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# AN APPLICATION OF NEW CRITICAL METHODOLOGY TO THE STUDY OF THE NARRATIVE FICTIONAL FILM

by
George Buchanan MacDonald

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Frank S. Hook
Professor in Charge

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Special committee directing the doctoral work of Mr. George Buchanan MacDonald

Frank S. Hook
Chairman

Ray L. Armstrong

David M. Greene

Edna S. de Angeli

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ABSTRACT

The expansion of film programs in the classroom creates a need for textbooks on film criticism and film aesthetics. This need is not answered by such theoretical works as Sergei Eisenstein's Film Form, Vsevolod Pudovkin's Film Technique, Siegfried Kracauer's Theory of Film, and André Bazin's What Is Cinema? All of these studies are written by and for cinéastes, people already deeply involved in either the study or the making of films. What introductory and survey courses in high schools and colleges are lacking are textbooks which plainly elucidate these theoretical studies and which, more importantly, apply the basic ideas of film theorists to specific moving pictures in a direct, easily comprehensible manner.

This thesis bridges the distance between abstract film theory and empirical film study by applying the closely analytical methods of literary New Criticism to specific films from the narrative fictional cinema. There are two goals in this proposed adoption of a New Critical approach to cinema: 1) the achievement of a higher level of competence in film criticism; and 2) the development of an inter-media approach to the study of film and literature in the classroom. If done properly, a cinematic absorption of New Critical techniques will be greatly helpful to students of literature at both the high school and college levels. For inasmuch as the narrative film relies upon many of the conventions of figurative poetic language and the structure of the literary narrative, it is logical to assume that a closely analytical

of the literary narrative, it is logical to assume that a closely analytical study of the narrative film would sensitize a student to the roles of aesthetic design and formal structure in a literary work of art. If, as this thesis maintains, cinematic and novelistic cross-cutting are analogous and if verbal and visual metaphors are alike in function, then a close, structural study of the narrative film will prove valuable in English courses introducing students to literary criticism and literary structure.

This thesis regards the shot as the basic structural unit of the moving picture. The first chapter presents a definition and a discussion of some of the technical terms used in the following chapters. The second chapter studies three silent films (The Battleship Potemkin, Greed, and Intolerance) in terms of the relational and compositional value between the shots in editing and within individual shots in sustained, uninterrupted takes of the camera. The thesis' third chapter has a particular pertinence to literary study. This section deals with imagery in such a way as to illustrate certain similarities in function between the literary and the cinematic image cluster. Chapter Three discusses specific image patterns in Greed, M, The Last Laugh, and Notorious. The fourth and final chapter discusses in detail both the editing structure and the intra-shot formalism of a single film in a manner which suggests a comprehensive, closely "textual," methodology for analytical film criticism. The film analyzed in the fourth chapter from the points of view of both structural composition and imagistic detail is Citizen Kane.

# INTRODUCTION

The relatively low quality of books on film criticism and film aesthetics has put high schools and colleges in a difficult situation with regard to film study in the classroom. On the one hand, there is an increasing student demand for courses in film; on the other, there is a lack of qualified instructors and adequate teaching materials to meet this demand. There is, for example, no film history text that is satisfying in both comprehensiveness of scope and particularity of detail. Nor has there yet been written any single, well-balanced study of narrative film theory and narrative film aesthetics which encompasses the four basic schools of: 1) classic Soviet montage; 2) Arnheimian photographic conventionalism; 3) neo-realist observationalism; and 4) Bazinian intra-shot aestheticism.

These statements do not minimize the wealth of abstract film theory and film aesthetics readily available today to the advanced student of film. Sergei Eisenstein's two volumes, Film Form[1] and The Film Sense,[2] and Vsevolod Pudovkin's two basic works, Film Technique and Film Acting,[3] are thorough, richly detailed expositions of the Soviet theory of the aesthetic and structural primacy of montage. Rudolf Arnheim's Film as Art[4] is a persuasive study of the basic conventionalism of the flat, framed photographic image. Arnheim's work discloses the inherent stylization

of a medium occupying the margin between a two-dimensional and a three-dimensional representation of reality. Siegfried Kracauer's monumental Theory of Film[5] is an exhaustive study of film as an "unedited," primarily naturalistic, vehicle of documentary and phenomenological observation. And André Bazin's essays,[6] together with the best auteur criticism of Cahiers du Cinéma, present an exquisitely precise and nuanced examination of the subtle visual tensions inhering within a single frame or a shot of a film.

All of these studies are written by and for cinéastes, people already deeply involved in either the study or the making of films. The problem for introductory and survey film courses in high schools and colleges lies not in the accessibility of such materials but rather in the lack of texts which plainly elucidate these studies for the first-year student and which, more importantly, apply the methodological procedures of film theorists to specific moving pictures. There has never been a more urgent need for books, monographs, and mixed-media teaching materials designed to bridge the distance between the abstract purity of film theory, on the one hand, and the particularized, determinate moving picture, on the other.

There are a number of methods one might choose to accomplish the task of grounding film theory in the empirical study of specific films. One approach is suggested implicitly by some of the comparisons which film theorists

have made between film and literary art forms. In reading Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Kracauer, and Bazin, one discovers a great many parallels drawn between cinema and literature--specifically, between the narrative film and the literary narrative. Typical of Eisenstein's valuable inter-media insights is his chapter "Dickens, Griffith, and the Film Today" in Film Form.[7] In this essay Eisenstein traces D. W. Griffith's experiments in editing to the alternating shifting of simultaneous bands of time in the novels of Charles Dickens. Eisenstein also emphasizes the similarity between the Dickensian "close-up" of a suggestive detail and the cinematic close shot of a similarly significant detail in a film's dramatic situation. Pudovkin, after Eisenstein the greatest of the Soviet director-theorists, also emphasizes the literary analogues of the techniques of the narrative cinema. In fact, Pudovkin regards editing, the primary structural principle of a film, as parallel to writing inasmuch as the film director "writes" in shots much in the way that a novelist writes in words. In the Introduction to the German edition of Film Technique, Pudovkin writes:

> To make clear my point and to bring home unmistakably to my readers the meaning of editing and its full potentialities, I shall use the analogy of another art-form--literature. To the poet or writer separate words are as raw material. They have the widest and most variable meanings which only begin to become precise through their position in the sentence. To that extent to which the word is an integral part of the composed phrase,

> to that extent is its effect and meaning variable until it is fixed in position, in the arranged artistic form.
>
> To the film director each shot of the finished film subserves the same purpose as the word to the poet. Hesitating, selecting, rejecting, and taking up again, he stands before the separate takes, and only by conscious artistic composition at this stage are gradually pieced together the "phrases of editing," the incidents and sequences, from which emerges, step by step, the finished creation, the film.
>
> The expression that the film is "shot" is entirely false, and should disappear from the language. The film is not shot, but built, built up from the separate strips of celluloid that are its raw material.[8]

In Theory of Film Siegfried Kracauer expounds a naturalistic aesthetic radically different from that of Pudovkin. Kracauer's basic view is that film is an extension of still photography and not an art form in the traditional sense of the term. For Kracauer the camera's primary tendency is the recording of the open-endedness of the continuum of physical reality. Yet Kracauer, like the Soviet theorists, makes repeated comparisons between literature and film and maintains that the novel's openness to diverse narrative strands has an analogue in the camera's voracious appetite for the "flow" of multiple events in actuality.[9] And, finally, André Bazin, whose "cinema of reality" somewhat resembles Kracauer's flow-cinema, is one of the theorists most sensitive to the many points of contact between film and all literary forms. Bazin's seminal essay, "The Evolution of Film Language," discusses the similarities between the literary

symbol and the cinematic symbol in the emblematic imagery of the silent screen.[10] In fact, it was partly Bazin's dissatisfaction with Eisenstein's excessively "literary"--or mechanically conceptualized--imagery that set off a critical reversal which today has resulted in a considerable loss of prestige for the symbolic montage theories of the classic Soviet period.

These comparisons of literature and film are generally concerned, like this thesis, with the narrative fictional cinema. The story film, unlike the "pure cinema" of experimental movies, cannot be considered as an autonomous, "purely visual," medium because it relies heavily on the conventions of literary art forms. Restricting our attention here to the parallels between film and literature, we may now find it helpful to turn away from film theory and look to critical approaches to literary study. For it is more than likely that a practical critical technique for the verbal medium might also serve as a working critical methodology for a visual medium sharing various formal and structural properties with literature. It is in the hope of joining abstract film theory to concrete film study that this thesis turns to the methodological procedures of the older, more professional disciplines of English and American literary criticism.

One comparatively recent technique of literary criticism is the methodology somewhat loosely labeled New

Criticism. Developed after World War I by, among others, I. A. Richards, William Empson, T. S. Eliot, and John Crowe Ransom, New Criticism was initially a reaction against a traditional form of literary study which emphasized history, biography, bibliography, and impressionistic response at the expense of a consideration of the texts of the literary works themselves. The counter-approaches adopted by the New Critics were by no means identical. Richards' neurological psychology, Eliot's orthodox historicism, and Yvor Winters' austere moralism represent only a few of the widely disparate ideational positions among the New Critics. The homogeneity of this movement lies not in any consistent formulation of a new literary aesthetic but in practical critical technique. Most of the earliest New Critics regarded the individual literary work as possessing a relative degree of autonomy. A number of these critics devoted a great many books and essays to the twofold task of: 1) moving the critical focus of attention closer to the structure, the texture, and the formal values of the individual text of specific works; and 2) formulating a critical vocabulary and a critical method which would facilitate this kind of intensive, closely textual kind of criticism.

The greatest overall achievement of New Criticism lies in its contributions to the language and the technique of precise analytical literary criticism. In his Practical Criticism (1927), for example, Richards sets up a framework

of four categories for the study of the various meanings of a poem. Richards' categories approach a poem in terms of 1) its Sense; 2) its Feeling; 3) its Tone; and 4) its Intention.[11] In a later work The Philosophy of Rhetoric (1936), Richards approaches the figure of the metaphor in a similar manner. Instead of merely examining a number of metaphorical statements, Richards uses his own set of critical terms in order to systematize the study of the structure of metaphor. This set of terms, tenor and vehicle, has since become a staple binary category of literary criticism. The tenor is the cognitive base of the poetic passage; the vehicle is the figurative importation which carries the tenor in a metaphorical image; and the metaphor is the relationship or tension between the tenor and the vehicle.[12] Richards' pupil William Empson continued this New Critical evolution of a practically analytic vocabulary for literary study. In his first and seminal book, Seven Types of Ambiguity (1929), Empson studies ambiguity as a technique of irony informing and constituting the logical structure of a poem. Empson considers seven different kinds of ambiguity and applies each type to a number of poems with an unprecedented exactness and subtlety of thought.[13]

The work of Richards and Empson constitutes only a fraction of the methodological contributions of the New Critics to the practice of close textual study. Today the

New Critical method is not so exclusive nor so sacerdotal as it was thirty years ago, but its influence on literary criticism and academic practice continues to be profound. Textbooks with a New Critical orientation such as Understanding Poetry[14] are commonplace in college classrooms. Cleanth Brooks' book-length study of Faulkner's novels[15] and Robert Penn Warren's detailed analysis of The Rime of the Ancient Mariner[16] are widely read works which build upon--and take for granted--the methods and practice of Richards, Empson, Eliot, and the first practitioners of the New Critical approach to literary texts.

If one compares the theoretical contributions of the New Critics with available works of film theory, one discovers that Eisenstein, Kracauer, and Bazin have all provided the critical language and the methodological procedures necessary to study film with the precision of a William Empson or a Cleanth Brooks. What has not been provided, however, are the empirically oriented applications of film theory to the criticism of specific films. Although there have been two or three attempts at such an application (Robin Wood's Hitchcock's Films being the best of them[17]), there has not yet been written a study of Griffith or Eisenstein comparable in detail and depth to Brooks' William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country. What is needed today is a series of books which study individual films with the care of an Empson analyzing Sidney

sestines in Seven Types of Ambiguity. Such studies would treat the basic unit of the film--i.e., the shot--with the same attention that Empson frequently gives to the basic unit of a poem--i.e., the word--in Seven Types. This New Critical approach to film would also endeavor to study visual metaphors and symbols with the precision of Richards' study of metaphor in The Philosophy of Rhetoric.

For the purposes of this study, a shot may be regarded as that part of a finished motion picture which has been photographed by a real or apparent uninterrupted running of the camera. Editing, or montage, is that process by which two or more shots are joined together to form part of the continuity of the finished motion picture. During the past sixty or seventy years, there have gradually evolved two theoretical overviews regarding the role of the shot in the shooting and the editing of a film. The first of these views, which will be called the inter-shot theory, maintains that the single shot is relatively less significant than the abstract value of the tensions between the shots in the total editing design of the film. The most complete statement of the inter-shot theory is found in the volumes (already mentioned) by Eisenstein (Film Form and The Film Sense) and Pudovkin (Film Technique and Film Acting). The second critical overview, which will be called the intra-shot theory, maintains that montage is less important than either: 1) the naturalistic, seemingly unedited flow of a

film's narrative development or 2) the structure of aesthetic design residing within a shot which may be of considerable spatial depth and temporal extension. Siegfried Kracauer's Theory of Film offers the most thorough exposition of the naturalistic "flow" theory; and André Bazin's collected essays are the virtually definitive source for a study of the complex ideational and aesthetic values which may inhere within the confines of a single shot. The first chapter of this thesis, a series of definitions of certain technical terms used in the following three chapters, examines a number of basic types of inter-shot montage.

The structural centrality which this thesis accords the individual shot does not imply a total agreement with Pudovkin's analogy between the shot and the word of a written or spoken sentence. On the contrary, it will be shown that Pudovkin and a number of other film theorists have often used the term "shot" in a misleadingly narrow sense of the word. For the role of a shot in a specific moving picture depends upon, among other circumstances, the shot's temporal length, its use of camera movement, its manipulation of composition in depth, and its relationship to the shots which immediately precede and follow it. A shot may constitute no more than three or four frames of a single object in close-up in an Eisenstein film; or it may, on the other hand, run as long as five or six minutes in a prolonged take (or sequence-shot) in a film by Jean-Luc

Godard. In the first instance, it is possible to make a rough comparison between the Eisensteinian shot and a word in a sentence; but in the second example, the shot functions less as a single word than as a full chapter in a novel or as a well-developed scene in a play. This thesis is concentrating on the shot only insofar as it is the basic cinematic unit relative to the entire structural design in the film in which it appears. Any abstract conception of the shot must be broad enough to encompass the Eisensteinian flash-shot and the temporally extended sequence-shot. In dealing with Potemkin, this study will emphasize that as a rule Sergei Eisenstein composes his films in temporally brief, formally composed shots which fit together in mosaic designs somewhat resembling the structure of a sentence--or, perhaps more precisely, the words of an Imagist poem. At the other extreme, Orson Welles' Citizen Kane will be shown to be composed, in large part, of temporally and spatially extended sequence-shots which unfold in the manner of unified events in an episodic play or novel. It is hoped that by studying the design of the particular shot in relation to the total shot-structure of a specific film we may come closer to an understanding of the syntax of the narrative fictional cinema.

There are two ultimate goals in this proposed adoption of a New Critical approach to cinema: 1) the adoption of higher standards for practical film criticism and 2) the

development of a new, structurally inter-disciplinary approach to literature and film in the classroom. First, the benefits of a precise critical methodology to the study of films themselves are obvious. There is no other art form which tolerates the low standards of factual accuracy and the vagaries of impressionistic statement which prevail in contemporary film criticism; and, correspondingly, there is no other art form more acutely in need of the systematic and structural precision which the New Critics have applied to works of literature. Secondly, the advantages to literary study in a New Critical film analytic would not be inconsiderable. If done properly, a cinematic absorption of New Critical techniques would be helpful to students of literature at both high school and college levels. For inasmuch as the narrative film relies on many of the conventions of figurative poetic language and the structure of literary narrative, it is logical to assume that a closely analytical study of the narrative film would sensitize a student to the roles of aesthetic design and formal structure in a literary work of art. In fact, if cinematic and novelistic cross-cutting are analogous and if verbal and visual metaphors are alike in function, then perhaps a close, structural study of the narrative film would prove valuable in English courses introducing students to literary criticism and literary structure.

It is hoped that this thesis will bring film study and

literary study closer together by applying the New Critical approach of close textual analysis to a number of formal and structural properties of the narrative fictional film. Because this study regards the shot as the basic structural unit of the moving picture, the focus of attention in the forthcoming chapters is frequently upon the individual shot and the small shot cluster.

As yet there has not been a single close study of specific films in terms of the two primary categories of inter-shot montage and intra-shot montage. It is partly for this reason that the second chapter of this thesis applies these two fundamental categories to three major films of the silent period: Sergei Eisenstein's Potemkin, which is studied as a model of inter-shot formalism; Erich von Stroheim's Greed, which is approached for the naturalistic detail of its intra-shot montage; and D. W. Griffith's Intolerance, a film which owes much of its enduring vitality to its perfect synthesis of Eisensteinian inter-shot montage and Stroheimian intra-shot montage. The thesis' third chapter has a particular pertinence to literary study. This section deals with imagery in such a way as to illustrate certain similarities in function between the literary and the cinematic image cluster. Chapter Three discusses specific image patterns in Stroheim's Greed, Fritz Lang's M, F. W. Murnau's The Last Laugh, and Alfred Hitchcock's Notorious. The fourth and final chapter

discusses in detail both the editing structure and the intra-shot formalism of a single film in a manner which suggests a comprehensive, closely "textual," methodology for analytical film criticism. The film analyzed in the fourth chapter from the points of view of both structural composition and textural detail is Orson Welles' Citizen Kane.

## Footnotes to Introduction

[1]Sergei Eisenstein, Film Form, trans., ed. Jay Leyda (New York, 1949).

[2]Sergei Eisenstein, The Film Sense, trans., ed. Jay Leyda (New York, 1942).

[3]V. I. Pudovkin, Film Technique and Film Acting, trans., ed. Ivor Montagu (New York, 1970).

[4]Rudolf Arnheim, Film as Art (Berkeley, 1957).

[5]Siegfried Kracauer, Theory of Film (New York, 1965).

[6]André Bazin, What Is Cinema?, trans. Hugh Gray (Berkeley, 1967).

[7]Eisenstein, Film Form, pp. 195-255.

[8]Pudovkin, pp. 23-24.

[9]Kracauer, Theory of Film, pp. 232-44.

[10]André Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," in The New Wave, ed. Peter Graham (London, 1968), pp. 25-50. This essay is available (as "The Evolution of the Language of Cinema") in Hugh Gray's collection of Bazin, but the translation of Bazin's French in Graham's collection is superior to that of Gray's. Citations referring to Bazin's essay are generally from The New Wave and not from What is Cinema?

[11]I. A. Richards, Practical Criticism (New York, 1952), pp. 179-83.

[12]I. A. Richards, The Philosophy of Rhetoric (Oxford, 1936), pp. 89-138.

[13]William Empson, Seven Types of Ambiguity, sec. ed., rev. (New York, 1949).

[14]Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, Understanding Poetry (New York, 1938).

[15]Cleanth Brooks, William Faulkner: The Yoknapatawpha Country (New Haven, 1963).

[16]Robert Penn Warren, "A Poem of Pure Imagination: An Experiment in Reading," in Selected Essays (New York, 1951), pp. 198-305.

[17]Robin Wood, Hitchcock's Films (London, 1965).

# CHAPTER I

Precision of critical terminology has seldom been a characteristic of film criticism. Because there does not exist even today a standard, generally accepted dictionary of technical terms, we must come to an agreement regarding the meaning of the term "montage" and the basic types of symbolic montage before we consider the shot-structure of Potemkin, Greed, and Intolerance. It is partly for the reader's convenience and partly as a dramatization of the need for a standard cinematic vocabulary that the following analysis of film terms appears at the beginning rather than at the end of this thesis. The meanings and definitions proposed in this chapter are derived in part from André Bazin's essay, "The Evolution of Film Language." The word "montage" in this section is used as a shortened form of "inter-shot montage." We are not concerned here with intra-shot montage but rather with a number of basic shot-combinations available to the director interested in creating value between rather than within the shots of a moving picture.

The basic meaning of the word montage in French film terminology is the technical process of editing--i.e., the process in which shots are timed and arranged in motion picture continuity. English film critics often regard montage as "creative editing," or the juxtaposition of shots for thematic, symbolic, or generally relational purposes.

The definition of editing in The Technique of Film Editing is both precise and inclusive: "the selection, timing and arrangement of given shots into a film continuity."[1] When a writer on film uses this term, however, he may be referring to any number of circumstances. The writer may be considering editing as the wholly technical process in which an editor cuts the various shots to size and joins them together to form a film's continuity. This task (which is the basic French cinematic meaning of montage) is largely a technical matter which, in itself, has little relevance to the artistic resources of editing and montage.

Ivor Montagu, following the example of Russian theorists and directors, regards editing as not only the assembly of shots into a final continuity, but also the partition of an action into shots before shooting on the basis of narrative, characterization, symbol, idea, rhythm, or visual design. "This is perfectly logical," writes Montagu. "It makes 'editing' cover all those aspects of the film production process that relate to the circumstance that the impression of the original single event is recreated by use of several pieces of celluloid . . . , and this is a single circumstance even if it implies two stages (a) the separation of the event into shots; and (b) the reassembly of the event from shots."[2] This thesis considers editing in Montagu's terms and regards montage as another word for editing. In this larger view, either

term--editing or montage--may be used in aesthetic and conceptual senses to indicate the basis for any juxtaposition of two or more shots. If, for example, two shots are juxtaposed for primarily thematic purposes, one may use either term and regard the juxtaposition as an example of relational editing or relational montage. Editing, or montage, means more than the mere technical operation of joining shots together; it includes, as Montagu states, all of the ". . . processes that have not yet taken place, the planning, in the mind, of the ultimate joining together of pieces not yet shot, and all the consequences that flow from this."[3]

Montagu's description of editing offers a helpful critical ideal. In its largest sense, editing may be considered as the arrangement of shots for visual, narrative, rhythmic, and thematic ends before as well as after the shooting of a film. (This definition should not, of course, minimize the fact that after shooting the director may spend long sessions with the editing equipment to create meanings not conceived either before or during the shooting of his film.)

Editing, or montage, should be considered first under two very general headings: 1) narrative, logical, continuous, or invisible montage and 2) expressive montage or what Pudovkin calls relational editing.[4]

Narrative, continuous, or invisible montage is that type of editing which joins shots together on the basis of

logical and narrative continuity. Sometimes regarded as invisible cutting or invisible montage, this kind of shot juxtaposition characterizes the film (or a part of a film) which seeks to call attention to the visual development within the shot rather than the means by which the shots are joined together. Invisible editing subordinates itself to the dramatic event; because it cuts with the action, it remains virtually unnoticed and contains minimal expressiveness. If, for example, a scene calls for a person to rise from a chair and walk across a room, the director employing continuous or invisible montage will end the shot and cut back just before or at the moment of the person's rising so that the resulting spatial jump will hardly impress itself on the viewer. Of invisible editing Bazin writes: "The only purpose of breaking down the shots is to analyze an event according to the physical and dramatic logic of a scene. This analysis is rendered imperceptible by its very logicality. The spectator's mind naturally accepts the camera angles that the director offers him because they are justified by the disposition of the action or the shifting of dramatic interest."[5] After describing a shot in a film which breaks only to connect an actor's departure from one room with his appearance in another, David Thomson writes, "This is what I mean by an invisible cut--one that is for efficiency's sake and not noticed by the viewer."[6] Using similar terms, Marcel Martin makes

basically the same distinction.[7] For Martin, narrative montage juxtaposes shots for the sake of chronological continuity in telling a story; he regards expressive montage (what Pudovkin calls relational editing) as the juxtaposition of shots which produces a meaning because of the tension or disparity between them. Here, of course, specific terminology is less important than an awareness of the two different kinds of editing or montage: 1) continuous, analytic, narrative, or invisible montage (or editing) and 2) relational or expressive montage (or editing).

The more complex types of montage fall under the very general heading of relational montage or expressive montage. This editing technique joins two or more shots not merely to tell a story unobtrusively and chronologically, but to make some kind of interpretive point through the interconnections of the juxtaposed shots. Relational editing does not seek to efface itself in the interests of a simple narrative but rather makes some kind of comment on the action through the tension it creates between the shots.

The following paragraphs name and describe some of the important types of relational editing or montage.

1) Dialectical montage, montage by collision, montage by attraction, or the Intellectual Cinema of Eisenstein.[8] This kind of montage is defined very loosely by André Bazin "as the reinforcement of the meaning of one image by another image which does not necessarily belong to the same

action."[9] This editing technique unites, through the metaphorical force of Eisenstein's "attraction," graphically, logically, and sometimes contextually disparate images and demonstrates the symbolic likenesses between them. When, for example, in October, Eisenstein juxtaposes shots of Kerensky with a statuette of Napoleon, the director detaches us from October's narrative line and asks us to examine the relationship between Kerensky and Napoleon. Eisenstein creates a dialectical opposition between (A) Kerensky and (B) Napoleon and produces not mere addition but (C), a wholly new meaning or concept (i.e., the idea that Kerensky is a power-driven leader incapable of subordinating himself to the needs of the people). The meaning of this kind of montage does not inhere in any of the images considered separately but rather arises from the clash (or what Eisenstein calls the collision) between the images.

Eisenstein's early films do not hesitate to inject an image (or series of images) wholly foreign to the time and place of the action into the narrative line if such an interpolation will help to interpret the action and multiply its meanings. In October, for example, the counter-revolutionaries are depicted as fighting for "God." To ridicule the Christian god and to suggest the superstition inherent in all religions, Eisenstein resorts to non-contextual montage: that is, he introduces images from a time

and place wholly foreign to the action of the narrative and significantly juxtaposes these images with those of the narrative. Calling this October montage sequence "perhaps the most classic example of Intellectual Cinema," Arthur Lennig describes how Eisenstein uses dialectical montage in reducing "God" to only one of many mythical beings: "The idea of God, represented by a beautiful baroque statue of Christ, is reduced by cross-cutting other statues and idols until the scene is concluded with a perfectly contained and dull egg-shaped mask of Uzume, Goddess of Mirth!"[10]

2) Metaphorical montage. In his essay "The Evolution of Film Language," André Bazin makes a distinction between Eisenstein's symbolic editing by attraction and montage of "comparison, or metaphor."[11] Bazin sees that although dialectical and metaphorical editing work on the same principle (i.e., two disparate images joined by the strength of their symbolic or metaphorical likenesses), they nevertheless leave clearly different impressions with the viewer. (What Bazin calls editing by comparison may overlap, in certain cases, what in this thesis is termed montage of suggestive detail. The names and descriptions offered in this chapter are the ones which seem most precise from my own standpoint; they are meant not to formulate absolute definitions but to make basic distinctions regarding some of the general kinds of shot combinations and the varying

impressions they make on the viewer.)

The distinction between dialectical and metaphorical editing lies in the degree of logical and contextual disparity between the images juxtaposed. Dialectical montage joins together images which are quite different from one another and often draws these images from temporally and spatially unrelated contexts. Metaphorical montage, by contrast, joins together images which always have some sort of fairly obvious point of resemblance and which always possess a geographical, or contextual, relationship to each other. In metaphorical montage the shots come together not in the violent and displacing explosions of Eisenstein's collisions but in the more harmonious flow of Pudovkin's "linking" shots.[12] Because the things compared in metaphorical editing are less immediately incongruous than the images in dialectical montage, the viewer is generally not so conscious of the artistry of the former editing technique. If, for example, a director wants to enlarge the scope of a love scene set in a forest, he might cut to a shot of a nearby waterfall to suggest the intensity of the lovers' feelings. David Lean in Doctor Zhivago creates a similar effect through a more urban metaphor when, early in the film, he cuts to the sparks flying above the streetcar carrying Zhivago and Lara; although at this point the two characters are not lovers, the portentous sparks above the car suggest the relationship to which the narrative is

developing. Because in both cases the comparisons are obvious and the terms of comparison spatially related, the montage in the two instances is metaphorical rather than dialectical or collisionary.

3) Montage of suggestive detail. Montage of suggestive detail isolates a characteristic part of the whole (usually the human body) and asks the viewer to relate the fragment to the totality. If, for example, a director wishes to suggest that one of two people in a conversation is bored or self-absorbed, he might cut to the person's twitching fingers. This character's face may be closed and impassive, but the cut to his fingers will disclose his inner boredom or agitation. In Fritz Lang's M, there is a sinister example of the great power of suggestiveness enjoyed by this editing technique. At one point in the film, the child-murderer is alone with a little girl when he reaches into his trousers' pocket. The following close-up of the bulging pocket visually suggests a sexual element in the murderer's crimes. Although the film's script does not explicitly examine this area of the murderer's psychology, the force of this isolated detail is sufficient to establish a sexual motive in the Peter Lorre character.

In many cases, of course, the suggestive detail in this kind of montage may be striking enough to be considered metaphorical. One might consider twitching or interlocked fingers as a metaphor of inner consternation just as in

Hitchcock's The Ring one may certainly regard the glass of champagne going flat as a metaphor of the disappointment of the man who poured it. In dealing with this kind of relational editing, the individual viewer must use his own judgment in choosing a term of identification.

4a) Parallel or simultaneous montage (parallel development). This type of editing presents two or more simultaneous actions by cutting back and forth so that the scenes are presented alternately. D. W. Griffith commonly uses parallel montage to create suspense and contrast by cutting from a person in danger to those hurrying against time to the rescue.

4b) There is, however, an instance in which parallel editing is used to mean actions juxtaposed not because of their simultaneity but because the substance of each is similar in some important respect. Lewis Jacobs uses this term to designate the juxtaposition of scenes for the purpose of establishing a point of identity between them which the cursory glance might either overlook or underestimate.[13] Jacobs describes an early use of parallel editing in Edwin Porter's The Kleptomaniac. This film uses parallel editing to juxtapose two similar events: a rich woman shoplifting from a department store and a poor woman stealing bread to stay alive. Parallel editing has structurally defined the identical nature of these two incidents and thus makes all the more unjust the ultimate conviction of the poor woman

and the releasing of the rich shoplifter. Intolerance makes the most elaborate use of this type of parallel editing in film history. Griffith's film spans thousands of years and intercuts actions from four different ages to show that intolerance is man's besetting sin.

5) Contrast editing. This term means the juxtaposition of scenes to demonstrate the differences rather than the similarities between them. In dealing with contrast editing in The Rise of the American Film, Jacobs turns to another Porter film, The Ex-Convict, and shows how Porter uses contrast editing in opposing the poor home of an ex-convict to the opulent house of the manufacturer who refuses to give the ex-convict a job.[14]

6) Accelerated montage or accelerated editing. This form of montage increases the tempo of a film by gradually shortening the temporal length of a succession of shots. Griffith's last-minute rescues (structured by parallel or simultaneous montage) often rely on accelerated montage to heighten the tension of the action and to approximate the growing excitement of both victim and rescuers. Bazin describes the effectiveness of this kind of editing, or montage, in Abel Gance's La Roue. "In La Roue, Abel Gance creates the illusion of an accelerating locomotive without having recourse to any real images of speed (for all we know, the wheels might as well be revolving on the spot), simply by an accumulation of shorter and shorter shots."[15]

7) Hollywood montage or impressionistic montage. Today Hollywood or impressionistic montage is regarded as a very special type of montage, but years ago many American film makers never thought of montage in any other sense. This structural unit consists of a series of fairly brief, impressionistic shots (or units of shots) used to convey: 1) the passage of time or the seasons; 2) the telescoping of either an action or the development of a human relationship; or 3) the establishment of mood or place. Such montage sequences are often nothing more than a mechanical series of stock images used for transitions in the narrative. Everyone is familiar with the succession of calendar pages or concert hall posters. Artists such as Slavko Vorkapich at M-G-M and Don Siegel at Warner Brothers, however, saw the creative possibilities in impressionistic montage and achieved considerable refinement of mood, theme, and action in their sequences. Siegel included dialogue in some of his montage shots, and in Citizen Kane Orson Welles used the units of an impressionistic montage sequence to communicate the breakdown of Kane's first marriage.

## Footnotes to Chapter I

[1]Karel Reisz and Gavin Millar, The Technique of Film Editing (New York, 1968), p. 15.

[2]Vladimir Nizhny, Lessons with Eisenstein, trans. and ed., Ivor Montagu and Jay Leyda (New York, 1962), p. 169.

[3]Nizhny, p. 169.

[4]Pudovkin, p. 75.

[5]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 26.

[6]David Thomson, Movie Man (New York, 1967), p. 90.

[7]Ralph Stephenson and J. R. Debrix, The Cinema as Art (Baltimore, 1965), pp. 130-31. Stephenson and Debrix make important use of Martin in constructing a theory of film.

[8]Film Form is the best source for Eisenstein's theories of montage.

[9]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 27.

[10]Arthur Lennig, The Silent Voice (Albany, 1966), p. 145.

[11]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 27.

[12]Pudovkin, pp. 67-78.

