuity as is found in *La Tour*, which elegantly matches its movements, or in *Rain*, constructed almost entirely on matches of movement and texture. Further, this involves a refusal of the master shot, the most common means of the spatial fixing of shots within specifically defined scenes. Thus the film includes no more than a dozen master shots, and then invariably for the purpose of subverting 'the 'authority' with which dominant cinematic modes invest them.

What occurs, then, in *Man with a Movie Camera* is a structured intersection of differing forms of spatial construction which reworks and progressively undermines the notion of coherent diegetic space. In this respect the overall process of the film can be

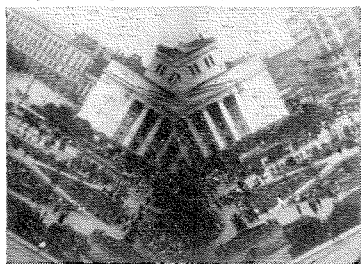
described as a movement from the diegetic coherence of the auditorium of the Induction – a coherence implying a relatively inactive, non-reflexive form of cinematic consumption – through the processes of labour, particularly those of filming and editing, back to a viewing situation in the auditorium of the Coda which is informed by these and promotes far more active reflection on the processes of cinematic construction. Given the film's promotion of the Film Construction Process, it is no accident that most of its very few coherent diegetic spaces, defined here as those including a master shot, expose to us the processes of production of the film before us: filming, editing and viewing. The Film Construction Process, in other words, is the absolute precondition of diegetic coherence or incoherence. The auditorium of the Induction (shots 6-67) even *opens* with a master shot, albeit printed in reverse so that the seat numbers read the wrong way round. The first editing segment (shots 336-74) is also spatially coherent. But even this soon in the film the master shot is much delayed and the segment placed so as to interrupt the Man with the Camera filming the new-bourgeois groups leaving the station.

The process of *Man with a Movie Camera's* undermining of notions of coherent diegetic space is clearly best illustrated by diachronic analysis. This can be seen on a small scale in the analysis of six segments from the film in Part III. For the purposes of the present analysis of the whole film, however, the means of such undermining can be seen at four levels: within shots, between consecutive or dispersed shots, within segments and between segments.

Even within the shots, then, the film often works against any simple *recognition* of objects within the phenomenal world. Four processes can be discerned here. First, many shots of the tram junction by the Moscow Trades Union Building (seen in stills 2 and 11) alternate three-dimensional depth of field with a two-dimensional flatness as trams cross the field of vision and obliterate the view. As Michelson notes, this pulls the spectator back to a constant awareness of the screen's two-dimensionality:⁴³ a concern examined far more thoroughly in, say, the more abstract *Ballet Mécanique*. Second, dissolves are used in one segment to conjure up successively a swimming lesson from a bare yard, a magician from a hedge, swimmers from empty water and carousel horses from behind their tarpaulins (shots 990-3). Split screen and superimposition shots are employed in a variety of ways: to 'collapse' streets and the Bolshoi (shot 1511, still 1), to slice off the tops of trams (eg shot 1440, still 2), or in differing scales so that the Man with the Camera appears like Gulliver in Lilliput or Brobdignag, towering over a miniature city or clambering out of a beer glass (eg shots 1203 and 1206). Lastly here, the film exploits *ostraneniē* on the local level in shots of unrecognisable objects: most spectacularly, the whirling patterns of light on the

- 24 screen in the Coda (shots 1421-3) and the superimposition of spindle-like objects and something resembling a sewing-machine flywheel (shot 1451, still 3).

Man with a Movie Camera exploits *ostranenie* similarly between consecutive or dispersed shots. Such *ostranenie* cuts include that from the junction with a banner advertising the Jubilee Edition of Gorky's works – a shot including a traffic signal which is in no way compositionally highlighted – to an extreme low-angle shot



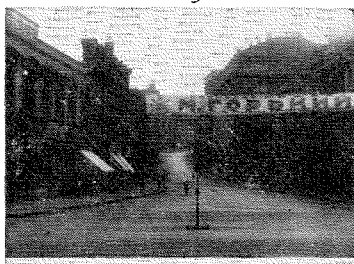
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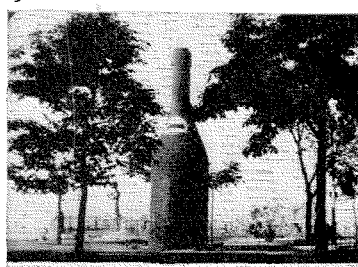
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of the signal, framed obliquely to the general shot so that the signal is silhouetted against the sky (shots 127-8, stills 4-5). Another example is the giant bottle, presumably a bar, which strangely appears and disappears with slightly different reframings of a café terrace (eg shots 76 and 78, stills 6 and 7). Such reframing can operate on a larger scale across the film: the recurrence of the same bannered junction in seemingly different guises through the film, or the reframings of the machine glueing seals onto cigarette packets such that it is barely recognisable as the same machine. A second means by which diegetic spatial coherence is called into question between shots is the 'oscillations' in the Coda whereby a spatially defined audience is seated watching a film – our film, *Man with a Movie Camera* – in which we are sometimes fully involved – their screen is our screen – and from which we are repeatedly pulled back into – again – our film, *Man with a Movie Camera*. Similarly, there is an insistent 'oscillation' between our seeing the Man with the Camera filming the new-bourgeois groups leaving the station and our seeing the groups he is filming (shots 307-30). Third, jokes are based on directional matches between consecutive shots in different diegetic spaces: the ambulance and the fire engines (seemingly) speeding into each other (shots 557-69), the goal-keeper who leaps up (to appear) to be speared by a javelin (shots 1133-4). Jokes are alternatively constructed on visual rhymes: the Waking Woman's early morning blinking paralleled with the opening and closing of Venetian blinds and the alternating blurriness and clarity of her view of some blossom which is intercut with focus-pulls of the camera lens (shots 187-203).

Assumptions of coherent diegetic space and continuous action are broken down in two principal ways within segments. On a modest scale, for instance, the coherence of the netball segment (shots 1115-31), complete with master shot and consistent matches on movement, is undercut by slow-motion shots of the ball being netted. More important, however, are the segments constructed on principles similar to, but subversive of those of Kuleshov's 'creative geography'. According to Kuleshov, successive shots linked by eyeline matches etc can be read as coherent diegetic spaces even if they were actually filmed 1,000 miles and ten years apart. In many of its alternating montage segments between seer and seen – themselves foregrounding the film's central opposition between human eye and camera eye – *Man with a Movie Camera* exposes such Kuleshovian readings for exactly what they are: fictional homogenisations, fabrications assuming continuity across shot/reverse-shot. Thus in the athletics and horse-track segments (shots 1003-41) spectators react at normal shooting speed to participants who are put through a range of slow and normal shooting speeds, as well as being freeze-framed and then set in motion once more. Again, differently, alternating montage interweaves shots

26 of a girl looking out from a spinning carousel with shots of the crowd which she could be read as looking at but for the fact that the crowd is spinning in the same direction as the carousel (shots 1180-7). Some of the film's alternating montage crescendos have a similar effect. In the 'eye-vertigo' segment (shots 457-532), for instance, each of the eye's movements cue the camera movements in the following shot. When the segment climaxes with single-frame editing, persistence of vision enables the spectator to 'see' both seer and seen 'simultaneously': a precursor of *Numéro Deux*'s video fade-ins of full-face shots of both brother and sister as they converse from opposite ends of a table.

Such assumptions – which evidently extend beyond Kuleshov and his contemporaries – are also criticised between segments. The shooting gallery segment (shots 1224-51), for example, has a long delayed master shot whose 'authority' as such is fast undermined by the construction of the following segment on the basis of alternating montage between another woman, shooting in the same gallery, and a crate of beer bottles which she appears to be shooting away (similarly to the comic segment in *Zvenigora* where the Ukrainians shoot blind over their shoulders to topple more and more Poles from the tree in which they have all – somehow – been hiding). Assumptions of diegetic spatial coherence are undercut differently in relation to the segments of the children watching the magician (shots 1080-96) or of the various people watching someone making music with bottles, spoons and washboard (shots 1287-1386), neither of which segments has any master shot. The first recontextualises some of its spectators from filmstrips earlier seen in Svilova's editing room, and the second carries over one woman from its audience into a new alternating montage series based on the same shot of her looking, but looking this time at multiple superimpositions which could be seen only in a cinema.

Enough has already been said to indicate the film's construction of geographically 'impossible' diegetic spaces. Outstanding examples would be the interpolation of stock shots of Moscow into series of shots filmed in Ukrainian locations some 1,000 miles away.⁴⁴ One of the most striking examples is the intercutting of two shots taken from the Bolshoi with two of revolving doors at a hall in the Ukraine advertising – fittingly – a concert (shots 378-81). Another remarkable example is the series of shots interleaved in alternating montage with shots of a car speeding across the screen (shots 934-40, stills 8-11 of shots 934, 936, 938 and 940). The first shows the Man with the Camera filming at a street junction in the Ukraine, the second his camera filming alone at the junction, the third him filming (in different clothes) at the Petrovka Street junction in Moscow and the last him filming at the junction by the Moscow Trades Union Building.

