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Dziga Vertov's Revolutionary Variety Show

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Within the early Soviet Union, artists and theorists experimented with a variety of representational forms and modes that were designed to manipulate audience reception and effect a new Soviet subjectivity. Investigating Dziga Vertov's often overlooked and misread first feature-length film, *Kino-Glaz* (1924), this article discovers within this historical context a unique cinematic intervention that sought to institute an alternative hegemony to American narrative film, and dominant conventions of narrativity itself, by exploiting the subjects and composite forms of early cinema to evolve a new proletarian sphere.

Keywords: early cinema; cinema of attractions; variety show; Soviet avant-garde; constructivism; continuity editing; montage; documentary; advertising history; propaganda; *Kino-Glaz*; Dziga Vertov

At the 49th minute of Dziga Vertov's first feature film, *Kino-Glaz* (1924), the Young Leninist Pioneers bid farewell to the newly organized village of Sannikovo and speed by train towards their next mission. This proto-narrative soon fades, however, and the film's register switches and oscillates. Visual displays of blurred trees signal the onward travel of the Pioneers, the bearer of the slim red thread of narrative in this changing, challenging work. But defamiliarized landscapes and the surprise appearance of an elephant and its crowds of onlookers interject seemingly inassimilable shots that then centre and detach the activity of 'watching'. The intercard 'Awakening' and the short domestic scene that follows – a wholesome mini-narrative of morning and familial togetherness, complete with dog – further evade any progression of a central plot as the elephant proceeds to a zoo. The intercard 'Sleeping', and its suspenseful pause in action, then add to viewer enjoyment as they invite us to guess which subjects, and which mode of cinematic storytelling, might follow. In this case, instead of a family happily 'asleep', the film's sleight-of-hand rhetoric plays with assumptions and genre mixing to unveil, from behind a black intercard, a mini-catalogue of 'still images' (or still 'moving' pictures?) that surprise viewers with disparate subjects aligned and curled in repose (Figure 1).[1]

What happened to the Pioneers, their mission, and the story? Why does the film diverge here, and elsewhere, into exhibitions of visual phenomena, carnivalesque shows, intercard play, and collages of anonymous everyday people? What sort of rationale accounts for these shots and their linkage? What is this unusual political documentary trying to accomplish, and for whom? Questions such as these have proven difficult for critics then and now, and have limited assessments of *Kino-Glaz*

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Figure 1. *Top*: 'Farewell to the village'; *Middle*: 'At the same time, an elephant visits the Young Pioneers in Moscow'; *Bottom*: 'Sleeping'. © Vertov, 1999.

and Vertov's broader poetics. Answers to at least some of these will open onto hitherto unnoticed dimensions of Vertov's ambitions and achievements, and their relationship to early cinematic forms.

While recognizing its anomalies, film historians still usually summarize *Kino-Glaz* as an experimental documentary that follows Young Leninist Pioneers uplifting villages and educating peasants about developments within the Soviet Union. Sequences such as those pictured above, however, complicate categorizations that prioritize plot over the film's apparently digressive and often quite peculiar footage.[2] Widely misunderstood and dismissed by most of its early Russian critics, *Kino-Glaz* regularly violates narrative paradigms associated with classical models of the 'well-made' story.[3] More challenging for critics, as it flaunts and mocks these conventions, it also seems indifferent to any alternative mode of contemporary rhetorical address. Apparently without justification, the film disrupts diegetic cohesion, introduces, but fails to develop, characters, and dilutes plot progression by directing frequent attention to 'irrelevant' visual detail.

For example, in Scene 1, 'gratuitous' superimposition of peaceful and turbulent views of water accompany our perspective of the Young Pioneers as they begin their poster promotion of 'International Day of the Cooperative' (Figure 2, top). Multiple return glances from Pioneers Anya and Kopuchuska also interrupt diegetic closure (Figure 2, bottom). Such devices, among others incorporated early into the film and repeated throughout, suggest to audiences a composite cinematic experience

Figure 2. *Top*: 'With the Village's "Young Pioneers"'; *Bottom*: 'Two girls: Kopuchuska and Anya'. © Vertov, 1999.

involving multiple genres and modes of spectatorship. They also abjure the rhetoric of popular fiction film and more commonplace docu-propaganda that tries to limit and streamline content to prove a central point.

Because of the film's apparent affront to structural rationality, mandated by Formalists especially in the 1920s,[4] is it any wonder that an early reviewer such as Osip Brik would describe Vertov's 'non-played film' as 'individual film sequences … badly stuck together with pathetic titles' (1928, 226)? Taking cues from Brik and other dominant Formalist intellectuals of the period such as Viktor Shklovsky, many scholars today still challenge the integrity of Vertov's project. Graham Roberts's view of the film's historical audience as likely having been bored and 'bogged down in masses of material with little idea of any argument being built' is typical of such criticism (1999, 41).[5] Even recent film retrospectives, which have contributed significantly to a 'third wave' in Vertov scholarship, have regarded *Kino-Glaz* as a conceptually rigorous but 'rambling narrative' (Surowiec 2004, 46) that montages largely unplanned footage of old and new Russia into 'autonomous' parts (MacKay 2011, 202).[6] These appraisals miss, however, *Kino-Glaz*'s bold and coherent intervention in a crucial debate over the future of Soviet cinema then only getting started in the early 1920s.