[13]Lewis Jacobs, The Rise of the American Film (New York, 1968), pp. 46-48.

[14]Jacobs, The Rise of the American Film, pp. 46-47.

[15]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," pp. 26-27.

## CHAPTER II

In terms of inter- and intra-shot montage, the aesthetics of the silent cinema falls between the two stylistic extremes of Sergei Eisenstein and Erich von Stroheim. Eisenstein finds essential cinematic value residing between the shots in montage whereas Stroheim extends the spatial and temporal lengths of a shot to reveal the meanings and relationship within the shot. Fusing these two styles into a single idiom is D. W. Griffith, a director whose best films balance the inter-shot formalism of Eisenstein and the intra-shot realism of Stroheim.

This chapter analyzes the shot-structure of three films: Sergei Eisenstein's The Battleship Potemkin (1925), Erich von Stroheim's Greed (1923-24), and D. W. Griffith's Intolerance (1914-16). Potemkin is studied for its use of inter-shot formalism; Greed, for its intra-shot manipulation of detail within the shot; and Intolerance for its blending of the two techniques of inter- and intra-shot montage. Because of the continuity between Eisenstein's theatrical and cinematic careers, a brief introduction to Eisenstein's stage work will precede a discussion of the shot-structure of Potemkin.

During the civil war that followed the Russian Revolution of 1917, Sergei Eisenstein contributed valuable propaganda to the Red armies in his banners, political catch-

phrases, and agitational drawings. After the defeat of the counterrevolutionaries, Eisenstein continued to serve the Revolution by designing sets and costumes and finally directing production for the Proletkult Theater in Moscow.[1]

Eisenstein spent a short term of service with Meyerhold and learned from this great metteur en scène of the theater the value of high graphic stylization in any theatrical presentation. Plastically modulating settings and actors' movements for thematic ends, Eisenstein used a form of staging called Acrobatic Theater for his 1923 production of Ostrovsky's Enough Simplicity in Every Wise Man, retitled The Wise Man. To satirize Ostrovsky's bourgeois types, Eisenstein created a circus world of tightrope, trapeze, and clown costume for the mise en scène of The Wise Man. From the film historian's point of view, the staging of the Ostrovsky play is significant for two reasons. First, the production illustrates Eisenstein's characteristic tendency to interpose a thematically meaningful stylization between audience and subject. Secondly, The Wise Man experiments with the technique of montage commonly called symbolic montage or montage by attraction. The tensions created by the multiple-stage techniques in The Wise Man bear similarities to the relational and dialectical editing effects in Eisenstein's films of the Twenties. Marie Seton discusses Eisenstein's staging in terms of its cinematic qualities:

> The dialogue, [illegible], retaining some of Ostrovsky's lines and including many quips from Sergei Eisenstein, was carried from one acting area to another; in fact, from scene to scene, without the conventional pause or 'curtain' to mark, as it were, 'another part of the forest.' This technique approached the time-space fluidity of the film medium. Actually, Eisenstein was practicing an elementary 'montage' throughout the production of The Wise Man, though no thought of the cinema was in his mind.[2]

Eisenstein regarded the realism of the Moscow Art Theater as emotionally narcotic and intellectually superficial. In place of naturalistic observation Eisenstein wished to substitute a constructivist theater which less depicted event than restructured and analyzed event through a plastically stylized mise en scène. One important meaning of Eisenstein's "attraction" as operative within the theater (and later the cinema) is that affinity existing between ideas and images which might at first glance seem to have no point of resemblance within the particular production. In The Wise Man the "attraction" between the circus performers and the dramatic situation might at first appear nonexistent. Eisenstein used the circus setting to interpret and ridicule Ostrovsky's play so that his audience would see that the attraction between mise en scène and idea lies in the bizarre ritualization which characterizes both the circus world and the bourgeois obsessions of Ostrovsky's characters. In a 1923 issue of Lef, Eisenstein specifically explains what he meant by his conception of attraction. In Eisenstein's words, the attitude of the director toward his material must not be one of "static

'reflection'" but one of "action construction." "Approached genuinely," writes Eisenstein,

> this /attraction/ basically determines the possible principles of construction as an 'action construction' (of the whole production). Instead of static 'reflection' of an event with all possibilities for activity within the limits of the event's logical action, we advance to a new plane--free montage of arbitrarily selected, independent (within the given composition and the subject links that hold the influencing actions together) attractions--all from the stand of establishing certain final thematic effects--this is montage of attractions.[3]

Frustrated by the physical limitations of the theater, Eisenstein turned from the stage to the cinema. His first feature-length film, Strike (1924), characterizes the ruthlessness with which a strike is repressed in Tsarist Russia. Temporally brief shots and intricate patterns of rhythmic montage mark Strike as one of the early Soviet masterpieces of creative editing. Eisenstein's most inventive films are those of the Twenties which are based not on the intra-shot compositions of Stroheim and Murnau but upon the inter-shot connectives emerging from highly complex patterns of collisionary montage. Eisenstein is the greatest director of the school of film-making which Bazin calls the image-cinema of expressionist editing.[4] Instead of subjecting his camera to an event in actuality, Eisenstein breaks down the event into fragmentary pieces which he both arranges and comments upon in mosaic designs of unusually intricate visual rhythms.

There are many forms of montage by attraction, but

generally film critics tend to emphasize its abstractly symbolic manifestations in Eisenstein's films. Through this most stylized form of symbolic montage by attraction, a director comments upon the naturalistic dramatic situation by intercutting into the action symbolic shots logically unrelated to the event being portrayed on the screen.

Both Bazin in "The Evolution of Film Language"[5] and Stephenson and Debrix in The Cinema as Art[6] emphasize the role of symbolic commentary in their respective definitions of montage by attraction. In "The Evolution of Film Language" Bazin writes that "editing by attraction, conceived by Eisenstein . . . , might be broadly defined as the reinforcement of the meaning of one image by another image which does not necessarily belong to the same action: for instance, the cascade of light, in /Eisenstein's/ The General Line, which follows the shot of the bull."[7] Defining montage by attraction in similar terms, Stephenson and Debrix write that such an editing technique explains or comments upon a shot of a film by juxtaposing it with a shot which may have no logical or contextual connection with the event being portrayed on the screen. "In expressive montage," state Stephenson and Debrix, "the contrasting shot that is used to achieve the effect may have nothing to do with the action of the film. This is the famous montage of attractions, the word 'attractions' being used

in the sense of one thing being attracted to, i.e. having an affinity with, or similarity to, another. . . . [For example,] in Lang's Fury, we see women gossiping, then hens cackling."[8] This type of symbolic montage by attraction does play a large role in Eisenstein's films of the Twenties, but it would be misleading to confine montage by attraction to this single technique in films such as Potemkin and October. Both films are rich not only in this kind of ideogrammatic shorthand but in a more realistic kind of editing which analyzes a concrete event by fragmenting it into a uniquely dynamized cluster of shots. After examining examples of symbolic montage by attraction in Potemkin (i.e., examples such as the ones from The General Line and Fury mentioned above), I will discuss Eisenstein's use of montage by attraction in scenes which photograph an uninterrupted incident within the film's narrative action. (The term "attraction" generally indicates some kind of strong relational tension between two or more shots. It is sufficiently inclusive to embrace both symbolic and "realistic" collisionary shot interconnections.)

Perhaps the most well-known example of symbolic montage by attraction in Potemkin occurs in a scene at the end of the Odessa Steps sequence. Near the end of the slaughter of the sympathizers on the Odessa steps, Eisenstein moves from the shore to the Potemkin, which is now preparing to take revenge on the army for its killing of the Odessa

citizens. The ship's massive cannons begin firing on the Odessa Theater which is the town's military headquarters. After a series of shots photographing the shelling, Eisenstein intercuts into this brief scene of the bombardment three totally symbolic shots of three statuary lions. (These lions were photographed not at Odessa but at the Alupka Palace in the Crimea.) The first lion is sleeping peacefully; the second is awake and looking up with alertness; and the third is half-upraised with what appears to be an expression of fierce anger. Eisenstein's juxtaposition of these statues turns the three lions into a single animal which seems to be leaping up at the sign of danger. As the sailors open fire on the Odessa Theater, Eisenstein cuts the three shots of the lions into the action to express through emblematic symbolism the wrath of the people in the face of the Odessa massacre. In this scene the spectator is meant to feel as if all Russia is rising to the defense of the populace of Odessa.

Another type of symbolic montage of attraction is found in certain sequences of emblematically interpretive shots which interrupt the dramatic eventwithout reaching outside the film for externally imposed symbolic images. Ordinarily, the use of suggestive environmental shots for thematic commentary would be considered metaphorical montage rather than symbolic montage of attraction. In Eisenstein's films, however, the cutting to symbolic environ-

mental detail within the dramatic situation is often so prolonged and so thematically complicated that the effect on the viewer is analogous to that aroused by a completely abstract, symbolically imposed, montage by attraction. There is one example of "organic" symbolic editing occurring just before the sailors overrun the ship in Part II of Potemkin. After Senior Officer Gilyarovsky orders the tarpaulin placed upon the sailors grouped by the railing, the members of the guard raise their rifles and aim them at the trembling tarpaulin. Time seems to stand still as Eisenstein cuts to four thematically related details on the ship in order to visualize through symbolic images the political and religious implications of this attempted execution. The rifles are ready to fire as Eisenstein juxtaposes in four rapid shots these visual details: 1) the tapping crucifix in the hands of the piously acquiescent priest; 2) a life preserver inscribed with the name of Prince Potemkin, the Russian field marshal who was a favorite and adviser of Catherine II; 3) the prow of the Potemkin adorned with a Tsarist eagle; and 4) a bugle held firmly by a ship's bugler. Four images embracing the ceremony and the authority of the church, the state, and the armed forces collide in this sequence in order to suggest that the planned execution of the sailors signifies far more than the inhumanity of a number of individual officers. Each of the four images projects the militaristic structure

of the class authority which is now resorting to arbitrary murder in order to maintain its power.

This type of commentative montage plays a relatively minor role in Potemkin. The most brilliant formal achievement in Eisenstein's film is not its symbolic montage but rather its underlying current of organic compositional dynamism which joins every shot in the film into a single prolonged sequence of montage by attraction. There is not a single frame in this work which does not contribute to what Eisenstein calls "the organic unity of the composition of Potemkin."[9] Perhaps the least aesthetically obtrusive type of compositional montage is that which runs a series of shots together according to the tensions and the interactions of linear and pictorial design both within and between a unit of shots. One of the most remarkable examples of this type of montage appears in the fourteen shots at the beginning of Part Four which Eisenstein singles out for explication in the chapter which appears as "Film Language" in Film Form.[10]

This group of shots at the beginning of Part Four of Potemkin photographs the yawls sailing out to the battleship while the people of Odessa watch from the shore and the sailors of the Potemkin watch from the battleship. The composition of each shot is roughly sketched in the following catalogue.

SHOT ONE: an elevated, long-shot view of a group of yawls

streaming across the frame from left to right. The light tones of the triangle-shaped sails form a contrast against the darker waters.

SHOT TWO: a high-angle, long-shot composition of the yawls sailing from frame-left to frame-right photographed through the open spaces of a curved colonnade which overlooks the sea from an elevated point on shore. The arched base and top of the colonnade are visible at the lower and upper horizontals of the frame. Photographed at a distance greater than that chosen for Shot One, the yawls appear smaller in this composition than they did in the first shot.

SHOT THREE: a long-shot composition of people rushing away from the camera to get a better look at the sea, which is now visible in the far background of the frame as the yawls continue to move from frame-left to frame-right. The major compositional element in this shot is the large archway of a bridge which extends over the people as they move beneath it to reach points nearer the sea.

SHOT FOUR: a medium shot of a darkly-dressed man at frame-left standing next to a woman in a striped white blouse at frame-right. The woman holds a parasol which frames her and part of her companion in the arc of a broken circle.

SHOT FIVE: a medium shot of three people watching the yawls from the Odessa shore. Forming an arch in the background of this composition is the curved railing of an elevated balustrade. The two darkly-dressed men in this shot stand on either side of a woman wearing a light-colored blouse.

The three figures are so positioned that the line formed by the placement of their heads forms a second arch. The right arm of the woman and the left arm of the man at frame-right are briefly visible in upraised waving gestures.

SHOT SIX: a fairly close shot of a group of yawls approaching the battleship. One of the yawls (moving in the direction of frame-left) is featured in the foreground of this composition; the top of its sail is cut off by the upper horizontal of the frame. In the background of this composition is the side of the Potemkin; its top is also cut off by the upper horizontal of the frame.

SHOT SEVEN: a long-shot of the arriving yawls photographed from the deck of the Potemkin. Sailors are visible in the foreground watching the background presence of the yawls. Protruding into the composition from frame-right and slanting obliquely in the direction of frame-left is the barrel of one of the Potemkin's heavy guns.

SHOT EIGHT: a medium shot of the same two people photographed in Shot Four. Each of these figures is waving his upraised right arm at the distant battleship.

SHOT NINE: a medium close-up of a darkly dressed woman and a darkly dressed young girl rejoicing at the presence of the ship.

SHOT TEN: a medium close-up of a young man in white energetically waving his upraised right arm and extending it above the upper horizontal at frame-left.

SHOT ELEVEN: a fairly close view of a yawl sailing toward the Potemkin from frame-right to frame-left.

SHOT TWELVE: a longer shot of a group of yawls sailing from frame-left to frame-right on their way to the ship.

SHOT THIRTEEN: a low-angle shot of the top of the Potemkin mast. The wind is blowing the ship's red flag in the direction of frame-left.

SHOT FOURTEEN: a long-shot view of the yawls from the ship's deck. Nearly the same composition as that used for Shot Seven, this frame features the waving sailors in the foreground and the approaching yawls in the background. The imposing gun-barrel still extends obliquely into the composition from frame-right.

In this brief sequence of shots there are three major motifs of dynamic linear composition: the vertical, the horizontal, and the arch. Eisenstein interweaves these linear patterns into complex visual designs which inform both intra-shot and inter-shot compositions throughout the sequence. During the course of the fourteen shots, the primary source of linear tension lies in the opposition between vertical and horizontal lines. Eisenstein deliberately plays verticals and horizontals against one another in order to heighten suspense and to create a visually dynamic opposition between the standing Odessa onlookers and the yawls which are gracefully streaking out to the Potemkin. A second source of visual drama and graphic diversity is

Eisenstein's defiance of the textbook dictum that all motion in a journey be propelled in the same direction in every shot. In this sequence of Part Four of Potemkin the yawls are photographed sailing in both rightward directions (Shot One, Two, Three, and Twelve) and leftward directions (Shots Six and Eleven). By varying the paths of the life-giving yawls, Eisenstein avoids visual monotony and creates the sense that help is flowing to the Potemkin from every direction. In terms of pure linear composition, it is important to observe, too, that the yawls themselves are conceived in visual tensions of vertical and horizontal interactions. The yawls create horizontal dynamism through their passage along the water, but they also project vertical thrusts in their upright masts and sails.

It is interesting to study the compositional artistry which Eisenstein employs both to differentiate and to reconcile the two different actions in this sequence of shots. These two actions embody the basic vertical-horizontal tensions of the sequence: 1) the waiting and the anticipation of both the standing Odessa citizens and the standing Potemkin sailors; and 2) the journey of the yawls out to the battleship with the much-needed provisions. The first of these actions is conceived in basically horizontal modes of expressiveness; the second, in designs of linear verticality. In the beginning of the sequence, the basic mode of linear dynamism is horizontal: At a fairly remote

distance from the camera the yawls are sailing to the Potemkin in paths very roughly paralleling the upper and lower horizontal borders of the frame. Shot Two is the visually pivotal composition which introduces verticality through the colonnade while still photographing the horizontally moving yawls through the openings between the individual columns. This second shot prepares the viewer for Shot Three. In this third shot the yawls are relegated to an even more obscure background while the vertically defined people in the foreground compositionally prepare the spectator for his first, fairly close shot of two standing Odessa citizens in Shot Four.

Another reason Shot Two may be considered visually pivotal is for its introduction of the third linear motif, the arch. Eisenstein uses this latter motif as a kind of linear foil which sets off, backs up, and expansively embraces the gradual shift from a dominantly horizontal to a dominantly vertical linear mode during the first shots of the overall sequence. In Shot Two the linear medium of the arch appears in the curving sweep of the columns as well as in the curved base and top of the colonnade which Eisenstein employs as masking devices at the lower and upper horizontals of the frame. These curving lines in Shot Two explode into the giant arch of the bridge in Shot Three and form an organic relationship with the numerous curved lines throughout the sequence. These curves include the arc of

the open parasol in Shot Four; the double arch formed by the row of heads and the elevated balustrade in Shot Five; the sweep of the gunwale of the featured yawl in Shot Six; the arcs formed by the waving arms in Shots Five, Eight, and Ten; the sweeping arches of the sail on the yawl in Shot Eleven; and the arch of the raised arms of the sailors who wait on board the Potemkin for the provisions to arrive.

It is the all-embracing arch motif in the beginning of the sequence which facilitates Eisenstein's moving from a primarily horizontal sweep in Shot One to a dominantly vertical mode of expressiveness in Shots Four and Five. Inasmuch as it is linearly operative throughout the sequence, the arch motif acts as a kind of graphic foil; it encompasses and, in a sense, unifies the opposed vertical and horizontal lines which Eisenstein employs in each of the fourteen shots. The arch minimizes the clash between verticals and horizontals and looks ahead to the fusion of these two latter modes in the dramatically climactic compositions of Shots Seven and Fourteen. These compositions embrace the Potemkin sailors in the foreground and the approaching yawls in the background. In that these crowded set-ups embrace both strongly vertical and horizontal lines, they can be said to reconcile the two basically opposed linear modes of the sequence. Each set-up contains the vertically expressive figures of the battleship deck partitions; the upraised sails of the yawls; and the standing

sailors who look out to the yawls. Both set-ups also contain the roughly horizontal linearity formed by the protruding gun-barrel and the broken line formed by the top of the deck partitions in the foreground. The mediating motif of the curve is suggested in this composition by the irregularly arranged yawls lying between the ship and the horizon. This sequence of fourteen shots in Potemkin is susceptible of a much more complex linear analysis, but the three motifs operative throughout the shots give the viewer some idea of the extraordinary compositional care which Eisenstein expends on every frame of his film. Each shot in Potemkin is so organically related to an overarching idea and an embracing aesthetic design that it is possible to regard the entire Potemkin as an extended example of montage by ideological and compositional attraction.

One final type of editing generally associated with Eisenstein is a technique one might call cubist montage. Through this technique of editing Eisenstein shoots a naturalistic event not in a single shot but in a highly dislocating series of very brief shots which photograph the event from varied points of view. As the camera quickly cuts among a set of multiple perspectives, Eisenstein frequently creates a sense of subjective time by prolonging the event beyond the time it would take to occur in reality. Very often incidents within the event seem to overlap one another as Eisenstein photographs

parts of the event more than once. The most sustained example of this kind of analytical cubist montage is the Odessa Steps sequence of Potemkin.[11] Through his rapid intercutting of varying spatial lengths (victim in close-up, soldiers in long shot, or tableau in lateral tracking shot), Eisenstein manipulates time and space in jerky, discontinuous rhythms which express the violence and the discontinuity of the event. The reason this editing technique evokes images of analytical cubism in painting is that in each aesthetic mode an attempt is made to present an object or an incident from a number of different perspectives which the viewer is meant to perceive simultaneously rather than sequentially. Instead of dealing with the monumental Odessa Steps sequence, it may be more convenient to study this extremely stylized form of cubist montage in two brief incidents from Parts One and Two of Potemkin. The first portrays the reaction of a haughty senior officer to the presence of the rotten meat on board ship; the second photographs the throwing overboard of Smirnov, the ship's surgeon.

This first incident takes place just after the sailors have discovered the maggot-ridden meat aboard the Potemkin. The scene describing an officer's initial reaction to the sailors' outrage consists of four shots. The first shot presents an exterior view of a door joining an interior part of the ship with an outdoor passageway. The camera

does not face the door directly but is positioned at a point at the left side of the door so that at frame-right the viewer can see below this passageway a number of sailors gathering around the meat on one of the ship's lower levels. As the first shot begins, the eye is attracted to the clustering of the sailors at lower frame-right. After two sailors enter the composition from frame-left and walk in front of the door, the door opens, and a senior officer walks out to the passageway. Without removing his hand from the door, this officer turns his back to the camera and peers over the railing to watch the sailors gathered about the meat. Moving back to shut the door, the officer turns around with his back still facing the camera; as he starts to close the door, he turns around far enough to make his left profile visible to the camera. At this point Eisenstein cuts to a placement at the right side of the door so that now the camera photographs the right profile of the officer as he slams the door shut. Turning away from the camera again, the officer brings his hands behind his back and is about to clasp them when Eisenstein cuts to the same set-up which informed the first shot of this scene. After the officer clasps his hands behind his back in this third shot and then starts walking toward the camera, he turns his head away from the camera to look once again at the sailors gathered about the meat on the lower level at frame-right. At this point Eisenstein cuts to a medium close-up

of the left profile of the officer as he slowly turns his sneering face toward the camera to look at the despised sailors below.

Photographed by almost any other director, this scene would have been shot either in a single shot or in a smoothly edited juxtaposition of one long and one medium (or close) shot. Eisenstein, with his contempt for psychological naturalism, deliberately resorts to collisionary, disjointed shot connectives in this scene for both thematic and aesthetic purposes. Through the officer's movements in the first three shots Eisenstein suggests a sinister quality in this aloof character. As the officer turns away from the camera in each shot, he suggests the indifference of the entire officer class to the welfare of the sailors. The dark ambiguity of this character in the first three shots dramatically changes to outright malignity in the last shot as Eisenstein directs the officer to turn his supercilious face toward the camera. Like an analytical cubist painting, Eisenstein's montage destroys the naturalistic surface of this scene by breaking its various planes into component fragments. During the very rapid juxtaposition of the first three shots, the spectator receives the impression that he is seeing every side of this dislikable officer at the same time. The front of the officer is continually playing off against the back of the officer because Eisenstein wishes to stress the human insensitivity

of this man. In addition, the director deliberately prolongs the officer's clasping of hands and the final turning of his head. The montage cuts against the officer's movements to emphasize the discontinuity rather than the smoothness of the man's actions just as a cubist painter creates collisionary dynamism in the collapsing and projecting planes of his similarly fragmented and multiplely viewed subject.

A second example of cubist editing occurs at the end of the scene in which the struggling Smirnov is thrown off the ship. The abstract extension of time and the visual repetition of incident are much more striking in this scene than they are in the officer's reaction to the sailors' anger in Part One. The following seven shots conclude the scene of the sailors' revenge on Smirnov near the end of Part Two. 1) The first shot is an overhead view photographing two sailors holding the writhing Smirnov at the edge of the ship. 2) The second is a closer, high-angle shot which watches the two sailors toss the surgeon overboard. 3) As soon as Smirnov leaves the hands of the two sailors in the second shot, Eisenstein cuts to an eye-level view of the same two sailors as they toss the surgeon off the ship a second time. 4) The fourth shot returns to the overhead set-up of the first shot; the arms of the two sailors are still in motion and the body of Smirnov is visible falling down toward the surface of the sea. 5) The

fifth shot, like the third shot, subjectively extends time by photographing the same action a second time. In this shot the camera is placed over the area of water into which the plummeting body of Smirnov finally falls. 6) After a large spray of foam rises from the water in the fifth shot, Eisenstein cuts back to the overhead set-up of the first shot. Sailors are visible in the foreground; and the splashing foam created by Smirnov's fall dominates the composition in the background. 7) The seventh shot returns to the set-up of the fifth shot; a spray of foam is still exploding from the spot where the surgeon fell. (After Smirnov receives this punishment at the hands of the sailors, there is a vivid example of metaphorical montage in Eisenstein's cut to a close shot of Smirnov's pince-nez, which is now dangling from the ship's rigging. This detail perfectly embodies the moral shortsightedness of the surgeon at the same time that it grimly suggests an anachronistic emblem of a dead social order.)

Eisenstein fragments and abstractly elongates the fall of Smirnov for the same reason that he fractures the naturalistic behavior of the officer at the beginning of Part One. The repeated heaving of the surgeon from the ship; the deliberately prolonged descent to the sea; and the sustained upheaval of the disturbed foam all dynamize the downfall of the surgeon and the destruction of the social order he represents. Each of the shots of this sequence

are brief imagistic flashes which collide against one another and create explosions which are both aesthetically exciting and thematically expressive. So brief are all of these shots that the spectator feels, as Alfred Schmeller writes of analytical cubism, that ". . . different aspects of one and the same object, its front, back and side views, are fused and integrated within one picture."[12] Eisenstein has the unique ability to restructure an event from multiple point of views which define the event ideologically at the same time that they create a commentary on the physical event itself.

The symbolism of Potemkin's dialectical montage is not as elaborate as that of Eisenstein's October (1927-28), a work which is surely the most colossal example of Intellectual Cinema in film history. Potemkin steers a middle course between the occasional crudities of Strike and the complex analogical movements of October. Largely for this reason, Potemkin is the most accessible of Eisenstein's works and the one to which audiences react most sympathetically. Its mastery of editing cadences and the absolute consonance between the rhythm of the montage and the idea it embodies make Potemkin one of the most formally perfect films ever made.

Our examination of Potemkin illustrates the lengths to which Eisenstein and the Soviets developed the editing techniques first perfected by D. W. Griffith. The early

films of Eisenstein consummately realize the principles of classical montage as set down by Pudovkin: 1) "The foundation of film art is editing," and 2) "The film is not shot, but built, built up from the separate strips of celluloid that are its raw material."[13] Instead of subordinating his camera to the action of the mutiny, Eisenstein photographs fragmentary moments of the event from multiple points of view and then arranges these shots in relational patterns which analyze the action in a thematically commentative editing design.

Lev Kuleshov, Soviet film director and teacher at the State Institute of Cinematography, helped to evolve the language of editing commonly associated with the great Soviet directors of the silent period. For Kuleshov, writes Pudovkin, editing is the creative center of cinema: "He maintained that film-art does not begin when the artists act and the various scenes are shot--this is only the preparation of the material. Film-art begins from the moment when the director begins to combine and join together the various pieces of film."[14] Pudovkin describes one of Kuleshov's famous demonstrations of the power of editing and, in doing so, illustrates both the strengths and the weaknesses of one type of classical Soviet montage. Pudovkin worked with Kuleshov on the experiment and details it in the following passage.

> We took from some film or other several close-ups of the well-known Russian actor Mosjukhin. We

> chose close-ups which were static and which did not express any feeling at all--quiet close-ups. We joined these close-ups, which were all similar, with other bits of film in three different combinations. In the first combination the close-up of Mosjukhin was immediately followed by a shot of a plate of soup standing on a table. It was obvious and certain that Mosjukhin was looking at this soup. In the second combination the face of Mosjukhin was joined to shots showing a coffin in which lay a dead woman. In the third the close-up was followed by a shot of a little girl playing with a funny toy bear. When we showed the three combinations to an audience which had not been let into the secret the result was terrific. The public raved about the acting of the artist. They pointed out the heavy pensiveness of his mood over the forgotten soup, were touched and moved by the deep sorrow with which he looked on the dead woman, and admired the light, happy smile with which he surveyed the girl at play. But we knew that in all three cases the face was exactly the same.[15]

Kuleshov and Pudovkin accomplish in this sequence an effect similar to that achieved by the three shots of the statuary lions in Potemkin. In both cases, an emotion (the varying moods of Mosjukhin) or an event (the rising in wrath of the Russian people) is less portrayed than suggested through the shorthand of montage. In its most creative employment, relational editing can enhance a scene by making a point through the unique cinematic resource of shot juxtaposition. When mechanically employed, however, the same technique of montage may degenerate into a sleight of hand which falsifies an event by only seeming to confront it directly. In "The Evolution of Film Language" Bazin suggests the basic limitation of one kind of editing when he states of Kuleshov and Eisenstein: They

> . . . do not show the event through their editing;

> they allude to it. True, they take most of their elements from the reality they are supposed to be describing, but the final meaning of the film lies much more in the organisation of these elements than in their objective content. The substance of the narrative, whatever the realism of the individual shots, arises essentially from these relationships (Mosjukhin . . . plus dead child = pity); that is to say there is an abstract result whose origins are not to be found in any of the concrete elements. In the same way, one could imagine that young girls plus apple trees in blossom = hope. . . . The meaning is not in the image, but is merely a shadow of it, projected by the editing on the consciousness of the spectator.[16]

This recognition of the limitations of classical montage is evident in Bazin's distinction between what he calls the two different schools of cinema from 1920 to 1940. Allowing for some critical simplification, Bazin writes that the film history of this period consists of directors who believe in the image and directors who believe in reality. By "image" Bazin means: "very broadly speaking, everything that the representation on the screen adds to the object there represented."[17] In other words, any director who resorts to expressionism of theatrical stylization (such as that of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari) or expressionism of editing (such as that of Potemkin or October) is significantly adding to, or distorting, the event; such a manipulative artist creates a cinema not of reality but of image. By "reality" Bazin means that kind of film-making generally characterized by composition in depth, subordination of camera to event, and "a respect for the continuity of dramatic space and also, of course,

for its duration."[18] Stroheim, Murnau, and Flaherty are directors in this tradition because each has created, in the words of Bazin, "a language whose syntactic and semantic components are not at all the individual shots: the images are important not for what they add to reality but for what they reveal in it."[19] Bazin is responsive to the achievements of both the cinema of image and the cinema of reality, but of the two he prefers the ambiguous and less artificially structured cinema of reality. Bazin's distinction between these two schools, while (intentionally) somewhat overstated, remains one of the most valuable critical insights into the nature of film. It will play a major role in our approach to the next two films to be discussed, Erich von Stroheim's Greed and D. W. Griffith's Intolerance.

Stroheim based his film Greed on the novel McTeague by Frank Norris. Stroheim believed that his film should scrupulously reflect both the full naturalistic detail and the total narrative incident of Norris' work. The director made an extraordinary attempt to include virtually every episode of the novel into the original scenario of Greed. Stroheim paid homage to Norris' naturalistic fidelity by insisting that most of the San Francisco episodes and all of the Death Valley scenes be filmed on location. During the shooting of the San Francisco sequences the director required that his actors live in the rooms chosen for the

film's interior locations. Stroheim records the conditions under which these San Francisco sequences were shot:

> I had rented a house on Laguna Street in San Francisco, furnished the rooms in the exact way in which the author had described them, and photographed the scenes with only very few lamps, making full use of the daylight which penetrated through the windows. . . . In order to make the actors really feel 'inside' the characters they were to portray I made them live in these rooms (a move which was favourably received at the studio since it saved the company some hotel expenses!).[20]

Stroheim adhered to the epic design of his screenplay and finally produced a film whose running time exceeded nine hours. Before its release, Stroheim was removed from his job of editing Greed and the original film was reduced to the shortened (less than three-hour) version which we watch today. This released Greed presents a somewhat skeletal version of Norris' novel and Stroheim's original screenplay.

The central character of both Norris' novel and Stroheim's film is McTeague, a simple, basically good-hearted person who, following his mother's bidding, leaves his job as car-boy in a California gold mine and apprentices himself to a traveling dentist. After establishing a dental practice in San Francisco, McTeague marries a lower middle-class girl, Trina Sieppe, and enjoys a period of relatively happy domestic life. McTeague's serenity is destroyed after he loses his dental practice and then suffers the increasing privations of Trina's avarice. His

sense of order gone, McTeague sinks into the alcoholism and the sadistic brutality which appeared at regular intervals in the life of his father. McTeague finally murders Trina, escapes to Death Valley with her gold, and later confronts his rival, Marcus Schouler, on the burning desert. McTeague kills Marcus in a fight, but not before Marcus locks the two men together with a pair of handcuffs. The novel ends with McTeague waiting to die in Death Valley.

Today Greed is generally acknowledged to be among the highest achievements of world cinema. Stroheim's film did not, however, always command such respect. During the late Twenties and the Thirties, the Kuleshov-Eisenstein concept of editing prevailed to such an extent that Stroheim's approach to film was frequently considered lacking in "truly cinematic" qualities. The view of Lewis Jacobs in The Rise of the American Film typifies a traditional view of Stroheim's emphasis on intra-shot rather than inter-shot montage. Jacobs contends that studio editors "did not vitally affect" Greed by cutting down, without Stroheim's permission, the film to the shortened version we have today. For Jacobs, Metro-Goldwyn could not qualitatively change Greed because Stroheim creates a universe in depth bounded by the confines of the shot: "Details, action, and comment were selected and brought into the camera's scope without any changing of the shot. Hence someone else could edit von Stroheim's films without destroying the essential von

Stroheim."[21] Jacobs grants Stroheim's mastery of profound characterization and imaginative visual stylization, but he asserts that the director's "lack of knowledge and power in editing" gives his films "an elephantine and blundering quality."[22]

Jacobs' condescension toward a technique which does not primarily concern itself with the relational value between the shots is characteristic of an earlier generation's critical subservience to the Soviet conception of editing as the creative center of film. Today, thanks in large part to Bazin and the critics of Cahiers du Cinéma, we are beginning to approach film without imposing on individual works the idea that cinematic meaning ought to inhere in creative editing.