This last example points up how the film makes manifest nonsense of any linear time scale which might be assumed to govern



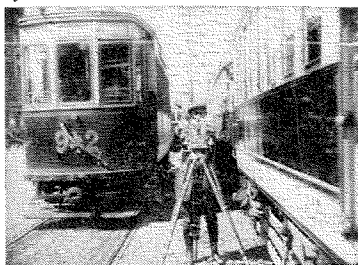
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a film adopting a Day to Night structure (contrast here the clocks reminding us of the time of day in *Berlin*). Since in *Man with a Movie Camera* the film itself, and not any diegesis, governs its contents, the *Man with the Camera* is eminently capable of being 'everywhere', 'simultaneously'. On one occasion he sets up his camera low on the side of a train eleven shots before the shots of the engine wheels presumably filmed from that set-up (shots 302 and 313-7). By the time the engine wheels are seen, he is already filming the new bourgeois groups leaving the station. Linear time scale is subverted within single shots by the use of reverse-motion (Vertov's 'negative of time'⁴⁵): chess and draughts pieces which are swept *onto* their boards (shots 1220 and 1222), street scenes in which people, trams and horses and carts walk and run backwards (shots 1558 and 1672). Overlapping montage serves the same function: consecutive shots from different angles of the same footballer heading the ball (eg shots 1137-9), the train which careers towards the camera for a few frames and then begins its journey again (shots 1588-9). Linear time is again called into

28 question in the duplication in horizontal split screen of a shot of a typing pool so that the two halves are out of sync (shot 1445, still 12).

Character in any psychological sense is clearly inimical to *Man with a Movie Camera's* project. For it would impose on the film a humanist ideology of the individual and cause-effect chains seriously at odds with its theoretical investigation both of cinematic forms and of the contemporary social formation. Neither the Man with the Camera, nor, in her section of the film, the Waking Woman is in any way identified as a character, the Man with the Camera relating to others only through the camera from which he is almost always inseparable. Such a conception of character marks off the film from even, say, *Turksib* and far more from the individualist humanism of the Eskimo, *Nanook of the North*, or from the sundry stories of prostitute, newspaper-seller and sailor which are overlaid on *Rien que les Heures'* impressionistic account of Paris.

For the same reasons, *Man with a Movie Camera* meticulously forestalls any humanist identification with the figures it shows, particularly through its predominant alternating montage. The pain of childbirth is thus diffused first by being intercut with shots of a wedding and of a funeral bier, and subsequently through intercutting with the first and only occasion in the film when the Man with the Camera is seen filming still photographs (shots 426-38).

Quite clearly the film has nothing that could be called a plot. Its refusal of any elements of narrative structure is usefully examined in terms of Barthes' hermeneutic and proairetic codes, which Barthes in *S/Z* notes as founding the irreversibility of the logico-temporal ordering of the classic text. Structured on a system of 'intervals' which demand that the spectator construct the film's meanings, *Man with a Movie Camera* refuses the determinations of the hermeneutic code, that of the posing and resolution of enigmas. For the function of hermeneutics is – the word's original meaning in Biblical exegesis – that of revelation. Hence Barthes' labelling the code the 'Voice of truth'. The film's rejection of character and plot elements clearly entails its rejection of any such question as: Will the prostitute marry the sailor? Equally, the film offers no ready-made answer to questions such as: What can be done to eradicate these social injustices? Nor does its disjunctive montage allow it to generate the kinds of hermeneutic of the signifier variously informing such avant-garde films as *Wavelength*, *Zorns' Lemma* or *N:O:T:H:I:N:G*. A straightforward example of the film's rejection of any hermeneutic is the refusal of any view from the top of the chimney which the Man with the Camera climbs (shots 235-48).

Barthes' proairetic code, detailing the logic of ordinary actions and hence dubbed the 'Voice of empiricism', is obviously anathema to the film. Manifestly, the film has no equivalent to such

character-centred sequences of actions as: Nanook stalks the seal . . . etc. Only exceptionally is a character-centred series of actions rounded off: those of the Waking Woman, and of the Man with the Camera returning across the railway tracks after filming the train (shots 140-59). The vast majority of such sequences are simply suspended, cut off after their first term. Even when disjoined from any human figure such sequences of actions in the film rarely cohere into any proairetic pattern: the items of factory machinery which are first seen still, later set in motion and finally stopped for the day (shots 119-25, 236-57 and 956-64).

Man with a Movie Camera reverses conventional cinematic treatment of motivation. Most cinema does its best to explain in terms of psychological motivation all the actions which it presents within its diegesis, but never its own signifying processes; in its constant return to the Film Construction Process, *Man with a Movie Camera* foregrounds its own processes to the maximum. Conventionally, motivation is diegetic and usually ultimately guaranteed; in *Man with a Movie Camera* even delayed non-diegetic motivation is far from ensured, and largely reserved for the Film Construction Process. A clear example is the shot showing the Man with the Camera getting up from the ground after a number of coal barrows have been trundled over the camera (shots 261-2). Again, the shot of racks of film in the editing room is motivated only thirteen shots later by a reframing showing Svilova looking at them (shots 339 and 352). Far more often, however, the film withholds any such explanations. Occasionally, it plays elaborately on expectations of motivation, as with the shots of the poster for the 'fictional drama' film, *The Awakening of a Woman* (shots 74, 132 and 226). First shown only partially, with only an indecipherable part of its title visible, it is interleaved with shots of the Waking Woman asleep. At its next appearance it is similarly framed, but the writing has been blocked out. The whole poster, with all its text visible, is not shown until the next section of the film, and then revealed in full only as the Man with the Camera passes it.

The film's Day in the Life structure and its use of thematisation and of the Man with the Camera and the Waking Woman all serve as structural props, though in a highly fragmented and disruptive way. This latter notably distinguishes the Day in the Life of a Soviet City – nevertheless the film's major syntagmatic strand – from the Day in the Life structures of other 1920s city films. Thematisation, the organisation of shots by theme, is again highly irregular. Section Two of the film might be described as grouping shots under the headings of the Man with the Camera travelling around the city, trams and buses beginning to move, coal mines fuelling factories, a market opening and so on. Clearly, however, given the film's concern *not* simply to show the phenomenal world, such a breakdown can only be partial and inadequate. It overlooks the complex interaction, through overlaps, inserts and intercutting,

30 of the various forms of activity described as well as of the varied meanings which can be read from them. Though in no sense developed as characters, the Man with the Camera and, in her section of the film, the Waking Woman do serve as threads through the film. The Man with the Camera constantly refocusses the Film Construction Process, while the Waking Woman focusses the film's critique of the contemporary social formation, as do the Day in the Life structure and the film's use of thematisation.

The final group of elements also serves the interests of structural coherence. Most are used consistently through the film, but only because they focus on signifiers rather than on character or narrative elements: rhythmic climax and balances, and marking. Anchor shots likewise focus on signifiers, though they find no equivalent in dominant cinematic forms.

Not unlike dominant cinematic forms – whether the tightly-scripted plots of classic Hollywood or direct cinema's 'crisis structure' – *Man with a Movie Camera* does have an overall climactic rhythm. But this cumulative rhythm in the film relates only to signifiers⁴⁶: the increasing complexity of split screen shots and superimpositions especially of the tram junction by Moscow's Trades Union Building (shots 940 and 1440, stills 11 and 2) and the increasing frequency through the film of its montage crescendos, themselves mathematically structured towards their single-frame climaxes: the 'eye-vertigo' segment (shots 457-532), that based on cigarette packeting and switchboard operators (shots 663-91), the 'work crescendo' segment (shots 790-927), the music-making segment (shots 1287-1399) and the final crescendo, almost all of whose shots are speeded up (shots 1509-1715). Significantly, several of these crescendos are built on the two forms of vision the film seeks to counterpose – the human eye and the camera eye – just as many of the film's 'diegetic' spaces mentioned above are structured on alternations between seer and seen.

Within this overall framework of increasing complexity, there are, moreover, rhythmic balances: the film's own equivalent of the calm-before-the-storm patterning of most genres of adventure film. All the film's montage crescendos except that of music-making are prepared for by an accelerating rhythm in the preceding shots, for example the speeded-up and tilted shots anticipating the 'eye-vertigo' segment. Further, there is a rhythmic balance between fast and slow-moving sets of images. Thus the 'eye-vertigo' segment is followed by that showing the ambulance and the fire engines being called out (shots 533-72). There is a similar rhythmic balance between segments largely soldering *énonciation* onto *énoncé* and segments exposing the friction between the two: the relative diegetic coherence of the marriage and divorce segments followed by the interweaving of wedding, death and birth, the last culminating in the shots of the Man with the Camera filming stills (shots 389-433). This is in turn followed

by the complex transitional segment, based particularly on the two Moscow junctions, which introduces the 'eye-vertigo' segment. Lastly, longer shots in the Waking and Leisure Sections of the film correspond to the stillness and relaxation they show, while faster-moving shots occur largely in the Work Section and Coda.

Man with a Movie Camera adopts a form of marking, which is, however, invariably non-anthropocentric, for instance the reintroduction of the dappled horse only two shots before it is freeze-framed (shots 328-330) and of the camera over the street preparatory to its being zip-panned through 180° for a specific metaphorical reading between the marriage and the divorce segments (shots 388-92 and 400). Vital qualifications here are that such marking is never guaranteed and is far more often withheld than offered. There is, however, one form of marking which is used consistently throughout the film: marking preparatory to transitions to a new segment or part of a segment. At the level of minutiae, this can take the form of the lengthening or shortening of a shot by a single frame in a montage crescendo where only such a level of variation is possible: equivalent in fact to Eisenstein's 'metric montage'. On a larger scale, it usually entails the disruption of an established pattern of shots by unexpected shots, such as those of the high-jumper interpolated towards the end of the motorbike/carousel segment (shots 1188-99). Unlike the interpenetrating montage fragments of *October*, these transition markers rarely specify the content of the subsequent segment, Vertov's film focussing on signifiers rather than on any diegesis.

Finally, *Man with a Movie Camera* gives structural coherence to its material by the use of anchor shots. The function of these is clearest in some of the film's montage crescendos: the eye in the 'eye-vertigo' segment (shots 457-532) or the Man with the Camera recurring as a constant term through almost all of the 'work crescendo' segment (shots 790-927). Anchor shots are used elsewhere in segments of otherwise seemingly disparate shots: the recurrence of one particular street junction (shots 225, 234 and 249) through a complexly interwoven series of shots including the Man with the Camera climbing the factory chimney, a boilerman stoking, factory machinery set to work, a Moscow boulevard and the poster of *The Awakening of a Woman*.