Theorizing new rhetorical patterns that might affect newly politicized subjects was, as we know, in the air after the 1917 Revolution. By the time of the New Economic Policy (NEP) of 1921, which put communism on hold to attempt financial recovery from the last six years of famine and war, Vertov's radical voice was but one among many vying to reconceptualize and organize cinema for the changing Soviet state.[7] Polemics on cinematic 'Americanism' and medium specificity proliferated in journals such as *Kino-Fot* and *LEF*.[8] Lev Kuleshov and other advocates of popular American fiction film's seamless illusionism (citing D.W. Griffith) clashed with Vertov, Alexei Gan, Vladimir Mayakovsky, and others who vocally opposed the insidiousness of such so-called bourgeois capitalistic models.[9] Sergei Eisenstein's treatise on the 'Montage of Attractions' (1923, 87) in theatre, later expanded to encompass film, expressed similar attention to modes of representation

and control of spectatorship. His ideological instruments for staging 'calculated', 'aggressive' shocks to 'mold the audience in a desired direction' paralleled other utilitarian moves in post-Revolutionary Russia that sought to advance communist ideals through tendentious art and entertainment.[10]

It is within this climate of debate over Pavlovian response, the 'Kuleshov effect',[11] dialectical montage, continuity editing, etc. that Vertov put forth his own cinematic model for constituting the new Soviet subjectivity. With nothing less than an evolving proletarian sphere at stake, Vertov was intent on energizing the peasants and workers central to communism and the future of the Soviet Union. As a result, he pursued a cinematic form that, he believed, might more directly reach and influence what he considered to be this technologically and aesthetically 'naive' audience. His theories on successful advertising (1923a) provided him with immediate resources for developing these messaging strategies. Previous experience with 'proletarian taste', especially, as he recounts, on agit-trains, helped him to select targeted content.

As Vertov tailored his nascent cine-movement to arouse 'primitive' spectatorship, his subsequent style suggests he also invoked cultural myths about cinema's earliest 'primitive' spectators and the films that had attracted them. Against the classical 'bourgeois' feature-length fiction being championed by the NEP, Vertov turned to pre-classical models whose popular variety format early-classical film had replaced or subordinated in the 1900s (most famously, by the early 1910s, through the films of D.W. Griffith).[12] For Vertov, these often self-reflexive early forms of cinematic entertainment, organized in mixed programmes, could serve an array of immediate political and aesthetic purposes. Their romantic past as the popular 'non-art' of the working class also likely reinforced what he regarded as an essential bridge to his 'pre-modern' rural and proletarian audience.[13]

Vertov's cinematic model, like that of Kuleshov and others, looked backward and Westward. Its reach, however, extended farther into film history and avoided compromising recognition of its derivation in print. Exploiting for political cover and institutional advancement Lenin's 1922 directive that documentary and fiction film be produced in a fixed ratio,[14] Vertov promoted his film composite, with almost carnivalesque bravura, as an original Soviet multimedia format that could satisfy many genres simultaneously.[15] Canny, pragmatic, with a background in Futurist experimentalism and documentary filmmaking, he devised this heterogeneous model unique among his contemporaries to contest the hold of narrative film in the USSR. Not incidentally, he also hoped it would reinvent his career and initiate a new Soviet industry of which he and his allies would be the primary exponents.

Better thought of as a Revolutionary variety show essential to the formation of his aesthetic than as an improperly formed classical story or standard documentary, *Kino-Glaz* is Vertov's first feature-length attempt to implement this Soviet reconfiguration of pre-classical cinema. It renews the composite programme format, adopts reflexivity to heighten cinematographic novelty and materialist awareness, and revives an assortment of subjects and forms that were especially popular with working-class and lesser-educated audiences at the turn of the century.[16] Tenuously integrated special effects, carnival tricks, street corner actualities, bawdy shots, dances, 'ghost rides', to-the-rescue sequences, domestic scenes, etc. – far from being unnecessary distractions in *Kino-Glaz* or extraneous to its thematics of 'old versus new' – are laced throughout the film as devices calculated to 'sell' its ideological products.[17] Avant-garde aesthetics, comparable to those practiced by European filmmakers at the time, also factored into the variety show to promote this goal (discussed further below).

Scholarship in the last several decades on the rhetorical modes, historical audiences, and visual priorities of cinema during its first phases offers us insight into this mixed-programme format.[18] And the concept of cinematic 'attractions' provides a new critical point of reference for understanding Vertov's cine-poetics and his quest to institute a communist proletarian sphere through cinema.[19] Vertov's decision to implement a kind of variety show to effectuate such a sphere, to constitute audience awareness, and to advertise communism's ideological system as a whole required a careful negotiation of formal, institutional, and theoretical discourses in the post-NEP climate. *Kino-Glaz*, an important site of this negotiation, sheds new light on Vertov's process and *oeuvre*.