Like the best silent films of F. W. Murnau, Stroheim's Greed creates a sense of visual density and spatial unity by making space hierarchical and by filling its various planes with important decor and action. Compositions in depth appear throughout Greed and project a universe fully as complex and ambiguous as the universe of Murnau or Welles. Bazin makes the important point that analytic editing forces the viewer to accept the director's interpretation of an event whereas set-ups in depth impel the spectator himself to share the function of the artist and to make the relational connections between elements within the shot. Composition in depth demands an intellectual

participation of the audience; it requires, writes Bazin, ". . . a more active mental attitude on the part of the spectator and even a positive contribution to the direction. Whereas with analytic editing he has only to follow his guide and let his attention focus on whatever the director has chosen for him to see, a certain minimum of personal choice is required here. The fact that the image has a meaning depends partly on his attention and his will."[23]

Numerous set-ups in Greed illustrate the intellectual demands of composition in depth. One of the most striking examples of this technique occurs just after Trina and Marcus leave the dental office following McTeague's awkward proposal of marriage to Trina. After Trina and Marcus board the streetcar, there is one deeply moving shot which photographs the departing streetcar from an elevated placement within McTeague's second-story dental parlors. In this shot McTeague is facing away from the camera as he watches the streetcar below his window. There are three immediately significant planes of action and setting in this shot. Closest to the camera in the first plane of depth is McTeague; during the shot McTeague turns from right to left to follow the movement of the streetcar. Farther away from the camera are the apertures of the windows which set off the street scene below in a kind of proscenium frame. And on the street in a more distant spatial plane is the streetcar which is carrying away the

only woman who has ever aroused feelings of romantic passion in McTeague.

In this scene, Stroheim could have used editing to cut from Trina in the streetcar to McTeague at the windows above. The director deliberately forsakes montage at this moment because composition in depth allows him to portray simultaneously and in a relationship of spatial and temporal continuity all of the constituent elements in this dramatic moment of estrangement. The sight of the hulking figure of McTeague against the moving streetcar heightens the poignancy of McTeague's sorrow. The windows in the shot's second plane take on Kracauer's psychophysical correspondences in that they seem to concretize the social barriers between McTeague and the departing Trina. And the streetcar in the third plane becomes a characteristically naturalistic symbol of destiny--of the destiny of the world of "civilized" urbanity from which McTeague has always been excluded. Stroheim's respect for the unity of time and space allows the viewer to study a visually detailed mise en scène and to decipher its meaning for himself. In Bazin's terms, Stroheim's composition typifies the cinema of reality because it presents diverse currents of action in the multiple spatial planes which structure the human eye's view of actuality.

Another example of a set-up in depth appears in the scene in which McTeague finally confesses to Marcus his love

for Trina. In this scene McTeague and Marcus are talking over a beer at the Cliff House. The two sit at a corner table in front of windows overlooking an outdoor promenade and the ocean beyond. This scene is of critical importance to the early part of the film. The inarticulate McTeague is called upon to make a totally uncharacteristic declaration of love; and Marcus, who is not deeply committed to Trina, seizes this occasion to play the hero and theatrically give up his girl for the sake of his best friend. Stroheim's editing fragments the greater part of this scene into balanced rhythms of one- and two-shots of McTeague and Marcus. If Greed were a staged play or a conventionally shot film, one would expect the director to focus all attention on the two men so that the audience could study every nuance of interplay in this dramatic confrontation. Because of Stroheim's naturalistic shot structure, however, most of the Cliff House scene is photographed in spatially extended shots which make it impossible for the viewer to devote his undivided attention to the two human beings seated near the windows. For behind the windows throughout this scene is visible, generally in clear focus, a varied panorama of human activity on the promenade; in the more remote background one can also see the ocean and the sky beyond the promenade. As McTeague and Marcus play their scene, the viewer's eye is repeatedly called away to watch the balloon-seller, the sailors, the young couples, and

all of the diverse people walking back and forth behind the windows.

Stroheim intentionally fractures our attention in this scene because he wants us to see McTeague and Marcus not as isolated figures in the anthropocentric world of the stage but rather as human beings enmeshed in the naturalistic environment of actuality. The composition in depth in the Cliff House scene runs the stagelike world of planned, indoor reality into the more impersonal exterior world of nature and unparticularized humanity outside the windows. The basic shot structure of this scene visualizes the smallness of the individual ego by setting it in an embracing social and cosmic context. McTeague makes a very painful confession of love, and Marcus delivers a highly impassioned speech of renunciation; but Stroheim's background detail reminds the audience that there is still a world of indifferent nature and impersonal human activity to place the individual in humbling perspective. In both McTeague and Greed, man is not the center of the universe but only a part of a tangled network of elemental forces, human relationships, and random circumstances. Composition in depth and spatial unity embody the interrelatedness of these elements far beyond the capabilities of relational or analytic montage.

The most famous example of multiple-plane composition in Greed appears during the wedding of McTeague and Trina.

There are many spatial levels in this crowded tableau-composition, but three of the planes command the viewer's special attention. Just after McTeague slips the ring on Trina's finger, the two kneel down in front of the minister. As soon as the couple kneels, Stroheim cuts to a high-angle placement in the back of the room. Of the three dominant spatial levels, the plane which includes the backs of the kneeling McTeague and Trina is closest to the camera. In the second plane is the figure of the standing minister, who is now facing the camera. In the distant background is the beginning of a funeral procession which is now starting to pass in front of the window in back of the minister. As the wedding ceremony continues, the eye of the amazed viewer is fixed on the clergymen, the coffin, and the pallbearers which slowly pass in clear focus from right to left in the stage-like window behind the minister.

Before breaking continuity for a badly chosen close view of the passing coffin, the camera views this composition of multiple planes as a spatially continuous whole and invites the audience to interpret its meaning. Instead of juxtaposing close shots of the coffin with shots of the marriage couple in the manner of Eisenstein, Stroheim asks that the spectator himself relate the funeral procession to the combination of internal weakness and external circumstance which will bring death to this marriage. This kind of composition is typical of shots throughout Greed. There

are two memorable examples of similar visual design in the sequence in which McTeague murders Trina. As McTeague menaces his wife in the foreground of the darkened kindergarten, a festive "Merry Christmas" sign hangs behind them. Still farther back stands a glittering Christmas tree. After the murder, McTeague appears framed by a doorway festooned with Christmas decorations. Behind him is a thematically suggestive void of light-slashed blackness. Again, Stroheim suppresses editing and encourages the spectator to discover for himself that both of these compositions in depth visually highlight the grotesque disparity between man's brutalized instincts and the sentimental decorativeness which is in part responsible for cheapening emotion and debasing human life in the twentieth century.

Stroheim's gift lies not in editing but in intra-shot detail. Almost all of the satire on American mores in Greed emerges not from direct statement but from a thematically weighted manipulation of costume, setting, and decor. Both the coffin at the wedding and the Christmas decorations of the murder sequence are visual statements of the idea that sentimentality is the obverse of a particularly national kind of cruelty. The most zany visualization of this idea is the cluster of rippling American flags decorating the Sieppe family on a picnic outing. These flags reflect the self-glorifying militarism of Mr.

Sieppe and are a measure of his total abstraction of experience. Stroheim does not use montage to juxtapose close shots of the flags with Mr. Sieppe's fierce regimentation of his family's actions. The director simply includes the flags in the composition of his shots, hopes that the viewer will take special note of them, and finally expects his audience to relate the flags to Mr. Sieppe's violent treatment of his children and his inability to treat his family on a human level. Like Fitzgerald in The Great Gatsby and Welles in Citizen Kane, Stroheim is fascinated by the persistence of the American Dream and the increasingly bizarre and cheapened vehicles through which the Dream is expressed. In view of Greed's dark insights into the psychology and the culture of a people, it is not surprising to find Bazin's likening of Stroheim's camera to the scrutinizing eye of a police inspector. In Stroheim's work, writes Bazin, "reality admits its meaning like a suspect who is being grilled by an indefatigable police inspector. The principle of his direction, a simple one, is to look at the world from so close and with such insistence that it ends up by revealing its cruelty and its ugliness. One can well imagine, in theory, a Stroheim film composed of a single shot, which would be as long and as close up as one liked."[24]

In turning from Potemkin and Greed to Intolerance, one discovers it is possible to combine the two modes of inter- and intra-shot montage in a single style of film-making.

Intolerance is in many respects the greatest of silent films because it blends with such ease of execution the abstraction of Eisensteinian editing and the realism of Stroheimian intra-frame detail.

Shortly after completing his Civil War epic The Birth of a Nation (1914-15), D. W. Griffith began working on his next film. Entitled The Mother and the Law, the new film was to have been an expression of social protest based on two events from actuality: a famous murder trial and the mass killing of a number of striking workers at a chemical plant. The later controversy over the racism of The Birth of a Nation influenced Griffith's plans for The Mother and the Law. Eager for an occasion to dramatize his hatred of intolerance, Griffith decided to fragment the narrative of The Mother and the Law and interweave it among three historical events dealing with prejudice. He titled the final film Intolerance and announced in an opening title that the thematic link threading the four stories is the battle waged between hatred and charity throughout the ages.[25] In the first episode, The Modern Story, the intolerant force in society is a group of puritanical reformers known as the Uplifters. In the beginning of this episode, we are introduced to Mary, the lonely and unwed sister of Jenkins, a wealthy industrialist. Neglected by her younger friends, Mary joins the reformers and wins money from her brother to support their charitable interests. His sister's

requests become so demanding that Jenkins orders a ten-percent cut in wages for his mill employees. The workers strike, and the militia is called in. The militia fires on the workers, but the strikers continue to demonstrate; they cluster threateningly around the gates to the mill until Jenkins orders his manager to "clear the property." Jenkins' hirelings now open fire on the workers and kill and wound a number of them. Among the dead is the father of a young mill worker called the Boy.

Many of the people whose lives once depended on the mill are forced to move to a nearby city. Among the dispossessed are the Boy; a young woman called the Dear One; the Dear One's aging father, a former mill worker; and the Friendless One, a girl left on her own as a result of the strike. In the city the lonely Friendless One becomes the mistress of a racketeer called the Musketeer of the Slums. The Boy, unable to find work, drifts into the Musketeer's service, but breaks away to start a new life after marrying the Dear One. The Dear One's father, unable to adjust to the life of the city, dies shortly after the Boy begins courting the Dear One. Angered by the Boy's defection from his band of outlaws, the Musketeer frames the Boy on a robbery charge. While the Boy serves a prison term the Dear One gives birth to a child. The Uplifters open a campaign against negligent mothers and place the Dear One's baby in an institution. The lecherous Musketeer ingratiates

himself into the Dear One's favor by pretending that he can secure the release of her baby. After the Boy's return from prison, the Musketeer tries forcibly to make love to the Dear One in her apartment. The Boy angrily intervenes at the same time that the jealous Friendless One crouches outside on a window ledge spying on her unfaithful lover. After the Boy and the Dear One fall unconscious in the struggle, the Friendless One shoots and kills the Musketeer from the ledge outside the window. The Boy, only recently out of prison, is tried for the murder and sentenced to be hanged. Shortly before the scheduled execution, the anguished Friendless One confesses at the urging of the Kindly Officer, a neighborhood policeman who has been helping the Dear One to discover the truth about the Musketeer's death. In the company of the Friendless One and the Kindly Officer, the Dear One rushes against time in a speeding racing-car to intercept the train in which the Governor is riding. The train is stopped, and the Boy is rescued from the gallows only moments before the time of his scheduled execution.

The second episode of Intolerance deals with events in the life of Jesus. Griffith concentrates upon the wedding at Cana, the attempted stoning of the adulteress, and the sustained intolerance of the Pharisees. In each instance the Judean Story opposes the charity of Jesus to the narrow self-righteousness of his enemies. Near the

conclusion of Intolerance Griffith portrays the victory of the Pharisees in the march to Calvary and the crucifixion of Jesus between the two thieves.

The third episode, The French Story, blends the historical event of the massacre of St. Bartholomew's Day with the personal love story of Prosper Latour and Brown Eyes. Catherine de Medici's hatred of the Huguenots plays an important role in Griffith's dramatization of the murdering of the Protestants, which begins in Paris on the morning of St. Bartholomew's Day, 1572. Catherine's son King Charles IX is reluctant to sign the order which will legalize the mass execution; but Catherine, the foppish Duc d'Anjou (brother to the King), and a number of councilors finally persuade the King to sanction the massacre.

The final episode, The Babylonian Story, opens in 539 B.C. and deals with the conquest of the Babylonians by the Persian forces under Cyrus. Griffith traces the fall of Babylon to the intolerance of its High Priest of Bel-Marduk toward the votaries of Ishtar, Goddess of Love. The ruling Belshazzar and his Princess Beloved antagonize the High Priest by worshipping the rival Goddess.

Much of the Babylonian Story centers around the spirited Mountain Girl. At the beginning of this narrative, the Mountain Girl's brother takes his sister to a Babylonian court because he cannot tame the girl's unruly disposition. The court rules that she be sent to the

marriage market to find a husband, but Belshazzar takes pity on the girl and allows her to remain free and unwed. The Mountain Girl spurns the advances of the Rhapsode, a warrior-poet, and vows eternal love to Belshazzar. When she learns that Cyrus the Persian is planning to attack the city, she warns Belshazzar personally and finally dies in the ensuing battle between the Babylonians and the Persians.

Griffith baffled and intrigued film audiences of 1916 by telling these four stories not sequentially and chronologically but simultaneously. Instead of arranging the episodes in strict chronological order, Griffith opened his film with the Modern Story and then interwove the four episodes into a single scenario by cutting back and forth among the four different bands of time. Griffith used a technique of symbolic montage of attraction in fusing his final film into a unified whole by periodically cutting back to the emblematic scene which opens and closes his film. This is the scene in which Lillian Gish, the allegorical Woman Who Rocks the Cradle, gently rocks a large cradle while a triad of Fates look on in the background.

In viewing Intolerance for the first time, the spectator is impressed by the similarities between Griffith's film and Eisenstein's early works. In both Griffith and Eisenstein, allegorical characterization, relational montage, and relative degrees of rapid cutting all tend to distance the viewer somewhat from the dramatic event so

that the audience will intellectually interpret as well as emotionally absorb itself in an exciting narrative. Intolerance, like most of Eisenstein's films, also uses many techniques of aesthetic alienation. The symbolic cradle shots, the interwoven narratives, and the yawning page and servant at the respective French and Babylonian courts are all devices which work to detach the viewer from narcotized involvement and arouse him to an attitude of intellectual scrutiny.

There are, however, important differences between Intolerance and Eisenstein's early films. Because Griffith also shares the naturalistic concerns of Erich von Stroheim, his films are less conceptualized and less aesthetically distanced than those of Sergei Eisenstein. Unlike Intolerance, Eisenstein's first films show little respect for the physical integrity of the event the director is portraying. Eisenstein's films of the Twenties destroy the naturalistic appearance of an action through the mosaic of flash cutting and the analogical movement of dialectical montage. The political meaning of an event and the thematic relevance of an action's rhythm are more important to Eisenstein than realistic characterization or the creation of a firmly localized sense of place. Intolerance, by contrast, for all its conceptualization, allows the viewer to feel a strong degree of emotional identification with character; the film also retains a sense of physical locality

which is lacking in Eisenstein but which is consummately realized in Stroheim. In Intolerance Griffith's camera slowly pans over the heads of the French courtiers and repeatedly floats down over the mighty Babylonian steps; as it does so, the camera fixes the action in a definite locality and helps us to relate emotionally defined characters to a specific physical environment which we can take the precise measure of. Eisenstein respects idea; Stroheim, event. A film such as Intolerance incorporates both idea and event into a mise en scène which is both intellectually abstract and naturalistically concrete.

Like Eisenstein, Griffith uses numerous techniques of montage to fragment the dramatic event into various spatial and temporal rhythms. The director's mastery of every resource of editing is more dazzlingly displayed in Intolerance than in any other film of Griffith's career. Griffith did not invent the close-up, the cross-cut, and the relational shot connective, but he was the first director to use regularly and aesthetically modulate these devices in transforming a recording machine into the instrument of an artist. The contrapuntal structuring of the four stories of Intolerance may represent a certain political and ideological naivete, but aesthetically it is a triumph of the imagination and a major advance in the development of editing. Unlike most of his predecessors, who conceived film as photographed theater, Griffith understood that the

essence of film lies not in simply recording a story from a fixed point in time and space but in breaking down and reordering the component elements of actuality. Griffith's freely moving and cutting camera penetrates the imaginary proscenium respected by earlier directors in order to destroy the stage's continuous space and the theatrical spectator's fixed point of view. Through montage Griffith manipulates time and space from multiple points of view within the action itself.

In the terms of Erwin Panofsky, Griffith dynamizes space and spatializes time through a dramatic and often ironic juxtaposition of spatially and temporally varied shots.[26] Griffith's variations of long, medium, and close shots succeed in making space plastic and manipulating it for purposes of both rhythmic variation and thematic commentary. When Griffith throws a tight shot of huddled strikers against a long shot of an industrialist alone in his immense office, the director creates political value out of spatial tensions. These two shots inform part of the strike sequence of The Modern Story in Intolerance. Their dramatic collision in time illustrates what Stephenson and Debrix write about film's ability to galvanize space by informing it with thematic and dramatically varied rhythms:

> In real life, in the plastic arts and on the stage, space is static, motionless, unchanging. It stays put while we move about in it, either physically

> or mentally. In the cinema, space loses its static quality and acquires a time-charged dynamic quality. Parts of space are arranged in a temporal order and become part of a temporal structure with a temporal rhythm. The close-up for instance is not just a large scale picture of a part of space--it is a stage to be reached in time just as much as a fortissimo passage in a musical composition.[27]

In Intolerance, the clash between the crowded workers and the solitary industrialist is violently dislocating because the director abruptly jumps from a small space to a much larger space in two shots of brief temporal length. No effort has been made to modulate time and space gradually in a series of even or regularly scaled temporal and spatial units.

Just as Intolerance dynamizes space through its arrangements of long, middle, and close shots, so, too, the film spatializes time through its aesthetic fragmentation of temporal units. Griffith's cutting from one age to another in Intolerance spatializes time by treating it as a place, or a structure, within which the viewer can move about much in the same way that he might walk through a museum whose chamber doors read: The Modern Room; the Judean Room; the French Renaissance Room; and the Ancient Babylonian Room. In his films Griffith also manipulates time in order to make the temporal length of a shot suggest the psychological situation of an event. In Intolerance, for example, the increasingly more rapid cutting among the four stories conveys the heightened tensions of the leading characters of each narrative through the use of accelerated

montage. Through his imaginative editing, Griffith creates rhythms and values which disclose meanings and relationships never before achieved in film. The monumental four-part structure of Intolerance is itself a giant metaphor of the principle of filming through juxtaposition, or montage, rather than by linear, logical continuity.

It is not surprising that Eisenstein viewed Intolerance more times than he watched any other American film. Griffith's use of nearly every conceivable type of montage immeasurably aided Eisenstein and his Soviet colleagues in their experiments with creative editing. Dialectical, metaphorial, parallel, contrast, and accelerated editing represent only a handful of the many techniques of montage to be found in Intolerance.

One recurrent tableau-composition in Griffith's film creates a pattern of dialectical montage which extends throughout the four episodes of Intolerance. This composition is wholly symbolic; it bears no naturalistic relationship to any of the four narratives. This tableau consists of a woman rocking a cradle in frame-center and three Fate-like women sitting in the background of the composition at frame-left. Griffith opens and closes his film with a shot of this scene. In addition, the director often uses shots of the same composition as a kind of chapter-heading when he wishes to break away from one narrative and enter into another. The dialectical tension

created by the repeated insertions of this visual leitmotif is meant to invest the entire film with an overarching symbolic significance. The maternal woman and the triad of Fates are intended to suggest the timelessness of man's history; the repetition of human endeavor throughout the ages; and the possibilities of spiritual as well as physical rebirth. One difficulty with this symbolic device is its somewhat schematic relationship to the interior life of the total film. Although the cradle-tableau does facilitate the shifts between the narratives, it is only emblematically suggestive of the eternally recurring human values which Griffith's four narratives dramatize. Eisenstein intelligently criticizes the leitmotif for its insufficient integration into the entire texture of Intolerance. Griffith re-creates Whitman's image, writes Eisenstein, ". . . not in the structure, nor in the harmonic recurrence of montage expressiveness, but in an isolated picture, with the result that the cradle could not possibly be abstracted into an image of eternally reborn epochs and remained inevitably simply a life-like cradle. . . ."[28]

Metaphorical montage informs a number of scenes in Intolerance. One common technique of metaphorical commentary is that type of editing which compares a person to an animal expressive of some salient quality in the person's nature. Shortly before the death of the Pet Sister in The Birth of a Nation, Griffith repeatedly juxtaposes shots of

Mae Marsh with shots of a squirrel in order to underscore through associative montage the playful friskiness in the girl's personality. The same technique is used a number of times in Intolerance. At the beginning of the film, for example, the Dear One is effusively calling out to her departing father and blowing him a kiss when suddenly Griffith cuts to a shot of two goslings belonging to the Dear One and her father. At this moment the goslings are walking toward one another; arriving at the same point, each bird reaches out toward the other's neck in what looks like an affectionate gesture of caress. The next shot returns to the Dear One, who, seeing the goslings below, coyly interlocks the index finger of each hand to imitate the love-ritual of two young birds. In this scene the insert of the two goslings is a somewhat unsubtle technique of italicizing through emblematic metaphor the loving harmony between the Dear One and her father. Later in the film, at the beginning of the French narrative, Griffith makes a similar point through editing when he cuts from a shot of the Duc d'Anjou leaning against a friend to a close-up of the puppies which the Duc is supporting in a pouch near his waist. Through this juxtaposition of shots, the director associates the epicene Duc with the pampered animals now lolling about in the Duc's somewhat suggestively placed pouch. And shortly before Jesus enters the chamber of the wedding guests at Cana, Griffith cuts from a full-

figure shot of Jesus to a fairly close shot of a cluster of white doves in order to relate the peaceful nature of the Nazarene to the gentleness usually associated with doves.

This type of metaphoircal montage is obvious to the point of becoming mechanically emblematic. The reason for the popularity of this technique in Griffith lies in the relatively limited expressive possibilities of the silent film. Because a director could not characterize a person or a place with dialogue and environmental sound, he was frequently forced to rely upon a somewhat schematic means of symbolism in order to comment upon a place or a person's character. Audiences of silent films quickly grew accustomed to an iconic shorthand hieratic in its stylization. In the Twenties a viewer knew that heroine + lamb = virtue and that vamp + cat = sin. One remarkable quality about Intolerance is Griffith's ability to use not only this visual shorthand but a more original type of metaphorical editing as well.

One example of a more subtle form of metaphorical montage is the symbolic coupling of two shots used to portray the degradation of the Friendless One in her relationship with the Musketeer of the Slums. The first shot photographs the Friendless One sitting at a table across the hall from the Musketeer's apartment. Slouched on a chair, she idly picks up a glass, drinks from it, and then places it back on the table. She is dressed in what looks like a

bizarre party costume and appears to be profoundly bored with the life around her. The next shot appears after a short transitional title reading, "Across the hall, The Musketeer of the Slums." This second, metaphorically commentative shot, brings us into the Musketeer's presence. This shot does not, however, photograph the Musketeer himself but rather a statue belonging to the Musketeer portraying a nude woman tied to the stylized trunk of a tree. The camera slowly tilts up the length of this statue before cutting to the Musketeer, who is now reading a book in the same room. In these two shots Griffith juxtaposes the debased Friendless One at the table with the Musketeer's statue so that the viewer will relate the two images and reflect that the Friendless One is just as unhappily enslaved to the Musketeer's lust as the statuary woman is physically bound to the tree trunk.

Montage of suggestive detail is another technique of relational editing frequently employed in Intolerance. One example occurs immediately after the first shot of Belshazzar's faithful bodyguard, the Mighty Man of Valor. After Griffith introduces this character in a long medium shot, he cuts to a diagonally masked shot of the bodyguard's sword as the burly warrior decisively pulls the sword out of its sheath and then pushes it back into the sheath with an equally forceful gesture. This visual detail cut into the scene emphasizes the martial strength and the ready

loyalty of Belshazzar's devoted protector. Two other examples are the shots which isolate the hands of the Mountain Girl and the Dear One at two emotionally intense moments in the lives of these characters. The first occurs just after a prospective husband feels the garment of the Mountain Girl as she fumes at the crowd gathered around her at the marriage market. Shortly after the man touches the bottom of her garment, Griffith cuts to a masked shot of one of the Mountain Girl's hands as it makes a savage fist and then slowly reopens. Griffith's insert of the furiously clenching hand emphasizes the rage and the humiliation which the Mountain Girl feels on being put on public carnal display. The second example is perhaps the most famous use of montage of suggestive detail in film history. As the trial of the Boy draws to a close, Griffith inserts a close shot of the Dear One's tightly clenched hands between two close-ups of the Dear One's face. Griffith's cut to Mae Marsh's lap and interlocked hands quietly conveys the desperation of the Dear One as the Boy's trial nears its end. More than any other shot in Intolerance, this insert of the Dear One's hands indicates Griffith's ability to illuminate the meaning of a scene through heightened detail.

The dominant technique of editing in Intolerance is that which Lewis Jacobs calls parallel editing.[29] Through this structuring device Griffith breaks down his four stories and conflates them into a single four-part narrative

in order more graphically to demonstrate the parallelism, or the oneness, of history's moral lesson: the lesson that the intolerance of the beliefs of others lies at the source of violence and injustice. Although the basic structure of the film is informed on the principle of parallel editing, there are numerous instances in which Griffith uses contrast editing both in relating scenes within an uninterrupted unit of a single narrative as well as in relating connective transitional points during the switching from one narrative to another. After a brief look at several examples of contrasting editing within an unbroken block of a single narrative, we will examine some of those passages in which Griffith draws significant relational value from both parallel and contrast editing at the points connecting the four narratives with each other.

Some of the most original montage work in Intolerance resides in the thematic and psychological tensions produced by contrast editing within a self-contained passage set in an uninterrupted stretch of narrative. During the strike of Jenkins' workers, for example, one of Griffith's juxtapositions of two spatially disparate shots is probably the most subtle political statement in any of the director's films. The first shot photographs a group of huddled strikers pressing against the barred wooden partition which separates the workers from the mill itself; the second is a very long shot of the solitary Jenkins as he sits at a desk

in his hugely oversized office. These two images collide to dramatize visually the inequalities of a system which pens up the workers like animals and which grants full material abundance to the man who exploits the workers. During a later scene of the strike there is an example of contrast editing which makes another dramatic use of a long-shot composition of Jenkins in his office. Between two shots of the Boy grieving over his father's body Griffith inserts another very long shot of Jenkins in his office; during the latter shot Jenkins' hands are clasped and his face is abstracted in an expression of inward melancholy. Later, after the Musketeer's frame-up sends the Boy to prison, Griffith contrasts the domestic security of the Dear One playing with her baby with the misery of the person the Dear One is thinking about. This sequence of two shots juxtaposes a shot of the briefly reflective Dear One in the apartment with a shot of the Boy as he unhappily looks out from behind the bars of the prison. Every example of contrast editing in Intolerance produces an idea or a relationship not inherent in each of the component shots considered apart from one another. This emergence of a new meaning from a series of juxtaposed shots typifies the kind of relational value which the Soviet directors of the Twenties achieved in their highly complex techniques of montage.

Griffith makes a number of thematic statements through

parallel and contrast editing as he moves from one narrative to another during the course of Intolerance. As Mary and the Uplifters continue implementing new reforms, Griffith juxtaposes a long shot of Mary and her friends at the General Offices of the Mary T. Jenkins Foundation Fund with a shot of the self-righteous Pharisees who now disapprove of Jesus' attendance at the wedding feast of Cana. Between these two shots Griffith verbalizes the parallelism of the montage with a title: "Equally intolerant hypocrites of another age." Much later in the film, Griffith dramatizes the timeless tyranny of the law by coupling a long shot of the courtroom in which the Judge is about to sentence the Boy with a long shot of Jesus carrying and falling beneath the weight of the cross after hearing Pilate's verdict. The title between the two parallel shots: "Outside the Roman Judgment Hall, after the verdict of Pontius Pilate: Let Him Be Crucified." There are two memorable instances of contrast editing in the interweaving of incidents in the Modern Story with opposing incidents from the Judean Story. After a shot in which the grateful adulteress walks away from Jesus, Griffith turns to the Modern Story with a transitional title: "Now, how shall we find this Christly example followed in our story of today? The Committee of Seventeen report they have cleaned up the city." After this title leaves the screen, Griffith ironically comments upon the charity of Jesus in the previous shot by photo-

graphing in this succeeding shot a view of the Uplifters in the immense General Offices of the Jenkins Foundation. In the scenes which follow a group of the Uplifters exult over their various reforms as Griffith visualizes the execution of some of these reforms on the screen in flashback form. The most deeply moving instance of contrast editing between the four episodes occurs just after three Uplifters forcibly take the baby from the Dear One. A shot of the Dear One lying unconscious on the apartment floor is succeeded by a shot of Jesus surrounded by a group of loving children. Between these two shots is an insert of a frozen tableau of Jesus and the children over which is written the legend: "Suffer Little Children--."

The mighty architectural design of Griffith's montage very often obscures the more unobtrusive cinematic achievements in Intolerance. Many of these quieter accomplishments form part of the intra-shot formalism generally associated with the cinema of Erich von Stroheim. Especially expressive are those compositions which make symbolic and psychological use of decor and landscape. One use of abstract setting appears as the Boy enters prison on the robbery charge. Just after two policemen hustle the handcuffed Boy through the door on the left side of the prison's mighty set of metal doors, the camera remains outside as the heavy door closes behind the three men. Griffith holds the shot as the handle on the left door swings down over the right

door and as a small opening in the right door is shut off by a square plate of metal. The blank, lifeless doors now dominate the screen as Griffith visualizes the living entombment which the Boy must undergo for a crime he did not commit. Such a geometric abstraction of setting looks ahead to the abstract decor in the works of Fritz Lang. Griffith's ability to transfigure the physical world with emotionally and thematically interpretive value is evident in almost every scene of Intolerance. The sensuous blacks and whites of the Babylonian Love Temple; the abstract austerity of the courtroom in the Modern Story; and the stark, linear expressionism of the gallows on which the Boy nearly dies are all imagistic manipulations which incarnate meaning through composition.

Related to this eloquence of visual design is Griffith's artful use of composition in depth throughout Intolerance. Griffith's sets are spatially extended structures in which the director carefully plays foreground against background action. Two of the most immediately impressive interiors of extended spatial reaches are those of the ballroom setting for Mary's party at the beginning of Intolerance and the cell-block in which the Boy is photographed on the day before his scheduled execution. One remarkable set-up during the Jenkins party discloses the multi-leveled interior of a palatial mansion; at one point Mary can be seen moving among her guests on a foreground

level while, on a higher background level, other guests are clearly visible stretching into distant reaches of space as they dance in an extended rectangular ballroom. Constructed in a similarly elongated manner is the expressionistic passageway of cells in which the Boy forlornly wanders on the day before he is to be executed. The Boy wears a striped prison uniform which matches the harsh chiaroscuro of this composition. At frame-left, extending obliquely into frame-right, is a corridor of black doors slanting into the background of the shot almost as far as the eye can see. The blackness of the oven-like doors forms a stark contrast against the whiteness of the upper wall. This expressionistically simplified opposition of tones and the suggestion of endlessness in the darkened corridor creates a sense of imprisonment in purely graphic terms. Easily the most visually astounding set-up of spatial extension in Intolerance is the elevated-angle view of both the upper wall and the road along the lower wall of the ancient city of Babylon. Near the beginning of the Babylonian sequence, Griffith photographs this double-planed setting as Belshazzar, riding on a splendid horse-drawn throne, slowly advances toward the camera on the upper wall at frame-right while, far below at frame-left, tiny handmaidens can be seen dancing about the statue of Ishtar as the mighty image of the goddess slowly advances toward the gateway of the city. For sheer delirium of visual spectacle, it is hard to think

of an image to match this double procession in all cinema. Intolerance helped to reveal to the world that film is the only art form which can do full justice to the epic physical event.