Man with a Movie Camera's structure, then, is indeterminate but also highly organised. Its promotion of the paradigmatic over the syntagmatic, especially through its refusal of the determinations of diegetic coherence and of character and narrative elements, facilitates what is probably the cinema's most extensive and radical investigation of its own signifying processes.

Also released is an extraordinary range of signifying forms. A clear index of this is the range based on the film's chief montage principle, alternating montage. Metz's taxonomy of the syntagmatic

32 units of the classic narrative film, the 'Grande Syntagmatique',⁴⁷ allows only two forms: the parallel syntagm and the alternating syntagm. Even a provisional inventory of forms of alternating montage in *Man with a Movie Camera* extends far beyond this. Alternating montage can signify simultaneity of actions (Metz's 'alternating syntagm'): the Man with the Camera walking to the Lenin Club/the proprietress of the alcohol store looking at him (shots 1265-70). Very occasionally, it can indicate simultaneity of actions building towards narrative climax (the 'alternating syntagm' again): the speeding ambulance/the injured man (shots 540-7). Conversely, it can make nonsense of assumptions of simultaneity: the Man with the Camera filming train and traps 'simultaneously' (shots 313-20). Recurrently through the film, it serves to contrast significant details: the intercutting of an abacus and a cash register with machine work (shots 632-5), an example to be examined in Part IIB. Another form is parallelism: the film's frequent assimilation of the processes of filming and editing to the labour process in general. Or again, antithesis (Metz's 'parallel syntagm'): the new bourgeoisie being made up, shampooed, shaved etc versus workers constructing walls and washing curtains in a tub (shots 579-93). Lastly, one image series can be used to diffuse involvement with the other: the childbirth/the Man with the Camera filming stills (shots 426-38). These various forms of alternating montage, of course, constantly intersect with relatively continuously ordered segments or shot series, such as those of wedding and divorce (shots 389-417), mining (shots 730-6) or foundry work (shots 741-53).

The film's range of signifying forms can be further illustrated by two specific examples, both adopting alternating montage, both from the Coda and both acting as comments on cinematic forms. The first example is the segment of the self-demonstrating camera which opens the Coda (shots 1400-20). This begins with a shot of the cinema auditorium. Alternating montage then interweaves members of the audience with the camera and tripod which are stop-framed so as to show off their technical range. On this level the segment suggests the limitless capacities of the camera. But camera and tripod are filmed from differing angles as if corresponding to the differing angles of view on a theatrical presentation – no screen is ever seen – and the segment is followed by the whirling patterns of light mentioned above which can be read as 'erasure' and which introduce the film's first series of 'oscillation' shots (shots 1421-3). This emphatic reassertion of the cinema is given added force by a segment intercutting members of the audience with split screen shots, a further assertion of the potential of cinematic forms. Overall, then, the self-demonstration of the camera can be read as a *critique* of a naive, Constructivist/technicist adulation of the camera apparatus. The outstanding example is the series of four shots prefacing the final montage

crescendo (shots 1509-12). The second and fourth of these shots show a speeded-up pendulum oscillating fast back and forth. These can be read as meaning 'imminently'. The first shot uses superimposition in differing scales to show the Man with the Camera towering over a street crammed with tiny people, and gradually panning his camera round towards the camera through which we see him. The third is the celebrated shot (still 1) of the Bolshoi collapsing into itself. Taken together, the four shots can be read as proclaiming the imminent death of 'acted cinema': a pronouncement with grave historical irony given the subsequent course of Soviet cinema.

Two further aspects of the film's invocation of the paradigmatic remain to be examined: recontextualisation and multiple-meaning (polysemia). Recontextualisation is achieved by repeating the same shot in different montage contexts, which confer different meanings upon it. It exemplifies *par excellence* the film's capacity to counter assumptions of fixed meanings for specific signifiers. The film's refusal of any dominant diegesis enables it to exploit recontextualisation far more extensively than, say, the statuary and Napoleon statuette of *October* or the reprises of bicycle wheels and of the eviction in *Kuhle Wampe*. Recontextualisation can thus set up a complex pattern of memories working across the film.

Appropriately, several examples focus on the Film Construction Process. The children which the segment with the magician recontextualises from the first editing segment have already been referred to. The Coda likewise recontextualises shots which have already been shown in various of their previous stages before reaching the screen: the shots of the new-bourgeois groups leaving the station, the freeze-framing of some of them preparatory to the first editing segment and finally the screening of some of them and of continuation shots of them (shots 309-30, 330-71 and 1515-53), or the set-up for the engine wheels of the train leaving the station, shots of the wheels and then the screening of continuation shots from these (shots 302, 313-7 and 1459-60). Other examples include the differing uses of vertically split screen shots whose two halves show streets tilted up towards each other, the camera moving forward through both halves (shots 301 and 414). First used as a transitional shot, on the second occasion this is inserted into the divorce segment where it assumes the specific metaphorical meaning of 'split paths in life'. Another example is based on the shot of a man showing a javelin left to right across the screen. This is first used as a critique of ballet, the javelin about to spear across a cut, the head of a dancer vainly bouncing up and down on the spot (shots 1313-4). When repeated, the shots form the basis of the joke of the goal-keeper about to save a . . . goal (shots 1333-4).

Polysemia is a crucial aspect of the film's project of not fixing signifiers, and clearly neither limited to recontextualisation nor

- 34 simply a function of the film's necessary ambiguity mentioned in Part I. One instance is the shots of the train intercut with the shots of the Waking Woman (shots 150-6). As she wakes, camera pans and tilts send the fast-passing train into vertiginous swirls. The intercutting here might be read in various ways: on a literalist level, the woman being woken by the passing train, or possibly waking from a nightmare, or more probably the disorientation of waking up. The subsequent intercutting – shots of the Waking Woman getting out of bed and a speeded-up shot of railway tracks filmed from a downward-angled camera mounted on the front of a train – could be construed variously as indicating the bewilderment of adjustment to waking life, the urgency of getting up or the restrictions which waking (and working?) life impose on the individual, particularly the blinkered life of someone of her class position (this will be picked up later). The film's open-ended structure neither dictates a single reading nor proposes indiscriminate choices within a range of possible readings, but rather directs the spectator towards readings promoting ideological awareness.

IIB The Film's Theoretical Reconstruction of the Contemporary Social Formation

Man with a Movie Camera itself gives four indicators of its concern with the Soviet social formation as related to urban and industrial development in the late 1920s. First, there is its marked geographical pluralism, different parts of the film having been shot in – at least – Moscow, Odessa and Kiev. The film's refusal to define its locale as that of any specific Soviet city supports the idea of a generalised reading: not so much a city film, more the analysis of a way of life. Second, the film eschews aerial shots. This absence would be extraordinary in a film both made in the period of the development of aerial photography and so seemingly concerned with exploring the possibilities of the camera etc – the shots of the *Man with the Camera* with a photogun à la Marey intercut with shots of biplanes (shots 1435-9) may be an oblique comment on this – were there not more important considerations: first, the creation of a composite Soviet city, and second, the commitment to avoid reducing this object of analysis to a given aggregate susceptible of instant untheorised comprehension like the concept of population elaborated by the classical political economists whom Marx attacks in the 1857 Introduction.⁴⁸ Third, the focus on urban rather than rural is marked by the fact that only one shot in the film shows any countryside, and then in no detail (shot 298). Lastly, a multitude of references – to NEP, to industrialisation etc – place the film's analysis as contemporary.

It should be noted initially that the film shows labour in none of the three ways familiar in capitalist societies. It is never seen as a drudge, as in, say, *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning* (both novel and film), in Vidor's *The Crowd* or, for that matter, in the later novels of Dickens. Nor is labour presented in terms of individual creativity, as in the harking back of Morris – reputedly the first Briton to read *Capital* – to eighteenth-century village industry, a myth perpetuated in such films as Flaherty's 1931 *Industrial Britain*. Nor, finally, is labour mystified as ennobling, as in many other Grierson-produced documentaries. In marked contrast, *Man with a Movie Camera* shows labour as a process of transformation: from cotton bobbins being reeled to sewing, from the folding of cigarette packets through the packeting of cigarettes into them to seals being glued onto the packets. And the interconnectedness of different kinds of work is also stressed: mines and dams powering factories. The film concentrates on the process of work itself, not on the individuals performing it. The only individual worker singled out – to any extent is the woman who folds cigarette packets. The montage's recurrent assimilation of the filming and editing processes to other forms of labour stands as a clear counterblast to the aesthetic position of a Lukács, conceiving art as a privileged terrain somehow standing outside the relations of production. As Svilova diligently works on editing, the Man with the Camera ceaselessly scurries about during the working day looking for set-ups, capering over bridges, having to retire before the scorching sparks of a foundry, chasing after fire engines and ambulance, and so on.

The theoretical reconstruction of cinematic forms analysed above serves specifically to deny the possibility of unquestioning, ideologically determined acceptance of the contemporary social formation presented in the film. Again, the key determinant here is the primacy of the paradigmatic over the syntagmatic. The extraordinary range of signifying forms thus released – especially of montage combination between both consecutive and widely dispersed shots – is invaluable for the film's theoretical reconstruction of the contemporary social formation. Here too, the paradigmatic is essential, for postulating alternatives to the forms of the existing order.

In his 'scenario' for *Man with a Movie Camera*, Vertov himself outlines the terms of this aspect of the film's work, stressing the importance of 'the struggle of the old with the new . . . of the Revolution with the counter-revolution . . . of the co-operative with the exploiting individual, of the club with the bar, of physical culture with depravity' as essential features of 'the struggle against the lack of confidence in the building of socialism in the USSR. The camera witnesses the huge battle between the world of capitalists, speculators, factory-owners and bankers and the world of workers, peasants and colonial slaves.'⁴⁹

36 This sets up a paradigmatic framework capable of exposing the contradictions inherent in the contemporary social formation. This framework allows for choices and substitutions to be made between abstractions derived from the forms of social relations engendered by an increasingly capitalist mode of production. The film focusses on the major contradiction here: that between labour and capital. The critique of the contemporary social formation is developed through a set of oppositions which counterpose lack/excess, productivity/non-productivity, health/depravity and education/mystification. Through the continual juxtaposition of the social practices equated with class divisions, the film points up the incongruities and mystifications involved in these practices. Whereas its satire on NEP and on alcoholism is congruent with the Party line, the film's critique of existing relations of production transgresses this line in its references to contradictions which those stated policies elide.

