FILM ART

AN INTRODUCTION

FOURTH EDITION

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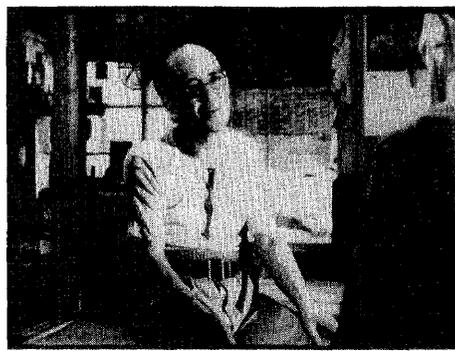### KRISTIN THOMPSON

Fig. 10.73

Fig. 10.74

Color Plates 59 and 60 show examples of graphic matches from Ozu films. The stylistic device is characteristic of Ozu, who seldom uses the graphic match for any narrative purpose. In *Tokyo Story* a conversation situation leads to a shot/reverse-shot pattern but again with cuts 180° across the axis of action. The two men speaking are framed so that each looks off right. (In Hollywood, upholders of the continuity system would claim that this implies that both are looking off toward the same thing.) Because they are positioned similarly in the frame, the result is a strong graphic match from one shot to another (Figs. 10.73, 10.74). In this respect, Ozu's style owes something to abstract form (see Chapter 4, pp. 119–127 and Chapter 9, pp. 351–353). It is as if he sought to make a narrative film which would still make graphic similarities as evident as they are in an abstract film like *Ballet mécanique*.

The use of space and time in *Tokyo Story* is not willfully obscure, nor does it have a symbolic function in the narrative. Rather, it suggests a different relationship among space, time, and narrative logic than exists in the classical film. Space and time no longer simply function unobtrusively to create a clear narrative line. Ozu brings them forward and makes them into prominent aesthetic elements in their own right. Ozu does not eliminate narrative, but he opens it out. *Tokyo Story* and his other films allow other stylistic devices to exist independently alongside narrative. The result is that the viewer is invited to look at his films in a new way, to participate in a play of space and time.

■ *INNOCENCE UNPROTECTED (NEVINOST BEZ ZASTITE)*

1968. Avala Film, Yugoslavia. Directed by Dušan Makavejev, incorporating a film directed by Dragoljub Aleksic. Script by Makavejev. Photographed by Branko Perak and Stevan Miskovic. Edited by Ivanka Vukasovic. Music by Vojislav Dostic. With Dragoljub Aleksic, Ana Miloslavljevic, Vera Jovanovic, Bratoljub Gligorijviec, Ivan Zivkovic, Pere Milslavljevic.

Like *Last Year at Marienbad*, Dušan Makavejev's *Innocence Unprotected* (more correctly translated as *Innocent Unprotected*) diverges markedly from the norms of classical narrative filmmaking. In analyzing the film, it is useful to think of its form as a *collage*, an assemblage of materials taken

from widely different sources. By playing up the disparities among the film's materials, the collage principle permits Makavejev to use film techniques and film form in fresh and provocative ways. The result is a film that examines the nature of cinema—particularly, cinema in a social and historical context.

The collage aspect of *Innocence Unprotected* is evident in its use of a wide range of materials. In one sense it is a compilation film, drawing its images from at least four different sources. At the core is the original fiction film, "Innocence Unprotected," made by the Yugoslav acrobat Aleksic and his collaborators in 1942, under the German occupation. (Since we are dealing with two films of the same name, let us put Aleksic's film "Innocence Unprotected" in quotation marks and Makavejev's film *Innocence Unprotected* in italics.) A second source is the mass of social-political documentation from the same period: newsreels of Yugoslavian current events, German propaganda films, footage of contemporary newspaper headlines, and footage of contemporary posters. Third, there appear excerpts from another fiction film, the Soviet feature *Circus* (Grigori Alexandrov, 1936). Finally, Makavejev uses present-day footage of Aleksic and the surviving participants in the original production. The last three types of footage permit Makavejev to embed Aleksic's original film in a complex context, justifying Makavejev's subtitle: "A New Version of a Very Good Old Film."