Contesting feature film aesthetics

In the early 1920s, *Kino-Glaz* was commissioned as part one of a projected series of six feature-length films by Kultkino, the non-fiction wing of the state committee for cinematography (Goskino).[20] Encouraged by the favourable reception of his at times experimental series *Kino-Pravda* (1922–5),[21] as well as by the recent promise of documentary's institutionalization by way of the 'Leninist proportion' (1922), Vertov seized the film as a political, artistic, and polemical opportunity to install a new hybrid form of cinema. For Vertov, the new post-NEP Russian film 'recall[ed], as was to be expected, the old "fictional" models to the same extent that the NEPmen recall[ed] the old bourgeoisie' (Vertov 1923e, 90). Drawing on his Revolutionary politics and expertise in non-fiction film, he argued for an ideologically sounder form that was better suited to the Soviet Union's vast rural and proletarian audiences. By reclaiming the camera as a tool of production enlisted by a new Cine-Eye relation of production among networks of camera operators and film workers, Vertov attempted to both follow Marxist methodology and reorganize cinema as an industry founded on a communist mode of production.[22] Mass art tainted by bourgeois formulation risked the transmission of capitalism's metanarratives. His cinematic form and polemics aimed to negotiate this threat.

Vertov's Cine-Eye movement also followed his desire for professional reinvention. At the time of *Kino-Glaz*'s commission, his documentary-based trade was broadly struggling for institutional security against fiction film's popularity.[23] Soviet public radio, progressing since the mid-1920s, also threatened his reports as 'old news' taking too long to produce (Feldman n.d., 16). In part as a result of his failed earlier project to establish 'Soviet cinema journalism' (Hicks 2007, 15), Vertov sensed the danger of newsreel's impending obsolescence and fiction film's allegedly bourgeois indoctrinations. Caught between pressures, he saw the Kultkino commission as a way to revitalize his practice and develop a new cinematic form and industry.

Any hope for Vertov's vision of communist film as an alternative hegemony required besting popular feature-length fiction.[24] With resources and critical acclaim absorbed by fiction film, Vertov, as his brother and collaborator Mikhail Kaufman explains, 'wanted to compromise the feature cinema at any cost'. He continues: 'We had to show that we too were entitled to material resources – the struggle for a place under the sun' (1979, 69). Building on his earlier wartime experience with longer thematic documentaries such as *Battle for Tsaritsin* (1920), *Instructional Steamer 'Red Star'* (1920), and *The VTIK Train; Agit Train of the Central Committee* (1921), and his often thematic *Kino-Pravda* series, Vertov put forth a structural

rival to feature-length film which, in Alexei Gan's words, was 'something … different from a newsreel and unlike fiction films' (1924, 105).

This 'something' – or first 'film-thing', as *Kino-Glaz*'s subtitle boasts – incorporated into an exhibition programme a mixture of shots that discreetly invoked a variety of widely accessible themes, such as health, beauty, domesticity, technological modernity, the grotesque, athleticism, sex, and danger. This format, derived from the spectacle of variety and vaudeville, followed an early cinema experience that commonly linked films thematically into a single programme.[25] These sequences of mixed forms invited audiences into an active and imaginative process of reception that entailed the subjective construction of loose narratives. Recalling this model, Cine-Eye programs promised '(a) the three-reel newsreel … (b) a one-reel cartoon (c) a one- or two-reel science (or travel) film [and] (d) a two-reel drama or comedy' (Vertov 1925b, 53).[26] Vertov's cinematic appropriation of the 'interval', a familiar concept from music theory constituting a relation between notes, was to provide a newly conceptualized Soviet mechanism for their intra- and inter-filmic coordination.[27]

For Vertov, illusions generated by uninterrupted shot relations, associated with popular American film, promoted a capitalistic social order. He believed the very structure of this 'film drama … adroitly and convincingly … intoxicate[d]' a viewer and then constituted him ideologically – 'cram[ming] some idea, some thought or other, into his subconscious' (1926, 63). The interval, which 'scientifically' attempted to atomize and essentialize film movement, offered meaning instead through a shot articulation based on association. This alternative Soviet mode of interpellation gave higher priority to paratactic referentiality and syntactic relations, which Roland Barthes would describe later in semiotic terms as functions of 'indices proper'. Linked through intervals, images and sequences, like Barthes's 'indices', could embed implicit signs of 'atmosphere, philosophy, feeling, or personality trait' without resorting to 'causal or chronological relations' between adjacent units (Prince 2003, 43).