A touchstone throughout this critique is Vertov's polemic for a Kino-Eye montage of actualities as against 'acted cinema' and related artistic practices designed for bourgeois consumption such as theatre and ballet. This is a crucial aspect of the ideological struggle entailed in the education/mystification opposition. Thus shots of the Bolshoi function as a kind of banner introducing both the film's segments showing NEP-type consumer goods (shots 94 and 284), while the death-knell of the Bolshoi described above is carried through to the film's very last reprise of the new bourgeois groups leaving the station. Vertov's bracketing together of 'acted cinema' and the new bourgeoisie extends to the juxtaposition of the Induction and the Waking Section. The relatively inactive cinematic consumption implied by the diegetic coherence of the first is thus paralleled with the consumer ethic exemplified in the second by the Waking Woman and the segments of luxury goods intended for NEP people. The Waking Woman's occupation is never made clear, but her class position is defined not only by her room(s) and her wearing styled lingerie (hence the montage's stress on her bra and slip), but also by the intercutting of her sleeping figure with the first shot of the poster for the 'fictional drama' film, *The Awakening of a Woman*, and with Perov's realist painting, *The Fishermen* (shots 74 and 72). It is in this class context that the railway track shot mentioned earlier takes on the signification of a 'blinkered path in life'. Likewise, the rhyming of the Waking Woman's morning blinking with the opening and closing Venetian blinds – coupled with her non-appearance thereafter in the film – hints at some fundamental incompatibility between her lifestyle and that of many outside the parameters set up by her room(s).

The critique of the contemporary social formation is prefaced by an exposition of the social inequalities proceeding from it. Only a few shots into Section One of the film, shots of two homeless

people, a man and a boy in tatters, are interleaved with a litter bin inscribed with the words 'Please Put Your Litter Here' (shots 79-82). The transferral of the sleep motif in alternating montage from the Waking Woman asleep in comfortable bed to these homeless people contrasts the two classes. Her silky stockings contrast with the functional woollen stockings of a homeless woman sleeping on a bench who appears to be woken by the camera, the distinction underlined by the camera focussing on her legs (shots 218-22).

All four sets of oppositions mentioned above inform the film's satire on NEP. The inclusion of alternative possibilities makes this satire more constructively critical than that of, say, Ilf and Petrov's novels, which barely attain even a moralistic distance from their object, and on the face of it, more politically optimistic than Mayakovsky's *The Bedbug*, which is overtly sceptical about the new order.

The fundamental opposition of productivity/non-productivity emerges most sharply in The Day's Work Section of the film. The non-productive new-bourgeois groups leaving the station at the end of The Day and Work Begins Section can find no place in The Day's Work Section beyond three shots showing them disappearing for the day into friends' homes (shots 373, 375 and 377). Significantly, it is the editing segment bridging these two sections which freezes their postures of supercilious indifference and phases them out of the film. The only other appearance of the new bourgeoisie in The Day's Work Section places them unequivocally in the context of being serviced by others: the hairwashing, shaving, manicuring etc set against the workers constructing walls, washing curtains etc (shots 576-603).

The film sets up a manifest contrast – partly through the use of concealed or visible camera – between the apparent vanity and self-consciousness of the new bourgeoisie and the 'natural' response of the proletariat before the camera, notably the post-Revolutionary orphan who scratches his armpit on being awoken, seemingly, by being filmed (shots 167-74). The same vanity marks the 'weightwatchers' (shots 1069-72 and 1097-1114). The second of these segments immediately follows that of the *magician*. Counterposing the excess consumption of the 'weightwatchers' is the physical culture which was promoted at the time and which is used to satirise it. The 'weightwatchers' are intercut, for instance, with shotputters whose aim seems, across the cuts, to be directed at the formers' heads. Ballerinas and dancers are assimilated into this critique as with the javelin 'directed' at the dancer vainly bouncing up and down. A woman with an expression of virtuous self-indulgence is seen unaccountably jogging up and down – before a shot reveals her foot in the stirrup of a horse simulator.

The excess satirised here finds its corollary in the inessential consumer goods spawned by NEP and designed for the new bour-

38 geosie: wigs and rings, a stuffed dog and models of sewing-machine and bicycle, the last advertised as being available on hire-purchase terms (shots 95-109). The reappearance of model sewing-machine and bicycle is prefaced by a pointed historical reference to the necessary compromise of NEP: shots of a shop sign advertising trips on the steamboat *Lenin* and of a demonstration with the banner 'Welcome New Leaders' (shots 282-3). The bicycle is this time being ridden by a mannequin in a futuristic leisure outfit and is contrasted with a postman using his workaday trike-cart on his rounds. And the now-activated model sewing-machine echoes and counterpoints the real sewing-machines used elsewhere in the film by workers for production (eg shots 250 and 618-25). The folly of accepting such social excrescences as well as the capacity of the film's Kino-Eye montage to expose them are pointed up in a sequence of two shots following the model sewing-machine: a shutter raised on a window to reveal a notice for 'Pince-nez' and the elaborate *énonciation* shot involving a mirror swivelled through 150° which en route reflects the Man with the Camera cranking the camera.

Like theatre, luxury consumer goods trade on false impressions. Contrasted with, for instance, the perfunctory hair-combing of the women leaving work (shots 969-70) is the satire's constant return to cosmetics, manicuring etc, an industry whose targets are women (shots 576-97, 600-9 and 694-8). The last of these segments has the sharpest critique of this industry. Women's faces being made up are interwoven with payment at a cash register, the last shot of which is followed by a fleeting six-frame glimpse of a pistol being raised in the direction of the cash register.

Man with a Movie Camera's critique of alcoholism is in line with contemporary campaigns, as witness the 1929 film *For Your Health*. Just as the health/depravity opposition affords the positive base for the film's satire on the 'weightwatchers', so the critique of alcoholism in the Leisure Section is based on the education/mystification opposition, the counterposing of Communist clubs with alcohol drinking, Vertov's 'struggle of the club with the bar'. *Man with a Movie Camera* backs up these terms with its own promotion of Kino-Eye documentary as against 'acted cinema'. The series of segments involved (shots 1202-86) almost dramatises the Man with the Camera as an emblem of the Kino-Eye's ideological function: 'to help . . . the proletariat . . . to see clearly in the living phenomena surrounding us'.⁵⁰ After a pan showing an exotic poster for a film called *Manuela* playing, with bitter irony for Vertov's campaign, at a proletarian cinema, the Kino-Eye's power is emphatically reasserted with the first shot since the *Egressio* using superimposition in different scales, here showing the Man with the Camera towering over the city. But only three shots into the subsequent beer-hall segment he is reduced to having to climb out of a beer glass. At the end of the segment,

vertiginous drunken pans associate alcohol with religion – en route we see a church spire and a shop selling icons and candles – before steadying up in front of the Odessa Railway Workers' Club, where people read and play draughts and chess. The capacity of the film to order its material through editing is reasserted in the next but one segment, showing the woman seemingly shooting away beer bottles. The Man with the Camera is then seen walking away from the alcohol store into a Lenin Club, where workers listen to the radio and play chess and draughts.

The political situation outlined in Part I clearly imposed severe restrictions on any artistic practice seeking to deal with the contemporary social formation. Production conditions made this especially true for cinema. Historical material was evidently safer, as witness the spate of such films in 1928-9, including *October*, *Fall of the Romanov Dynasty* and *The New Babylon*, and indeed, the re-titling of *The General Line* as *The Old and the New*. If satire on NEP and on alcoholism was more than condoned, critiques logically developing from the former into an analysis of the relations of production and of the new bureaucracy were actively discouraged. Hence *Man with a Movie Camera's* relative inexplicitness about this part of its project. One obvious symptom of the pressures against any explicit statement of such a critique is the absence of any clarification of the labour/ownership relations governing the work shown in the film.

This said, some portions of the film's Work Section nevertheless counterpose the productive processes of industry as either labour or capital-intensive. The principal example starts from the seemingly unequivocal celebration of the efficiency of machine-sewing contrasted with the tedium and inefficiency of sewing by hand (shots 618-23 and 610-14) in segments analysed in Part III. But the assurance of this celebration is undercut both by the contemporary situation of the textile industry and by the subsequent segments of the film. As an essential basic consumer industry, the textile industry should ideally have been taken over by the state, but any such attempt was abandoned with the abolition of Glavtextil in 1927. This left it even more susceptible than previously to the production of luxury fabrics and garments for members of the new bourgeoisie such as the Waking Woman or those leaving the station (hence the late 1920's adoption of silk stockings as a cultural emblem of the new bourgeoisie, as in Romanov's *A Pair of Silk Stockings* and Eisenstein's 'Notes for a Film of *Capital*'). This problem was compounded by the 1928 crisis of State overproduction of textile machinery which exacerbated the unemployment situation.