Another type of depth-composition in Intolerance is the spatially extended set-up which manipulates background detail so unobtrusively that its complexity is often unnoticed by the viewer who watches the film for the first time. One such example occurs shortly after the strike forces the Boy to leave home and seek a new life in the city. Leaving his house, the Boy walks along the sidewalk and finds the Friendless One sitting on the steps of her home. The Boy tips his hat, offers some words of encouragement to the Friendless One, and shakes her hand before tipping his hat a second time and walking off. The Friendless One, who has stood up to greet the Boy, now stands alone as she reflects upon the Boy's kind gesture. This is an important scene in the Modern Story. The Friendless One's responsiveness to the Boy's overture is a measure of the girl's deep emotions; her sensitivity suggests that had circumstances been kinder the Friendless One might have found a man more like the Boy and less like the Musketeer. Griffith uses this first meeting between the Boy and the Friendless One at a later point in the film. As the Friendless One watches the Musketeer repeatedly striking the Boy from her position on the window ledge, she

recalls this scene (part of which Griffith recalls on the screen in flashback form) and then shoots the Musketeer to death.

With the weight of this scene established, it is interesting to go back and consider the significance of a visual detail in this scene which has no relevance whatsoever to the Friendless One's psychology. As the scene begins, the Friendless One is sitting on the steps in the foreground at frame-right. The Boy enters the set-up at frame-left and walks along the sidewalk toward the sitting girl. A distinctly visible background detail near the center of the set-up is a man in his shirtsleeves sitting on a porch of the next house. The man is sitting on a rocking chair and reading a paper. As the Boy talks to the Friendless One, his body blocks from the viewer's attention the man sitting on the porch; after the Boy walks away, however, the man in the background becomes totally visible and makes himself conspicuous by leaning over in his rocking chair to pour himself a drink from a pitcher. This background detail makes it difficult for the viewer to concentrate all his attention on the Friendless One, who now stands at frame-right mulling over the Boy's gesture. The director's distracting use of the man with the pitcher is not accidental. This man's presence typifies the way Griffith undercuts the viewer's emotional rapport with the film's central characters in order to dramatize the richly

detailed physical universe in which these characters live. The man with the pitcher is a representative of a world which continues to perform all its mundane activities despite the ecstasies and the tragedies of the world's individuals. For Siegfried Kracauer, the background detail on the far porch would be an indication of the cinema's natural tendency to embrace the permeating, unplanned intrusions of the external universe into any structured environment.[30]

Another set-up of realistically expressive composition in depth is that which informs shots of the Boy's newspaper stand. The stand is placed on the sidewalk at frame-left in set-ups which allow the viewer to look beyond the stand and glimpse the human activity taking place far down the sidewalk. Griffith makes comical use of this crowded set as he directs a bearded man to walk between and bump against the Boy and the Dear One as they first meet on the sidewalk near the newspaper stand.

Later Griffith makes a dramatically complex use of a shot's spatial extension as the Boy confronts the Musketeer and announces that he's through with crime. This meeting takes place in the Musketeer's apartment; at the beginning of the shot the Boy stands at frame-left, the Musketeer, at frame-right. Throughout this shot there is visible in the background a doorway leading into a bedroom. In the beginning of the shot, the Musketeer's body is blocking part of the doorway. Shortly after the Boy throws down his gun,

the Musketeer gestures with his left arm and in so doing makes briefly visible in the room beyond the face of the Friendless One as she rests in bed. The Musketeer makes a pathetic attempt to beat up the Boy, but he is no match for the more agile younger man. The two men fight in the foreground while in the background the Friendless One is seen lying in the bed and apparently taking little interest in the first stages of the fight. As the men continue to swing away at each other, the Friendless One rises from the bed and slowly walks toward the doorway with her hair falling over her shoulders and the bedclothes still wrapped around her. Approaching and standing in the doorway, she says nothing as she watches the Boy turn to leave the fallen and humiliated Musketeer. In this shot (and in the shot following a superfluous cut-away to the departing Boy outside the door) the Friendless One says nothing, but her darkly watchful presence in the set-up's background adds a psychological dimension to the scene. In the Modern Story Griffith portrays the Friendless One as fully aware of the Musketeer's empty bravado yet at the same time sexually and emotionally dependent upon this petty racketeer. The Friendless One's witnessing of the Musketeer's humiliation heightens her own debasement and characterizes more fully the relationship between the Musketeer and his mistress.

The total editing design of Intolerance is so complex that it is easy to underestimate the importance of Bazin's

cinema of reality in each of the four narratives in the film. Of all the episodes, it is the Modern Story which is richest in those scenes which forsake editing and plastic modulation for a more realistic subordination of camera to event. Mae Marsh's Dear One is the most epic and fully developed character ever created by D. W. Griffith. Some of the scenes tracing her growth from girlish ebullience to mature womanhood create the most detailed cinema of reality in all the works of Griffith.

Three of these scenes are unusually detailed. The first is the single shot recording the departure of the Dear One and her father from their home after the strike. As the shot begins, the father and the Dear One are passing through the gate of their house for the last time. The father stays behind momentarily to shut the gate while the Dear One unhappily walks toward the camera. In this scene Mae Marsh is wearing a sagging, wide-brimmed hat and a rumpled, loose-fitting jacket; in her right hand she is tightly clenching the strap of her bag. Her mouth tightly set and her face drained of color, she walks toward the camera, stops, and then takes a backward look toward the house she has grown up in and which she may never see again. As she looks around, her father, having shut the gate, begins walking toward the camera to join his daughter. The father tries to conceal his emotions under a facade of business-like calm. Stopping next to his daughter, he,

too, takes a final look back, but then abruptly jerks his head in a beckoning gesture as the Dear One touches the sleeve of her jacket to her nose. The father walks out of sight at frame-left and the still stunned-looking Dear One follows him as she, too, walks off at frame-left. The camera lingers briefly on the gate and the leaves of the surrounding trees before breaking to the next scene. In this vignette Griffith deliberately avoids the easy emotionalism of a Big Scene by suggesting the sorrow of both characters through indirection. Griffith relates father and daughter to each other in the same frame and asks the viewer to study carefully the physical appearance of each person. It is the tightness with which the Dear One holds her bag in front of her and the obviously studied calm of the father which betray the depths of unhappiness which the two characters feel at this moment. Griffith does not break the mood by cutting for relational or dramatic effect; he rather preserves the spatial and the temporal continuity of the scene and asks the viewer to relate the scene's component elements for himself.

A later, somewhat modified, example of Bazin's reality-cinema is the sequence of four shots which concludes the scene in which the Dear One mourns her dead father in the apartment. This sequence begins and ends with a tableau-composition. In the first shot, the Boy is just entering the apartment door at frame-right; after closing the door

behind him, he does not walk farther into the room but remains standing by the door so that he will not obtrude upon the Dear One's sorrow. At frame-left is the body of the father; he is laid out facing away from and parallel to the camera's viewpoint so that the top of his head is now visible in the lower foreground at frame-left. By the left side of the father's head a candle is burning; at the foot of the corpse, facing the camera, sits a mourning woman who remains silent and motionless throughout the scene. As the Boy pauses by the door, the Dear One does not turn to greet him but remains obliquely facing the camera as she stands at the right side of the corpse looking down at her father. In this mourning scene of Intolerance, the next shot is a loose close-up of the Boy; still standing by the door, he is now ineffectually trying to control the tears running down his face. The third shot is a medium view photographing the Dear One as she looks upward with an expression mingling physical weariness and uncomprehending sorrow. The fourth shot, the masterpiece of the sequence, photographs the same tableau-composition recorded in the first shot. The Boy is still by the door; the unidentified woman remains motionless as the Dear One, gazing down her father, slowly raises her arms in an attitude of complete helplessness. Able to contain herself no longer, she begins crying, drops to the level of the body, and throws her hands around the head of her father. The shot ends with the Dear One's

sobbing head pressed against her father's face and the figure of the Boy still anxiously poised by the door at frame-right.

What is remarkable about these four shots is not only the pliant grace of their spatial rhythm but the perfect timing in the building up of the Dear One's sorrow and in the prolonging of her supplicating gesture in the last shot. Griffith knows exactly how long to extend a sustained, muted emotion before allowing a character to surrender to impulse and give way to an undisguised display of feeling. The stillness of the corpse and the mourning woman at its feet eloquently plays against the inward psychological tension of the two barely composed young people in this gravest of the film's tableaus. Although there is editing in this scene, Griffith makes complex use of compositional detail and establishes numerous relationships among the four people in the scene's two tableau-shots. The final shot of this mourning scene presents a unit of self-contained action which is the structural basis of Bazin's cinema of reality and Stroheim's temporally prolonged, visually cluttered shot.

The conclusion of this mourning vignette is somewhat similar to the scene in which the Boy returns to his wife after his first stay in prison. In this scene the camera is set up inside an apartment so that the door leading out to the hall is at frame-right. As the first shot begins, the Boy enters the door at frame-right and then closes the

door behind him; as he walks a few steps into the apartment, he nervously smiles and looks around to find something to say about the room's appearance. Instead of walking across the room to frame-left, where the Dear One is standing, the awkwardly embarrassed Boy stops walking and looks at his wife from his place near the door at frame-right. The Dear One, standing somewhat closer to the camera at frame-left, starts to make a tentative movement toward her husband but then draws back and stays where she is. A conventional director might have sentimentalized this reunion by requiring the two to rush into each other's arms at this point. Griffith resists this temptation because he wishes the physical space now separating man and wife to suggest the spiritual and the psychological void created by the seizure of the couple's baby. After an uncomfortable pause, the Boy walks across the room to his wife; as he approaches her, the Dear One transfers from her left hand to her right hand a knitted bootee once worn by her child. In her left hand she holds the warrant authorizing the seizure of their baby. The Dear One tries to interest her husband in the letter, but all the Boy's eyes can see is the piece of his baby's clothing. The Boy takes the bootee in his left hand and the Dear One, understanding his feelings, places her right hand over his left so that the bootee is now clasped between their two hands. At this point, the two exchange a direct, unhappy glance, and Griffith (rather needlessly)

cuts away to three shots of the baby in the reformers' institution. After the third baby shot, the director returns to the same scene and holds the shot as the Dear One tries to mask her sorrow with a quick smile. The smile has the opposite effect. The grief which has been rising in the Dear One now spills over as the unhappy mother throws her arms around the Boy and breaks into tears. The Boy, hardly more controlled than his wife, tightly encircles the Dear One in his arms. The shot concludes with the two comforting each other in this desperate embrace.

Carefully detailed scenes such as the three just described are the distant forerunners of the sequence-shots of Welles and Wyler. They are central to the realistic aesthetic of Griffith and extremely important for what they reveal about the director's less restrained displays of emotion in Intolerance. Although Griffith's emotional responses to his characters frequently approach pathological sentimentality, the director's sentiments are never faked or glibly manipulated. If the three, deliberately unsentimentalized, scenes just described indicate anything, it is the sure, intuitive understanding of human psychology on which all of Griffith's sentiments are based. The director's overstated feelings are honestly rooted in a personality and a vision of the world; they are uncontrolled but never fraudulent.

This chapter by no means exhausts the technical

achievements of the shot-structure of Potemkin, Greed, or Intolerance. On the contrary, this study addresses itself to a mere fraction of the shots and scenes of these three films. It is hoped, however, that the inter-/intra-shot approach will eventually be employed on much more extensive critical level so that finally the serious viewer of film will have a firm, concrete idea of the basic design and the visual complexities of the single shot in a carefully directed film.

## Footnotes to Chapter II

[1]Marie Seton, Sergei M. Eisenstein (New York, 1960), pp. 32-66. The biographical details of Eisenstein's life which appear in this chapter are all from Seton's book.

[2]Seton, p. 60.

[3]Seton, p. 62.

[4]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 26.

[5]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 27.

[6]Stephenson and Debrix, pp. 131-32.

[7]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 27.

[8]Stephenson and Debrix, p. 131.

[9]Sergei Eisenstein, The Battleship Potemkin, trans. Gillon R. Aitken (London, 1968), p. 8. (Screenplay.) At the present time, only two of the screenplays of the films studied in this thesis have been published: Sergei Eisenstein's The Battleship Potemkin and Fritz Lang's M. Citations pertaining to these screenplays appear in the footnotes and bibliography of this study. Quotations from Notorious, Citizen Kane, and the titles from Intolerance are taken directly from prints of these films.

[10]Eisenstein, Film Form, pp. 115-21.

[11]This sequence is described in detail in the Potemkin screenplay.

[12]Alfred Schmeller, Cubism (New York, n.d.), p. 7.

[13]Pudovkin, pp. 23-24.

[14]Pudovkin, p. 167.

[15]Pudovkin, p. 168.

[16]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 27.

[17]Bazin, "What Is Cinema," p. 24.

[18]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 39.

[19]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 31.

[20]Joel W. Finler, Stroheim (London, 1967), p. 26.

[21]Jacobs, p. 350.

[22]Jacobs, p. 350.

[23]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," pp. 45-46.

[24]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," pp. 30-31.

[25]Two helpful sources of information on the filming of Intolerance are the Griffith chapters in Jacobs' The Rise of the American Film and Iris Barry's D. W. Griffith (New York, 1965).

[26]Erwin Panofsky, "Style and Medium in the Motion Pictures," in Film: An Anthology, ed. Daniel Talbot (Berkeley, 1966), pp. 18-19.

[27]Stephenson and Debrix, p. 133.

[28]Eisenstein, Film Form, p. 241.

[29]Jacobs, pp. 46-48.

[30]Kracauer, Theory of Film, pp. 254-57.

## CHAPTER III

In their treatment of the symbolic image pattern in film, Eisenstein and Pudovkin tend to emphasize the metaphorical image which is isolated from a film's narrative line by its inclusion in a clearly delimited shot. The four symbolic images in the execution scene in Potemkin (the crucifix, the life preserver, the prow, and the bugle) do not constitute an unobtrusively symbolic part of the foreground or the background of the combined shots which make up this scene. Each of these four details on board the Potemkin is an example of a thematically meaningful image which appears within the boundaries of a single shot. We are not allowed to find these images in the physical settings in which this sequence is set; rather we must be led to the symbolic details in shot conjunctions which are overtly signified with value.

Such patterns of symbolic editing do not exhaust the resources of imagistic expressiveness in either the silent or the talking cinema. For in most films there are coherent patterns of images which depend less upon the boundaries of the individual shot or shot cluster than upon their relatively subtle immersion in the physical setting of the sequences in which they appear. Had, for example, Eisenstein merely included the four symbolic images of the Potemkin execution scene within the foreground or the background of the long shots in this sequence, they would

have lost some of their overtly metaphysical import; nevertheless, they would have retained the status of suggestive imagery and would have contributed a measure of symbolic value to the shots in which they appeared.

The difference between symbolic montage and symbolic imagery is analogous to the difference between the literary simile and the literary metaphor. When Griffith in Intolerance cuts from (A) a shot of Jesus to (B) a shot of a flock of doves, the relationship between (A) and (B) is explicitly conceptualized for the spectator in the abstract, relational tension (C) between the two shots. In this typically "Soviet" shot-simile, the overt montage linkage yoking (A) and (B) does the interpretive work for the viewer by creating the relational tension (C) between the two shots. In this type of shot-simile, the inter-shot conjunction unifying (A) and (B) possesses the kind of direct figurative importation which the "like" contains in the literary trope: "Christ is like a flock of doves." Symbolic imagery, by contrast, is a much less conceptualized form of cinematic statement. This kind of visual detail does not depend upon the boundaries of a shot. It is not cut into or cut away from; it rather occupies a relatively unobtrusive place within a shot or a large shot cluster. Very often such an indirect form of imagistic statement goes unnoticed by the viewer during the first watching of a film. Had, for example, two doves occupied

the background of a long shot of Jesus in Intolerance, the birds would certainly have been less saliently symbolic; yet they would still have made some kind of imagistically suggestive impression on the viewer. That imagery in films is frequently subliminal in its effects does not mean that it loses its symbolic weight. In fact, the sections on M, The Last Laugh, and Notorious in this chapter indicate the overwhelmingly determinate power which even the most understated image pattern frequently possesses in motion pictures. The reason this subtler type of imagery may be regarded as metaphorical is that it makes its point by unspecified intra-frame juxtaposition rather than by overtly signified inter-shot conjunction. In Eisenstein's editing of the execution scene in Potemkin, we are led from image to image (i.e., from crucifix, to life-preserver, to prow, to bugle) in simile-like shot conjunctions which make the conceptualized meaning of the images clear for us. However, if (A) the trembling sailors had been photographed standing below (B) a cross or a martial emblem, (A) and (B) would be two indeterminately juxtaposed phenomena which the viewer himself would have to relate to one another.

The first film studied in this chapter, Stroheim's Greed, has been chosen for its symbolic, simile-like montage. The second film, Fritz Lang's M (1931), is a particularly rich example of a moving picture whose thematic significance relies almost entirely on intra-shot formations

of imagery which in virtually no way depend upon symbolic montage. After examining the diverse image clusters in these two films, this chapter becomes more particularized as it studies a related group of images--that of doors, windows, and rooms--in F. W. Murnau's The Last Laugh (1924) and Alfred Hitchcock's Notorious (1945-46).

A film such as Greed greatly contributes to an understanding of the development of editing in silent film history. Like many silent pictures of the Twenties, Greed compensates for its lack of sound by informing its scenes with complex patterns of literary montage. Even in the shortened film we have today there are many examples remaining of Stroheim's heavy emphasis on imagistic statement through metaphorical montage and montage of suggestive detail.

Following the example of his former employer and mentor, D. W. Griffith, Stroheim frequently uses animal imagery as the basis of his metaphorical editing. Three of the central characters of Greed are associated with symbolically suggestive animals. Marcus is likened to a predatory cat; and the two pet birds of the McTeagues are frequently mirrors of changing marital conditions in the McTeague household. One detailed instance of metaphorical montage using these three animals occurs during the scene in which Marcus takes his final farewell of the McTeagues. After his falling-out with McTeague, Marcus decides to

betray McTeague to the dental authorities; he then pays a call on the unsuspecting McTeagues both to say goodbye and to talk of his plans to become a cattle rancher. In his scene Stroheim uses a cat's stalking of the two caged birds to symbolize the hidden treachery of Marcus' betrayal. As Marcus walks into the McTeagues' apartment, the film cuts to a shot of the cat as it waits near a doorway and then suddenly leaps up and runs off at frame-left. Not long afterward, a long three-shot of the seated Marcus, McTeague, and Trina is followed by a five-shot sequence which likens Marcus to a cat on the prowl and which compares the McTeagues to two birds helplessly trapped in a cage. The five shots present: 1) a high-angle view of the cat as it looks up from McTeague's dental chair at the offscreen bird cage suspended overhead; 2) a low-angle view of the cage in which the birds are obliviously facing away from the camera; 3) an extreme close-up of the cat's face; 4) the same low-angle view of the birds seen in the second shot; and 5) a second, extreme close-up of the cat's face. This likening of Marcus to a sly cat is repeated at the end of this scene. After Marcus rises from his seat and walks to the doorway, a medium shot of Marcus at the doorway of the McTeagues apartment dissolves to an extreme close-up of the cat's face. After the film cuts from the cat's face to a shot of the bird cage and then back to the cat's face again, the latter shot of the cat dissolves into a shot of Marcus,

who is still standing in the doorway of the apartment taking his farewell.

The cat and bird imagery extends into the scene in which McTeague reads the letter from the dental authorities telling him to stop practicing dentistry. A medium profile shot of McTeague holding the letter is succeeded by a cut to the cat poking its head into the window of the dental parlors. The next two shots juxtapose a low-angle view of the bird cage with a close shot of the cat looking up at the off-screen birds. McTeague opens the letter and reads it. After he scans the brief notification, the film cuts from the letter to a series of four brief shots which record: 1) the cat looking up at the off-screen birds; 2) the two birds perching in the cage above; 3) the cat leaping from the windowsill; and 4) the cat landing on the overhanging bird cage. After McTeague shoos the cat off the cage and then shows Trina the letter, a two-shot of McTeague and Trina looking at the letter is juxtaposed with two shots photographing first the cat gazing upward and then the two birds perching in the cage. And shortly afterward, as Trina broods over the letter, two shots again photographing the cat and the birds appear on the screen to indicate that Trina has solved the mystery of the letter. After the shot of the birds leaves the screen, Trina reappears snapping her fingers at her recognition that Marcus is the person who notified the dental authorities of McTeague's lack of

formal professional training. The pet birds of the McTeagues play an important symbolic role throughout Greed. During the scene in which McTeague first becomes violent with Trina, Stroheim underscores the growing marital discord between the McTeagues by twice cutting to the two pet birds fighting in their cage. And after McTeague kills Trina, he appears in Death Valley with only a single canary in the cage because Stroheim wishes to emphasize the solitude of McTeague in the final sequences of the film.

There are similarly emblematic examples of metaphorical montage in Greed. As McTeague and Trina walk toward the sewer, Stroheim inserts into the scene a shot of a nearby dead rat in order to emphasize the squalor of the setting and the incongruity of McTeague's playing "Nearer My God to Thee" as he and Trina sit on the sewer. Not long afterward, McTeague proposes to Trina and kisses her on the mouth. During the kiss, Stroheim inserts a shot of a passing train to underscore the sexual energies in the couple's embrace. The author of The Octopus might have appreciated this literary image; a racing train fittingly suggests a naturalistic inevitability in the romance between McTeague and Trina.

Montage of suggestive detail is another frequently employed device of emblematic commentary in Greed. At the beginning of Greed, McTeague is pushing a cart along a track of the Big Dipper Gold Mine when he sees a disabled

bird lying in the path of the cart. McTeague stoops down, picks up the bird, and begins to raise it to his mouth. When McTeague's hand starts moving, Stroheim cuts to a close-up of McTeague's lips as McTeague raises the bird to his mouth and kisses its bill. This insert of the kissing lips emphasizes the tenderness which runs beneath the forbidding exterior of the hulking McTeague. Near the beginning of Part One of Greed McTeague shakes hands with Trina as Marcus introduces the girl to him. As McTeague and Trina are shaking hands, Stroheim cuts to a close-up of McTeague's large hand tightly squeezing Trina's smaller hand. This detail characterizes the bodily strength and the social awkwardness of McTeague; it also establishes at the outset an element of menace in McTeague's physical superiority over Trina. Later in the film, during the scene in which McTeague and Trina are married, Stroheim communicates Marcus' rage through a shot of Marcus' hands tightly gripping each other behind his back. In this extreme close-up of Marcus' back, McTeague's rival joins his hands together and clenches them because he deeply resents losing Trina and the five thousand dollars of the lottery money. A well-known example of montage of suggestive detail occurs shortly after the wedding guests leave the McTeague's apartment. When McTeague kisses his frightened bride, Stroheim dramatizes McTeague's physical power through an insert of Trina's feet as they gradually stand tiptoe on

the top of McTeague's shoes. Stroheim uses a similar technique of montage to emphasize Trina's anguished reaction to the letter her husband receives from the dental authorities. As Trina reads the letter, Stroheim cuts to a shot of her rubber-gloved hand fiercely squeezing water out of a sponge. Similarly, when McTeague and Marcus quarrel over the gold in Death Valley, Stroheim cuts from a close-up of McTeague's face to a shot of McTeague's fiercely clenching hands.

While watching Greed, many viewers are understandably annoyed by Stroheim's frequently mechanical use of both analytic and relational editing. Stroheim learned from Griffith the dramatic use of naturalistic detail and composition in depth and then infused both of these techniques with visual genius and a unique, profoundly felt vision of the world. Stroheim also emulated Griffith's experiments in montage, but he generally failed to duplicate or improve upon them because he approached film-making with an aesthetic based on the detail within rather than on the abstraction without. Among the scenes weakened by analytic editing in Greed are the emotional confrontation at the Cliff House and the wedding of McTeague and Trina. Near the end of the scene in the Cliff House, Marcus rises to his feet and looks out the window to consider a proper response to McTeague's confession of love for Trina. At this point Stroheim needlessly breaks up the spatial depths

of the scene's overall composition by photographing Marcus alone from a point outside the window as Marcus looks through the glass out toward the sea. This shot of Marcus is followed by subjective-camera shots of the promenade and the ocean beyond; because they are taken from Marcus' point of view, they exclude all interior detail of the Cliff House as well as any part of the window frame. All of these shots destroy the spatial harmonies of the scene's otherwise smoothly related depth-compositions. They add nothing to the thematic significance of the scene because they only guide the viewer's attention to the background detail which the alert eye has already picked out and evaluated. A more glaringly ruinous use of analytic editing is the insert of the fairly close shot of the coffin into the climactic, long-shot set-up of the wedding ceremony. Stroheim's needless dissolve to the passing coffin accentuates the obvious and momentarily robs the scene of a remarkably subtle kind of black comedy.

Most of the instances of relational editing in Greed are as superfluous as the unnecessary insert of the coffin into the long-shot tableau of the wedding ceremony. Although it is convenient to have a virtual Guide to Silent Film Editing in Greed, it is also visually distracting to watch obtrusive literary symbolism disrupt the temporal and spatial rhythms of the film's action. When Stroheim cuts away to a passing train as McTeague kisses Trina, the

director weakens the scene's emotional intensity with a symbol of obvious significance. Similarly obvious are the inserts of first the bird cage and then Trina's feet into the scene in which McTeague kisses Trina after the wedding feast. Like the many symbolic shots of the cat and the bird cage, these shots detract from the realism of the event without adding anything except mechanically emblematic metaphors and suggestive details.

Far less obtrusive than Stroheim's shot-similes are the intra-frame images which inform so many of the set-ups of Fritz Lang's first talking film, M. Before discussing some of the image patterns in this film, it will be helpful first to examine the aesthetic and the psychohistorical background of both M and the whole period of German expressionist cinema. For so closely related are form and content in Lang that it is impossible to deal with Langian imagery without also dealing with the unique and somewhat specialized world-view which this imagery brings to life.

After its defeat in World War I, Germany entered a period of psychological displacement which only the cathartic violence of Nazism finally expelled. Siegfried Kracauer's From Caligari to Hitler demonstrates how the postwar German cinema reflected this national sense of dislocation in some of the most profoundly schizophrenic films ever made.[1] The murdering hypnotist of The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari (1919), the deathly vampire of Nosferatu

(1922), the disgraced doorman of The Last Laugh, and the masochistic Professor of The Blue Angel (1929-30) moved through a paranoid universe threatened, as Kracauer has shown, by the polar forces of tyrannical sadism and anarchic misrule. The directors of this period relied heavily on expressionist stylization of image because only such a plastic modulation could project the elemental forces of the screenplay's inner design. The German films of the Twenties dealt less with individually psychologized human beings than with the archetypal characters of dream and nightmare. Directors, writers, and cinematographers such as Josef von Sternberg, Carl Mayer, and Karl Freund stylized plastic image in expressionist patterns in order to embody a basically symbolic vision of the world.

One of the great directors of this extraordinary period of German film-making is Fritz Lang. Lang's works of the Twenties confront not the naturalistic world of surfaces but the expressionistically simplified reality of myth, legend, and fantasy. In Die Nibelungen (Siegfried and Kriemhild's Revenge (1922-1924)), Lang gives monumental realization to a myth long central to Germany's cultural consciousness. The stylized and oppressive settings in Die Nibelungen have a formal stateliness which makes the human drama seem as inevitable and as ritualized as a carefully rehearsed pageant. Metropolis (1925-27) marks the apotheosis of Lang's expressionist scenic design. In this film,

the titanic setting separating the masses of workers from their rich overlords is a magnificent visual statement of the slave structure of an unchecked capitalistic society.

A consideration of Lang's expressionist German work is helpful in understanding both M and the later American films. Although the success of M reconciled Lang to a visual style of modified realism, the director never abandoned the expressionistic formal design and the major thematic concerns of the German period. The distanced viewpoint, the emphasis on long and middle shots, and the closed universe of oppressive architecture are formal characteristics in both the German and the American films of Lang. The people in the director's visionary world of fantasy and nocturnal menace have always been less individualized human beings than abstracted representations of elemental impulses moving through patterns of action as formal as Lang's architecture. The director's slow pace and stylized plastic image distance the viewer from particularized emotional attachment to character. The effect of such a directorial remove is the creation of one of the most hieratic and conceptualized of cinemas. "Lang does not try to disguise the strict melodramatic formulas of his films," writes David Thomson, "but strips everything else away and concentrates on the developments of the action so that they achieve formal values like the demonstration and proof of theorems. The action of his films is not realized

but conceptualized."[2]

The architectural severity and the dream-like movements in Lang are visual incarnations of the two forces which challenge man's freedom of will and subject human behavior to ritualized patterns of action. In the terms of Siegfried Kracauer, these forces are the internal and the external Caligaris. In Lang's cinema, the Caligari within is that force of elemental and uncontrollable desire which seizes possession of a human being and subjects his will to the dictates of a ruling obsession. Vengeance and consuming sexuality are two frequent manifestations of the inner Caligari in the works of Lang. Moving with splendid and inhuman severity, Kriemhild in Kriemhild's Revenge lives only to punish the murderer of Siegfried. After nearly being lynched in Fury (1936), Spencer Tracy becomes obsessed with legally harassing the people who tried to kill him. The richest examples of Langian figures succumbing to unchecked sexual energies are Edward G. Robinson in The Woman in the Window (1944) and Glenn Ford in Human Desire (1954). In The Woman in the Window, Robinson, a college professor of seemingly mild disposition, indulges in a dream-fantasy in which his adulterous infatuation for Joan Bennett causes him to murder one man, to plot the murder of a second, and finally to resolve upon his own death by suicide. In Human Desire, Glenn Ford, a good-natured railroad engineer, undergoes a similar descent

into the world of ungovernable sexuality when he begins an affair with Gloria Grahame and later contemplates the murder of her husband.

The external Caligari in Lang is represented in all those social organizations and institutions which arbitrarily manipulate the destinies of human beings. Lang's protagonists are often menaced by people who dehumanize themselves by acting not as thinking and compassionate individuals but as members of corrupt and dictatorial social and political systems. In the beginning of Fury and at the end of M, the Caligari-like system is a mob. In You Only Live Once (1937) and The Big Heat (1953), the corrupt and oppressive structure interfering with human freedom is the organized Caligarism of the law and its agents. No director fears and mistrusts the law with the depths of revulsion evident in Lang's films. Spencer Tracy in Fury, Henry Fonda in You Only Live Once, and Glenn Ford in The Big Heat are typically victimized individuals who suffer because of the cowardice, the stupidity, or the treachery of those interpreting and enforcing the law. In man's corrupt societies the external Caligari exerts what seems to be an absolute control over the destinies of individual human beings. Gavin Lambert rightly comments that Glenn Ford's vindication at the conclusion of The Big Heat only technically marks a happy ending. In the world of Lang, writes Lambert, ". . . human relations break down, guilt

and violence are at large, and though for the first time in The Big Heat the ending shows a crusader [Glenn Ford] still going about his business . . . one feels little doubt that he will soon be up against a situation equally ominous."[3]

There is no self-indulgence in Lang's visionary world of driven and obsessed human beings. Lang does not exploit the sadism of his audiences but honestly confronts the primal forces which most men hide beneath a socially acceptable facade. Lang's ultimate subject is the id, or, more specifically, the estrangement between the superficiality of man's consciousness and the ferocious impulses of his hidden, subterranean emotions. Lang's is a cinema of ritual demanding our active participation in the descent of the Langian hero into chaos, irrationality, and the inner heart of darkness. In You Only Live Once, Lang asks first that we undergo the privations of Henry Fonda and then recognize that we, like Fonda, might be driven to robbery and murder in a society unwilling to grant entry to the socially and economically dispossessed. The Woman in the Window dramatizes that circumstances might quickly turn the gentlest of persons to adultery, murder, and suicide in quick succession. Like Conrad's Marlow, Lang is an artist who offers his audience a journey into the darker regions of human nature. The director's films suggest that when man refuses to take this voyage and examine the potential excesses of himself and society, he runs the Kurtzian risk

of enslavement to impulses which are inhuman, uncontrollable, and all the more powerful, once released, for being repressed so long. Andrew Sarris calls Lang's art the cinema of nightmare,[4] but it is also the cinema of the exorcism of the nightmare. Through sympathetic identification with the Langian protagonist, we undergo ritualistic descent into the underworld and vicariously participate in an experience which is both psychologically enlarging and purgative of violence.

Like a number of Fritz Lang's films, M has a basis in journalism and documentary observation. Lang and Thea von Harbou based their scenario partly upon case-studies of Berlin criminals. The two writers were also influenced by the contemporary case of Peter Kürten, the child-murderer of Düsseldorf. Lang recently told Peter Bogdanovich that he and Thea von Harbou had originally set out to do a film about "the ugliest, most utterly loathsome crime" imaginable:

> I discussed with my wife, Mrs. Von Harbou, what was the ugliest, most utterly loathsome crime and we thought at first it was the sending of anonymous letters; I think we even started to write a synopsis. But then we both decided that the most horrible crime was that of a child-murderer. I had many friends in Berlin's Homicide Department, which was called Alexanderplatz, and through them I came in touch with various murderers. Kürten, the infamous killer of Düsseldorf, I never met. Our story was finished before he was caught. The title came from where they put the chalk-mark on Lorre's shoulder--and, of course, in every hand there is a natural M.[5]

The action of M is set in Berlin, 1930, at a time in which a series of unsolved child-murders has thrown the city into a state of desperate panic. Peter Lorre plays the central role of Hans Beckert, the child-murderer who whistles the "In the Hall of the Mountain King" melody from Grieg's Peer Gynt music as he accosts little girls. As the film begins, Beckert murders another young girl, Elsie Beckmann, and once again makes all Berliners a little more suspicious and mistrusting of their friends and acquaintances. In the general atmosphere of terror each citizen is beginning to see a potential murderer in every other citizen of the city.