This more self-reflexive symbolic regime, which promoted exposed relations between shots, offered (at least rhetorically) an ideologically favourable alternative to the grammar of 'hidden' integration celebrated by classic 'American cinema' and Vertov's domestic rivals.[28] Vertov's interval, reconfigured and scientized from musical expression (ostensibly less reliant on narrative), could challenge narrative seamlessness as a suspect model of relations inherited from literature produced under capitalism. It also could protect Soviets from Hollywood drama's 'indoctrination' while providing entertainment and a framework for effective political messaging.

Vertov's reflection on these two different systems of syntactic organization highlights his early conscious revolt against dominant narrativity or 'literary' cohesion at this structural level:

> The almost unanimous diagnosis – 'insane' – after the release of [Kino-Pravda's] fourteenth issue [1923], completely puzzled me. … Friends didn't understand. Enemies raged. … I myself was perplexed, I must admit. The film's structure seemed simple and clear to me. It took me a while to learn that my critics, brought up on literature, under force of habit, could not do without a literary connection between different items. (1924c, 33–4, emphasis added)

By making films that exchanged 'literary' connection for systematic heterogeneity, Vertov's model could encourage a more active participation in the production of knowledge and meaning rather than perpetuating a passive consumption of classically

told stories. The indirect significance of attractions, arranged strategically in somewhat mysterious intervals, afforded a flexible and more participatory mode of cinematic communication that promoted a more engaged proletarian sphere. The Soviet cinematic experience therefore could be marked by a process of discovery, surprise, and shared investigation.[29]

The inability to predict which short narrative, gag, lesson, view, projection trick, visual or aural format, effect, temporality, etc. might come next – an uncertainty derived from early cinema – could be harnessed as an alternative method for sustaining attention over the course of a feature-length film. Live action might give way to animation; a city view might turn suddenly on its side and invoke apparatus humour; or shadows might assume, through framing and shot juxtaposition, sudden aestheticized prominence.[30] Without such surprises, *Kino-Glaz*'s '1000 metres of film' risked, according to one early reviewer, sending 'the audience to sleep in half an hour' (Erofeev 1924, 106). A closer look at some of these transformations within *Kino-Glaz* will help to demonstrate Vertov's strategy for cohesion and messaging through suspenseful shifts in focus and cinematic form.

The Mosselprom tavern scene, for example, invites audience participation in a live-action ruse that leads unexpectedly to trick animation. After the Young Pioneer Shura's request from a tavern patron for 'Alms for the Tubercular' (intercard), coded visual exchanges between Shura, Pioneers above the bar, and the camera build anticipation for a mischievous action. Following this relay of eyes, familiar from early cinema, Pioneers joyfully scatter agit fliers onto unsuspecting patrons said to be 'promoting tuberculosis' (intercard) through drinking and smoking (Figure 3, top and middle). Suddenly, one of these fliers, focalized by a patron, 'transforms' into an

Figure 3. *Top to bottom, left to right*: 'Tavern Mosselprom is located under the Pioneers' club house'. © Vertov, 1999.

ad-like cartoon that graphically re-presents the previous sequence from a different visual perspective (Figure 3, bottom). This form of 'repeat-action' editing – a temporal convention from the early 1900s largely subordinated by the continuity editing conventions of narrative film – schematically repeats the message that patrons (and viewers) should adopt a healthier and thus more patriotic lifestyle. Its surprising and entertaining inclusion, focalized by the drinker holding it and thus 'animated' imaginatively by his intoxication, the magical(?) Pioneers, or the Cine-Eye, directly corresponds with Vertov's theory of 'good' advertisement (discussed below) and adds mnemonic and pedagogical value.[31]

Functioning much like indeterminate glances within the tavern scene, which heighten narrative pleasure in part through the deferral of an event, ambiguous intercards provide dramatic pauses that maintain audience attention and interest without reliance on (literary) narrative conventions such as centralized plot conflict and resolution. In this way, they also encourage self-reflexive awareness. For example, after the intercard '"A letter for you"' towards the end of reel 1 renders Pioneer Latislov's speech to a herdsman, we expectantly watch him open it. Instead of revealing its contents, however, the film cuts to an ambiguous shot of female Pioneers walking urgently within a marketplace. Did they send the letter? Does the letter explain their urgency? A moving intercard subsequently appears to answer our questions but, instead, a hand, penning a letter, humorously spells out: 'End of the first reel'.

Intercards within the famous Tverskoy Street sequence also play with expectation in this way. The scene first presents a sustained view of this busy Moscow street in extreme long-shot space. The intercard 'The same place seen from a different angle' appears to respond to this formidable distance and to anticipate a closer view. After a withholding pause, however, the film instead surprises us with a display of the city flipped on its side from the same distance (Figure 4, top).

Yuri Tsivian (2007) likens this rotated city image to architectural covers for Constructivist journals such as *Novyi lef* by artists such as Rodchenko. While this association remains, the tone of Vertov's shot and the rhetoric of its sequencing seem perhaps even more homologous with early cinematic apparatus humour and similar sequences found throughout *Kino-Glaz*. Specifically, this rotation recalls a montage strategy within a carnival trick sequence, performed earlier in the film, which enhances humour and surprise. Within this scene, an elephant stands still and indifferent on the streets of Moscow, its signification, ambiguous. 'Tired' (intercard) next arouses curiosity through terse 'explanation'. The elephant then appears surprisingly and humorously on its side, with transition between the two postures elided (Figure 4, middle).