The critique of capital-intensive productive processes arising here is expanded in the film's subsequent five segments (shots 632-98) in terms of the class beneficiaries of mechanisation. Paradigms are set up between manual and mechanised labour, and between the

40 | needs of the proletariat and of the automated, communications-dependent orientations of a modern industrial society. A shot of machine-folded newspapers slithering off the press immediately precedes the segment showing the woman mentioned earlier folding packaging paper around a wooden stump and then throwing the packets over her shoulder for filling with cigarettes. The segment is framed by shots of a machine shunting boxes – themselves apparently machine-made – with the label ‘Password’ and the size of chocolate or cigar boxes. The subsequent montage crescendo is structured on the antithesis: filling cigarette packets/operating a switchboard. There follows a shot of typing and the cosmetics/cash register montage referred to earlier. The congruence between machine-made and new bourgeoisie on the one hand, and between manually made and proletariat on the other extends the critique of capital-intensive development. In the shots of the smiling cigarette packet folder, as of the sewing machinist before, this critique encompasses the illusory contentment offered to the worker by machinery. These five segments have echoes elsewhere through the film: the felt boots of mineworkers which side-step the camera (shot 261), the homeless of the Waking Section who are doubtless unemployed, the bewildered-looking mechanic framed by an array of cogs which seem to overwhelm him (shot 253), the rhyming of water swirling over the brink of a (man-made) dam with printing rollers which it thus appears to be powering (shots 771-2), the compositional highlighting which links two women machine-winding cable with the cable of a traffic signal, controlled by a policeman, in the following shot (shots 630-1). The prefacing of these five segments by shots of an abacus with a nearby notice enjoining us to ‘Keep Silent, Please’ (to what, or whose ends?) and of a cash register – emblems, respectively, of the old and the new – hints at the development of the later 1920’s as a falling away from revolutionary ideals. The critique culminates in the shot of the pistol being raised, across a cut, on the cash register.

Many transitional shots extend this critique to State functionaries. The recurrent transitional shots featuring policemen using signals to direct traffic at road junctions (eg shots 127, 934 and 936, stills 4, 8 and 9) have an obvious enough symbolic value, underscored by such montage series as that meshing a woman (apparently a bureaucrat) speaking on an office phone with a policeman at a crossing signal, the series framed by shots taken from the Bolshoi (shots 381-6). Other transitional shots often show trams at the Petrovka Street and Trades Union Building junctions in Moscow (eg, respectively, shots 938 and 940, stills 10 and 11). Like the junctions with traffic signals these are always filmed with a static camera concentrating on continuous and controlled movement without any visible destination, seemingly condemned to a futile circularity. Other movements in the film reinforce this idea:

the speedway/carousel segment where motion is both circular and circumscribed (shots 1162-99) and the railway track shot mentioned above as being associated with the Waking Woman's class position. Indeed, the film's only(?) two series of actions which are closed both involve rails: the Man with the Camera returning across the railway tracks after filming the train (shots 140-59) and the train arriving at and leaving the station (shots 305-19). Trains speeding nowhere recur as transitional shots in the Coda, where there is also a segment intercutting members of the audience with shots of various forms of road transport moving in almost identical semi-circular arcs (shots 1466-1504).

Through its use of the paradigmatic, then, *Man with a Movie Camera* is able to set up particular referents, moving between them so as to construct a critique based upon a synthesis of the spectator's consciousness and the ideas presented by the film. The film, as stimulus, thus engages in catalysing a dialectical process. By using the above-mentioned sets of oppositions as the base for an (acceptable) satire on NEP and on alcoholism, the film is able to extend this into a more thorough-going critique of the social formation and of the relations of production it engenders. What is therefore achieved in *Man with a Movie Camera* is a realisation of a politicised, self-conscious cinema in accordance with Vertov's materialist theory of film.

III Diachronic Analysis of Shots 576-630

This part of the film follows the segment of ambulance and fire engines, and precedes the segments analysed above as a critique of the existing relations of production. Its relative unity as a group of segments is suggested by its being framed by similar transitional shots of a traffic junction. Its six segments are:

- 1 Worked for/working (shots 576-99, stills 13-23 for shots 589-99).
- 2 Haircutting and manicuring/cutting and splicing film (shots 600-9).
- 3 Sewing by hand (shots 610-14).
- 4 A transitional segment: filming as work (shots 615-7, still 24 for shot 615).
- 5 Sewing by machine (shots 618-23).
- 6 Identifying film rushes/winding by machine (shots 624-30).

The following shot breakdown lists shot number in the film, its length in frames, shot scale and the action shown. All shots are filmed from a static camera position except for the last. Camera angles at no point set up any consistent system; the few significant variations will be detailed as relevant in the analysis.

42 Table

<i>Shot number</i>	<i>Length in frames</i>	<i>Shot scale</i>	<i>Action</i>
<i>Shot number</i>	<i>Length in frames</i>	<i>Shot scale</i>	<i>Action</i>
<i>Segment 1:</i>			
576	46	MCU	A well-groomed woman wearing a white turban sits at a table and looks blankly ahead.
577	57	CU	A woman has mascara put on her right eye-lash.
578	27	MCU	The woman of 576 puts her hand to her forehead, then smiles awkwardly as if (?) surprised by the camera.
579	42	CU	The woman of 577 smiles as her right eyebrow is made up.
580	169	MCU	A woman wearing coarse working clothes bends down out of frame, scoops up handfuls of mud-like substance and throws them onto a substructure (possibly wall-building).
581	41	CU	The woman of 577 smiles as her left eyebrow is made up and her right eyebrow retouched.
582	92	MCU	The woman of 580 looks at the camera whilst still working and then looks back towards the substructure.
583	40	CU	The woman of 577 has surplus eyebrow make-up wiped off with cotton wool.
584	73	MCU	The woman of 580 smiles for a long time at the camera then turns back towards the substructure and recommences work.
585	38	CU	A woman has her hair shampooed.
586	81	MCU	The hands of a woman plunge lace curtains in and out of a wash-tub.
587	81	CU	The woman of 585 continues to have her hair shampooed, smiling and nodding in conversation.
588	80	MCU	The hands of 586 continue to wash the curtains.
589	77	CU	The woman of 585 has her hair rinsed.
(Still 13)			
590	78	MCU	The hands of 586 now wring the curtains.
(Still 14)			
591	55	CU	A man with a chin beard and moustache has his right cheek lathered for a shave.
(Still 15)			
592	54	CU	A hand strops a razor.
(Still 16)			
593	83	CU	The man of 591 has his right cheek shaved.
(Still 17)			
594	76	CU	Hands hone an axe on a grindstone.
(Still 18)			
595	80	CU	The woman of 585 has her hair blow-dried and smiles, hairdresser wearing a bow-tie is now visible behind her.
(Still 19)			



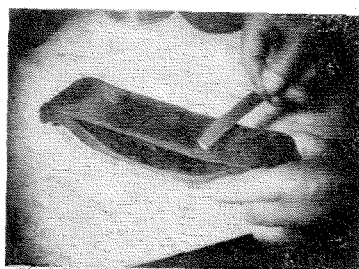
13



14



15



16



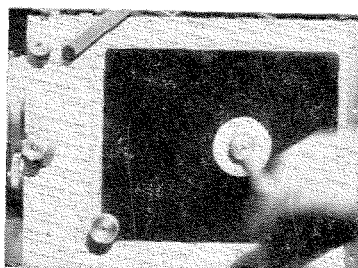
17



18



19



20

596 30 CU

(Still 20)

597 83 CU

(Still 21)

598 106 CU

(Still 22)

599 107 CU

(Still 23)

A hand cranks a camera.

The woman of 585 continues to have her hair blow-dried.

A camera, being cranked by the Man with the Camera, films itself in a mirror headed 'Specialist Shoeshiner from Paris'.

A shoeshiner's hands brush a man's shoe (speeded-up motion).



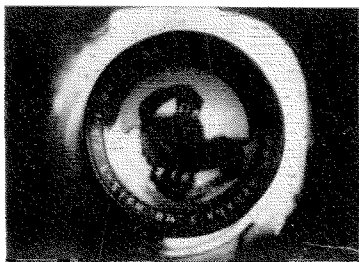
21



22



23



24

Segment 2:

600	67	CU	Hands comb and cut hair of head seen from behind.
601	51	MCU	The head of 600 is revealed to be that of a woman. In addition to the hands of the hairdresser, a smiling manicurist is now revealed as working on the woman's left hand.
602	51	CU	The woman, seen from behind as in 600, has her hair cut.
603	79	MCU	The manicurist of 601 shapes a finger-nail on the woman's left hand. The hairdresser is no longer visible.
604	76	CU	Hands cut with a sharp knife between frames of a filmstrip held over the light-box of an editing table.
605	55	MCU	The manicurist, shown as in 603, pushes back cuticles of the woman's fingers.
606	38	ECU	The hands of 604 place film in a splicer.
607	25	ECU	A hand from 604 dips a brush into a small bottle of editing cement.
608	42	ECU	The splicer of 606. The brush paints cement onto the edge of the film. The hand clamps down the splicer lever onto the pieces of film.
609	54	MCU	The manicurist, shown as in 603, cuts the woman's finger-nail.

<i>Segment 3:</i>			
610	28	MCU	A glum-faced woman is about to thread a needle.
611	20	CU	The face of the woman of 610.
612	55	MCU	The woman pulls the cotton through the needle and picks up material from her lap.
613	19	CU	Her face looks down.
614	76	MCU	The woman tacks a hem.
<i>Segment 4:</i>			
615	27	ECU	Crab-like hands and arms cranking a camera are reflected in a convex lens, the lens surround itself showing its writing to be reversed.
(Still 24)			
616	6	CU	A hand cranks a camera of the same type as is shown in 596.
617	21	ECU	As 615.
<i>Segment 5:</i>			
618	27	CU	A woman smiles as she works at a sewing-machine.
619	40	CU	Hands set material in place on a sewing-machine.
620	29	CU	Fly-wheel of a sewing machine, steadied by a hand.
621	28	CU	The hands of 619 feed the material through the sewing-machine.
622	39	CU	The woman of 618 smiles as she works at the sewing-machine.
623	47	CU	The hands of 619 continue to feed the material through the sewing-machine.
<i>Segment 6:</i>			
624	55	CU	A filmstrip whizzes over a lightbox and is brought to a halt.
625	84	CU	A woman at a sewing-machine steadies wheel, bends back, bends forward, then steadies wheel again.
626	88	MCU	Svilova, the editor of <i>Man with a Movie Camera</i> , takes a reel of film from one of the racks in front of her and inspects it.
627	43	ECU	The hands of 604, now recognisable as Svilova's, note a number on a slip of paper.
628	109	MCU	A smiling woman wearing a headscarf controls a machine-wound drum of fine-gauge cable.
629	50	MCU	Svilova, seen as in 626 in front of the racks of film, places a slip of paper into a reel of film and leans forwards towards the racks.
630	180	MCU	The camera pans back and forth five times between the woman of 628 and a woman opposite her engaged in the same work, then tilts down to the cable-drum and the belts driving it.