The four strands—original film, documentary footage, other fiction footage, and present-day footage—function initially to compare several different styles and modes of filmmaking. We are forced to compare Aleksic's technically crude "Innocence Unprotected" (full of incorrect continuity editing and flat lighting) with the Hollywood norms of "technical perfection." By inserting newsreel footage into fictitious scenes, Makavejev also impels us to contrast fiction film with documentary. When Nada, the heroine of "Innocence Unprotected," looks out a window, an eyeline match cut suggests that she "sees" the rubble of a bombed Belgrade. The digressions in *Innocence Unprotected* often come from Makavejev's habit of breaking off one kind of footage to juxtapose it with another—a fictional scene with attack maps or animated cartoons, an interview interrupted by a fictional scene.

Perhaps most complicated of all are the comparisons we draw between Aleksic's old film "Innocence Unprotected" and the "new version," which Makavejev has "prepared, decorated, and supplied with comments." Aleksic's original was a fictional narrative shot in black and white. Makavejev has juggled sequences, inserted new footage, added commentative titles, toned the black and white in several hues, and even hand colored parts of certain shots. (See Color Plate 47 for an example of blue-black toning and hand coloring.) Thus we always see Aleksic's film at one remove, *through* Makavejev's reworking.

Moreover, in the present-day sections, which Makavejev has shot, the differences between the original and new versions function to contrast the past and the present. The participants are frantically energetic in the 1942 film; now, though still vital, they are elderly. The disparity of past and present is perhaps most amusingly indicated when we see Aleksic as a young man dangling from a plane by his teeth, and then, while the plane

noise continues over the image, Makavejev's camera in the present tracks through a house to find Aleksic dangling by his teeth in his cellar.

Yet it would be rash to stress only the differences between the original "Innocence Unprotected" and the new version. The original film itself was something of a collage, drawing on newsreel footage of Aleksic's stunts. And Makavejev often imitates the editing discontinuities and musical effects found in Aleksic's 1942 original. At times Makavejev even hesitates to keep the two films separate, as when the credits for *Innocence Unprotected* include names of people who worked only on the original. In *Innocence Unprotected,* then, the juxtaposition of various strands of source material contrasts and likens various uses of film technique.

The strands do weave together but not in conventional ways. In films like *His Girl Friday,* we have little trouble in demarcating the separate scenes. But *Innocence Unprotected* (again like *Last Year at Marienbad*) is difficult to segment. This is because Makavejev has chopped into collage fragments whatever narrative unity Aleksic's first version had. Nonetheless *Innocence Unprotected* does have a form, often more associational than narrative. Here is the breakdown we propose:

Part 1:	Introduction	Credits; explanatory prologue; introduction of surviving cast and crew.
Part 2:	"Innocence Unprotected" begins its narrative	Scene 1 of "Innocence Unprotected"; newsreel footage of German attack; Aleksic is introduced, then and now.
Part 3:	Production background	Financing; the film's success and the censorship; Serbia's place in Yugoslavia; the Occupation; credits of "Innocence Unprotected."
Part 4:	"Innocence Unprotected" narrative continues	Scenes 2–8 of "Innocence Unprotected," interspersed with newsreels.
Part 5:	Souvenirs of Youth	(to be analyzed)
Part 6:	Aleksic's strength	Scene 9 of "Innocence Unprotected" (Aleksic rescues Nada); Aleksic's stunts today; scene 10 of "Innocence Unprotected" (Aleksic escapes from police).
Part 7:	Innocence protected	"Innocence Unprotected" narrative resolved (dance in cafe, lovers united); Aleksic cleared of criminal charges.