These memorable sequences, linked formally, reinforce central lessons in *Kino-Glaz* and seek to connect audiences to other formally related 'triggers'. The film's first reversal sequence, for example, which revives a slaughtered bull, also involves a similar shot pattern. After the intercard 'The bull comes back to life', we again see a shot of something on its side (this time, a bull, dead) and its abbreviated 'rotation' (the bull leaps in fast motion to its feet) (Figure 4, bottom). This reanimation is part of a longer reversal sequence which serves, entertainingly, to expose the labour invested in the bull's commodification (from the market to the field) and to underscore the message to shop at the cooperative. By memorably going back in time to 'undo' the plot decision that motivates this scene – Pioneer Kopuchuska's mother's purchase of meat from a private sector market instead of from the 'First Red Supermarket' (intercard) – *Kino-Glaz* seeks to teach audiences to avoid the same mistake.

Figure 4. *Top*: 'On Tverskoy Street'; *Middle*: 'At the same time, an elephant visits the Young Pioneers'; *Bottom*: 'The bull comes back to life'. © Vertov, 1999.

Less ideologically charged visual 'turns' throughout the film, such as the elephant and Tverskoy Street scenes, lead us, through association, back to these and even earlier scenes and their lessons. In fact, establishing this motif early in the film, a Pioneer hangs a poster upside down, then quickly right side up for us to read (and then better remember) after a crowd giggles: 'The cooperative is fighting the high cost of living – will you help it?' (Figure 5). As we watch the film and recall such devices and messages, couched in humour and surprise, we are encouraged to anticipate and assimilate others. This lends a playful and open thematic cohesion to the film's sequences and urges attention to and recognition of connections.

Although Rodchenko's austere avant-garde covers perhaps suggest utopian possibility more than, as with these sequences, reflexivity, mnemonics, and apparatus amusement, *Kino-Glaz*'s shadow play often does appear contemporary with

Figure 5. 'With the City's Young Pioneers'. © Vertov, 1999.

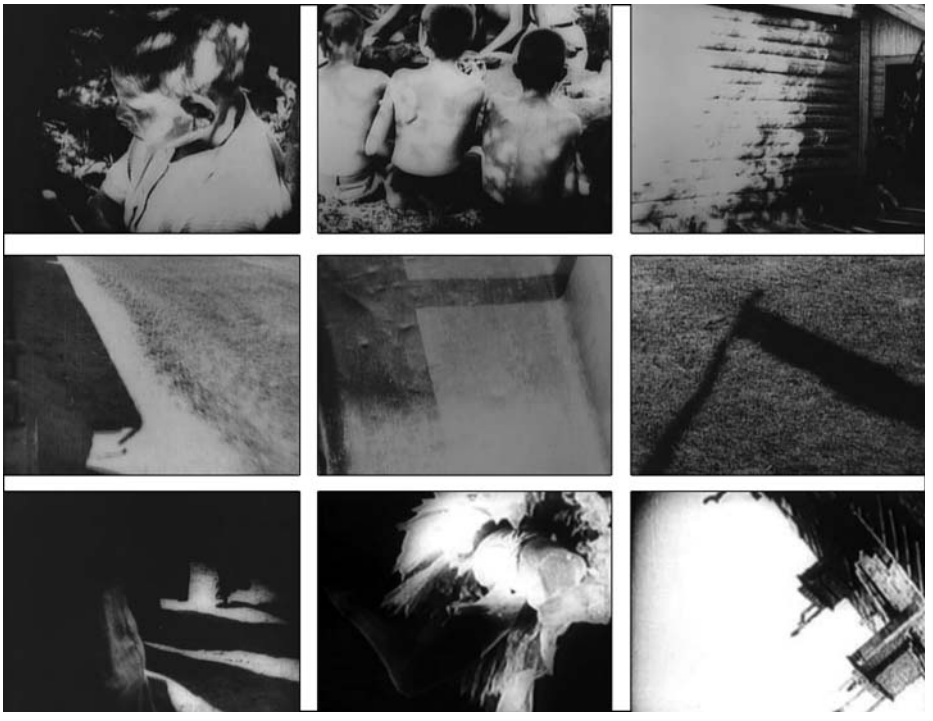

Figure 6. *Top*: '"Thank you, children; you helped us a lot"', and 'Gathering of the village troops' (last two shots); *Middle*: 'In the railroad cars', 'The rye returns to the railroad cars', and 'Salute the flag'; *Bottom*: 'At the church holiday or the effect of homemade vodka on the village women'; and two shots from René Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924): kaleidoscopic dance filmed from below, and a rotated cityscape (Auten et al. 2002). © Vertov, 1999.