Public and political indignation over the child-murders becomes so acute that the city's police are forced to take increasingly severe measures in hunting the murderer. Policemen raid underworld hideouts and arrest many of the city's professional criminals. The police become so oppressive that Schranker, the chief of organized crime, realizes that the criminals will have no peace until the child-murderer is caught. Schranker calls a meeting of four of his chief henchmen to discuss the problem. Lang uses cross-cutting to juxtapose Schranker's conference with the very similar conference now being conducted by police officials on the same subject of the child-murderer. After much deliberation, criminals and police finally settle upon two different courses of action. Schranker decides to

order the Beggar's Union to patrol all sections of the city in search for the child-murderer. Lohmann, the Chief Inspector of the Homicide Department, resolves to check the names of all those released in the recent past from clinics, prisons, and insane asylums. Both plans succeed. The beggars track down the fugitive; and the police discover the identity of the murderer by checking lists of former mental patients. The criminals, however, are first to seize the wanted man.

Careful detective-work finally leads the police to Hans Beckert's rooming house. While the police wait for the murderer to return, Beckert is out stalking the streets for little girls. As Beckert passes the stand of the blind balloon-seller, Lang photographs not the figure of actor Peter Lorre but the shadow of Beckert as he walks in front of the balloon-seller. Identifying this phantom for the viewer is the off-screen whistling of the Grieg melody. The balloon-seller, a member of the Beggars' Union, now remembers that on the day Elsie was murdered a man whistling this same melody purchased a balloon for a little girl. The balloon-seller alerts Henry, a younger man, to the whistler's identity and tells him to follow Beckert. Henry runs off and finds Beckert buying sweets for the girl in a basement-level greengrocer's shop. After chalking a large M (for murderer) on his hand, Henry deliberately bumps into Beckert and imprints the identifying mark on the left

shoulder of the murderer's overcoat. Later the little girl innocently points out the mark to Beckert, who turns to gaze at the M in a storefront mirror. Aware that he is being followed, the fugitive runs through the streets and finally hides in the darkened attic of an office building.

The criminals wait until the workers leave the building before they move in to apprehend the murderer. Later that night Schranker, disguised in a police uniform, approaches a grillwork gate leading to the building and gains the watchman's attention by claiming that the lock is not fastened. Schranker forces the watchman at gunpoint to open the lock. After the watchman is briefly tortured for some necessary information, the criminals fan through the building and break into rooms to hunt down the murderer. Locked in the attic, Beckert breaks his knife in a vain attempt to unfasten the lock of the door leading back into the corridor of the building. Beckert then hammers a nail with his knife-handle to make himself a lock-picking device. Unknown to the harried murderer, the Pickpocket hears the tapping of the knife-handle on the other side of the door. The criminals gather outside the door while inside Beckert stares in horror watching the door handle turn as if of its own accord. The murderer hides in one of the wooden compartments of the attic. Discovered, he is wrapped in a carpet, removed from the building, and finally delivered to the cellar of an abandoned distillery. The criminals

obviously intend to kill the murderer, but, like a legally sanctioned government, they plan to go through the motions of a trial and even appoint a lawyer to defend Beckert.

At the police station Lohmann questions Franz, a burglar who was seized by the police in the office building. Lohmann deceives Franz by letting him believe that one of the watchmen died at the hands of the criminals. This ruse frightens the burglar into admitting the truth about the search for the child-murderer. The police head for the distillery where Beckert now faces a monumentally massed tableau of criminals, most of whom regard the child-killer as a degenerate unworthy of life. Beckert initially denies his guilt, but he breaks down after being confronted first by the balloon-seller (who holds a doll-shaped balloon) and then by pictures of girls Beckert has murdered. In his own behalf, Beckert reproaches the criminals for their voluntary choice of criminal careers and insists that he cannot help the terrible things he does under compulsion. The murderer is filled with self-loathing because he knows that he cannot avoid evil. The criminals pay little heed to Beckert's words or to the statements of the lawyer, who maintains that no one should execute a man for that which he cannot help doing. As the criminals surge forward to lynch the murderer, the police arrive to save Beckert for a legal trial which may be little different from this one.

M embodies the basic theme of Lang's films: man's

search for the darkest, least accessible truths of his nature. On the personal level, the film is a kind of nightmare-allegory which asks us to accept the child-murderer as ourselves--or at least as symptomatic of that unformed or malformed impulse which certain circumstances might dangerously agitate in any man. On the social level, M indicates that collective man can never pretend to maturity and self-knowledge until he accepts and learns to treat as human beings those people who are unequipped to play conventional roles in society. The state should not kill the murderer, as Schranker and the criminals demand; nor should it permanently incarcerate him, as the courts may propose. The compulsive murderer can never be free of his violent obsession until he wins help and understanding from people qualified to deal with him on a human and a therapeutic level. The murderer writes letters to the press and the police not simply to torment his adversaries but to achieve through communication some relief for his tortured soul. The disgust with which most of the criminals and citizens regard the child-murderer is a measure of the average person's limited self-awareness as well as his tendency to externalize evil and impose it upon a luckless scapegoat. The basic idea of the film is that no man can mark another with the sign of a murderer. Inasmuch as each man has within him the capacity to kill, we are all murderers and a large M is embedded in the heart of every human being.

When the posters of the city ask, "Who is the murderer?" Lang expects each man to accuse himself. Peter Lorre is the Langian Everyman when he cries out during the trial that the evil is within him: "Always, always, there's this evil force inside me. It's there all the time, driving me out to wander through the streets, following me, silently, but I can feel it there. It's me, pursuing myself. . . ."[6]

The expressionism of M lies not only in the artifice of its studio sets but in the film's numerous patterns of abstract visual design. Lang repeatedly uses images of circles, mechanical objects, maps, and intersecting straight lines as visual metaphors of both the internal and the external Caligari. A listing of examples of each of these image patterns gives an idea of the high degree of conscious visual stylization in Lang. The most obvious geometric pattern in M is the circle. The first shot of the film is an overhead view of a group of children playing a game in a circular formation. Shortly afterward, a group of parents standing in a semicircle are photographed from the rear as they wait outside the closed doors of Elsie Beckmann's school. The men who listen to the newspaper report at the café are seated at a round table; later, Schranker and his four henchmen are also photographed at a round table as they discuss their plans for apprehending the murderer. The angry townspeople who falsely accuse a dignified old man of the murders gather around their victim

in a circular design. Later, as the police comb the city for clues, a compass is shown drawing increasingly larger concentric circles around a point on a city map. Shortly after Schranker's conference with his four subordinates, Lang photographs a beggar playing a barrel organ in a tenement courtyard in front of a scattered group of children. Photographed from an overhead view, the organ-grinder and the children form an elongated circle which recalls the initial composition in the first shot of M. Later in the film, two concentric circles inform the shot recording Franz's emergence from the hole he has drilled in the floor of the office building. Lang's camera shoots from an overhead point of view while Franz begins to climb up the rope ladder; as the burglar finally lifts himself out of the circular hole, Lang cranes the camera upward in order to bring into view the circle of policemen who surround the hole waiting to arrest Franz. Like the overall stylization of the sets, the rigid geometric designs of Lang's cities express the element of pattern in human behavior. Lang's geometric images and his rigidly contoured settings imply that man does not control his own destiny but that the two Caligaris of internal violence and external social coercion shape human destinies with the precision of a geometric design or an architectural structure. In Lang's world the circle is not a liberating mandala; it is rather a perverse magic circle which objectifies the imprisonment of the

human soul.

Another formal technique used to minimize the uniqueness and the freedom of people in M is the high-angle camera placement. It is not a large exaggeration to say that M is a film conceived and executed from an elevated perspective. Some of the scenes shot wholly or in part through a high-angle placement are those portraying 1) the children playing in a circular formation at the beginning of the film; 2) the murderer buying the balloon for Elsie; 3) the murderer writing the letter to the press; 4) the argument at the café table which nearly ends in a fight between two men; 5) a group of police officials searching suburban gardens for a clue to the murderer's identity; 6) the arrival of many plain-clothes men and uniformed policemen on a street near an underworld hideout; 7) the conference of Schranker and his men; 8) the group of children listening to the music of the beggar's barrel organ; 9) the murderer and the little girl receiving fruit and sweets in the greengrocer's shop; 10) the murderer running about in confusion in front of the gateway leading to the office building; and 11) the murderer staring up in horror at the blind beggar's balloon at the trial. Lang uses elevated and overhead camera angles both to set off the geometric designs of the streets and to emphasize the thematically expressive patterns in the film's overall visual design. Like Lang's detached long and middle shots, these elevated viewpoints distance the viewer from

the emotional particularization of the narrative and, once again, visually subordinate people to the Caligarism of oppressive architecture and constricting linear design.

Lang's concern with design and pattern explains the importance of things in M--especially mechanical things which symbolize man's loss of will in the Caligari-like machinery of urban life. Shortly after the beggars' vigil begins, Lang photographs a toy-shop display window filled with mechanically jerking and rotating toys. Little children gaze into the window while at frame-left a legless beggar scrutinizes the scene for a trace of the child-murderer. Lang invites the viewer to follow the incessant movement of toys such as a spinning windmill and a revolving fairground ride. Later, as Beckert stalks a girl through the streets of the city, Lang sets up a composition featuring the window of a bookstore in which are visible two comically obscene mechanical devices. One of these, a large descending arrow, continually moves up and down while nearby in the same window a round disc painted with a spiral design turns with unceasing motion. At the beginning of this shot, the little girl is photographed gazing in the window; near the end of the shot, Beckert stands near the window display just after the girl and her mother walk out of frame. Lang juxtaposes Beckert and the girl with these bizarre emblems to suggest that Beckert is enslaved to sexual drives which are as mechanically

insistent as the mock-copulation portrayed by the arrow and the disc in the window. When Beckert accosts another little girl, Lang photographs the two behind the glass of still another emblematically suggestive shop window. This set-up features the bottom half of a flat, cutout doll hanging from the top of the window. As Beckert and the little girl peer into the window, Lang shoots from a point inside the shop so that the mechanically jerking legs of the cut-out doll are directly above the heads of the murderer and his intended victim. And, finally, after the watchman rings the alarm at the office building, Lang photographs the mechanically operated ticker-tape machine at the police station which is now registering the alarm. All of these mechanical devices in M obliquely underscore the surrender of man's will to external structures, environments, and ideas which influence and regulate human thought and action.

Related to these mechanical processes are the numerous maps, architectural floor plans, and linear visual designs in the film. At various points in M, the police, the criminals, and the beggars are seen calculating their hunt for Beckert with the aid of labyrinthian city maps. In one close shot the camera shoots from above as the police compass draws the beginning of the third concentric circle around a point on a city map. The camera shoots from a similarly elevated perspective as Schranker spreads his

leather-gloved hand over a map to indicate that every inch of the city must be scrutinized in the hunt for the murderer. And near the end of the film we are shown two architectural floor-plans of the office building. The first is the diagram of the general lay-out which the Safe-breaker explains to the Pickpocket; this drawing indicates the localities of the time-switches for the building's automatic alarm system. The second floor-plan is the diagrammatic design of the building's layout which is removed from a file at the police station after the watchman sounds the alarm. Like the huge blow-up of the fingerprint at the police laboratory, these maps and diagrams illustrate the fatalistic design of a world in which man has surrendered his will to external, implacable values and structures. In M these designs also project the presence of the two Caligaris which beset Hans Beckert. The external, or social, Caligarian threat to the protagonist lies in the diagrammatic snares which the police and the criminals are slowly tightening around the child-murderer. The internal menace to the child-killer, or the Caligari within, is the fugitive's enslavement to a pattern of murderous transgression which is as rigidly contoured as any of the linear designs in the film.

The most original and distinctively Langian visual effects lie in the director's manipulation of architecture. Lang's use of setting is intimately related to the general

structure of the shot in M. Because he wishes to stress geometric fatalism in all things, Lang very frequently begins or ends the shots of M by allowing his camera to linger upon a setting totally devoid of any human life. The typical shot in this film begins with a purely geometric overture or concludes with a wholly architectural coda. This technique of framing human action between patterns of frozen geometric design once again stresses the power which external structure and ritualized obsession exert over the lives of men. There is a remarkable example of typically Langian shot structure at the very beginning of M. In the first shot of the film the camera is in an overhead position photographing the circle of children at their game. As the game continues, the camera, without breaking the shot, moves from right to left, tilts and moves upward, and finally fixes itself upon the tenement balcony onto which a woman carrying a heavy basket is now walking. The woman rests the basket on the balcony railing and calls down to the children to stop singing a popular song about the murderer. Off-screen the song stops as the woman resumes her walk and disappears through a door leading into the tenement. What is unusual about this shot is that the camera does not break here but rather lingers to contemplate the diagonal angularity of the balcony, the railing, and the clotheslines strung above the balcony. For a moment of silence the camera continues

to look upon the empty balcony; Lang does not cut to the next shot until after the off-screen voice of a girl is heard once again chanting the song about the murderer.

Later in the film there is a similar example of an architectural shot-coda. As Schranker forces the watchman to open the grillwork gate leading to the office building, the camera is positioned outside the gate and photographs the back of Schranker as he compels the watchman to do his bidding. The gate slides open and Schranker pushes the watchman out of sight at frame-left. According to the strict demands of the plot, this shot should end after Schranker has passed through the gate. Lang does not, however, end the shot at this point; instead he continues to direct the camera at the gate and asks the viewer to take note not only of the hard geometric structure of this composition but also the ring of keys which is now gently swaying back and forth in the keyhole. After the contours of this set-up have made a forceful impression, Lang cuts to a long shot of the grillwork barrier from the opposite side of the gate. Lang fixes the camera on the chill, ascetic beauty of the silhouetted gate before he directs the rest of the criminals to enter the composition and slip through the opening in the grillwork. This tendency to begin a shot before, and prolong it beyond, the purely narrative demands of the dramatic situation is one of the most fundamental structural techniques in M. In this film

Lang's camera lingers on deserted corridors, doorways, walls, gates, and stairwells to suggest that man is trapped in the visual geometry of his architecture and all that this architecture symbolizes.

The role of architecture in M can best be understood through a consideration of Lang's view of human nature. In the mass, the people in Lang's films are devoid of independently thinking selves. They are weak, frightened, easily swayed and often vicious. Collective man in Lang has alienated himself from his own nature by abstracting human qualities and investing them in social, political, and psychological structures outside the self. Lang's schizophrenic world of tyrants and zombies finds perfect expression in the monumental architecture of his films. Kracauer writes that the architecture in German cinema expresses "the structure of the soul in terms of space;"[7] if this is so, the architecture in Lang is an expression of a political and psychological authoritarianism which diminishes the importance of the individual and heightens the grandeur of the systems to which man has surrendered his selfhood.

The director visualizes the mob-like nature of the urban masses through visual detail. Lang dresses most of his people in dark, heavy-looking clothing and often photographs these people from the rear so that they are totally lacking in any kind of uniqueness. The camera takes this

rear-view angle especially when Lang wishes to suggest a sinister, inhuman quality in a person. For example, as people cluster about the poster announcing Elsie's disappearance, the camera accentuates their massed anonymity by moving in over their heads from behind and then moving out again in a reverse tracking gesture. More openly suggestive of blank human ugliness is the similar composition used for the set-up in which the watchman is tortured. Lang does not bring the camera into the office where the torturing takes place. He rather photographs the scene from a point behind a group of criminals who stand outside the door to watch. After the watchman's arms are pinioned behind him, the men step forward and ominously block from view the brief exercise of force upon the watchman. Variations of this kind of imagistic abstraction are employed most expressively in shots photographing the murderer. Beckert makes his first two bodily appearances with his back to the camera in high-angle shots; in the first shot, Beckert is paying the balloon-seller for Elsie's doll-shaped balloon; in the second, he is seated at his window-sill writing a letter to the press. Later in the film, Beckert is photographed with his back to the camera as he stands in the doorway of a bookstore trying not to be seen by a little girl as she walks away with her mother. After he is locked in the attic of the office building, Beckert tries to open the locked door with his pocketknife. Lang

photographs much of this unsuccessful effort from a high-angle placement behind the crouching figure of actor Peter Lorre; as he furiously picks at the door, it is Beckert's back rather than his face which receives primary emphasis in the set-up. Perhaps the most vivid rendering of Beckert's purely bodily presence occurs in the scenes in which the criminals carry the murderer from the office building and then deliver him to the courtroom at the distillery. Writhing in the carpet and later forced up a flight of stairs with his jacket over his head, the murderer looks less like a humam being than a wriggling clot of sensuality. All of these compositions contribute significantly to the creation of Fritz Lang's vision of urban paranoia. An emphasis on the dark, hulking backs of men in a group minimizes individual distinction of character and projects a dangerous social and mental collectivity. And the many shots of the back of the darkly dressed murderer suggest imagistically Beckert's enslavement to an ahuman, indiscriminate compulsion.

The more one watches M the greater one's admiration grows for Lang's variety of techniques of visual abstraction in characterizing Hans Beckert. Like a silent director, Lang generally establishes his protagonist less through words than through the purely visual means of gesture, decor, symbolic object, image pattern, and interpretive lighting. Two primary visual techniques used to character-

ize Beckert are the facial expressions of actor Peter Lorre and the suggestive decor which surrounds and defines Hans Beckert throughout the film. Spoken words seldom play any role at all in the brief vignettes in which Beckert appears in all the scenes leading up to the trial sequence in the distillery. Near the beginning of M, for example, a handwriting expert claims that the murderer enjoys playing roles; as the expert talks, Lang switches his speech from actual sound to overlapping commentative dialogue as Hans Beckert appears in a cluttered composition making a grotesque face into his rooming-house mirror. Later in the film, Beckert is seen at a fruit-seller's barrow; hanging along the top of the frame in this set-up is a row of perversely suggestive pineapples, two of which frame Beckert's face. The murderer is eating an apple as he indolently points to another apple for the fruit-seller to put in the bag now being filled for him. Shortly afterward, Beckert stares into a cutlery-shop window. During this scene Lang photographs Beckert from inside the window so that reflections from the silverware-displays appear on the glass window interposed between the camera and Beckert. These reflections fall on the glass in such a way that Beckert's face appears in the center of a reflected, diamond-shaped formation of knives; around Beckert's waist is a reflection of a sensually fan-shaped display of spoons. It is in the mirror framed by the diamond-shaped arrangement

of knives that Beckert sees the reflection of the little girl he follows as this scene ends. After the girl rushes into her mother's arms, the frustrated Beckert tries to relax himself by having a couple of drinks at a café. Lang photographs this scene from a point outside a leafy trellis so that Beckert's face becomes a sinister, berry-like ornament in the foliage. And, finally, near the end of the film, Lang again portrays Beckert through decor as he shoots the murderer hidden in one of the wooden compartments of the office building's attic. In the foreground of this cluttered set-up is a row of phallus-like bottles; in the background are vertical wooden bars which portray psychic as well as physical imprisonment.

The obsessions of Hans Beckert are more devastatingly characterized by the oddly lewd pineapples and the sexually suggestive silverware designs than they are by the long, theatrical speeches Beckert recites at the end of the film. Peter Lorre's perverse serenity as he indulgently points to a piece of fruit is worth more than all the eye-popping, hand-clutching fear which this actor displays during the overacted speeches at the trial. Praising the subtle artistry of the decor which expresses Beckert's nature, Siegfried Kracauer writes that such physical clutter is emblematic of the subjection of will to things in the postwar German cinema. "Since in many German films," states Kracauer, "the predominance of mute objects symbol-

izes the ascendancy of irrational powers, these . . . shots /from M/ can be assumed to define the murderer as a prisoner of uncontrollable instincts. Evil urges overwhelm him in exactly the same manner in which multiple objects close in on his screen image."[8]

Important in establishing the power of Beckert's inner Caligari is Lang's use of shadow and mirror imagery. When, for example, the murderer approaches Elsie at the beginning of the film, Lang photographs not the physical image of Peter Lorre but the shadow of the murderer as it falls upon a poster above Elsie. Later, as the murderer passes in front of the balloon-seller, the camera records only the phantom-like shadow of Beckert flitting across the figure of the blind beggar. Achieving virtually the same sinister effect in M are the shots in which the murderer appears in company with himself in the reflection of a glass or a mirror. The shots of Beckert mugging in the rooming-house mirror; walking away from the reflecting glass of the cutlery shop window; and gazing at the chalked M in a storefront mirror all fragment the murderer into two persons. These shots project photographically the schizophrenic duality of Beckert's nature. Like the human shadows of M, mirror and glass duplications disclose the presence of the other, darker self--the presence of the inner Caligari of irrational powers.

The most oblique suggestion of the dual Caligari in

M lies in the director's manipulation of suggestive lighting. All of Lang's films rely heavily on low-key illumination to characterize the ineradicable presence of both the outer and the inner Caligari. Variations of low-key lighting transform the sets of M into sinister labyrinths of oppressive shadows and jagged, uncertain passageways of light. The pools of darkness encroaching on the lighted areas of Lang's compositions are so menacing that no space within the frame seems safe from the threat of attack. The shadow which shrouds Lohmann on his arrival at the criminal hideout; the darkness of the studio streets and the facades of the confining buildings; and the increasingly dim lighting of the massed criminals at the rear of the distillery cellar are all formal means of establishing the presence of the external Caligari of the law, the mob, and the hierarchical social structures of mass man in an urban society.

In any Lang film it is instructive to watch how each individual character is lighted within each chamber of the director's total labyrinth. One of Lang's staple techniques is a form of side-lighting which illuminates one side of the actor's face and leaves the other in shadowed darkness. This form of illumination projects in purely visual terms the dark, potentially demonic force which exists in every human being. A similar technique is a form of top-lighting which casts a shadow over the face of anyone

wearing a wide-brimmed hat. Lang uses this latter device in the trial scene to characterize the sinister nature of Schranker. As the criminal chief conducts a blantantly unfair trial, the shadow cast by the brim of his derby frequently falls over his eyes and makes his entire face considerably more threatening in appearance.

Lang defines Beckert's compulsions by continually associating the child-murderer with darkness. In his dark hat and dark overcoat, the porcine figure of Hans Beckert is always an image of sinister visual abstraction regardless of the lighting of a particular shot. His hands frequently in his pockets, his back often facing the camera, Beckert rarely seems a specified, differentiated human being in any of the film's scenes preceding the trial at the distillery. Lang further characterizes his protagonist as an abstraction of dark, inchoate obsessions by drenching the murderer in the artificially contrived shadows of suggestive lighting. When, for example, Beckert leaves the cutlery shop window to follow the little girl, Lang directs actor Peter Lorre to lower his head as he walks off-screen so that the shadow cast by the wide brim of his hat menacingly falls over his eyes. Later, after he has been branded with the M, Beckert runs into an office building and hides in the compartment of the building's attic. While a suspicious watchman prowls the attic, Lang cuts to a long-shot composition of the frightened Beckert in the

cage-like compartment. The compartment is very dimly lit; the viewer can barely make out the figure of Hans Beckert between the vertical bars of the background and the ranked bottles in the foreground. Yet just before the watchman leaves the attic, he turns off the light and in doing so throws Beckert into still darker blackness. Shortly afterward Beckert leaves this gloomy cage, turns on the light, and begins working on the locked door with his pocketknife. As he struggles to unfasten the lock, the wide brim of his hat again casts his face into shadow. After the criminals gather on the other side of the door, Beckert casts himself into almost total darkness by turning off the light. He then scurries back to his compartment through the main corridor of the attic; as he does so, the shadows of the vertical bars framing other compartments along the corridor cast fleeting patterns on the murderer's body. And, finally, during Beckert's long confession at the trial Lang illuminates actor Peter Lorre with a harsh side-lighting which makes the left side of his face appear sharply white and the right side of his face almost completely black. As Beckert talks of the murderer within, Lang's schizophrenic illumination of Peter Lorre's face allows us to <u>see</u> this inner murderer plainly manifest in the shading of the actor's features.

Perhaps the most subtle quality in Lang is the indirectness of the political statements in his films. Lang

regards all legal and political structures as dehumanizing and potentially dictatorial. This attitude occasionally surfaces in his dialogue, but it is the visual imagery of Lang's films which contains the director's strongest social commentary. Two early scenes in You Only Live Once indicate the highly iconic quality of Lang's political observations. In the beginning of this film the sympathetic Public Defender is seen lighting a cigarette for the District Attorney. Not long afterward, the popular priest, Father Dolan, makes his first appearance as a catcher-umpire in a prison-yard baseball game. In themselves, neither of these circumstances is exceptional, but in the hieratic imagistic texture of Fritz Lang both of these details take on a large importance. The Public Defender's service to the District Attorney is a symbolic visualization of the way all defense lawyers cooperate with the prosecution in their ultimate loyalty to the legal system which embraces anyone who serves it in any capacity. Similarly, it is the visual detail and not the script which projects the political corruption of the priest. Wearing an insect-like catcher's mask in the baseball game, the priest looks much like the men who wear gas masks to rob a bank later in the film. In this scene the priest has just made an unpopular decision and is now being booed by the inmates. The priest's role in the game and the sinister mask across his face characterize this figure as

an enemy rather than a friend to the prisoners. Later the priest's loyalty to an unjust penal system is suggested by the ease with which he moves in the private quarters of the fatuous warden and his wife. You Only Live Once, like all of Lang's American films, is absorbing if for no other reason than for the disparity between the relatively conventional script and the visionary images which embody the script on the screen.

Like You Only Live Once, M projects its political observations less through words than through cinematic formalism and visual imagery. The most radical implication of M is the suggestion that there is not much difference between the legal maneuvers of the police and the illegal maneuvers of the criminals. Fairly obvious means of suggesting this idea are Schranker's policeman's disguise and the elaborate cross-cutting between the similar strategy-sessions held by the criminals and the police. Lang is careful to draw visual parallels of intra-shot montage in juxtaposing the two conferences regarding the apprehension of the child-murderer. Each of them is held in a dimly lit room; and the tobacco smoke filling each conference room creates a somewhat sinister sense of moral ambiguity.

Not so direct, however, are the careful imagistic parallels which Lang draws between Lohmann and Schranker. Each of these central figures makes a very distinct and

visually similar entrance into the film. As Lohmann descends a staircase down to an underworld hideout, Lang photographs not actor Otto Wernicke but the shadow which Lohmann casts on the wall near the arched entrance which the Inspector is now approaching. When Lohmann himself appears, he does not come all the way down the stairs but remains under the archway with the upper part of his body obscured in shadow. Over his left arm Lohmann is carrying a cane. After listening to choruses of "Lohmann! Lohmann!" the Inspector walks down three steps, tells the criminals to be quiet, and then enters the room and walks to a table where he inspects the papers of the outlaws. As Lohmann conducts this routine task, his cane rests on the table at his right side; at one point Lohmann uses this cane to hook the arm of a suspicious criminal and bring him back to the table.

Not long afterward, Schranker makes an initial entrance which resembles Lohmann's in some regards. After the doorbell to the underworld conference room rings several times, Lang cuts from the waiting henchmen to the closed door through which Schranker is about to enter. Schranker opens the door and then angrily closes it so that he is visible only through a fairly narrow aperture. Schranker, who is carrying a cane over his right arm, is displeased because a blind on a window opposite the door has not yet been closed. After a sharp command from his

chief, the Pickpocket cautiously approaches the window to let down the blind. Only now does Schranker enter the room and begin the conference on the subject of the child murderer. Near the end of the criminals' conference, Lang cuts to a long-shot composition of the shadows of Schranker and his men as they fall upon a wall behind the table. As Schranker talks of the need for a foolproof vigil during this shot, his words seem to be coming directly from the shadow he casts on the wall. Just before the chief names the Beggars' Union as the ideal agency of spies, Schranker's shadow rises from its seated position and looms above the shadows of the henchmen to indicate Schranker's supremacy of power and intelligence. Schranker is fond of holding his cane in front of him as he talks. He is shot clenching the cane at points during both this conference and the later trial of Hans Beckert.

In these two scenes Lang associates both Lohmann and Schranker with darkness. After first appearing as a shadow, Lohmann stands in an elevated placement with the upper part of his body obscured by darkness. Schranker fears an open blind and partially closes the door so that he stands against an almost totally dark background; later, he is metamorphosed into a shadow as he explains the perfect solution to the problem of the child murderer. In both instances, the darkness and the shadow imagery betray Lang's fearful mistrust of any kind of authoritarianism--

legal or criminal. Lang draws a second visual parallel between Lohmann and Schranker by associating each with a concrete image of power. The canes which both men carry are emblems of authority and control over other human beings. Although Lohmann uses his power with relative benevolence, the sinister implication of both walking sticks is that power can always be manipulated arbitrarily to subjugate the human will. Lohmann and his aides are generally more humane than the criminals, but the difference between the two groups is not sufficient to expel the general sense of paranoia which hangs over M and all of Lang's films.

Equally unobtrusive in their visual indirection are the three shots in which hands break into the frame to touch Hans Beckert during the sequence set in the distillery cellar at the end of the film. Near the beginning of the first shot, Hans Beckert is standing at medium-shot range from the camera as he tries to convince the criminals that he is not the child-murderer. Beckert is appealing to the assembly with an expression of eager beseechment when a hand suddenly breaks into view at frame-left. The hand waves up and down as it gropes to find Beckert's right shoulder. Locating it, the hand fiercely seizes the shoulder of Beckert's jacket. Off-screen, a feeble voice can be heard saying, "No, No, No mistake."[9] Petrified with fear, Beckert slowly turns his head around toward

frame-left to identify his accuser. As Beckert turns around, the camera tracks backward to reveal the presence of the blind balloon-seller, who is repeatedly saying that there is "no mistake"--Beckert is indeed the man who once bought a balloon for Elsie Beckmann. Beckert is deeply shaken by this confrontation; he backs away in fear as the balloon-seller holds up the same kind of doll-shaped balloon which Beckert once purchased for Elsie. Still determined to outface the criminals, however, Beckert continues to deny his guilt. It is only Schranker's pictures of the little girls which totally destroy Beckert's self-possession. The murderer runs for the door but is beaten back into the courtroom. Beckert is crouching against a number of pieces of wood in a one-shot when unexpectedly a hand descends from the top of the frame and taps Beckert on the right shoulder. Beckert bolts up; as he does so, the camera recedes and reveals that the lawyer appointed to defend the murderer has chosen this means of announcing himself to his client. And finally, at the very end of this sequence, Beckert is kneeling on the distillery floor when still another hand enters the frame and touches him. This hand enters from the top of the frame at screen-right; it descends into the composition and firmly grasps Beckert by the left shoulder. This hand belongs to one of the policemen who have saved Beckert from being lynched by the criminals. After the off-screen voice of the policeman

says, "In the name of the law,"[10] this shot of Beckert in the grasp of the vise-like hand dissolves into a shot of the bench in the courtroom where Beckert will be legally tried for the child-murders.

These three shots of the encroaching hands all portray Beckert as the victim rather than the beneficiary of three different interest groups. Whether criminal, "liberal," or legal, each approach to the child-murderer is in some way threatening and manipulative. The three shots visualize Lang's conviction that all groups working within social and political structures are ultimately exploitative of the selfhood of the individual. It is because the director is working in a mass medium subject to commercial and political pressures that he is forced to communicate his deepest attitudes of social dissent through highly subtle hieroglyphs. The director of M could no more have verbally equated legal and illegal institutions any more than the director of You Only Live Once could have explicitly denounced the criminality of the American clergy as a social and economic class. Each of these critical attitudes exists in the two films, but both inhere in the visual structure of the shot rather than in the dialogue of the scenario. Like all of the great directors of commercial film-making, Fritz Lang has mastered the art of circumventing censorship by counterpointing bland verbal language with richly expressive visual imagery.

Like Fritz Lang, F. W. Murnau and Alfred Hitchcock are

directors who situate value in decor, interior decoration, and all forms of architecture. Some of the most effective image patterns in The Last Laugh and Notorious lie in the correlation of actor and theme, on the one hand, and psychologized setting on the other.

The Last Laugh is a film which perfectly exemplifies the high aesthetic and technical standards of the German studios during the Twenties. A masterpiece of lighting, set-construction, deep-focus photography, and the temporally extended sequence-shot, The Last Laugh is a film which represents the best work not only of its director but of the studio tradition in which it was produced.

The action of the film is set in a large German city during the Twenties. Emil Jannings plays the role of doorman at the luxurious Atlantic Hotel. At one point during the film's opening sequence, a taxicab pulls up to the Atlantic with a large trunk on its roof. Ordinarily a porter is on hand to remove luggage from the automobiles of arriving guests. At this moment, however, a heavy rainfall is slowing down hotel procedure, and no porter is waiting on the sidewalk to service the burdened taxicab. Doorman Emil Jannings vainly beckons one of the porters to come out from inside the lobby and take down the trunk from the roof of the cab. Finally, Jannings himself approaches the parked taxi while on the roof of the cab the driver impatiently waits to hand down the trunk to the doorman.