Figure 1

	Shot	576	577	578	579	580	581	582	583	584	585	586	587	588	589	590	591	592	593	594	595	596	597	598	599
Turbanned Woman	46																								
Make-up		51		42		41		40																	
Working Woman						169		92		73															
Shampooing										38		81		77						80				83	
Washing											81		80		78										
Shaving																	55		83						
Razor- Stropping																		54							
Axe-honing																					76				
Cranking Camera																							30		
Camera Filming Itself																									106
Shoeshining																									107

The ensuing analysis aims to illustrate the sequential operation and interaction of features outlined in the foregoing synchronic analysis. It therefore takes account of the interaction of the film's work on cinematic forms with its work on the contemporary social formation. It focusses particularly on the way in which the film's dominant structural principle, the ceaseless displacement of one 'system' by the next, serves the development of conceptual argument. The diagrams heading the discussion of each segment show the patterning of different actions within each. Numbers within the diagrams give shot-length in frames.

Segment 1

(see Figure 1, opposite)

The first segment's alternating montage serves, first, to separate out different diegetic spaces and second, to set up an antithesis between worked for and worker. The first pattern is broken only by the razor of 592, which can be read as belonging to the same diegetic space as the man of 591 and 593. Once established with 579-80, the second is carried through consistently to the end of the segment, the length of 580 serving as an emphatic assertion of the proletariat after four successive shots of the new bourgeoisie. The regularity of this pattern of class-based antithesis set in different diegetic spaces is reinforced by the allocation of three shots to each of the figures involved: the woman having her eyes made up/the woman involved in construction, the woman having her hair shampooed/the woman washing curtains (stills 13-14 show the last two shots (589 and 590) of this regular patterning). The pattern is established to be undermined (stills 15-23 of shots 591-99 illustrate this development). For 591-3 (stills 15-17) could be read as occupying the same diegetic space, while the worked for/worker antithesis is maintained. The shot of the razor being stropped (still 16) not only disrupts the diegetic separation pattern, it is also the segment's first shot to foreground an object to such an extent. In both respects, it functions as a kind of transition marker preparatory to the extraordinary shot of an axe being honed (still 18). This shot not only disrupts the temporary respite of diegetic coherence; more, it is a remarkable invocation of the paradigmatic at the level of the signified. The film's montage poses the question directly: either one serves the new bourgeoisie (the razor), or one works to eliminate them (the axe followed by the exposed neck of the woman luxuriating in the sensation of having her hair blow-dried: still 19). The work proposed here is in the first place ideological, this being the point of using the axe shot as a transition marker for the introduction of the camera two shots later: the camera, via editing, as ideological weapon against the

- 48 ruling class. Rhymed with the circular movement of the blow-drier, the hand cranking the camera (still 20) stands as the segment's first phasing-in of the Film Construction Process. As throughout the film, filming is designated as labour, here assimilated to it through the ongoing worked for/worker antithesis. After the final appearance of the woman having her hair blow-dried (still 21), the camera is seen filming itself in a mirror headed 'Specialist Shoeshiner from Paris' (still 22). The joke linking this with the subsequent shot of shoeshining (still 23) is the transition marker for the end of the segment.

Segment 2

Figure 2

	Shot									
	600	601	602	603	604	605	606	607	608	609
Haircutting	67		51							
Haircutting and Manicuring		51								
Manicuring				79		55				54
Cutting and Splicing					76		38	25	42	

This segment phases out the worked for/worker antithesis for a parallelism through alternating montage. It therefore opens with a modified form of the dual antithesis structuring the previous segment. For while 600 and 602 centre on the person worked for and 601 and 603 show those working – first both hairdresser and manicurist, and then just the manicurist – these four shots represent a coherent diegetic space. 601 thus serves as a delayed master shot answering the questions raised by the play with framing in 600: What is happening here? Who is having this done for him/her? Worked for and worker in these shots are therefore separated only by framing within a coherent diegetic space. 603 introduces a double shift: from antithesis to parallelism of activities, and from diegetic coherence to the separation of diegetic spaces. The alternation established in 603-9 between the manicurist and the editor assimilates editing to other labour processes. But a significant divergence between their activities emerges in the course of the segment. Both start from cutting (fingernail/filmstrip). Whereas the manicurist is doing the same at the end of the segment, however, the editor has advanced from cutting to splicing film. Editing, then, can transform and create from its raw material; manicuring cannot. The point is given ironic emphasis in the shot (607) breaking the alternation pattern – and also serving as transition marker for the end of the segment – which highlights the editor's fingernail as she dips the brush into the editing cement.

Figure 3

	Shot				
	610	611	612	613	614
Seamstress	28		55		76
Her Face		20		19	

This is a segment of extraordinary diegetic coherence for the film, albeit lasting only five shots. It even opens with a master shot of the woman glumly and clumsily sewing by hand, probably at home, and follows eyeline match conventions in the cuts between close-ups of her face and medium close-ups of her figure. This switching between face and figure in a way maintains the film's dominant principle of montage alternation. The segment picks up the film's many preceding shots of bobbins being reeled, thus suggesting the interconnectedness of different forms of work. Its transition marker is barely noticeable, if it qualifies as such anyway: the relative brevity of 613 contrasted with the increasing lengths of 610, 612 and 614.

Segment 4

Figure 4

	Shot		
	615	616	617
Camera Lens	27		21
Cranking Camera		6	

The phasing-in of *énonciation* in the form of shots of the camera in this segment clearly breaks any simple involvement the spectator may have had with the previous segment, thus initiating consideration of a problematic investigated through the six segments. The *ostranenie* of 615 (still 24) and 617 depends on such distortions of visual perception that it is difficult to work out how the shots could have been constructed. The convex lens reflects the Man with the Camera filming it, hence the crab-like arms which are presumably cranking the filming camera. But this is first turned through 90°, and second superimposed(?) within a shot of a camera which is already filming itself in a mirror, hence the reversal of its writing which can be seen to read correctly elsewhere in the film. The six-frame shot of the cranking of the camera is the segment's transition marker. This transitional segment sharpens the contrast between the preceding and subsequent segments showing different forms of sewing, stressing both as choices within a paradigm.

50 Segment 5

Figure 5

	Shot					
	618	619	620	621	622	623
Seamstress	27				39	
Material		40		28		47
Sewing Machine Fly-wheel			29			

In this segment the sewing is done by machine in a factory. The machinist's smile obviously contrasts with the expression of the woman sewing by hand, and the speed of her work with the slowness of that of the woman in Segment 3. Montage alternation is similarly maintained throughout this segment in the interweaving of shots of the material on which the seamstress is working with shots of her and of the sewing-machine flywheel. Again, the diegetic coherence of the segment enables the spectator to concentrate on the kind of work which it shows, to the extent even that there seems to be no transition marker for the next segment. This segment finds its memory in earlier shots in the film of the model sewing-machines on display in shop windows for the new bourgeoisie. This memory combines with that of the sewing by hand in Segment 3 and thus advances the argument from the antithesis of worked for/worker of Segment 1. Thus far, the group of segments under discussion develop the terms of the productivity/non-productivity and lack/excess paradigms outlined in Part IIB.

Segment 6

Figure 6

	Shot						
	624	625	626	627	628	629	630
Identifying Rushes	55		88	43		50	
Machine Winding		84			109		180

At this point the argument is further developed by the introduction of the opposition labour-intensive/capital-intensive and the paradigm education/mystification. Segment 6 returns to the diegetic separation of activities last seen in Segment 2. This formal parallelism establishes an implicit equation between the servicing done in the first and the factory work done in this segment. Here the activities shown are the identification of film rushes and factory work involving winding by machine. It is the motion of winding or turning which links the two series: winding on the viewing table of 624 rhymed with controlling the sewing-machine flywheel of 625 and winding the fine-gauge cable of 628 and 630. The critical

difference between the two series lies in the difference necessary to, and in this film, also *generated by* editing and, conversely, the non-reflective nature of factory work in the given social formation. When the machinist stops the sewing-machine flywheel, it is only to direct the material on the correct course. When Svilova stops the filmstrip, it is to identify it preparatory to reworking the filmed material, to thinking through its final organisation. This theoretical reconstruction is what fills the gap between the two aspects of editing – cutting and splicing – shown in Segment 2. The divergence between editing and the other activities in this segment is such that the similarities between the two all but disappear after the first two shots. While the factory workers continue machine-winding through the segment, the editor takes a reel, numbers it – this action pointedly breaking the regularity of the alternation pattern – and thus identifies it. Editing, itself predicated on filming – another reason for the inclusion of the filming process in Segment 4 – is far more capable of transforming material than is sewing. This segment thus extends the argument initiated by the razor/axe opposition in Segment 1. Not only does its sequence of shots *enact* the capacities of editing to diverge from the phenomenal world it more often serves merely to reflect, it also exposes the very processes which such reflection occludes. Moreover, the establishment of the film's capacity, through editing, to transform the appearance of the world casts further doubt – already suggested in Segment 4 – on the diegetically coherent representations of the world adopted in Segments 3 and 5. In terms of *Man with a Movie Camera*, these two segments have exceptional diegetic coherence, focussing considerable attention on their signifieds. However, the contextualisation of these two segments by Segments 4 and 6 catalyses criticism of their apparent celebration of the benefits of factory work within the given social formation. This criticism is amplified in the two ways noted in Part IIB: by knowledge of the state of the textile industry, and through the five subsequent segments' extension of the argument into a critique of relations of production.