avant-garde European cinema. Idyllic shadows playing across the club house and bodies of the Young Pioneers (Figure 6, top), for example, suggest similar (though more erotic) attentions in Man Ray's *Le Retour à la Raison* (1923). The film's isolation and abstraction of shadows cast by trains, ramps, and flags (Figure 6, middle) recall similar abstract figures and their movements within contemporary graphic films by Walter Ruttmann and Hans Richter.[32] And kaleidoscopic shadows within *Kino-Glaz*'s absurd dance sequence invite comparison with those in René Clair's *Entr'acte* (1924). Like *Kino-Glaz*, *Entr'acte* also reflects early cinematic apparatus humour, and also includes humorous cityscape rotations (Figure 6, bottom).[33]

Such examples of cinematic heterogeneity within *Kino-Glaz* speak to the film's systematic interest in developing a new model for holding audience attention, generating identification, and facilitating ideological messaging. As types of game or attraction, surprising interactions between sequential shots and formally related but non-contiguous scenes playfully sought to encourage different modes of rhetorical engagement, decoding, and association for which an audience had to be ready at any moment. In keeping with Vertov's formalism, this variety structure then could be realized on a larger scale, with *Kino-Glaz*, in this case, serving as just part of a larger composite show: a 'mixed program … to which', according to Vertov, 'we must gradually accustom both theaters and the public' (1925b, 53). Synthetic flexibility, which could prioritize thematic attention to 'individual exercises' (film

Figure 7. *Top*: 'At the church holiday or the effect of homemade vodka on the village women', '"Here is where the magic is"', and 'As heavy as 350 people!' (last two shots); *Bottom*: 'Last day with the peasants' children. The storming of the camp'. © Vertov, 1999.

segments) even over the integrity of individual films, furthered this goal and offered a pragmatic and critical approach to feature-length cinema.[34]

Positioned as largely 'non-played' (not based on dramatic scripts performed by actors), this format also could attempt to outdo rivals by incorporating 'real' proletarian or popular material, subtly akin to music hall and circus scenes made famous by American films, without, according to Vertov, overtly resorting to '*crumbs* from the American table' (Vertov 1923e, 59) or the 'played' Eccentric shows of 'freaks' (89), circuses, acrobatics, exotics, tricks, etc. promoted by Eisenstein and FEKS.[35] Audiences could marvel at 'genuine' grotesque folk dances, share astonishment with spectators at 'real' magic acts and circus shows (Figure 7, top), and follow the stunts of Young Pioneers engaged in actual progressive activities (Figure 7, bottom).

Editing effects such as dramatic superimposition, which we recall from Scene 1, could also be enlisted toward this end. 'The everlasting sleep' (intercard), for example, which follows a segment on addiction and homelessness (the curled subjects in Figure 1), leads to an emotive shot of a dead brewery worker's crossed hands which, through superimposition, merge with those of his bereaved wife and daughter. Her return glance invites our personal involvement in his ambiguous murder, which is then linked to (the depravity of) his place of employment (Figure 8). This 'interval' provides the thematic bridge that leads to the Mosselprom tavern scene and its engaging warnings about alcohol (discussed above).

Playful and extreme close-ups are also deployed alongside calls for improved hygiene and healthy lifestyles. Exaggerated tooth brushing by village children, the wobbly eyes of the mentally ill in a Moscow hospital, and the explicit backsides of divers offering dubious sport instruction following the 'dives' of children bathing

Figure 8. 'The everlasting sleep'. © Vertov, 1999.

Figure 9. *Top:* 'Morning at the camp of the Young Pioneers', 'Kino eye at a State "country home"', 'They bathe', and 'Kino Eye shows how one dives properly'; *Middle*: horse and cart in reverse motion run over the camera in 'At the mill', train in forward motion runs over the camera and then provides a landscape view in 'The rye returns to the railroad cars' (last three shots); *Bottom*: view of blurred trees in 'Farewell to the Village' (first two shots), and actuality scene and forward motion collision with an electric train in 'on Sukharevka Street'. © Vertov, 1999.

(Figure 9, top) each serve to make prescriptions for uplift memorable and enjoyable. Bumpy and windy ambulance rides – such as we encounter prior to 'At the tuberculosis sanitarium' (intercard) – and heart-racing parallel-action sequences – such as those involved in 'An old man is out of breath, please help' (intercard) – likewise escape 'Hollywood-style' narrative integration while advancing attention to health efforts.[36] These shots, as well as exhilarating and picturesque views from trains, actuality scenes on Sukharevka Street, and trains, wagons, and horses 'running over' the camera (and viewers) in forward and reverse motion (Figure 9, middle and bottom), lace ideological instruction with dramatic or sensual pleasures to instil lessons.[37] Segments such as these, as well as *Kino-Glaz*'s several temporal reversals, discussed widely by scholars, draw on attractions familiar from early cinema and must be given careful reconsideration within this context.