The segmentation shows that this is no ordinary narrative film. Parts 2, 4, 6, and 7 emphasize the original film's plot, but parts 1, 3, and 5 function principally to put the film into historical contexts. And every part is riddled with jokes, interruptions, and digressions. In this connection we might

Fig. 10.75

Fig. 10.76

Fig. 10.77

Fig. 10.78

Fig. 10.79

Fig. 10.80

recall Eisenstein's notion of intellectual montage. (See the *October* example in Chapter 7, pp. 283–287.) By cutting freely from one kind of footage to another, Makavejev's collage form creates discontinuities that "free the action from time and space," as Eisenstein said of intellectual montage, in order to make abstract, ironic points. *Innocence Unprotected* presents us with a skeletal narrative form interrupted by parts that are organized around associationally linked topics.

As a concrete example, consider Part 5. We label this "Souvenirs of Youth" because that seems to be the concept binding together a varied collection of material. The segment begins in the present, with the original participants reflecting on their pasts. First, Aleksic and two collaborators stand on a roof used in the filming (Fig. 10.75). Next, Vera, the actress who portrayed the stepmother, recalls the beauty of her legs and performs a vaudeville song (Figs. 10.76, 10.77). Then Pera, who played the butler in the original, stands before a memorial to heroism to sing a song about political fence-sitting during the Occupation (Fig. 10.78).

The film now moves into the past, showing a newsreel of the boy King Peter reviewing his troops (Fig. 10.79). Although a king, he had little power; Prince Paul actually ran the country before handing Yugoslavia over to Germany and fleeing. The narration moves back to the present, showing Aleksic bending a bar. "This is a souvenir of my youth" (Fig. 10.80). Now shots from *Circus* show a young woman shot from a cannon (Fig. 10.81). We learn that this film inspired Aleksic to build a similar cannon for one of his stunts (Fig. 10.82). Finally, news stories report how someone was killed by Aleksic's contraption (Fig. 10.83).
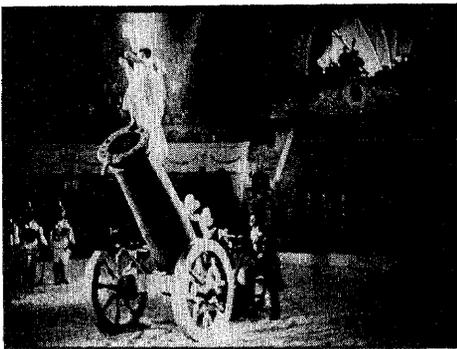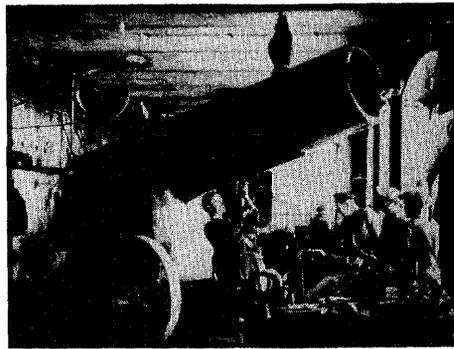
Fig. 10.81

Fig. 10.82

Fig. 10.83

The sequence's sources—songs, newsreels, a Russian musical—and the different periods discussed are not unified by narrative principles (cause-effect, temporal progression). Instead, associations pull the fragments loosely together: souvenirs from the youth of the participants in the film and from a period when their country was ruled by a child.

The "Souvenirs of Youth" segment also illustrates how the concepts emerging from the collage form tend to be overtly political ones. Makavejev's prologue announces: "This first Yugoslav talkie is not mentioned in our film histories because it was made during the Occupation." Makavejev situates Aleksic's "Innocence Unprotected" firmly within the ferment of Serbian nationalism. The success of Aleksic's film at the time is held to be a triumph for Serbian rights. More subtly, Makavejev's "decoration and commentary" turn Aleksic's film into an allegory of Yugoslav resistance to the Germans. When the uncle lunges toward Nada, Makavejev cuts in animated newsreel maps showing the German invasion. Nada, the unprotected innocent, becomes identified with native Yugoslavia, the uncle with the Nazis. By the same token, Aleksic emerges as a heroic, politicized figure. "We can all be proud of this," says Nada in "Innocence Unprotected," "but we underrate what is our own." While Aleksic breaks his chains in a stunt, Makavejev plays the Communist anthem, the *Internationale*, which refers to the world's workers arising and breaking their chains. In Part 6 Aleksic's prowess is celebrated in mock-heroic shots of him as a statue or a god. Here, as elsewhere, the nationalist allegory becomes ironic, but it nevertheless functions to make Makavejev's "decoration and commentary" frankly political.