Overall, then, the six segments move the spectator from a straightforward perception of class differentials, which presumably in 1929 could have been easily recognised as such, towards an awareness of the determinations of those differentials and hence a possible transformation of them. The final shot's links with the subsequent transitional shot (shot 631) explicitly point to such connections. After elaborately panning back and forth between the two machine workers, the camera tilts down to the revolving cable-drum and to the belt-driven machine (these complex camera movements, the only ones in all six segments, mark the end of this one segment and of the whole series). The cable they wind rhymes with that prominent on the traffic signal in the next shot, and the belts of their machine with that of the policeman controlling the

- 52 signal. Beyond a limited range, their machine-aided work, it seems, benefits not themselves but the social order which directs their daily actions.

IV Conclusions

This article, then, has attempted to indicate why only a Marxist theoretical framework can adequately come to terms with *Man with a Movie Camera*. Through rigorous theoretical reconstruction of its objects, the film thwarts attempts to read into it common-sense ideological constructions, either of forms of cinematic representation or of the contemporary social formation. The method used is an invocation of the paradigmatic. This allows the film both to set up and to explore the ideological nature of social constructions which form a problematic internal and external to cinema's presentations of everyday life, in other words, of social, political and economic consciousness. The paradigms set up are taken to be familiar both to the film-maker and to the spectator. Ideally, the interaction of the spectator, with his/her cultural knowledge, and the film's presentation of that knowledge achieve a synthesis of comprehension enabling the spectator to arrive at a new consciousness of the status of the knowledge. With its focus on this interaction between politicised cinema and the viewer's cultural knowledge, *Man with a Movie Camera* exposes as rampant stupidity – given their knowledge of Russian – the remark of Luda and Jean Schnitzer that 'one of the reasons for *Man with a Movie Camera*'s great success [sic] outside the USSR is precisely the fact that it is the *only* [sic] film which a spectator ignorant of Russian [sic] can see in its complete definitive form'.⁵¹

From the late 1920's Vertov was all too well aware of the ideological recuperations to which his films were subjected.⁵² The film-maker has very limited control, even at the time, over the preponderantly non-cinematic discourses determining the reception of his/her film. Vertov's work in general, and *Man with a Movie Camera* in particular, raise acutely the question of the historical determinants, of the how, when and where of recuperation, problems which in *Screen* have sometimes been elided and sometimes skirted. British recuperations of Soviet cinema – of which a classic symptom is Manvell's capacity to analyse *Battleship Potemkin*'s Odessa Steps segment in terms of Pudovkin's theory of montage⁵³ – are far greater blocks to our understanding of Vertov than is the Soviet editing of his writings. There is material for at least a book on the ideological recuperation of 1920's Soviet cinema in Britain alone. No attempt can be made here to specify adequately the range of determinations involved in the recuperation of Vertov. In Britain, these have resulted in the non-availability of his films apart

from *Man with a Movie Camera*, *Three Songs for Lenin* and the odd number of *Kino-Pravda*, and the existence of only piecemeal translations of his writings into English.⁵⁴ As will be seen below, there are correspondingly few constructive writings on Vertov. It is to be hoped that this dismal situation will soon be remedied.

The 1972 *Cinéthique* 15-16 article, ‘“ Ne Copiez pas sur les Yeux ”, Disait Vertov’, includes a very useful reading of various Russian and French recuperations of Vertov’s work. Both of the principal recent appropriations of Vertov’s work uproot it from all historical determinations. The first of these is conducted in the name of realist Truth: Sadoul, for instance, whose *Dziga Vertov*⁵⁵ has a chapter entitled ‘From Dziga Vertov to Jean Rouch (Cinéma-Vérité and Kino-Eye)’. The second is in the name of an avant-garde formalism: for instance, Vogel’s hailing of *Man with a Movie Camera* as ‘antedating the structuralist [sic] films of our day by almost half a century’.⁵⁶

What characterises all the misreadings of *Man with a Movie Camera* is their inability to read the film in toto, unless covering it with such meaningless blankets as Kracauer’s ‘lyric documentary’.⁵⁷ The few critical attempts at the film which actually examine it carefully tend to fall apart after considering some twenty shots or so, because they fail in any way to come to terms with the film’s overriding structural principle, the ceaseless displacement of one ‘system’ by the next. Michelson’s essay on the film,⁵⁸ which gets closer to it than most, epitomises the difficulties in which idealist approaches to the film are caught. Her phenomenological formalism limits her account of the film to segments where a coherent diegesis can be read in: for instance, the unmatched shot/reverse-shots of the athletics segments, or the shot of the Bolshoi which is *then* ‘collapsed’ by means of formal devices. Pervading critical attempts at the film are straightforward errors testifying to its incompatibility with the structures and processes of memory: Barnouw’s placing of the self-demonstrating camera segment as the film’s finale, to cite just one example.⁵⁹ Some critics apparently feel safer avoiding the embarrassment of confronting the film at all: Robinson’s *World Cinema: A Short History* does not even mention it, and Barsam’s *Non-Fiction Film: A Short History* devotes five words to the film – its title – while lavishing several pages on both *Berlin* and *Rien que les Heures*. Throughout *Man with a Movie Camera*’s critical history, the terms of its dismissal have remained remarkably consistent, indices both of the radical nature of the film’s disarticulation of dominant assumptions in cinema and of the continuing perpetuation of those assumptions. Such assumptions, then as now, centre on homogeneity. Thus it is an ideology of coherence which recurs continually through most writings on the film and whose assertion often unwittingly includes its own negation, the negation on which it is founded. Thus Abramov, writing in the USSR in 1962, an-

54 nounces the film as 'a serious artistic fiasco' and describes it as a 'heterogeneous kaleidoscope'.⁶⁰ Luda and Jean Schnitzer, whose book was published in France in 1968, complain that 'the bewildered spectator could not follow the infernal cadence of the film'.⁶¹ Grierson's 1931 remarks typify the problems of the British documentarists' technicist appropriation of Soviet cinema. He reviles *Man with a Movie Camera* as 'not a film at all: it is a snapshot album. There is no story, no dramatic structure and no special revelation about the Moscow [sic] it has chosen for a subject'.⁶² In 1929, *Close-Up* complains à la Bazin of the film's 'wilful interference with the raw material',⁶³ and in 1931 of its being 'never a rounded work'.⁶⁴ On the basis of similar assumptions accusations of camera trickery and formalism become easy excuses for failing to come to terms with the film. Even Leyda, in 1930, laments its 'intricate camera pyrotechnics'.⁶⁵ The 1935 Special Number of *The Studio*, 'Art in the USSR', describes the film similarly: 'a brilliant display of pyrotechnics, this exposition of Kino-Eye said little more than that. Vertov as a documentalist [sic] has still to get to grips with the sociological importance of his material'. A 1971 Soviet article by Kopalin, 'A Life Illuminated by the Revolution, dedicated to Dziga Vertov's 75th Anniversary', criticises the 'exaggerated importance . . . attached to the cine-camera itself – the Kino-Eye', and skirts any mention of *Man with a Movie Camera* by title, though this does emerge in the quote from Vertov used as an epigraph.⁶⁶ Mitry in 1973 illustrates the tenacity of the assumptions of dominant cinematic forms in his criticism of the film for showing 'only the tricks of film', not the 'grammar'.⁶⁷ Indeed, the extent of *Man with a Movie Camera*'s disarticulation of such assumptions has made it less susceptible to recuperation than Vertov's other films. The tangentiality to the film of such critical remarks as are cited above leaves it relatively unscathed and open to more ideologically conscious analyses.

What seems most to trouble such criticism, in fact, seems to be less the film's absence of character and plot elements than its simultaneous dismantling of diegetic coherence and retention of diegetic elements, its refusal simply to accept or simply to reject diegesis. If this unclassifiable hybrid has thwarted film critics, it also forces a rethinking of work in film theory which normalises diegesis. One obvious instance is Metz's early 'Grande Syntagmatique'. Focussing exclusively on the *énoncé* and disavowing *énonciation*, it normalises the diegesis of film as the basis for any cinematic language system (*langue*). Any shot or segment outside a film's diegesis is thus consigned to the dustbin of the non-diegetic insert. Mechanistic applications of Jakobson's metaphor/metonymy distinction to diegesis create similar problems. Through its theoretical practice *Man with a Movie Camera* rids metaphor and metonymy of their (mis)application to diegesis and returns them to their proper linguistic foundations, paradigm and syntagm.

Man with a Movie Camera's (unparalleled?) reworking of diegetic space and time is more extensive than that undertaken by either his contemporary Eisenstein or by Godard, who adopted the Dziga Vertov Group banner for films he made with Gorin and Richard in 1969-71. Both in his theoretical writings and in his films of the 1920s, Eisenstein, conceiving signifiers primarily as a means of expression and montage primarily as a collision of signifieds, tends to assume a dominant diegesis. Hence the appearance of his 'intellectual montage' segments, for instance the 'gods' segment and the Kerensky/titles montage of *October*, as excursions from the film. His unrealised *Capital* project indicates a move away from this: 'The "ancient" cinema was shooting *one event from many points of view*. The new one assembles *one point of view from many events*.'⁶⁸ However, this new direction was never followed through. Godard's 1968-71 films experiment extensively with multiple diegesis, in both fictional and documentary modes. While his work on the latter modes does not rethink the notion of diegesis as thoroughly as does *Man with a Movie Camera*, this is because of his endeavours to set up a dialectical relationship between sound and image. Notably in *Numéro Deux*, made with Mieville, Godard does begin to effect a political transformation of the spectator's relations to meaning. In distinction from *Man with a Movie Camera*, of course, this is in a fictional mode. It remains, however, that neither Eisenstein nor, as yet, Godard has shown the theoretical rigour informing *Man with a Movie Camera's* theoretical reconstruction of its objects and the setting of the two in parallel.