Attractions and temporal manipulation

In Russia (as elsewhere), two decades before the production of *Kino-Glaz*, actualities, travelogues, comedies, chases, and 'to-the-rescue' films often featured creative use of time made newly possible by cinematography. These early films, less reliant on words for comprehension, were able to reach and appeal to people of different language backgrounds and limited literacy. For these reasons, strategies such as projecting life in slow, fast, and reverse motion could be adopted to excite Vertov's diverse primary audience among the less educated. At the same time, these strategies could reappropriate film as a popularized 'scientific' apparatus for analysing and demystifying reality beyond the senses – one of moving pictures' earliest sought functions.[38] The concept of instructive entertainment through film reversal provided another tool by which Cine-Eye productions could dazzle audiences. In

doing so, it offered an appealing device to help meet the growing need for communist propaganda in rural cinema – a point emphasized by the Eighth Party Congress Resolution a few years earlier.[39]

The most discussed reversed-motion sequence of *Kino-Glaz* – when the 'film eye pushes time backwards' and rewinds the commodification of beef to 'dress the bull in his skin' (intercards) – must be understood within this context of political entertainment.[40] Annette Michelson (quoting Vertov) explains that with reverse motion, Vertov tried to 'develop the negative of time' for 'the Communist decoding of reality' (1972, 66).[41] Jeremy Hicks, extending Michelson, argues that this reversal depicts 'otherwise invisible processes of labor invested in the final product' (2007, 18). Michelson, Hicks, and others (such as Feldman) who have done important work on *Kino-Glaz* overlook, however, that the evolution of raw materials forward in time (presented through flashback, etc.) achieves much the same political revelation.[42] In fact, a sequence within reel two of *Kino-Glaz* does just that. After showing village children and Pioneers interacting within a camp, 'Kino eye tells how this camp was founded and built' (intertitle) by recounting through flashback its step-by-step construction.

More soberly edifying films, such as Cricks & Martin's *A Visit to the Peek Frean and Co.'s Biscuit Works* (1906) or Kineto's *A Day in the Life of a Coal Miner* (1910), also had previously used this method of breaking down labour in forward motion. Like *Kino-Glaz*, these films trace labour and commodification to celebrate factory efficiency and expose physical work (among other things) (Figure 10). They might also be said to centre attention on, and reveal more clearly, the process of labour itself.

Why, then, depict labour in reverse? First, running film backward had been in early cinema – since at least the Lumière brothers' work-film run backward, *La Démolition d'un mur* (1896) – a humorous novelty associated with an interest in cinematic technology and its ability to reveal new views of everyday life. Eisenstein, who used reversed music in *Battleship Potemkin* (1925), and backward-running shots in *October* (1928), agreed that 'reversed motion is always highly entertaining, and I have recalled sometime how frequently and how richly this device was used in the first old comic films' (1985, 87–8). As Tsivian explains in his discussion of early cinema in Russia, watching meat revert back into the shape of an animal was a cinematic attraction at the turn of the century. Commenting in 1897 on the cinematic trope of reassembled food, a reviewer marvelled about a film that depicts a man eating in reverse and then depositing 'a whole chicken back on his plate' (Tyurin 1898).

Figure 10. 'From dough to batter', and 'The sacks of flour back on the wagon' during the bread-making reversal scene in *Kino-Glaz*; biscuits being made in forward motion in *A Visit to the Peek Frean and Co.'s Biscuit Works* (1906); *A Day in the Life of a Coal Miner* (1910) following the labour process of men 'locking the lamps'. Image from *Kino-Glaz* © Vertov, 1999. Latter images from Stewart et al. 2002.

In addition to promising a historically successful way to interest his ideal audience, temporal reversals supported Vertov's scientism and echoed popular turn-of-the-century cognitive experiments that proposed to disrupt temporal progression as determinant. This 'revolt' against the inherited order of time, perhaps recalling Cubo-Futurism's 'Victory over the Sun',[43] was evident of course in *Kino-Glaz*'s unusual temporal progression and in Vertov's broader composite film programme. The film's intertitle colour schemes, such as when the white-on-black title 'film eye pushes time backwards' inverts the preceding text's black-on-white design, further embodied this theme of 'overturning' and invoked the film's other visual inversions and 'turns' (and their messages).

Rather than more straightforwardly demonstrating commodities as the property of labour, which doesn't actually require watching the process backward,[44] reversed labour in *Kino-Glaz* primarily serves to defamiliarize and aestheticize work with entertainment in mind. Its transformation of the banal was meant to appeal to his ideal audience's working-class experiences by 'making work new' (a Formalist move) and promoting the usefulness of Cine-Eye film. It also significantly broadened Vertov's earlier machine aesthetic – revealing 'the machine's soul' – to a more inclusive aesthetic of physical work (Vertov 1922b, 8).[45] This development satisfied Vertov's Productivist vision of democratizing art by merging it with daily life. Moreover, it exposed for a largely technologically impoverished audience the pleasurable physics or natural 'technology' that existed within everyday manual labour.