The aged Jannings raises his arms, heaves the trunk over his back, and slowly walks into the hotel with his heavy burden. Exhausted, the doorman sits down to rest inside the hotel lobby. At the moment Jannings is taking this break from his labors, the hotel manager escorts two departing guests out to the sidewalk and looks from side to side for the doorman. Not finding him on the job, the manager himself hails a cab for the guests leaving the Atlantic. As he passes into the hotel through the revolving door, the manager notices Jannings relaxing. Displeased, the manager pauses inside the door and makes an entry in his notebook before walking into the hotel. Outside once again, Jannings waits for a callboy to remove his raincoat before primping his whiskers in a pocket mirror. The rain has stopped, and Jannings stands proudly in his decoratively martial doorman's coat as this first sequence ends.

Jannings' uniform and his association with the rich make him a figure of grandeur in the tenement where he lives. Returning home after work dressed in his uniform, Jannings is warmly greeted by his neighbors. The next morning Jannings, again in uniform, arrives at the hotel and enters the revolving door only to see another man in a doorman's uniform walking through the other side of the revolving door out onto the sidewalk. Dazed, Jannings wanders outside for an explanation but is told to see the

manager. Through the glass panes of the manager's office doorway, the camera photographs the manager handing Jannings a letter explaining his fall. Jannings puts on his glasses and reads that the hotel has found a position more suitable to his advanced age.

To convince the unsympathetic manager of his strength, Jannings picks up a trunk in the manager's office but demonstrates only his inadequacy by dropping the trunk and knocking it open. A hotel attendant brusquely removes the doorman's coat from Jannings; during this humiliating ceremony a button from the coat pops to the floor. The coat is placed in the manager's closet. After stealing the key to the closet, Jannings is escorted from the office by a dour woman in black who leads the ex-doorman to a supply closet. She gives him a washroom attendant's jacket and a large number of towels before guiding him to the doors leading downstairs to the lavatory.

At night, Jannings prowls the corridors of the hotel, removes his old uniform from the closet, and appears at the tenement in the costume of his former doorman's identity. In his apartment he becomes jovial and finally quite drunk at an all-night wedding party. After the guests have gone, the room seems to spin around the intoxicated Jannings. Waking up with a hangover and forgetting the demotion of the previous day, Jannings manages to lurch from the apartment and walk to work as usual in the doorman's uniform.

It is only the sight of the new doorman outside the hotel which recalls to the ex-doorman the events of the day before. Jannings hurries to a checkroom in a railroad station, deposits the coat, and then returns to the hotel to take up the duties of his new job. At the end of the day Jannings picks up the doorman's uniform from the checkroom and returns home. This time, however, he is cruelly jeered by his neighbors because word of his new position has spread through the tenement. That night Jannings walks to the hotel, gives the coat to the kindly night watchman, and returns to the lavatory. When the solacing watchman leaves the washroom, Jannings is sitting in his chair, his head bowed and his will broken.

The only title in The Last Laugh introduces the viewer to the epilogue. This addition to the film consists of a lengthy episode in which a burlesque happy ending is attached to the melancholy conclusion of the doorman's story.

There are a number of important image patterns in this film. One of the most dominant is that which embraces the many doors of The Last Laugh. The first view of the lobby is photographed through the door of the descending elevator. Introducing the audience to the life beyond the hotel is a shot which photographs the crowded sidewalk and the car-filled street through the glass panels of the lobby's revolving door. At the moment the hotel manager raises his arm to hail a passing cab, the callboy spinning about the

revolving door in the foreground of the shot suddenly brings the revolving door to an unexpected halt; in this scene Murnau associates the movement of the door with the action of the manager which directly results in the loss of the doorman's job. Shortly afterward, the hotel manager stops inside the revolving door and sees Jannings resting in the lobby; it is in one of the revolving-door compartments that the manager makes the entry in his notebook calling for Jannings' demotion. The next day Jannings sees his uniformed successor for the first time in a moving subjective shot taken inside the revolving door. Not long afterward, the camera shoots the manager's presentation of the letter of demotion through the glass panes of the doorway of the manager's office. After his doorman's coat is placed behind a closet door, Jannings is assigned to a downstairs lavatory which is separated from the glamorous upper floor by <u>two</u> sets of doors.

Although all of these images are thoroughly worked into the texture of the film, they convey a definite meaning beyond themselves. The fixed doors of <u>The Last Laugh</u> may be seen as Marxist emblems of economic hierarchies as well as visual statements of Jannings' imprisonment in a debased social and psychic persona. The revolving door of the lobby, the imagistic center of the film, is likened by Arthur Lennig to the wheel of fortune.[11] Certainly this constantly spinning vortex is suggestive of the impermanence

and the treachery of Murnau's universe.

Two relatively lengthy shots emphasizing the revolving door are those photographing: 1) the short scene in which Jannings spruces his whiskers outside the hotel in the beginning of the film; and 2) the moment in which Jannings walks to the revolving door on the morning he is to learn of his demotion. Each of these shots deserves special attention because of the grace with which Murnau evokes psychophysical correspondences from a mise en scène which is never stagily symbolic.

Murnau uses an obliquely directional medium shot to photograph Jannings as he happily pats his whiskers outside the revolving door of the hotel in the opening sequences of The Last Laugh. There are three dominant spatial planes of depth in this shot. In the foreground, in medium-shot view, stands Jannings happily gazing into his pocket mirror. In the far background of the shot, people are visible inside the lobby behind the glass doors of the hotel. At frame-right, in a middle plane of depth, are the whirling glass panels of the revolving door now being methodically spun about by a hotel attendant. As Jannings continues admiring himself, he sees two women approaching the hotel from an off-screen location beyond the left border of the frame. Jannings momentarily puts down the pocket mirror, salutes the arrival of the two women, and turns to follow their walk across the frame and toward the revolving door

in a passage from frame-left to frame-right. At this point Jannings resumes his toilette; he puts the mirror away only as two female guests emerge from the hotel through the revolving door at the background of the shot at frame-right.

In this shot Murnau ironically relates the vanity of the doorman to both the unstable fluidity of the framing and the ominously spinning revolving door behind the doorman at frame-right. The composition relates Jannings to a ceaselessly changing environment at the same time that it juxtaposes the doorman's self-assurance with a door whose revolving motion has fatalistic implications throughout the film. Murnau emphasizes the background presence of the inexorably spinning door to hint at the ultimate dissolution of all of man's vanities and illusions.

One of the most intricate shots of the revolving door is that photographing Emil Jannings as he proudly approaches the door on the day that he loses his doorman's job. Like a number of Murnau's long-shot set-ups, this shot opens with an emphasis on environment rather than on individual human beings. For this shot Murnau places the camera just inside the hotel and faces it out toward the revolving door through which can be seen pedestrian activity on the sidewalk and automobile traffic on the street. As the shot opens, the distant figure of a uniformed Emil Jannings becomes visible entering the composition from frame-right. Jannings is seen through the glass of the revolving door as

he walks across the sidewalk toward the door. As Jannings approaches nearer, the looming back of the new doorman enters the set-up from the inside of the hotel at frame-right. At this moment both men are visible in the frame as each walks from different directions toward the revolving door. Jannings is on his way into the hotel, and the new doorman is on his way out of the hotel. The two men, each in uniform, enter opposite compartments of the revolving door at the same time: Jannings is outside the hotel at frame-left; the new doorman is inside at frame-right. At this point Murnau breaks the shot as he cuts to a medium-close view of Jannings as he moves through the door beholding his mirror-image in the new doorman. The visual structuring of this scene reveals the total subordination of compositional detail to Murnau's overall aesthetic/metaphysical design. The shot recording the double entrance into the revolving door has a sinister quality in that the human figures moving into the frame create a sense of unpredictable change. In this shot human stability seems as illusory as the apparent fixity of the panels in a revolving door.

After the revolving door in the hotel lobby, the two glass doors leading to the downstairs lavatory play the most important symbolic role in The Last Laugh. Two shots of these doors are extraordinary both in their imaginative use of composition in depth and in their characterization

of the doors and staircase as emblems of an infernal descent. The two shots, both early forms of the Wellesian sequence-shot, photograph: 1) Jannings' first passage down the lavatory staircase and 2) the successive ascent, descent, and final re-ascent of an irritable customer who complains of Jannings' incompetence as a washroom attendant. Before examining Murnau's logic in setting up these two incidents, the action in each of the sequence-shots will be detailed.

The first of these shots opens with a long-shot composition of the woman in black who is standing near the supply-closet door at frame-left and the glass doors leading down to the lavatory at frame-right. The woman locks the closet door and then walks to the lavatory doors; she opens the glass door nearer the closet and waits for the off-screen Emil Jannings to move into the shot at frame-left and walk down the darkened stairs beyond the door she is now holding open. As the woman moves to this glass door of the lavatory, Murnau pans the camera slightly in the direction of frame-right to follow her movement. Holding the door open and looking somewhat coldly in the direction of frame-left, the woman watches as Jannings, burdened with towels, trudges into the composition through the left border of the frame. The stooped old man walks into the open door and begins the descent down the stairs. During Jannings' slow passage through the door, Murnau pans the camera rightward to underscore Jannings' centrality in

this scene. The woman, who has been watching this unhappy journey with an expression of some ambiguity, now releases the swinging glass door and walks out of the frame at screen-left. Murnau again pans the camera in the direction of frame-right in order to emphasize the symbolic significance of the heavy glass doors. These doors fill the frame in the concluding moments of the shot. Beyond the doors one can no longer see anything but darkness and the top part of the lower doors leading to the lavatory: Jannings has walked so far down the stairs that he seems to have been engulfed by the darkness beyond the upper set of glass doors.

The second shot photographing the upper set of doors occurs immediately after a customer, angered by Jannings' negligent service, bursts out of the washroom on his way up the stairs leading to the upper set of glass doors on the level of the hotel lobby. After the customer exits from the lavatory, Murnau cuts to a shot of the set of glass doors leading to the descending lavatory staircase and then to the lower set of doors leading to the lavatory itself. During the sequence-shot which follows from this point, the camera is close enough to the upper doors to allow the viewer to look through their clear glass panes and see, at the bottom of the staircase, the upper parts of the two swinging doors of frosted glass which lead directly to the lavatory. The camera is positioned in

front of the upper set of doors during the entire shot; there is no camera movement during the take.

At the beginning of this shot, Jannings' displeased customer charges up the stairs, passes through one of the upper doors, and rushes out of sight at frame-left. The camera is now without a human subject; it remains focused on the upper set of doors and invites the viewer to study the sinister darkness beyond these doors and surrounding the two lower doors at the bottom of the staircase. Soon the irate customer and the manager enter the shot from frame-left, pass through the upper doors, walk down the stairs, and enter the lavatory through the lower set of doors. As Jannings is reprimanded behind the closed lower doors, Murnau does not cut away from the upper doors to photograph the unpleasant scene now taking place between the manager, the customer, and the lavatory attendant in the washroom below. Murnau holds the shot of the upper doors and encourages the viewer to imagine the chastisement which Jannings is now receiving in the lower depths of the hotel. This prolonged sequence-shot does not conclude until after the manager and the placated customer re-emerge through one of the lower doors, walk back up the stairs, and then pass through one of the upper doors and exit at frame-left. Even now, after the manager and the customer walk off, the camera lingers on the darkly suggestive swinging door before finally breaking away to a shot of

the uncomprehending Jannings in the lavatory below.

Each of these sequence-shots described above characterizes the lavatory doors as emblems of social imprisonment and passageways to psychic death. In the first shot, Murnau's characteristically fluid framing brings the moving figure of Emil Jannings through the doorway and then, in Alexandre Astruc's terms,[12] visually assassinates the old man by dropping him so far down the staircase that he completely disappears. In the second shot Murnau intentionally refrains from cutting away from the upper doors to shots of the lavatory after the customer brings the manager down the stairs and through the lower set of doors. Cutting away would have recorded the obvious. Murnau holds the shot because the two sets of oppressive doors and the intervening darkness above the staircase express the worldly damnation of Jannings with the profoundly oppressive weight of pure compositional design. Moreover, the temporal extension of this shot allows the spectator to feel once again that people and things moving in and out of frame convey menace and mutability in the director's mise en scène. Murnau is an artist who psychologizes setting and space in a relationship of thing to feeling which is at the basis of Kracauer's psychophysical correspondences.

In Notorious Alfred Hitchcock uses doors, doorways, and an occasional window in a manner suggesting Murnau's use of portals in The Last Laugh. Hitchcock wrote the

original story for Notorious and, following his usual custom, made contributions to the writing of the screenplay.[13]

The first scene in Notorious takes place in Miami, April 24, 1946. Through an open door to a courtroom the camera watches a judge sentence Nazi agent John Huberman to twenty years imprisonment for the crime of treason. Publicly branded a "marked woman," Alicia Huberman, John Huberman's daughter, recklessly plays the role society imposes upon her and seems about to accept the offer of a pleasure cruise to Cuba when she is approached by a mysterious and cynical stranger named Devlin. A United States agent, Devlin explains that he is in Miami to ask Alicia to aid the governments of United States and Brazil in spying upon and exposing some of the high-ranking Germans who once employed John Huberman during the war. (Devlin is unaware of the specific nature of Alicia's assignment. His job consists of flying down to Rio de Janeiro with Alicia and then reporting with her to his superiors.) Alicia is at first scornful of Devlin's offer; but shortly afterwards--partly because she has nothing better to do--she accepts and flies to Brazil with Devlin.

On the plane to Rio Devlin tells Alicia that her father killed himself by swallowing a poison capsule. Alicia admits that when she discovered her father was working for the Nazis during the war, she became so disillusioned that she stopped caring about what happened to

herself. Her dialogue in this scene indicates that she turned to drinking and random sexuality to distract herself from thinking about her father's treason. In her conversation with Devlin on the plane, Alicia derives some comfort in recalling the happier days she and her father enjoyed when both of them were "nice."

Free now of both her father and the country of her social disgrace, Alicia feels a new self growing within her. She and Devlin fall in love and spend a leisurely period of time exploring Rio while waiting to learn what Alicia's assignment will be. Devlin is afraid of love and will not openly acknowledge his feelings for Alicia. Alicia talks about Devlin's emotional fears on one of their first outings in Rio. Sitting at an outdoor café, Alicia jokingly remarks to Devlin that he needn't be afraid to hold her hand. When she asks of him, "Scared?" Devlin says, "I've always been scared of women--but I get over it." Understanding Devlin's attitude, Alicia replies, "And now you're scared of yourself--you're afraid you'll fall in love with me." The deepest source of tension between the lovers is Devlin's unwillingness to forget the sexual amorality of Alicia's past. He deliberately distances himself from Alicia by making tactless allusions to the pleasure-seeking days in the United States which Alicia is trying to forget.

Devlin is appalled when his superior, Captain Prescott, discloses the nature of Alicia's assignment. Alicia is to

solicit the romantic attentions of Alexander Sebastian, the head of a large German business concern. Intelligence officials know that Sebastian's house is the headquarters of a combine of Nazis in league to create another giant war machine. Alicia is to gain entry into his house and to report to Devlin everything that she learns there. She is, in effect, being asked to prostitute herself in the service of her government. Devlin protests that Alicia may not be qualified for such unsavory work--that she may not want the assignment. Prescott, however, assumes that a woman of Alicia's character would have no moral objections to such a request. When Prescott informs Devlin that Sebastian once loved Alicia, all of Devlin's fears regarding Alicia's promiscuity return. Devlin quits protesting and returns to Alicia's apartment with news of the assignment.

Alicia listens in disbelief to Devlin's description of her assignment. "Did you say anything?" she asks Devlin, "I mean that maybe I wasn't the girl . . ." for this kind of work. "I figured that was up to you--if you'd care to back out," replies Devlin. When Alicia accuses Devlin of assuring the police of her unique talents for such a job, Devlin says coldly, "I didn't say anything." Alicia feels betrayed by Devlin's failure to renounce the assignment in her name; that Devlin should imagine her even considering such a proposal indicates his suspicion that Alicia is still a selective, high-living prostitute. Assuming a

facetious tone, Alicia asks that Devlin not be angry with her now: "I'm only fishing for a little birdcall from my dream man. One little remark--such as, 'How dare you gentlemen suggest that Alicia Huberman--the new Miss Huberman --be submitted to so ugly a fate.'" Desperate at the possibility of slipping back into her old self, Alicia asks Devlin for guidance in the hope that he will forbid her to take the assignment. The word, however, never comes. Devlin believes that Alicia herself must be the one to turn down the job and, in so doing, prove her fidelity to him. Alicia says, "I'm asking you," but all Devlin can answer is, "It's up to you." Alicia gives Devlin a final chance as she pleads with him to tell her what he didn't tell the others: that he believes that she loves him and that she will never change back to what she was in Miami. When Devlin answers this plea by saying, "I'm waiting for your answer," Alicia walks inside the apartment from the terrace, takes a drink, and announces that she's ready to accept the job.

Alicia re-acquaints herself with Sebastian at a riding club and quickly learns that he has never stopped loving her. She attends a dinner party at Sebastian's palatial home and at a racetrack shortly afterward reports what she has learned to Devlin. Trying to hurt Devlin the way he has hurt her, Alicia remarks, "You can add Sebastian's name to my list of playmates." Devlin becomes insulting,

but Alicia indignantly claims that one word from Devlin would have made her drop the assignment: "You could have stopped me--with one word. But no. You wouldn't. You threw me at him." When Devlin ridicules the idea of Alicia "made over by love," Alicia whispers more to herself than to Devlin, "If you only once had said that you loved me--." It is not long after this encounter that Alicia appears at intelligence headquarters to ask how she should react to Sebastian's proposal of marriage. Most of the officials agree that Alicia should accept the offer. When asked for his opinion, Devlin calls the plan a "useful idea;" but he suggests that the duration of the honeymoon may delay the timetable for capturing the Germans. Devlin's feeble protest is dismissed, and Alicia accepts Sebastian's proposal. After a brief honeymoon, Sebastian and Alicia return to Rio.

Sebastian's mother has always exerted a strongly domineering influence over her son. She regards Alicia as a rival and is displeased by her son's unalterable decision to marry. After returning from her honeymoon, Alicia asks Sebastian for a set of keys so that she can open certain locked doors of her new house. With some difficulty Sebastian obtains the keys from his mother and presents them to his wife. Alicia moves through the mansion checking the locked rooms but discovers that the key to the wine cellar has been withheld from her. On one of their regular rendezvous on a park bench, Devlin suggests that Alicia

steal the key from her husband and then use the occasion of a formal party to allow Devlin himself to explore the cellar. The devoted Sebastian heeds his wife's request. He schedules a lavish party at his home and allows Devlin to be included on the guest list.

During the course of the party Devlin inspects the wine cellar while Alicia keeps watch at the outer door to the cellar. After finding some suspicious material in a wine bottle, Devlin appears at the door only to discover Sebastian and a servant approaching the wine cellar. Thinking fast, Devlin kisses Alicia in order to distract Sebastian from taking out his key ring. Sebastian confronts the kissing pair, and Devlin makes a rapid departure. The romantic stratagem is only temporarily successful. Sebastian finds the key missing from his ring and at once suspects his wife and Devlin of something more than romantic collusion.

After discovering his wife's treachery, Sebastian's love for Alicia and his newly won independence from his mother both collapse. Sebastian reveals Alicia's betrayal to his mother. Taking total command of the situation, Mrs. Sebastian resolves upon a slow, discreet death for her daughter-in-law: Alicia will die through a series of regularly administered doses of poisoned coffee.

Worried by Alicia's disappearance, Devlin gains admission to the Sebastian mansion and slips unnoticed up to

Alicia's bedroom. Finding Alicia greatly weakened by sleeping pills and poison, Devlin takes Alicia up from the bed and walks her toward the door, insisting all the while that she keep talking to stay awake. Devlin walks Alicia first across the room and then, accompanied by Sebastian and his mother, down the mansion's great staircase. The latter couple does not protest because Sebastian's Nazi colleagues are downstairs looking up at this spectacle. Devlin explains that he called the hospital when he saw Alicia's condition. He and Sebastian escort Alicia outside to a car, but Devlin disgraces Sebastian before his associates by refusing to allow him inside the car. The car drives off, and Sebastian is left waiting on the sidewalk under the scrutinizing eyes of two of his associates who are standing in the lit doorway of Sebastian's house. Sebastian is curtly summoned back into the house; his companions' suspicions are aroused by their awareness that there is no telephone in Alicia's room. The film ends just after Sebastian walks back into the house and the door is closed behind him.

One way to approach Hitchcock's use of door, window, and enclosure imagery is to consider, as David Thomson does in Movie Man, the director's unusual use of back projection.[14] Back projection is the use of previously filmed backgrounds in a scene in a movie; this effect is achieved by photographing the actors in front of a translucent

screen on the back of which is photographed a scene from another movie. Back projection is generally used to save money and to dispense with location shooting. But Thomson maintains that Hitchcock deliberately uses this device to dislocate his actors from a three-dimensional locality and to trap them against a wall of isolated flatness. This technique is consonant with Hitchcock's general approach to composition in depth because Hitchcock, unlike Renoir, uses multiple spatial planes to emphasize the separateness rather than the interwoven solidarity of man in a social context. The people in Hitchcock's films do not move in an organically charged spatial continuum because almost all of them are "characters" in the negative sense of Wilhelm Reich's psychic-armor bearers.[15] Separated from each other by fear, mistrust, or stupidity, Hitchcock's characters are psychological grotesques who obsessively cultivate inflexible personas to protect themselves from the dark, chaotic truths about themselves and the universe. Because these people are not related to other human beings or to themselves, they move in a world of flat, unrelating planes. Thomson attributes Hitchcock's spatial discontinuity to the director's fundamental assumption of the "impossibility of communication and understanding" among people: "Like the people in Antonioni's later films," writes Thomson, "Hitchcock's characters do not have a mutually supporting spatial relationship. The idea of a

flat screen is multiplied so that every character is shut in his own plane, relating to the other characters by contrast or reflection."[16]

In Notorious there is one scene in particular which illustrates Hitchcock's characteristic use of depth compositions. After Devlin learns of Alicia's assignment, he visits Alicia at her apartment and walks out to the terrace where the table is set for dinner. Visible beyond the terrace is a back-projection vista of the ocean and the sky. Alicia enters from the kitchen and, while standing near the doorway of the terrace, listens to Devlin explain the sordid nature of her assignment. Stunned by Devlin's apparent lack of faith in her, Alicia turns away from Devlin and mechanically sits down at the table. Shortly afterward, Devlin walks behind Alicia and takes a standing position at the wall of the terrace so that he now faces the back of Alicia's head. At this moment neither person can see the other's face. Intensifying the abstracted separateness of the lovers' different spatial planes is the presence in the background of a back-projection view of a picturesque Rio nightscape. The conversation which follows from this point is crucially important because it offers the last chance for Alicia and Devlin to certify their love by a shared gesture of faith. At this climactic moment in the scenario all that is needed to prevent Alicia's prostitution is a single word from either of the lovers. If

Alicia were to say, "No," or if Devlin were to say, "Don't," the film would end here because either word would save Alicia from Sebastian's bed. Neither word is forthcoming, however, because each of the partners is too self-absorbed to understand how deeply the other is committed to the love which certainly exists between the two. Hitchcock visualizes the alienation of the lovers by placing Alicia in the foreground as she sits facing the camera; and by placing Devlin in a more distant plane as he gazes at the back of Alicia's head. The irony and the pathos of this composition is not only the spatial differentiation but the failure of the lovers to look into each other's faces at this moment in which their delicate relationship is being tested most severely. Only the camera and the audience can see and relate to one another the stricken horror on Alicia's face and the correspondingly desperate rigidity of Devlin's expressions. This moment of dual solipsism passes when Alicia rises to her feet and faces Devlin to ask him to tell her what he did not tell Captain Prescott. But by this time it is too late. And it is not this latter confrontation but the earlier composition of total spatial estrangement which comes to essentialize the truest reflection of the relationship between Alicia and Devlin.

Before concluding this scene Hitchcock deepens our sense of the separation between the lovers through another imaginative manipulation of visual planes. After Alicia

faces Devlin and begs him for a word of faith, she is devastated by the curtness of his reply: "I'm waiting for your answer." Resigning herself to Devlin's cynicism, Alicia turns her back on her lover and walks from the terrace into the apartment. As she walks, the camera pulls back, tracking and panning in the direction of frame-right to follow her movement. Hitchcock uses this moment in the scenario to express Alicia's situation through both verbal and visual statement. As she walks away from Devlin, Alicia puts into words what Devlin's lack of trust is doing to her: "Never believe in me--hm? Not a word of faith. Just down the drain with Alicia. That's where she belongs." The back-tracking camera has now isolated Devlin from the frame as it records Alicia arriving at the door to the terrace. Crossing the threshold and entering the apartment, Alicia cries softly to herself, "Oh Dev--Dev," and then pours a drink as the camera watches through the curtained glass of the doorway. After downing the drink, Alicia asks despairingly when she starts working for Uncle Sam.

During this latter scene the visual description is more deeply evocative of the lovers' psychological situation than is the speech which Alicia makes while walking to the door. Hitchcock's camera movement has the doubly alienating effect of cutting Devlin out of the frame and then recording Alicia's symbolic crossing of a threshold

and her isolated entrapment in the confining aperture of the window in the doorway. Alicia's words explain her feelings of debasement, but her passing beyond a door and her enclosure within an interposed window shows us her isolation in graphically visual terms. Hitchcock's separation of the lovers in unsupporting visual planes echoes the alienation projected at the table; it also heightens the agony of Alicia in its suggestion that entrapment in a separate plane means a return to her old life of drunkenness and casual sexuality.

Hitchcock's interposition of a symbolic barrier between Alicia and Devlin is a typical instance of the director's imagistic expressiveness in Notorious. In fact, throughout the movie Hitchcock uses doors and windows to suggest that each man is enclosed in a world of his own making. The many doors, walls, and windows in Notorious are architectural expressions of a psychological situation; they project an interior labyrinth of chambers, corridors, and prison cells which isolate man and prevent him from communicating with others. They are also perfect physical manifestations of Hitchcock's Reichian view of character as neurosis. Like Reich, Hitchcock sees that the social persona adapted by most people is ego rather than self--is little more than protective armor adapted through fear to save the soul from an open, multiple, and flexible response to the mysteries of nature and the self. In Hitchcock's

world of comic grotesques, the room is frequently a metaphor for the ego as a kind of spiritual carapace. One thinks of the solipsistic opulence of Rebecca's room, more temple than mortal bedchamber; or of the tiny, screen-like rooms of psychic entrapment in Rear Window (1954). The room-as-prison-cell is an imagistic center of Hitchcock's world; and the ability to break from the room and achieve communion with others is always the measure of deepest psychic fulfillment in Hitchcock.

Hitchcock's films obey the laws of an inexorable dramatic rhythm. Almost every Hitchcock film traces the liberation of the protagonist from imprisonment in a persona/cell. The persona established, the film progresses to a disruptive confluence of circumstances which jolt a person from the persona's shallow security. From this point, the film advances to an examination of the individual's efforts to reconcile himself to forces in himself and in nature which he has previously ignored. In Suspicion (1941), Joan Fontaine moves from a bleak world of genteel spinsterhood to the adventurous and possibly murderous world of Cary Grant. Tallulah Bankhead, the egocentric reporter in Lifeboat (1943), gradually loses all of her material possessions and is increasingly driven to defining herself in terms of love and the understanding of others. And North by Northwest (1959) wrenches Cary Grant from his trivial Madison Avenue existence and asks

him to confront a violence all the more frightening because it flourishes in the daylight world he once mastered so easily. "The Hitchcock hero," as Robin Wood has commented, "typically lives in a small, enclosed world of his own fabrication, at once a protection and a prison, artificial and unrealistic, into which the 'real' chaos erupts, demanding to be faced."[17]

Because Reichian persona turns human society into a ritualized charade, disguises, stages, and false identities all play an important role in Hitchcock's world. For Hitchcock, the theater is a perfect symbol of the arbitrary nature of the roles which circumstances and psychological limitations impose upon man. The theaters of Stage Fright (1950) and I Confess (1952); the movie house in Saboteur (1942); the lecturer's hall in The Thirty-nine Steps (1935); and the auctioneer's chamber in North by Northwest are all visual comments on the nature of artifice and role-playing in human society. Like the room, the role in Hitchcock exists to be destroyed or escaped from. Hitchcock's essential dramatic rhythm embodies the passage of the protagonist from the state of trivial role-playing to a transcendence of the role in a recognition of the larger possibilities of human existence. In North by Northwest, for example, the shallow advertising executive played by Cary Grant is mistaken for a non-existent spy named George Kaplan. Before the film ends, Grant has been forced to

assume both the nominal and actual identity of Kaplan. As Kaplan, Grant falls in love and takes risks for other people; he defines himself through sympathetic human relationships for what may be the first time in his life. In the terms of Hitchcock's values, Grant has stopped playing a trivial social role and has begun to assume a truly human identity. Robin Wood examines the tragic possibilities in this ritual of psychic metamorphosis in Vertigo (1958).[18] In this film a coarsened young woman named Judy (Kim Novak) is hired to play the role of the spiritually and aesthetically sensitive Madeleine. Because Judy cannot keep her own personality separate from her performance, part of Judy's character sinks into and becomes part of the Madeleine imago. Judy and Madeleine never totally fuse, and the outcome is schizophrenia and death for the Kim Novak character. Although Vertigo ends unhappily for its two central protagonists, the viewer is made to admire the spiritual growth attendant upon Judy's absorption in the Madeleine persona. Vertigo, like a number of Hitchcock's American films, expresses the truth of Hamlet's Pirandellian advice to his mother after the play: "Assume a virtue, if you have it not"[19] so that eventually the substance of the role may grow out of the form of the role.

For Hitchcock, the only means of transcending the social persona and escaping from the prison-room lies in an extension of the self in trusting human relationships.

In Notorious Alicia and Devlin do not reach the condition of mutual trust until the very end of the film. Therefore, doors, windows, and walls are used throughout Notorious to concretize the misunderstanding and the faithlessness separating the lovers. It is also important to notice how the suspicions of Alicia and Devlin force each of the characters to play a role. As long as each of the lovers continues to withhold faith from the other, Alicia is condemned to revert back to her playgirl persona; and Devlin is forced to enact his customary role of sceptical voyeur. A mature personality is not a constant, static entity in Hitchcock; it is a net of interacting relationships with other people and with society as a whole.

Lending a visual and thematic structural symmetry to Notorious is Hitchcock's use of doors at both the beginning and the end of the film. Just after the opening moments of Notorious, the camera peers through a slightly opened door of the courtroom to watch a judge sentence Alicia's father to twenty years in prison. The camera does not track into the courtroom, nor does it cut to the faces of either the judge or the defendant. It rather remains outside the chamber and includes at both sides of the frame the enclosing verticals of the doors. Hitchcock's intention is to interpose a barrier between the spectator and John Huberman so that the audience will feel that Huberman has been entirely cut off from human society. Similarly, at

the very end of Notorious, Alexander Sebastian is summoned back into his house by his German associates who stand in the open doorway. Sebastian knows that after he walks into the house, he will first be condemned for his stupidity and then be summarily executed. He walks up the steps slowly and re-enters his house. The door is ominously closed behind him, and the film ends immediately afterward. The door as a portal to the terrors of isolation and death is here the perfect imagistic representation of Sebastian's fate. Like John Huberman, Sebastian has broken the rules of society; and like John Huberman, he pays for his transgressions by being totally isolated from the community. (The parallel use of doors at the beginning and end of Notorious is also Hitchcock's typically cynical means of identifying the legal gangsterism of the courtroom with the illegal gangsterism of the Nazis; like Fritz Lang, Hitchcock believes that it is only the visibility of legal structures which makes the law somewhat less treacherous than criminal procedure.)

The door as an image of human separateness appears throughout Notorious. When Devlin leaves Alicia's apartment to speak to Prescott, he is embracing Alicia as he walks with her to the door. After the door closes behind him, Devlin begins his journey to a disclosure which will interpose a far heavier psychological door between Alicia and himself. As Alicia leaves for her first party inside

Sebastian's house, the camera records her walking through her apartment door from Devlin's subjective angle of vision. Arriving by car at Sebastian's home, Alicia walks up the steps to Sebastian's front door while the camera records her slow ascent from an extreme long-shot placement on the far side of the automobile which brought her here. As she arrives at the door itself, the long shot dissolves into a medium shot of the back of Alicia. A servant opens the door, and Alicia enters the house. Somewhat unusual is Hitchcock's holding the shot until the door slams shut on the eye of the watching camera. Hitchcock rudely closes the door on the camera because such a gesture increases the viewer's fears for Alicia's safety at the same time that it heightens the idea of Alicia's imprisonment in the alien world of Alexander Sebastian.