Though this analysis has barely scratched the film's surface, we venture an interpretation of the title. Who is the innocent without protection? In Aleksic's 1942 film, it is the orphan Nada, rescued by Aleksic. But by comparing film styles, working out a unique form, and making general political points, Makavejev's "collage" strategy also suggests that Aleksic, the strong man who made the film, is something of an innocent too. Over newsreel footage of blasted bodies, we hear the characters in Aleksic's film singing a café tune. By situating the film in a political context, Makavejev suggests the implicit meaning that Aleksic and his crew were dangerously innocent, oblivious to the concrete political situation. All involved insist that they had no subversive intent, that they made the film only to get rich. They risked death at the hands of the Nazis to make a silly romance about an acrobat.

Yet despite the lack of political purpose, Makavejev makes the original "Innocence Unprotected" emerge as a genuinely anti-Nazi film. In the original, Aleksic's rescue of Nada culminates in a victory dance at a café ("our national dance"), and Makavejev hand colors one woman's dress the colors of the Serbian flag. No wonder Makavejev calls the original "a very good old film": the Germans banned it as subversive. The closing moments of *Innocence Unprotected* linger over the question of "innocence." We are told that many participants in the film fought in the Resistance and that Aleksic was exonerated after the war, since his film "had not told a single lie." The fiction film has become a document; the apolitical project has become political. Makavejev's use of style and form has revised the old film in ways that ask us to rethink cinema and its functions in history.

DOCUMENTARY FORM AND STYLE

■ *HIGH SCHOOL*

1968. Produced and directed by Frederick Wiseman. Photographed by Richard Leiterman. Editor: Frederick Wiseman. Associate editor: Carter Howard. Assistant cameraman: David Eames.

Before the 1950s, most documentary filmmaking shot footage silent and added a voice-over commentary and postsynchronized music at the assembly stage. Lorentz's *The River* and Riefenstahl's *Olympia*, Part 2, analyzed in Chapters 4 and 9, are instances of this trend. After World War II, however, magnetic tape recording made it possible to record sound on location. At the same period the demands of military and television users encouraged manufacturers to develop lightweight but sophisticated 16mm cameras. These technological changes fostered a new approach to documentary film-making: *cinéma vérité* ("cinema truth"). In the 1950s and 1960s, many filmmakers began to use portable cameras and synchronized-sound recording equipment to capture spontaneous activity in a wide variety of situations: a political campaign (*Primary*, 1960), a legal case (*The Chair*, 1963), a folk singer's life (*Don't Look Back*, 1967), the tribulations of a Bible salesman (*Salesman*, 1969). Some filmmakers claimed that *cinéma vérité* was more objective than traditional documentary. The older trend had tended to use editing, music, and commentary to inject particular biases, but the *cinéma-vérité* film minimized voice-over commentary and put the filmmaker on the scene as the situation unfolded. It could, its defenders asserted, neutrally record the facts and let the audience draw its own conclusions.

Frederick Wiseman's *High School* is a good example of the *cinéma-vérité* approach. Wiseman received permission to film at Philadelphia's Northeast High School, and he acted as sound recordist while his cameraman shot footage in the hallways, classrooms, cafeteria, and auditorium of the institution. The film that resulted uses no voice-over narration and almost no nondiegetic music. Wiseman uses none of the facing-the-reporter inter-views that television news coverage employs. In these ways, *High School*