One of the problems which Eisenstein's 'intellectual montage' left unresolved was that of the verbal cueing on which it depends in his films. If any of Eisenstein's montage categories applies to *Man with a Movie Camera*, it is 'intellectual montage'. The film's liberation from the determinations of diegetic coherence in particular allows this to be activated throughout. *Man with a Movie Camera* stands as one of the very few feature-length silent films with no titles, the absolute refusal of which Vertov repeatedly stresses.⁶⁹ Its achievement is all the more remarkable for its restriction to only one – albeit the most fundamental – of Metz's five material categories of the signifier.⁷⁰ But this concentration is understandable given Vertov's description of the film as 'aiming to fill a breach in the sector of cinematic language'.⁷¹ It is vital to think thoroughly through the modes of construction of the moving photographic image alone in cinema, an investigation probably pushed further by *Man with a Movie Camera* than by any other single film. It is therefore wrong to assume, as does MacCabe, that heterogenisation of the cinema can be attained only, or even primarily, through counterposition of non-diegetically motivated graphic material to 'the plenitude of the image'.⁷² To assign an immutable function to any of Metz's five material cate-

56 gories of the signifier is to lapse into the God-given. Moreover, it should be further noted that Metz's list makes no allowance for intra-diegetic writing, which in *Man with a Movie Camera* does serve to heterogenise the image.

Man with a Movie Camera points a route out of the impasse which Barthes locates for avant-garde art and which enables him to define it as 'that stubborn language which is going to be recuperated'.⁷³ The film disproves Barthes's notion that avant-garde artistic practices, aimed at the 'destruction of discourse', are inevitably negative operations doomed to the interminable reassertion of the discourses they counter through simple opposition to them. *Man with a Movie Camera* demonstrates to the contrary that the 'destruction of discourse' can be a dialectical operation. The complete inadequacy of idealist attempts to appropriate the film is evident from the above quotations (Rouch himself admits the film to be one 'which we have not yet understood').⁷⁴ As long as avant-garde artistic practices limit themselves to work on the signifier alone, they fall into the traps laid by and inherent to the structures of dominant discourses. Through its invocation of the paradigmatic, *Man with a Movie Camera* dialecticises these opposite terms and thereby opens up a terrain beyond that directly determined by dominant discourses.

Beyond those already considered, *Man with a Movie Camera* raises many further questions for film theory and film-making: how films can most effectively contribute to ideological struggle, what forms of documentary are now possible in the light of the film's theoretical reconstruction of its objects of 1929, what sound can contribute over and above the image, how a film can most effectively build on the cultural knowledge of the general or of the more specifically defined audience in order to increase (raise) political consciousness and, finally, how such a distinction of audiences, if necessary, can be achieved.

Credits

Man with a Movie Camera (*Chelovek s Kinoapparatom*): USSR 1929
1830 metres

Production – VUFKU. Released January 8, 1929. *Scenario and direction* – Dziga Vertov (Denis Arkadevich Kaufman). *Editing* – Elizaveta Svilova. *Photography* – Mikhail Kaufman.

Notes

1. M Enzensberger: 'Dziga Vertov', *Screen* v 13 n 4, Winter 1972-3.
2. Dziga Vertov: *Articles, Journaux, Projets*, Union Générale d'Éditions 1972, pp 97-8.
3. *Ibid*, pp 101, 105, 93-4, 93.
4. Vertov, *op cit*, p 107.

5. Ibid, pp 69, 197, 83.
6. Ibid, pp 79-80.
7. Ibid, p 59.
8. Vertov: 'Film Directors, A Revolution', *Cinema* 9, 1971, p 27, reprinted *Screen* v 12 n 4, Winter 1971-2, p 56; Vertov: *Articles, Journaux, Projets*, pp 95, 52, 105, 51.
9. Cf "Ne Copiez pas sur les Yeux", Disait Vertov', *Cinéthique* 15-16, 1972, pp 63-4.
10. In Eisenstein, *Film Form*, Meridian 1957, pp 55-63, 72-83.
11. Vertov: op cit, p 142.
12. Eisenstein: op cit, p 43.
13. Marx: *Grundrisse*, Penguin 1974, p 105.
14. Ibid, p 101.
15. Ibid.
16. Nove: *An Economic History of the USSR*, Penguin 1976, p 136.
17. *Articles, Journaux, Projets* is a complete translation of the 1966 Russian edition of Vertov's writings.
18. Carynnyk (ed): *Alexander Dovzhenko: The Poet as Film-maker*, MIT Press 1973.
19. Translated in *October* 2, Summer 1976.
20. Kozintsev: 'La Fin des Années Vingt', *Cahiers du Cinéma* 230, July 1971, p 5; Eisenstein: op cit, p 26.
21. Vertov: op cit, pp 137-8; Fevralski: 'Dziga Vertov et les Pravdisty', *Cahiers du Cinéma* 229, May 1971, pp 28-9.
22. Vertov: op cit, pp 83-5; Fevralski: op cit, pp 28-9.
23. Vertov: op cit, p 118.
24. Fevralski: op cit, pp 28 and 31-3. Vertov: op cit, pp 234-6, 286, 294.
25. Vertov: op cit, p 51.
26. Barthes: 'L'Ancienne Rhétorique', *Communications* 16, 1970, p 213.
27. Vertov: op cit, p 119.
28. Ibid, p 209.
29. Ibid, p 61.
30. Ibid, pp 34, 102.
31. Lenin: *On Literature and Art*, Progress Publishers 1970, p 17; cf Vertov: op cit, p 240.
32. Heath: 'Narrative Space', *Screen* v 17 n 3, Autumn 1976, p 107.
33. Quoted Abramov: *Dziga Vertov*, Premier Plan 1965, p 57.
34. Ibid, p 58.
35. Cf Wollen: "'Ontology" and "Materialism" in Film', *Screen* v 17 n 1, Spring 1976, pp 14, 22.
36. Preface to Vertov: *Articles*, cit, p 11.
37. Vertov: op cit, p 129.
38. Ibid, p 119.
39. Lacan: *Ecrits*, Seuil 1966, pp 502-3. Cf especially p 502: 'It is in the chain of the signifier that meaning *insists*, but none of the elements of the chain *consists* in the meaning of which it is capable at that particular moment.'
40. Vertov: op cit, p 283.
41. Quoted Abramov: op cit, p 58.
42. Vertov: op cit, pp 29-30, 31-2.
43. Michelson, 'The Man with the Movie Camera: from Magician to Epistemologist', *Artforum* v X n 7, March 1972, p 69.
44. The ambulance of shots 534-68, for instance, belongs to the Kiev brigade, and the Railway Workers' Club of shot 1219 is in Odessa, while the litter bin of shot 80 and the marriage and divorce certificates of shots 390 and 402, for example, are inscribed in Ukrainian.
45. Vertov: op cit, p 61.
46. Contrast Grierson on *Drifters*' rattling good yarn of Man's epic struggle against the elements: 'If you can tell me a story with a better crescendo. . . Men at their labour are the salt of the earth.' Forsyth Hardy (ed): *Grierson on Documentary*, Faber 1966, p 135.
47. Metz: *Essais sur la Signification au Cinéma*, Klincksieck 1968, pp 121-34, summarised in Daniel: 'Metz's "Grande Syntagmatique": A Summary and Critique', *Film Form* 1, Spring 1976.

- 58 48. Marx: op cit, p 100. 49. Vertov: op cit, p 384.
 50. Ibid, p 73.
 51. Luda and Jean Schnitzer: *Dziga Vertov, 1896-1954*, Anthologie du Cinéma 1968, p 187.
 52. Cf Vertov: op cit, pp 117-8, 144-5, 145-50.
 53. R Manvell: *Film*, Penguin 1944, p 48.
 54. Those available are listed in Lawder (ed): *Essential Cinema*, New York University Press 1976. Many are, in the most generous terms, unscholarly, as witness the unacknowledged excision of Vertov's quotes from Lenin, cited in Part II above, from *Film Culture* 25, reprinted in Sitney: *Film Culture Anthology*, Secker and Warburg 1973 and in Geduld: *Film Makers on Film Making*, Penguin 1970. The most useful single item of Vertov's writing available in English is his 1923 'Film Directors, A Revolution', *Cinema* 9, 1971, reprinted in *Screen* v 12 n 4, Winter 1971-2.
 55. Editions Champ Libre 1971.
 56. Vogel: *Film as a Subversive Art*, Weidenfeld and Nicholson 1974, p 43.
 57. Kracauer: *From Caligari to Hitler*, Princeton University Press 1947, p 185.
 58. Cit, note 43.
 59. Barnouw: *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film*, OUP 1974, p 63.
 60. Abramov: *Dziga Vertov*, Premier Plan 1965, pp 57, 59.
 61. L and J Schnitzer: op cit, p 186. 62. Grierson: op cit, p 127.
 63. Lenauer: 'Vertoff, His Work and The Future', *Close-Up*, December 1929, p 467.
 64. Quoted Leyda: *Kino*, Allen and Unwin 1973, p 251.
 65. Leyda: op cit, p 251. 66. *Soviet Film* 1971, n 1, January 1971.
 67. Mitry: *Histoire du Cinéma Muet III 1923-1930*, Editions Universitaires 1973, p 256.
 68. Eisenstein: 'Notes for a Film of Capital', p 18.
 69. Vertov: op cit, pp 118, 379.
 70. Metz: *Langage et Cinéma*, Larousse 1971, p 180.
 71. Vertov: op cit, p 148.
 72. MacCabe: 'The Politics of Separation', *Screen* v 16 n 4, Winter 1975-6, p 55.
 73. Barthes: *Le Plaisir du Texte*, Seuil 1973, p 87.
 74. Rouch: 'Cinq Regards sur Vertov', in Sadoul, op cit, p 12.

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