After Alicia and Sebastian return from their honeymoon, the full thematic meaning of Sebastian's house becomes clearer. This Chinese-box mansion of rooms-within-rooms is a psychological prison on every level. In its closed and locked doors; in its sheltering of criminal activity; and in its lonely, egotistical residents, Sebastian's mansion takes on the dimensions of a central symbol in Hitchcock's work. The mansion is a labyrinth of base secrets and paralyzed emotions; its rooms are the locked chambers of empty souls, and its doors are the psychological barriers which impede the giving of the self in love.

Sebastian's nature is frequently defined by the symbolic implications of his home. When Alicia arrives at Sebastian's mansion for the first time, she walks across a hall and gazes at the closed doorway to a room; inside Sebastian and his Nazi colleagues are laughing loudly as Alicia passes. Hitchcock places Sebastian in a sealed-off room during Alicia's first moments in the house so that the audience will feel at once that something devious lies behind the elegant facade of Claude Rains' Sebastian. The house characterizes Sebastian in other ways. The locked wine cellar suggests the price of secrecy and social isolation which Sebastian must pay for his illicit political activities. The locked rooms to which Mrs. Sebastian has the keys indicate the degree to which Sebastian has been isolated and emasculated by his unnatural dependence on his mother. As Sebastian argues with his mother about the keys behind a closed door, we listen to the argument from Alicia's subjective viewpoint as she stands outside the door of Mrs. Sebastian's bedroom. The camera never visualizes the argument itself, but rather fixes its gaze on the closed door behind which the quarrel takes place. In this scene, the shut door is an image of the barrier which separates the greatly different worlds of Alicia and Sebastian. When, shortly afterward, Alicia moves through the house inspecting its locked chambers with a set of keys, Hitchcock is suggesting that only this

forced and treacherous intrusion on Alicia's part will yield up the deepest secrets of Sebastian's life. A more dramatic use of the door as an image of the estrangement between Alicia and Sebastian occurs shortly after Devlin leaves the wine cellar. Just after Devlin kisses Alicia to divert Sebastian from the missing key, Hitchcock photographs the embracing couple in long-shot composition from Sebastian's subjective angle of vision. From Sebastian's point of view the lovers are seen kissing through the glass panes of the outer door to the wine cellar. Hitchcock uses the door in this instance to visualize the alienation of Alicia and her husband and to suggest a possible reconciliation between the kissing partners on the far side of the door. This reconciliation takes place at the end of the film, and it is significant that Devlin must walk through two doors before reaching Alicia as she lies in bed in a gravely weakened condition. When Devlin walks through first the front door and then through the bedroom door, his motion is an extension of faith and a rescuing of Alicia from an imprisonment which is spiritual as well as physical.

These imagistic analyses of Greed, M, The Last Laugh, and Notorious are by no means complete. Each film is rich with myriads of hieroglyphic patterns not touched upon in this chapter. Nevertheless this section does indicate the weakness of any critical/theoretical attitude which reduces

symbolic imagery to symbolic montage. Narrative fictional films are often as expressive imagistically as a novel, a short story, or a poem. A film by Lang or Hitchcock can be approached with the same precision which a New Critic brings to the study of image patterns in a novel by William Faulkner or a poem by T. S. Eliot.

## Footnotes to Chapter III

[1]Siegfried Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler* (Princeton, 1947).

[2]Thomson, p. 65.

[3]Gavin Lambert, "Fritz Lang's America," Part Two, *Sight and Sound*, 25, No. 2 (Autumn, 1955), p. 97.

[4]Andrew Sarris, *The American Cinema* (New York, 1968), p. 64.

[5]Peter Bogdanovich, *Fritz Lang in America* (London, 1967), p. 126.

[6]Fritz Lang, *M*, trans. Nicholas Garnham (London, 1968), p. 103.

[7]Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, p. 75.

[8]Kracauer, *From Caligari to Hitler*, p. 221.

[9]Lang, *M*, p. 98.

[10]Lang, *M*, p. 108.

[11]Lennig, p. 109.

[12]Alexandre Astruc, "Fire and Ice," *Cahiers du Cinema in English*, No. 1 (January, 1966), pp. 69-73.

[13]Hitchcock discusses the circumstances in which *Notorious* was prepared and produced in *Hitchcock*, a book-length series of Hitchcock interviews conducted by Francois Truffaut. (*Hitchcock*, Francois Truffaut (New York, 1967), pp. 120-25.)

[14]Thomson, pp. 71-77.

[15]Wilhelm Reich, *Character Analysis* (New York, 1949),

[16]Thomson, p. 74.

[17]Wood, p. 68.

[18]Wood, pp. 72-99.

[19]William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, ed. Willard Farnham (Baltimore, 1957), III. IV. 161.

# CHAPTER IV

In the preceding chapters we have applied a number of critical categories to specific films. The purpose of this task has been to show how a systematic critical approach to cinema allows us to study a particular moving picture with the precision of a New Critical examination of a work of literature. This concluding chapter broadens the methodological approach of this thesis by synthesizing the three categories we have studied (inter-shot montage, intra-shot montage, and inter/intra shot imagery) and applying them to a single film, Orson Welles' Citizen Kane (1940-41). Welles' film is richly expressive on every conceivable aesthetic level. The total inter-shot construction of its scenario, the wealth of intra-frame detail in its temporally extended sequence-shots, and the extraordinarily complex patterns of its light-and-darkness imagery make Citizen Kane an ideal work to subject to the critical categories examined in this thesis. It is hoped that a close analysis of the shot-structure and the imagistic development of Citizen Kane will demonstrate that film is as capable of being examined with the same close attention to detail and structure as a work of literature.

Citizen Kane opens with a shot of a NO TRESPASSING sign on a wire fence enclosing Xanadu, the Florida palace of Charles Foster Kane, the man who once ruled the most powerful chain of newspapers in America. Moving into a

room of the palace, the camera watches the dying Kane say "Rosebud" and then drop a glass paperweight to the floor. A nurse enters the room and, seeing that Kane is dead, draws a bedsheet over his face.

The stillness of this sequence is shattered as a film newsreel, "News on the March," suddenly fills the screen to the accompaniment of martial music and the authoritarian voice of a commentator. The newsreel, nearly ten minutes in length, presents a film biography of Charles Foster Kane, "America's Kubla Khan," who built one of the largest private networks of mass communications in the world's history. The newsreel begins with a description of Xanadu, the still unfinished palace which Kane built from "the loot of the world." Plundered from the statuary, the works of art, and the stones of earlier palaces, "Xanadu," intones the narrator, "is the costliest monument a man has built to himself."

After a view of Kane's funeral at Xanadu, the newsreel turns to important periods in Kane's life. The first recalls the days when Kane took over a failing New York newspaper, the Inquirer, and built upon it an empire of 37 newspapers, co-syndicates, and a radio network. Kane's initial fortune multiplied itself many times: Kane once owned apartment buildings, paper mills, ocean liners, forests and factories--"an empire through which, for fifty years, flowed in an unending stream, the wealth of the

world's third richest gold mine." The narrator treats Kane's first acquisition of money as part of American folklore ("Famed in American legend is the origin of the Kane fortune.") as he relates that in 1868 a defaulting boarder left to Kane's mother, the keeper of a boarding house in Little Salem, Colorado, a seemingly worthless deed to a deserted mine shaft, the Colorado Lode.

At this point the newsreel abruptly jumps 57 years into the future to the point at which Walter Parks Thatcher, banker and "grand old man of Wall Street," is testifying at a Congressional investigation concerning his relationship with Charles Foster Kane. Thatcher had once been the guardian of Kane. Thatcher's firm was the trustee to which Kane's mother had given up her young son after she came into possession of the mine shaft. During this hearing, Thatcher, now a very old man, reads a statement in which he accuses Kane of being a communist because of his attacks on the American way of life.

We are told that Kane exerted an enormous influence on national and world politics. The newsreel states that Kane encouraged his country's entry into one war (the Spanish-American); fought participation in another (World War I); secured the election of at least one President (Theodore Roosevelt); and always took a stand on the world's leaders, one of whom (Adolf Hitler) Kane supported and later denounced.

The newsreel briefly details Kane's personal life and political career. Kane was twice married and twice divorced. The first wife, Emily Norton, the niece of the President of the United States, left Kane in 1916 during the time of the scandalous disclosure of Kane's friendship with Susan Alexander, a former sheet-music salesgirl whom Kane wed shortly after the divorce from Emily. After marrying Susan, Kane, determined to make his second wife a great opera singer, built for her the Chicago Municipal Opera House. It was also for Susan that the unfinished Xanadu was built. Kane's political endeavors proved as unsuccessful as his marriages. In 1916, he ran as independent reform candidate for governor and seemed an inevitable winner until the state's newspapers lewdly exploited his relationship with Susan Alexander. The public disgrace of this disclosure ended a political career which seemed destined to reach the White House.

In 1929, the first year of the Great Depression, a Kane newspaper closed down. In a period of four years Kane's world collapsed: Eleven Kane papers were forced to merge; others were sold.

As the newsreel draws to a close, the commentator asserts that Kane, no longer able to shape history, lived to see himself become part of it. Kane spent his last years in the lonely rooms of Xanadu. Alone, mistrusted by the people, he managed from a distance the remnants of his

worldly empire. The newsreel's last glimpses of the reclusive old man are taken by an unauthorized camera which peers into the closed world of Xanadu. Forgotten and nearly powerless, Kane is being pushed in a wheelchair. After the solemn announcement of Kane's death, the newsreel ends.

When the hysterical Luce-world of "News on the March" leaves the screen, the viewer learns that the setting is not a theatre but a projection room of a Time-like media network which is interested in doing a character study of Charles Foster Kane. The men watching the film agree that it lacks an "angle." Rawlston, the man in charge, believes that the newsreel tells not who Kane was but what Kane did. It is Rawlston's conviction that "Rosebud" may hold the key to the mystery of Kane's life. He orders Thompson, who is responsible for the making of the newsreel, to hold up the film a week--two weeks if necessary--and find out the meaning of Rosebud.

The rest of Citizen Kane consists largely of the various flashback accounts of Kane's life from five different sources: 1) the memoirs of Walter Parks Thatcher; 2) Bernstein, Kane's general manager; 3) Jedediah Leland, once Kane's best friend and former drama critic on two successive Kane newspapers; 4) Susan Alexander, Kane's second wife; and 5) Raymond, the butler at Xanadu. The events in Kane's life are not presented chronologically. The scenario

jumps back and forth to the different periods in Kane's life and occasionally portrays the same episode from two different viewpoints in two different flashbacks. The first place Thompson visits is the El Rancho night club in Atlantic City, where Susan Alexander, Kane's second wife, is now working as a singer. The last place Thompson visits is Xanadu, where many of Kane's personal belongings are being catalogued and burned.

Citizen Kane marks the culmination and the greatest single achievement of the big-studio period of American cinema. Welles did not invent a visual vocabulary for Citizen Kane but rather exploited the rich technical facilities of RKO in synthesizing and extending cinematic devices which many directors had been using during both the Thirties and the silent period. In terms of shot-structure, Citizen Kane is a highly innovative film replacing the expressionist editing of the Twenties and Bazin's "analytic" editing of the Thirties with sequence-shooting and detailed composition in depth.

In "The Evolution of Film Language" André Bazin writes that American film-making of the Thirties represents an expressionism of genre and a type of montage which Bazin calls analytic and dramatic. The characteristic genres named by Bazin are the comedy; the burlesque farce; the Western; the musical; the horror film; the gangster film; and the psychological and social drama.[1] The dominant

technique of montage in these genre movies is analytic and dramatic in the sense that the editing breaks down the sequences into details and guides the viewer's attention, however unobtrusively, to those compositional elements which seem to call for thematic and dramatic emphasis. Bazin illustrates the editing methodology of the mid-Thirties film by breaking into shots a scene in which a beggar approaches a table laden with appetizing food. "In 1936," writes Bazin, "the breakdown might have been as follows:

1) General shot taking in both the actor and the table.

2) Tracking shot forward ending in a close-up of his face which expresses a mixture of wonder and desire.

3) A series of close-ups of the food.

4) Back to the character (in medium shot) who walks slowly towards the camera.

5) Slight track back to take in the actor from the knees up, seizing a chicken's wing.[2]

This example represents not the explosive expressionist montage of the silent Soviet cinema but the dramatically logical, "invisible" editing of the Thirties. The shot breakdown is dramatically functional rather than relational. "The change in camera angles," states Bazin of this technique, "does not add anything, it simply presents reality in the most effective manner. First of all by allowing one to see it better, and then by emphasizing what needs

emphasizing."[3]

Although American films of the Thirties did not use dramatic symbolic editing to impose complex thematic and imagistic designs upon reality, their invisible shot breakdowns encouraged visual passivity on the part of the spectator. A viewer of a typical Thirties' film could not exercise his judgment in selecting for himself compositional details to study within a visual context; instead, he was forced to accept the details chosen by the camera which continually cut from detail to detail in patterns of long, medium, and close shots. In the scene with the beggar and the food, for example, it is superfluous for the viewer himself to relate the man's hungry face and tense posture to the food because the breakdown of the shots has already done this work for him. Although the relationship between the beggar and the food is obvious, the editing does not allow the spectator himself to work out this interplay and thus encourages a dependence upon montage to analyze the significance of an event.

The aesthetic of Citizen Kane reveals the limitations of dramatic editing. In place of analytic montage Welles substitutes composition in depth and the sequence-shot and, in doing so, realizes the creative dimensions of spatial continuity and the held shot. Citizen Kane invites the audience to take an active creative role in establishing the thematic and psychological relationships among the compositional details of temporally extended ensemble shots.

Two shots from Citizen Kane illustrate not only the difference between analytic and early Wellesian editing but also the superior realism inherent in the cinematic preservation of the unity of time and space. In each of these shots Welles and cinematographer Gregg Toland heighten composition in depth through the use of the wide-angle lens. Near the beginning of Citizen Kane, Welles uses a sequence-shot of considerable compositional depth for the important part of the Little Salem sequence in which Mary Kane signs her son over to Thatcher's firm in defiance of her husband's objections. This shot begins with a long one-shot composition of Charles playing in the snow. The camera, which is located inside the boarding house, slowly moves backward as Mrs. Kane talks briefly to Charles from inside the house. As the camera moves, it gradually brings into view the window frame, the interior of the room, and the figures of Mrs. Kane, Thatcher, and Mr. Kane. The backtracking continues as Mrs. Kane, dominating the scene, turns away from the window and walks toward the camera on her way to the inner room where she will sign the papers. In the inner room the camera stops receding as Mrs. Kane sits down to sign the documents; following her have been the eager Thatcher, who now sits down near Mrs. Kane, and the disapproving Mr. Kane, who stands in the doorway leading into this inner room. The camera is still for a time and allows us to study this visually and psychologically complex

composition. At frame-right, closest to the camera, is Mrs. Kane. Sitting near her is Thatcher, who is placed somewhat deeper in the frame. On the other side of the screen, at frame-left, is the standing figure of Mr. Kane in the doorway, which is located in a third and still deeper plane of depth. As the viewer gives his attention to these three people, he notices that the subject of this unhappy conference, young Charles, is still visible outside the window playing in the snow. The boy now occupies the deepest plane in the far background of the shot; although tiny in size, he is dramatically framed in the proscenium-like aperture of the window which visually divides Mrs. Kane and Thatcher, on the right side of the screen, from Mr. Kane, on the left side of the screen.

Welles expends great artistry in the composition of this set-up and in the suggestive use of planes in depth. But he resists the temptation to underline the meaning of this sequence through inter-shot montage. Welles might have used editing to isolate in separate shots the faces of the three adults and then juxtaposed a three-shot of these characters with a shot of the young boy whose life the adults are so arbitrarily manipulating. Welles does neither. He rather prolongs the temporal duration of this ensemble shot and places the characters in different planes (emphasizing the boy's uniqueness through the window-frame) in order to encourage the viewer to establish for himself the

psychological and thematic relationships between these characters. As the spectator examines the composition of this held shot, he has sufficient time to study the profound discord between Mr. and Mrs. Kane; the coldness of Thatcher's reserve; the deep sense of loss in Mrs. Kane; and the very abstract relationship between the three adults and the boy playing outside the window. Welles uses the held shot and composition in depth as stylistic means of emphasizing the interrelatedness of human beings as well as the ambiguity of a vision of life which grants each human being a right to a personal and at least somewhat sympathetic and justifiable viewpoint. (This particular sequence-shot is of an unusually extended temporal length. It does not end after Mrs. Kane signs the papers but continues, with a short tracking movement, as Mrs. Kane walks to re-open the window which her husband has closed.)

There are a number of such sequence-shots in Citizen Kane, but one of them, appearing later in the picture, is particularly striking. This shot photographs Susan's singing lesson. At the beginning of this shot the camera tracks in slightly to isolate a group of people at the piano. Nearest the camera, standing at the side of the piano at frame-right, is Susan. At the front of the piano, at frame-left, are the somewhat more distant figures of the pianist and the singing coach. There is little harmony in this group. Susan is desperately trying to sing an acceptable

aria; the exasperated singing teacher verges on hysteria; and the dour piano player is comically indifferent to the whole spectacle. As the viewer occupies himself with the dramatic interplay among these characters, a fourth and crucially important person emerges as a minute figure through a doorway in the distant background of the shot. This figure is Kane himself, the center of the film and the manipulator of this bizarre group at the piano. Kane stands unnoticed in the background of the shot as he watches the singing lesson continue. A director employing analytic montage might have cut to Kane at this point and juxtaposed his reaction with shots of the other individual characters in this scene. Welles chooses instead to preserve the continuity of time and space and to invite the viewer to study for himself the complexities of fear, ambition, desperation, and indifference which bind these four figures into a visual gestalt. The camera plays the role of spectator as Kane, angry at the teacher's contempt for Susan's voice, finally walks toward the piano, becoming visually and symbolically larger as he steps up to the group and imposes his will on the situation. In this shot Welles creates an image of extraordinary visual intricacy from a calmly observant camera, the unbroken performance of actors, and a detailed composition of spatial depth.

These two examples from Citizen Kane contain the three qualities which Bazin believes to be inherent in composition

in depth. In "The Evolution of Film Language" Bazin writes that composition in depth is in some ways superior to relational editing: 1) because depth-composition is closer in structure to the multiple planes of actuality; 2) because it encourages the spectator to assume the active role of the artist in unifying the component elements of a visual context; and 3) because it resists imposing a highly patterned order on actuality and thus "brings ambiguity back into the structure of the image."[4] Like The Last Laugh and Greed, Citizen Kane is a high achievement of Bazin's cinema of reality because its meaning resides primarily within the visual structure of the individual shot.

Bazin's statement that ". . . Citizen Kane is conceived entirely in terms of composition in depth"[5] does not mean that montage plays a minimal role in Kane. On the contrary, the whole narrative structure of the film is a kind of montage mosaic which projects the essential cinematic idea that truth is fragmentary, multiple, and rooted only in the existentially particularized viewpoint of the individual. Moreover, within the narrative structure of Kane, Welles does not refrain from interpretive inter-shot montage whenever the dramatic situation seems to call for such a technique. For example, the montage sequence used to photograph Kane's death conveys the mystery of this event and the tragedy of Kane's life far more effectively

than could a sequence-shot. The eight shots in this sequence are overpowering in their visual interaction and their symbolic suggestiveness. The eight successive shots photograph: 1) the glass ball in Kane's hand; 2) an extreme close-up of Kane's lips speaking the word "Rosebud;" 3) Kane's hand releasing the ball, which rolls down toward the floor; 4) a space near the spot on the floor where the ball falls and smashes; 5) the nurse opening the door (photographed through distorting glass); 6) the nurse walking into the room (Photographed at a larger distance from the nurse through distorting glass, this shot includes at frame-left the tiny house from the glass ball, which now lies on its side.); 7) the nurse folding Kane's arms and pulling the sheet over his face; and, after a brief fade, 8) the silhouetted deathbed of Kane against the window. The rapid cutting in this sequence deliberately disorients the viewer so that he will feel the abruptness and the psychic dislocation of a man's death. In this series of temporally curtailed shots, Welles creates a particularly symbolic meaning in the cutting from the high-angle shot of the ball as it falls to the floor to the close-up of the place on the floor where the ball breaks into pieces. Collisionary editing creates a dynamized sense of destruction at this moment; the shattering of the ball's languid descent with a close-up photographing the smashing of the bibelot is an effect which

could only be produced by the spatial dislocations of inter-shot montage. The Eisensteinian collision between these two shots of the glass ball heightens the symbolism of this scene. For, at the moment of Kane's death, the glass ball is an emblematic suggestion of both Kane's youth and the world which Kane tried--and failed--to hold in his hand.

Another example of symbolically associative montage is the series of four shots photographing Kane as an old man as he is being pushed in a wheelchair over the lawn at Xanadu near the end of the NEWS ON THE MARCH newsreel. These shots have not been authorized by the aged landlord of Xanadu. Kane's desire for solitude forces newsmen to shoot the reclusive millionaire through and above the protective fences of Xanadu. Welles intentionally shakes the camera while shooting this sequence; he wishes the visual instability of the frames to suggest the hand-held shakiness of a forbidden camera peering into the life of a withdrawn celebrity. The units in the sequence are:

1) A long shot photographing the distant wheelchair of Kane being pushed from the far background of the shot at frame-left toward the foreground of the shot. The shaking camera shoots through a wedge-shaped aperture in a wooden fence enclosing an area of Xanadu's spacious lawn. As the wheelchair continues to approach the camera, Kane makes a gesture indicating that the servant pushing the chair make a turn in the direction of frame-right. Just

after the wheelchair begins to turn in the direction of frame-right, Welles cuts to:

2) An extremely high angle, crane-level placement which photographs Kane as he is pushed toward the camera from the upper-left side of the top of the frame. The wheelchair travels a short distance toward the camera in a movement roughly paralleling the left border of the screen. The wheelchair makes a slight shift of movement toward the direction of frame-right before Welles cuts to:

3) A lateral, extremely jittery, panning shot of Kane being pushed in the wheelchair from frame-left to frame-right. The camera photographs the wheelchair through an opening in the wooden fence photographed in the first shot. Cut to:

4) A high-angle placement which photographs Kane as he is pushed toward the camera from the upper-left side of the top of the frame. In this shot the camera tilts down in a descending arc as the wheelchair rolls toward the camera and makes a turning movement in the direction of frame-right. The servant pushes the wheelchair off the lawn and lowers it over a curb as the shot ends.

Welles breaks down the wheelchair's passage across the lawn into four shots for two primary reasons. First, the multiple placements behind and above the fence create a sense of the ubiquity of the snooping <u>vérité</u> camera in the twentieth century. Secondly, the rapid cutting between

the shots dynamizes the wheelchair's journey with the commentative value of Eisenstein's collisionary montage. The jumping from one angle of vision to another in this short scene persuades the viewer that a voyeuristic public incessantly spies upon Kane's every movement and that, fittingly, privacy is an impossibility for the creator of America's first mass communications empire.

Welles' attitude toward the impotency of the aged Kane is conveyed by an Eisensteinian montage breakdown which seems to photograph the same action in a multiple succession of temporally brief shots. The visual structure of each of the four shots is similar; In each instance Kane is photographed as his wheelchair moves--or just begins to move--from left to right. In the first and second shots the wheelchair moves toward the camera from the left side of the frame; in each of these two shots Welles cuts away just after the wheelchair turns in the direction of frame-right. In the third shot the wheelchair moves smoothly from left to right, but the rightward panning camera minimizes the sensation of <u>motion</u> because the pan keeps the wheelchair in roughly the same area in the frame. It is not until the fourth shot of the sequence that the wheelchair makes a clearly described, arc-like movement in the direction of frame-right; even here, however, the tilting and descending camera follows the wheelchair's movements and in doing so confines it to a relatively

stable position in the frame. The four shots used to photograph this sequence make it seem as if Kane, for all his movement, is not really going anywhere. Each of the three shots following the initial shot seems to jerk the wheelchair back into the left side of the frame. The effect of this repetition of visual structure is to create the kind of imagistic paradox unique to cinematic expression. In each of these shots we see the wheelchair moving; but the cutting of the shots and their arrangement in a pattern of montage make it seem as if some force is at the same time retarding and negating this very movement. Welles employs the fragmentary shot structure of Eisenstein to create a sense of an endlessly repeated and ultimately unrealized action. The chair is repeatedly halted or thwarted in its motion to suggest the failure of Charles Foster Kane to impose his will upon reality.

A less symbolically associative but equally appropriate montage sequence structures the Chicago opera debut in Susan's narrative. Welles interweaves shots of the opera performance with shots of the principal players in Kane's personal drama (including Leland, Bernstein, Kane, and the singing coach) and juxtaposes the pathetic sounds of Susan's singing with a number of important audience reactions (including Leland's boredom, Bernstein's sleepiness, and Kane's crazed attentiveness). This symphonic tour de force of editing is very similar in design, scope, and meaning

to the cross-cutting of the marriage ceremony in The Scarlet Empress and recalls the stylistic similarities between Josef von Sternberg and Orson Welles. Welles' smooth mingling of prolonged sequence-shots with montage designs of the highest artistry helps to explain why Citizen Kane is sometimes called the greatest masterpiece of technical virtuosity in film history.

Citizen Kane is one of the greatest examples of big-studio expressionism in film history. For all of its realistic sequence-shooting. Orson Welles' movie relies as much on the expressionist plastic manipulation of Méliès as it does on the naturalistic observation of Lumière. The lighting, the decor, and the camera angles throughout Citizen Kane are sufficiently stylized to justify the film's being studied as an extension of German expressionist theater and cinema.

Working closely with cinematographer Gregg Toland, Welles shoots most of the scenes in Citizen Kane in various patterns of low-key lighting. Welles illuminates the film's set-ups in heavily shadowed configurations because the world of Citizen Kane is not the naturalistic universe of surfaces but rather the interior, largely symbolic, projection of America's psychic life. The film's low-key compositions intensify the mystery of Kane and the world which he unsuccessfully attempts to master.

In the film's opening sequence Welles uses the

extinguishing of a light in a room of Xanadu to portend the death of Charles Foster Kane. Kane himself first appears as a corpse-like figure silhouetted against a towering window. In this composition Kane looks less like an individualized human being than an emblematic--or imagined--monarch laid out for burial. In the sequences which follow, low-key compositions frequently throw Kane into darkness whenever Welles wishes to suggest a sinister, ghost-like quality in his protagonist. In this film Charles Foster Kane possesses both the spiritual blackness of a Caligari and the shadowy incorporeality of an abstraction. Inasmuch as Kane exerts a domineering force over other human beings, he is a Caligari whose darkened image projects a capacity for the tyrannical exercise of power; and inasmuch as Kane is an epitome and an abstraction of purely national, archetypal, qualities, he is nothing--he is a ghost living a dream rather than a particular human being confronting the circumstances of existential reality.

Near the beginning of Bernstein's account in Citizen Kane, Kane tells Leland and Bernstein that he plans to make the Inquirer as indispensable to New York as the gaslight in the Inquirer's office. Reaching his hand toward and then placing it upon the switch of a jet of gaslight in the Inquirer's office, Kane says, "I've got to make the New York Inquirer as important to New York as the gas in that light." Finishing the sentence, Kane turns off the light

and carries his Declaration of Principles to his desk. As Kane talks to Leland and Bernstein and reads the Principles, the camera photographs Kane from below while a combination of back and side-lighting throws Kane's face into shadowy darkness. In this early sequence in the Inquirer's office, the dialogue of the film's script clearly indicates the schizophrenia of Charles Foster Kane, a man who dedicates himself to journalistic truth at the same time that he commits himself to the idea that the headline determines the importance of the news. Yet, even if there were no dialogue in the scene in which Kane reads his Principles--if in fact this were a silent film by Murnau--the viewer could apprehend visually the unconscious duality of Kane's behavior through Welles' manipulation of light. Consciously, Kane wants to bring the light of truth and justice to the people of New York; unconsciously, however, Kane desires personal power through the manipulation of the public mind. It is not surprising, then, that the conscious Kane produces an impressive-looking Declaration of Principles while the unconscious Kane, inadvertently expressing himself through purely visual means, snuffs out the light which the conscious Kane might regard as an emblem of the truth of honest reporting. The conscious Kane impresses Leland and Bernstein with his Declaration, but the unconscious Kane reads from the Declaration with his face bathed in a darkness which projects a sinister quality in Kane's deepest

motivation.

Later in the film Welles carefully modulates the lighting of both Kane and his political rival, Jim Gettys, in the climactic confrontation at Susan's apartment. This sequence begins immediately after the shot of Kane and Emily waiting outside the doorway of Susan's apartment building. After the maid admits Kane and Emily, the shot of the building's closed doors dissolves into a low-angle, long-shot composition photographing the open door to Susan's apartment; the camera is placed at the head of the stairs outside the apartment. As the shot begins, Susan appears at the open door. Immediately afterward, Kane and Emily break into the foreground of the shot at lower frame-left as they ascend the top of the stairs. At this point Susan calls out to Kane. Welles accompanies the Kanes' walk to Susan's doorway in a tilting and panning gesture of the camera. Just after Susan explains that Gettys forced her to send Mrs. Kane the letter, Gettys himself walks into the doorway from inside Susan's apartment. Gettys does not walk into the hall but stands directly in the doorway as he silently confronts Kane. Illuminated primarily by back-lighting, Gettys stands silhouetted against the brightly lit doorway; just before he says, "I'm Jim Gettys," Welles cuts to a long medium-shot composition of Gettys, Susan, Kane, and Emily as they stand in a nearly frozen tableau about the door to Susan's apartment.

The stronger back-lighting used to photograph Gettys in this second shot makes Kane's political enemy the most imposing figure in this fairly close four-shot composition. After Emily walks into Susan's apartment and turns around to face the camera, Kane walks to the left side of the doorway and looks directly at Gettys. As the camera moves in to follow Kane, it cuts Susan out of the shot. The resultant three-shot now composed by these latter movements of both camera and actors photographs: 1) Emily as she faces the camera from the inside of the doorway in long medium-shot range and 2) Kane at frame-left and Gettys at frame-right as their profiled, silhouetted, figures face one another in the foreground of the open doorway. The source of illumination in this composition derives primarily from back-lighting: Inside Susan's apartment Emily is clearly lit; in the doorway Kane at frame-left and Gettys at frame-right stand in silhouetted darkness. After Kane threatens to break Gettys' neck, Gettys walks inside, and Welles cuts to a camera placement within a room of Susan's apartment. Shortly after this third shot has begun, Kane walks to the far side of the room to talk to Gettys. As the two men briefly snarl at one another in the background of the set-up, the viewer observes that Welles has again transformed the two political rivals into shadowy phantoms by illuminating both Kane and Gettys with side- and back-lighting. After Gettys walks to the relatively bright foreground to

talk with Emily, the darkened figure of Kane continues to stand in the background of the set-up. Kane remains in the same place throughout much of the scene which follows from this point.

The lighting used in this sequence at Susan's apartment comments upon the deepest meanings in the clash of wills between Kane and Gettys. When actor Ray Collins first steps into the open doorway of Susan's apartment, his ominous silhouette marks Jim Gettys as the conventional villain in a gaslit melodrama of blackmail, political corruption, and illicit romance. Welles redeems this visual cliché of the shadowy villain by twice moving Kane himself into the same darkly lit areas of the set occupied by Gettys. When Kane threatens Gettys in the doorway and afterwards walks into the background of Susan's apartment, the back-lighting makes the reform candidate for governor seem fully as malevolent as the darkened, admittedly corrupt, figure of boss Jim Gettys. In both instances Welles is using light to define character; the director is seeking visually expressive means of implying that both men are now acting less as responsive human beings than as driven forces of ambition. The low-key compositions indicate that the only difference between Gettys' and Kane's corruption is a matter of awareness: Gettys is conscious that his public life is a lie whereas Kane, like Gatsby, has never understood the disparity between the integrity of his

dreams and the "foul dust /which/ floated in the wake of his dreams."[6]

Perhaps the most consistently developed pattern of light and darkness in Citizen Kane is that which characterizes the relationship between Kane and Susan. On two different occasions Kane's domination over Susan is expressed through the shadow of Kane falling over the kneeling or sitting figure of his wife. At one point in the scene immediately following the Salammbo debut in Susan's narrative, Susan is kneeling on the floor complaining about continuing her opera career. Furious at Susan's affront to his will, Kane walks over to his wife and says firmly, "You will continue with your singing." As Kane's shadow falls over his kneeling wife, Susan's face is obscured in darkness; set off by her husband's shadow is the fearful animation of Susan's eyes as they behold Kane's threatening physical presence. Susan descends to a crouching position and wordlessly agrees to obey her husband's order. Later, during the outing at the Everglades, Kane and Susan are having a bitter quarrel in their picnic tent. Enraged at Susan's insults, Kane rises from his chair; as he stands before his seated wife, Welles uses cross-lighting to throw the right side of Kane's face into darkness. When, in the same scene, Susan's remarks finally goad Kane into striking her, Welles shoots Susan in a high-angle shot and photographs the shadow of Kane flitting across her face

and body as Kane slaps Susan across the face.

The most obsessively Caligarian darkness in Kane appears during and immediately after the Salammbo debut in Susan's narrative. As Kane intently watches the performance, Welles shoots Kane in one of two basic set-ups. The first, a loose frontal close-up, is a darkened composition in which the top of Kane's head and the bottom of Kane's face are obscured in shadow. The second is a composition in depth which photographs: 1) the darkened right side of the back of Kane's head in the foreground at frame-left and 2) the tiny opera stage in the distant background at frame-right. After the performance has concluded, Kane rises to his feet and tries to extend the audience's applause by loudly clapping his hands. As the standing Kane obsessively applauds Susan's performance, the lights are dimmed, and Kane abruptly turns into a completely shadowed silhouette. It is only the raising of the house lights which causes the suddenly embarrassed Kane to stop clapping. Kane is photographed from below in this scene. As his darkened image applauds his wife in solitary abandon, the low-key lighting projects a will totally absorbed by an obsessive passion. Like the shadows falling over the frightened Susan, the ghostly phantom of Welles' opera characterizes the fanaticism with which Kane is subjecting the will of his wife throughout Susan's singing career. It is fitting, then, that Welles visualizes Susan's later

suicide attempt in terms of darkness encroaching upon and finally extinguishing an area of light. The suicide attempt is telegraphed in a single symbolic shot. A lightbulb gradually flickers into darkness while on the soundtrack an artificially slowed down recording of Susan's singing voice simultaneously collapses into silence.

Welles frequently associates Susan with darkness because she is the most passively victimized character in the film. Forced into a world she is not sophisticated enough to understand, Susan is an isolated, entrapped human being sadly passing through a landscape of ghosts and shadows. During the first El Rancho sequence, expressionist lighting is used to define the deathly impersonal relationship between Thompson and the headwaiter, on one hand, and Susan, on the other. In the beginning of this sequence Susan angrily tells Thompson to leave her alone; she adamantly objects to answering any questions about her marriage to Kane. Thompson leaves Susan's table and makes a phone call to his boss. Just after Thompson enters the phone booth, Welles cuts to a camera placement which photographs the interior of the El Rancho from the far side of the glass-enclosed telephone booth. The sequence-shot which follows is the concluding shot in the first El Rancho sequence; the camera remains motionless throughout this sequence-shot. The shot concentrates upon three people: 1) Thompson, who talks on the phone to his boss about the interviews he has

planned with other acquaintances of Kane; 2) the headwaiter, who hovers about the phone booth hoping to sell some information about Susan to Thompson; and 3) Susan, who continues to sit at her table. In the beginning of the shot Thompson shuts the glass door of the phone booth; after he finishes the call, he re-opens the door and gives some money to the headwaiter in a vain attempt to discover the meaning of Rosebud.

The composition which deserves particular attention in this sequence-shot is that which photographs Thompson, the headwaiter, and Susan during the period of time in which the glass-paneled door to the telephone booth is closed. In the foreground of this composition at frame-right stands the silhouetted image of Thompson, who obliquely faces the camera in the direction of frame-right as he talks on the phone; the totally blackened image of the reporter is set off against the booth's front and side glass panels, which are visible behind Thompson. At screen-center, in a medium plane of depth, is the headwaiter; he is framed in one of the glass bars in the door of the telephone booth. Dressed in black--like Thompson--the headwaiter stands with his hands in his pockets and looks off abstractedly in the direction of frame-left. The shadow-like figures of Thompson's silhouette and the headwaiter in black seem to have grown out of the darkness with which Welles blankets the foreground of this set-up. In the far background of

this composition sits the brightly illuminated Susan, who is slumped over her table with the drink a waiter has just brought over to her. Susan is not photographed through the telephone booth's glass panels; but the juxtaposition of Susan's distant spatial plane at frame-left with the closer spatial planes of the headwaiter and Thompson at frame-center and frame-right makes all three of these characters in this composition appear to be entrapped within imprisoning, adjacent, vertical bars of space.

The manipulation of planes in depth in this shot recalls both Hitchcock and Antonioni in that the pointedly disparate levels of space convey estrangement rather than a Renoir-like continuum of spatial wholeness. Welles underscores the self-absorption of the shot's three characters by setting up the scene in such a way that each of the three actors faces in a different direction. It is Susan, however, whose psychological situation is uniquely heightened by the lighting and the composition in depth of this shot. Welles' low-key illumination throws the foreground images of the set-up into sinister darkness or near darkness: Thompson is a shadowed silhouette and the headwaiter behind him is wearing a black suit which is sharply set off against the light background of the shot. The primary source of illumination in this shot, the back-lighting, accentuates Susan's vulnerability because it makes her appear to be a pitilessly exposed Lilliputian besieged by

towering shadows who are interested only in exploiting her. The action and the dialogue throughout this first El Rancho sequence make it clear that both Thompson and the headwaiter are using Susan: Thompson displays lack of consideration by sitting at Susan's table unasked; and the headwaiter exhibits unfeeling calculation by seeking to sell Thompson a piece of Susan's past. A reading of Kane's script would yield this information, but it is the richly expressive nuances of the mise en scène's lighting and composition which embody Susan's entrapment most vividly.

When Thompson visits the El Rancho night club a second time, Welles is again careful to characterize Susan through light. As the camera rises from Susan's poster and travels over the roof a second time, the viewer notices that, whereas the electric sign advertising Susan's name had been brightly lit in the opening shot of the first El Rancho sequence, the sign is now completely darkened. This detail may seem insignificant, but subliminally it suggests the gradual downfall of Susan Alexander from her earlier worldly eminence as the wife of Charles Foster Kane. Shortly afterward, Welles indicates through modulation of light that one of Susan's few pleasures lies in recalling the past--especially the time she defied Kane by walking out on him. This example of expressive lighting occurs just before Susan's face disappears from the screen at the El Rancho nightclub and dissolves into the opening image of

the singing-lesson sequence. As Susan starts to re-create her past for Thompson's benefit, Welles dims the lamps on the tables surrounding Susan at the beginning of the dissolve from the shot of Susan's El Rancho table to the sequence-shot photographing the singing-lesson flashback. Susan's brightly lit face is surrounded by darkness as the El Rancho decor fades into blackness and the singing-lesson shot begins to succeed it on the screen. Susan's transfigured face now fades from the frame, and the camera begins to track closer to the piano in the singing-lesson shot. As the camera begins to move forward, the viewer feels as if he has entered the darkness of a human mind and is now journeying to the subterranean secrets of Susan's past.

Much of the decor of Citizen Kane is expressionistically simplified in the service of theme and symbol. Sometimes the plastic modulation of a set is stylized to an almost Caligarian extreme. The vault-like chamber in which Thompson reads from Thatcher's memoirs is a chill, unadorned, stone room furnished with only a table, a chair, and a large portrait of Walter Parks Thatcher. This reading room is illuminated by diagonally slanted bars of light which make the chamber appear to be a sacred cathedral of learning. The woman who guides Thompson to the table is part of decor; efficient, mechanical, and totally devoted to form, this arch gargoyle in suit and tie is one of the film's most comic human caricatures. All of this scene's

decor--both animate and inanimate--expresses the pedantry of a world of trivial rules and empty conventions. The Thatcher Memorial Library is an appropriate mausoleum to the soulless life of Walter Parks Thatcher. When, in Bernstein's narrative, Thatcher asks Kane what he would liked to have been, Kane answers with directness, "Everything you hate," because to Kane Thatcher personifies the safe, mundane wisdom of society. It is the cold, riskless, lifestyle of a "grand old man of Wall Street" which Welles translates into scenic design in the Thatcher Memorial Library. Orson Welles, himself an epic creature of the imagination, admires not commonplace worldly successes like Thatcher but life-actors who transform the dull conditions of society with will, consciousness, and a self-created personality of aesthetic beauty. Unlike Thatcher, Kane never commits the unforgivable sin: He never becomes part of the decor.

The hall in which Kane gives his political speech in Leland's narrative is perhaps the most expressionistically stylized set in the film. In the back of the stage on which Kane is speaking is a backdrop-poster of Kane's face which is so huge that it completely dwarfs the figure of the human Charles Foster Kane at the lectern below. Sitting around and to the back of Kane is an irregularly arranged arc of doll-like politicians who mechanically laugh and applaud at all the proper places in Kane's speech.

The total mise en scène in this sequence is a perfect representation of Kane's elephantine ego and the mass-produced sameness of the ordinary men who surround Kane. The ambition of Citizen Kane is a national quality which transcends the individual self. The poster grotesquely magnifies the will of Charles Foster Kane; it allows us to see in the same visual context both the existential Kane and the overpoweringly archetypal image to which Kane aspires.

Typical of both stage and film expressionism is the ring of seated politicians who sit behind Kane as he speaks. One of the staple techniques of expressionist theater and cinema is the juxtaposition of the central protagonist with a massed group of robot-like human beings. Fritz Lang uses such compositions at the end of M as he contrasts shots of the frightened Peter Lorre with shots of the massed and vengeful people on the criminal jury. Josef von Sternberg frequently employs the same technique in films such as Dishonored and The Devil Is a Woman in order to set off images of Dietrich against a crowded tableau of dummy-like Sternbergian males. From Sternberg one remembers such images as Dietrich before the court-martial officers in Dishonored; Dietrich in front of the firing squad in Dishonored; or Dietrich outfacing a mass of Spanish officials in Edward Everett Horton's office in The Devil Is a Woman. In Lang and in much of German stage expressionism such compositions are generally paranoid reflections of the indi-

vidual's fear of violence from within and from without. In Sternberg and Welles similar compositions are frequently used to oppose the dynamism and the self-consciousness of the hero/heroine to the lumpen torpor of the rest of humankind.

In Citizen Kane Welles frequently accentuates Kane's archetypal quality by juxtaposing Kane with a Sternbergian grouping of human mannequins. After the photograph of the Chronicle staff resolves itself into a shot of the real Chronicle staff at Kane's victory party, Kane himself walks into the composition from frame-left and in doing so playfully contrasts his vivacity with the inanimate stiffness of the ex-Chronicle men. Just after his return from Europe, Kane, dramatically set off in a white suit, charges into the office and then impatiently listens to the opening of Bernstein's welcoming speech while the massed Inquirer staff looks on in attitudes of relative rigidity. This composition magnifies Kane's will by deliberately surrounding him with conventional people whose physical immobility and darkly colorless clothing suggest a deathliness of spirit.

Two of the sets in Citizen Kane which have received little critical attention are those depicting the El Rancho interior and the office of the aged Bernstein. The ersatz Mexican backdrop behind Susan's table at the El Rancho is a crudely painted vista depicting such motifs from the North American Southwest as a tall cactus plant, a rugged mountain

range, and the facades of adobe houses. The "atmospheric" El Rancho wall design features painted-on cracks in the painted-on plaster; beneath the flakings of the pseudo-plaster are painted-on bricks. This blatantly faked interior decoration evokes the debasement of the iconography of the American West; it suggests the distance traveled between the inchoate myth of the Little Salem frontier and the commercialized fantasy of a twentieth-century cliché.

Bernstein's office is expressionistically expressive on a personal rather than on a national level. The chief characteristic of Kane's business manager has always been loyalty. Welles visualizes this quality through the vertical linearity of the office in which Thompson interviews Bernstein. The central compositional images in this set are Bernstein's desk; a large fireplace; a portrait of Charles Foster Kane; a fluted pilaster; and a set of tall vertical windows at both sides of the corner of the room. (In the second sequence-shot photographed in this office Welles removes Bernstein's desk and the chair behind it in order to set off the fireplace more clearly.) All of these compositional images are cast in vertical forms. The large fireplace at frame-left is vertically extended by the portrait of Kane which hangs above it; the fluted pilaster to the right of the fireplace runs in vertical lines from the ceiling to the floor of the office; and the set of

vertical windows near the pilaster at extreme frame-right reaches, like the pilaster, from the floor to the ceiling of the office. Studying the foreground detail in the first sequence-shot set in this office, the viewer notices that the back of Bernstein's desk chair is a large vertical slab whose size and shape extend the dominant linear mode into a closer plane of depth; as soon as the camera is fairly close to Bernstein at the desk, the viewer also observes that below Bernstein, in the glass top of his desk, are reflected both the pilaster and the tall vertical windows. It is obvious at once that this room is not meant to be taken as a replica of a Wall Street office. The naturalistically absurd pilaster and the outsized portrait of Kane have meaning on an expressionist level of scenic simplification and exaggeration in the service of theme and mood. Viewed in a single visual context, the compositional details in this room form part of the Temple to Kane which the loyal Bernstein will oversee until he dies. The stark verticality of the composition signifies the moral uprightness of Bernstein, perhaps the only person who never betrayed Kane.

In 1941 the most innovative expressionist technique of Citizen Kane appeared to be Welles' use of high-angle shots (shots taken from a point above eye-level) and low-angle shots (shots taken from a point below eye-level). In many scenes Welles uses a dramatically low-angle camera

placement to heighten the authority and the domination of Charles Foster Kane. This use of a depressed shooting angle is particularly expressive when used to photograph those scenes in which Kane undergoes some kind of humiliation. Three such instances are: 1) the moment in which a silhouetted Kane stands in his box and furiously applauds Susan's first opera performance; 2) the sequence in which Leland confronts Kane on the morning after Kane loses the election; and 3) the sequence in which Kane destroys his wife's room after Susan finally decides to leave him. In each of these three circumstances the script tells us that Kane is suffering a humiliating defeat; yet in the very same circumstances the camera uses a suggestive low-angle to exaggerate Kane's height and to invest the film's hero with a towering and forbidding authority. Paradoxically, Kane's dignity never seems so magnificent as during these humiliations because the persistently loyal camera continues to gaze up at Kane with a child's sense of stricken awe. In these three scenes the director's camera angles suggest that Kane's epic fidelity to dream transcends the vicissitudes of Kane's worldly fortunes. The camera worshipfully looks up because Kane never loses his heroic stature: Kane always radiates the power of a directed will and the imagination of a self-created work of art.

Complementing the low-angle shots of Kane during his marriage to Susan are the high-angle placements used to

photograph Kane's second wife. Welles often characterizes Susan by the use of the elevated camera because he wishes to portray Susan as subject to Kane's domination throughout the film's flashback sequences. During the Salammbo opening in Susan's narrative Welles employs a number of different high-angle placements to express Susan's subordination to Kane. As Susan performs the opera and later receives polite applause from the audience, Welles photographs Susan in a series of close, long, and extremely distant high-angle shots to imply that Susan is undergoing submission to a will which is not her own. Like Kane, the camera imperiously bears down upon Susan and exposes her powerlessness in the baroque designs of Charles Foster Kane. In the scene immediately following the Salammbo performance, Welles alternates low-angle shots of the standing Kane with high-angle shots of Susan on the floor in order to suggest through visual formalism that Kane will succeed in forcing his wife to continue her singing career at the end of this sequence. Welles completes this pattern of low- and high-angle shooting in the tent in which Kane and Susan argue during the picnic in the Everglades. The low-angle shots used to photograph the standing Kane and the high-angle placements used for the close shots of Susan visually prepare the viewer for the moment in which Kane will slap his wife and in an instant destroy the little that remains of his second marriage. Welles' tendency to juxtapose Kane

and Susan in alternating low- and high-angle shots encourages the viewer to recall that as a child Kane himself rarely experienced any kind of human relationship except one structured in a master/slave pattern. Our understanding of Kane's treatment of Susan grows when we remember that the only two shots in the film portraying young Charles in Thatcher's home are: 1) a shot which tilts up from young Charles on the floor to an extremely low-angle view of the supercilious Thatcher; and 2) a complementary high-angle shot photographing the dwarfed Charles surrounded by Thatcher and a number of his servants. The pathos in Kane's domination of Susan is that Kane himself has rarely been granted any direct, honest, display of affection. Kane towers over the people in his life because he has no access to human love.

In Citizen Kane Welles frequently uses the low-angle camera placement in order to create dramatic effects of foreshortening. When the camera is placed at the level of the floor or the level of an actor's waist, the entire frame is thrown into visual disorder. Even if the camera is motionless, the resultant foreshortening depicts a collapsing universe in which the vertical lines at frame-right and frame-left fall sharply toward the center of the screen. In such compositions the fluidly tilting, metronomic verticals of the moving actors play against the similarly tilted, but fixed, verticals of the decor; the ceilings

made visible in these compositions aggravate the distortions of perspective by seeming to be falling down upon the heads of the actors. In Citizen Kane the linear tensions of Welles' low-angle shots are frequently extended by a second technique of oblique camera placement. When setting up a scene in Citizen Kane Welles rarely places the camera at a direct right angle to the subject. If a sequence calls for two people to face one another in a conversation, Welles generally positions the two actors in different spatial planes and shoots at an oblique angle to the actors. If an interior scene requires that walls appear in the background, Welles is generally careful to avoid directly frontal shots of the walls which appear behind the actors. Instead, Welles photographs the walls at oblique angles and frequently emphasizes in the resultant compositions the corners and ceilings of the room in which lengthy sequences are set. When, for example, Thatcher and Kane argue with each other at Kane's Inquirer desk, Welles places in the central background the corner formed by a vertical pillar and the converging sides of the low wooden partition surrounding Kane's desk. In the sequence in which Kane reads his Declaration of Principles, the camera shoots from a low angle and directs its gaze in the general direction of the far corner formed by two of the office's converging walls. And the initial confrontation between Kane and Gettys outside Susan's apartment is photographed from a depressed

angle which gazes upward at, among other things, the corner of the hall at the right side of the composition.

A particularly dramatic composition of clashing diagonals is created by the oblique, low-angle placements used to photograph Kane and Leland in the Inquirer's office on the morning after the lost election. In this sequence the camera is so close to the floor that it makes the vertical lines of the room at frame-right and frame-left appear markedly pitched toward the center of the screen. The cross-beamed ceiling at the top of the frame converges with the walls at sharply oblique angles and seems to entrap Kane and Leland in a Caligari-like net of wildly projecting and extending linear planes. The moving, constantly changing, tilted verticals of Kane and Leland interact with the slanted verticals and horizontals of the room's walls, ceiling, and pillars to produce a total destruction of any conventional spatial bearings. The clashing and crisscrossing of the scene's oblique linear modes are perfect aesthetic means of objectifying the shattered friendship of Kane and Leland. The emotional breakdown between the two men reflects itself in the disordered perspectives created by the oblique, low-angle shooting of the sequence.

The many oblique camera set-ups and acutely depressed shooting angles fill the frames of Citizen Kane with clashing, tilted, intersections of horizontal and vertical lines. The low camera angles inwardly tilt the verticals at the

two sides of the frame; and the oblique positioning of the camera in front of walls and corners causes the horizontal axes of the lines formed by the ceiling and walls to slope downward in sharply tilted declensions; to the viewer it sometimes seems as if the converging walls are simultaneously projecting out toward and extending away from the camera. Welles intensifies the pressure of the clashing diagonals in Citizen Kane by marking many of the ceilings of the film with raised cross-beams. The ceilings of the interiors of the main New York Inquirer office; the Chicago Inquirer's city room; and Susan's bedroom at Xanadu are all covered by various patterns of intersecting cross-beams. Photographed from below, these crisscrossed ceilings continue the patterns of jagged linear intersections formed by the foreshortening in the rest of the composition. Apprehended simultaneously, the walls and the ceilings of Welles' low-angle set-ups seem to be the collapsing planes of a world which is about to fall apart upon the heads of the actors or else explode into pieces from within.

The depressed camera angles and the oblique camera placements in Citizen Kane are important formal statements of Welles' vision of modern America. The instability and the latent violence of Kane's linear designs mirror the growing consciousness of the challenge to the American Dream in the twentieth century. When Welles shoots a scene with a depressed, obliquely directional camera, he is

adopting a perspective which carries within it a self-consciousness of the disparities between the American ideal and the American experience. In the nineteenth century these disparities did not seem pathological because America still possessed the expanding frontier, the pioneer's eagerness for exploration, and a young country's illusion of innocence and perpetual rebirth. In the twentieth century, however, it has become increasingly difficult not to feel the schizophrenic disruption between the national ideal and the national fact. Two world wars; the disappearance of the frontier; and the emergence of clearly defined economic classes have all contributed to a dissociation of Americans from America. In Citizen Kane the mythological frontier finds its last avatar in the tawdry decor of the El Rancho night club; young Kane's idealistic faith in Andy Jackson and "the union forever" degenerates into a skeptical vision of venal politicians and corrupted businessmen; and the gorgeous myth of America as an anarcho-apocalyptic poem of a new Eden has fallen to the wild fantasies of popular journalism. Welles is uncomfortably aware of all of these contradictions; he sees that to be an American demands that one lead a life so schizophrenic that eventually one's psychic vision becomes distorted. It is nothing short of Welles' idea that America is an Art Deco madhouse which engenders the neurotically eccentric camera angles and the acute foreshortenings of Citizen Kane.

Welles has the audacity to extend the expressionist perception of the world-as-insane-asylum beyond the Kracauerian confines of Hitler's Germany.

In studying the highly plastic lighting and the exotic settings of Citizen Kane, one is frequently reminded of Josef von Sternberg, a director whose textural densities and experiments with decor exerted a strong influence on Orson Welles. Welles frequently composes his shots in multiple spatial planes which carefully play off foreground against background detail. One such composition in Susan's room at Xanadu might have informed any number of scenes in The Scarlet Empress. In this briefly held composition the camera, shooting from a low-angle placement, looks up at Susan and Kane as they confront one another just before Susan leaves Xanadu for the last time. The camera is placed directly over one side of Susan's bed. Susan at frame-left and Kane at frame-right are facing one another in profile at the far side of the bed. Photographed with a wide-angle lens, the composition takes into view and holds in sharp focus the right profile of a blonde doll which sits on the bed in the foreground at extreme frame-left. Like Susan, the doll faces frame-right; this miniature version of Susan is placed so close to the camera that it appears almost as tall as the background figure of the human Susan. As Kane looks at his wife, it seems as if he is confronting two Susans: the living woman who stands

before him and the doll whose profiled face seems to be facing Kane to the left of Susan. As the viewer reflects upon this composition, the doll becomes a metaphor for Kane's puppeteer-like manipulation of Susan's life. Through his dictatorial will Kane has transformed Susan into an inanimate creature in a Sternbergian dollhouse. Kane has metamorphosed Susan into the decor of Xanadu just as Sternberg melts most of his barely animate actors into the physical properties of the mise en scène. In this scene from Kane, the image of the doll on the bed is Welles' wordless explanation of Susan's reason for leaving her husband.

One technique which Welles appears to have learned from Sternberg is the slow dissolve. Welles' extension of the visual mix in Citizen Kane allows the viewer to see one period of time slowly disappearing into and giving way to another. The dissolve is the ideal cinematic expression of the simultaneity of the past, the present, and the future. This means of bridging two shots is particularly organic to Citizen Kane, a film whose disjunctiveness of bands in time expresses Welles' sense that each moment in time contains within it its past and its future. As certain characters begin to tell their stories to Thompson in Citizen Kane, Welles uses a protracted dissolve to move from the face of the speaking character to the opening image of the story lodged in the mind of the speaker.

This liquid passing of one era into another is a characteristically Sternbergian means of emphasizing the mutability and the transience of all human life.

Welles makes a similarly evocative use of the Sternbergian dissolve in two of Kane's impressionistic montage sequences. For most big-studio directors, the impressionistic, or Hollywood, montage sequence presented little more than an occasion to suggest a transition in time through a series of visual clichés. Welles, however, enriches this staple technique of the narrative film by making the impressionistic montage sequence serve to define character and tone in addition to conveying information and bridging gaps in time. Perhaps the most inventive use of this technique in Citizen Kane is the breakfast-table sequence which portrays the gradual estrangement of Kane and Emily. The two examples which should be considered here, however, are two less celebrated sequences whose value inheres not only in the substance of the shots but in the dissolves employed to join the shots into a unit. These two sequences are those photographing the grounds of Kane's estate at the beginning of the film and Susan's puzzles at Xanadu near the end of the film.

The first of these two sequences begins almost immediately after the first three ascending crane shots of Citizen Kane which photograph the NO TRESPASSING sign and the three levels of the wire and metal fences enclosing Xanadu. Each

of these three shots is joined by a dissolve. The fourth shot in the film, a view of the giant K surmounting an unseen gate, introduces us to the impressionistic montage sequence which photographs representative details of Xanadu's estate at the same time that it gradually brings us closer to the room where Charles Foster Kane is dying. It is the film's fourth shot, the shot photographing the K, which gives the spectator his first view of the distant palace of Xanadu in the painted background of this shot at upper frame-right. The mist-shrouded palace in the remote background of this shot is darkened save for the tiny light in the room in which Kane is dying. After this fourth shot has established the K and the distant palace, Welles dissolves from this composition to a series of different localities on the Kane estate. None of the shots in this sequence ever loses sight of the lighted window beyond which Kane is dying. Welles threads a visual continuity through all the shots of Kane's estate by including at upper frame-right a recurring image of the remote Xanadu.

The following series of shots directly follows the fourth shot of Citizen Kane (i.e., the shot of the K and the remote palace of Xanadu). The shots listed below are numbered in the order in which they appear in the film. Those which constitute the impressionistic montage sequence of Xanadu's landscape run from five through nine:

5) The image of the giant K in the fourth shot of

Citizen Kane dissolves into a shot photographing part of a large cage at frame-left and an overarching iron gateway at frame-right. The cage is marked with a sign reading BENGAL TIGER, but two monkeys now occupy the cage. Looking out from the bars of the cage, the monkeys turn their heads from side to side as if bewildered to find themselves part of Xanadu's decor. A film of mist is floating across the frame from left to right during this shot. Dissolve to:

6) A high-angle shot photographing the surface of one of the pools of Xanadu. Two darkened gondolas break into the frame in the foreground of the composition. In the reflection of the water at upper frame-right is the upsidedown image of Xanadu. A veil of mist floats over the water in the direction of upper frame-right. Dissolve to:

7) A shot photographing a large stone column at frame-left and a statuary cat at frame-center. Behind this decor is an upraised drawbridge and a mist-covered pool. Dissolve to:

8) A shot photographing in the foreground at frame-left the marker of the sixteenth hole of Kane's private golf course. Dissolve to:

9) A shot photographing the debris-covered surface of a swimming pool behind which a short flight of steps rises to a stone facade of Xanadu. Clouds of mist float over the pool from frame-right to frame-left. Dissolve to:

10) A very long, low-angle shot photographing the

lit window of Kane's room near the top of one of the misty peaks of Xanadu. Dissolve to:

11) A fairly close shot of the lighted window. Shortly after this shot begins, the light behind the window is turned off. Dissolve to:

12) A reverse-angle shot of this window from inside the room. Near the bottom of the window is the silhouetted image of Kane's deathbed. Kane is lying beneath the bedclothes; his left hand is outstretched by his side and holds the glass ball. Kane's head is obscured by the drapery of an overhanging canopy. Dissolve to:

13) A shot of densely falling snow. Dissolve to:

14) A shot of the glass ball containing a small, snow-covered house.

In the impressionistic montage sequence of Xanadu's landscape (shots five through nine) Welles uses techniques of both intra- and inter-shot montage to characterize the bizarre unworldliness of Kane's solipsistic empire. The mist floating over Xanadu's elaborate stage properties; the overt stylization of the artificial backdrops; and the dim lighting used throughout this sequence are all typically expressionist means of thematic commentary through intra-shot manipulation of plastic detail. Each such modulation of the <u>mise en scène</u> is meant to magnify the irreality of a fabled world which has already slipped into America's mythic past. Yet equally expressive is the inter-shot

formalism through which Welles unifies these ghostly images of Xanadu into a sustained elegiac poem. The slow mixes which link each of the five shots are suggestive of change and death: They gently dissolve the hallucinatory apparitions of Xanadu into nothingness and in doing so crystallize the impermanence of all worldly empires. Welles' impressionistic montage sequence is both functional and commentative. On the level of pure narrative, the sequence brings us to the room in which we will witness the death of Charles Foster Kane; and on the level of the film's inner design, this set of dissolving images creates the phantasmal dreamlandscape of a life-actor's soul.

A second impressionistic montage sequence enriched by dissolves is the unit of shots photographing a number of Susan's jigsaw puzzles. The puzzles which Susan assembles during her lonely hours at Xanadu are the only real diversion in Susan's life. Immediately after a scene at Xanadu in which Kane dismisses Susan's desire to visit New York, Welles shoots an impressionistic montage sequence consisting of six shots photographing Susan's hands arranging the pieces of six different jigsaw puzzles. Only Susan's hands and forearms appear in these shots; Welles indicates a lapse of time between each of the shots through both the dissolves and the changing bracelets and sleeves on Susan's wrists and arms. The six shots photograph:

1) A puzzle portraying a camel on a desert. The

puzzle is faced in the direction of frame-left. Susan's hands enter the composition from the top and the bottom of the left side of the frame as she works on the nearly fully assembled puzzle. Dissolve to:

2) A diagonally tilted puzzle depicting a snowscape facing in the direction of the lower-left corner of the frame. Susan's hands break into the shot from the left and the bottom borders of the frame. Dissolve to:

3) A diagonally slanted puzzle facing the direction of the upper-right corner of the frame. The puzzle's design is that of a modernistic house surrounded by trees and grass. Susan's hands reach into the shot from the top and the right side of the frame. Dissolve to:

4) A diagonally slanted puzzle portraying a country landscape facing in the direction of the lower-right corner of the frame. Susan's hands enter the composition from the bottom and right borders of the frame. Dissolve to:

5) A diagonally slanted puzzle facing in the direction of the lower-left corner of the frame. The puzzle depicts another landscape--this one featuring tall trees and open spaces. Susan's hands break into the frame at the left and the bottom borders of the frame. Dissolve to:

6) A puzzle portraying a ship on a stormy sea. The puzzle is faced in the direction of frame-right. Susan's hands reach into the shot from the top and the right

borders of the frame.

This montage sequence telescopes a long period of time partly by suggesting the passing of the seasons in the changing graphic designs of the puzzles. The quietly moving hands playing over the designs poignantly evoke the dislocation which Susan suffers in her imprisonment at Xanadu. (This suggestion of psychic dissociation through the visual fragmentation of a person's body is one of the fundamental structural techniques of Godard's The Married Woman.) More than anything else, however, it is the dissolve which accounts for the extraordinarily affecting impression this sequence has upon the viewer. The mixes give one the impression that time, the seasons, and the hours of Susan Kane have become incarnate and are passing before our eyes during this sequence. The melting of the puzzles into one another creates a sense of the quietly dissolving hours, days, and years of a woman's life. The only other director capable of evoking such a mood through a series of dissolves is Josef von Sternberg.

There are many other dimensions of Welles' shot-structure which deserve careful attention. The shots we have examined, however, are sufficient to indicate the great convenience of possessing a critical method in dealing with a film as visually complex as Citizen Kane. Some kind of categorical lattice-work is obviously necessary if we are to have any hope of isolating the formal design

and the structural composition of a Greed, an Intolerance, or a Potemkin. The closely analytical approach used in this and the previous two chapters has not yet been generally adopted as a critical procedure by scholars and critics of films. Certainly I would not have developed such a methodology had not it been for the carefully textual, "New Critically" oriented approach which I have been taught to apply to works of literature in both undergraduate and graduate classes in English and American literature. This critical methodology, while somewhat outdated in literary studies, has opened up enormous possibilities for film criticism. For it is only a carefully "textual" attention to form, structure, and detail which will enable us to understand exactly how a film is made and how its constituent parts fit together to form some kind of unified whole. The future accessibility of films themselves in low-priced audio-visual cassettes is the technological innovation which will allow a precisely analytic kind of cinematic study to become widely practiced. Soon it will be possible first to purchase a film for the price of a hardcover book and then to subject the same film to a frame-by-frame analysis in the privacy of one's study or living room. At this still-futuristic point in time, the student of cinema will possess the same access to films which the student of literature now possesses to books, magazines, and scholarly journals. It is hoped that at such a time

a New Critical methodology will be generally accepted as a tool of cinematic as well as literary study.

## Footnotes to Chapter IV

[1]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," pp. 31-32.

[2]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 35.

[3]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 35.

[4]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," pp. 45-46.

[5]Bazin, "The Evolution of Film Language," p. 46.

[6]F. Scott Fitzgerald, The Great Gatsby (New York, 1925), p. 2.

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# VITA

George Buchanan MacDonald was born in Far Rockaway, Long Island, on March 10, 1941. He attended Don Bosco High School in Ramsey, New Jersey, and graduated in June, 1958. After four years at Boston College, where he majored in English, Mr. MacDonald received his B. A. in June, 1962. In September, 1962, he entered Lehigh University, where he continued his studies in English literature. In September, 1964, he became a teaching assistant in Lehigh's English Department, and in October, 1964, he received his Master's Degree from Lehigh. In September, 1969, he was appointed to the position of instructor in Lehigh's English Department, where he is now teaching courses in cinema and the drama.