Other reversals in *Kino-Glaz*, such as the reconstitution of rye from bread (recalling the steer from beef scene), and the diving instruction scene (Figure 11), developed this aesthetic by linking it to historically appealing sequences borrowed from early cinema. In fact, 'Pictures of people jumping into water' and 'horses driven backwards' (recall Figure 9, middle) were, as Tsivian explains, 'favorite subjects for reversals' in early film (1994, 75). This historical taste, newly ideologized in being linked thematically and proximally to aestheticized images of proletarian labour (Figure 12), helps account for these 'unmotivated' scenes within *Kino-Glaz*. These shots encouraged viewers to draw associations between the aesthetic pleasures of visual attractions and the overlooked, undervalued, or hidden pleasures of physical work itself.[46]

Whereas bourgeois cinema for Vertov was thought to produce 'distractions' for a corrupt(ing) culture industry, attractions that could heighten attention to labour and reclaim work as a beautiful phenomenon might benefit the Revolution. They could 'grab the attention of the viewer', 'cool his thirst for "detective stories"' (1925a, 120), and illustrate Vertov's argument that 'one-millionth part of the inventiveness which every man shows in his daily work in the factory, the works, in the field, already contains an element of what people single out as so called "art"' (1924a, 92). For example, as 'Kino Eye shows how one dives properly' (intercard),

Figure 11. 'Kino Eye shows how one dives properly' (in reverse motion). © Vertov, 1999.

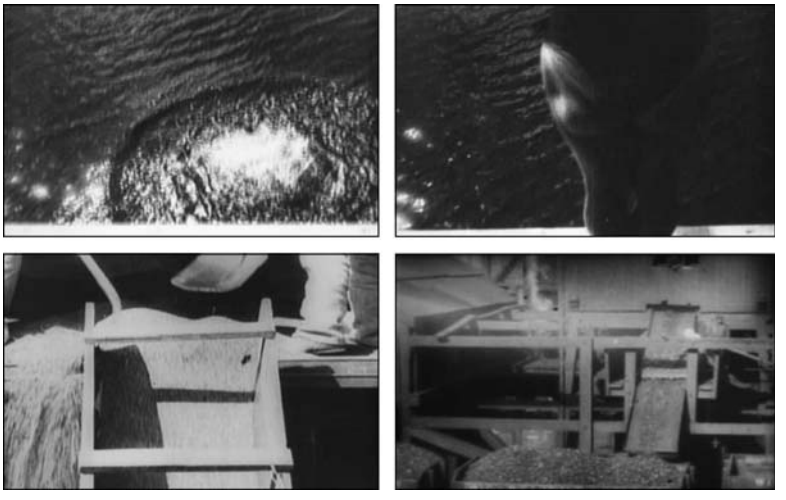

Figure 12. *Top*: 'Kino Eye shows how one dives properly'; *Bottom*: 'The rye returns to the railroad cars'; coal moving down a ramp in *A Day in the Life of a Coal Miner* (1910) (Stewart et al. 2002). © Vertov, 1999.

water's captivating physics after a diver's plunge (reversed by cinema) (Figure 12, top left) recalls the bread-to-rye reversal in which waves of rye cascaded up a shiny silver ramp and back onto a worker's shovel (now an aestheticized and naturalized tool of Constructivist or Productivist 'art') (Figure 12, bottom left).

This reversal, and the magic show that motivates it ('The magician's pay is in units of bread' [intercard]), serve, among other things, to insinuate 'the magic' of labour's transformations into what otherwise might have been a dry lecture on bread production.[47] As Tsivian reminds us, prevailing stereotypes of Russian peasants as 'slow-thinking' suggested the need for 'a special approach and extra agit-prop' (Surowiec 2004, 48). Effects such as these sought to address this need.

In the case of the example above, we also should note that both waves of materials (water and grain) gain added signification as they mix phenomenal arousal with the curvilinearity of a sexualized close-up that similarly sparkles (Figure 12, top right). As this sequence suggests, the voyeurism, scopophilia, and fetishism often attributed to classical narrative cinema's rhetoric are not necessarily displaced by the epistemophilia of documentary.[48] Films such as *Kino-Glaz* appropriated psychosocial conditions to embed new metanarratives that could effect different ideological goals.

This is not to say, however, that the Cine-Eye's often fetishistic focus on mechanistic movement always, or ever, effectively inculcates a communist ethos. Vertov's desire to integrate pleasure and ideological instruction through cinematographic 'watching' sometimes registers more as an alternation between entertainment and education. As discussed previously, unsteady mobile camera movement and unexpected sharp turns heighten the drama of our participation in *Kino-Glaz*'s several 'to-the-rescue' ambulance rides that culminate in health warnings and precautionary images. But gazing upon the revealed bodies and faces of 'performing' patients at a mental facility in Moscow; the abjection of deformities 'on display' during 'The representatives of flotsam' sequence; and the pulsing flesh of a recently butchered

Figure 13. ‘Kino Eye at a state “country home”’, ‘The Representations of flotsam’ (middle two shots), and ‘What twenty minutes ago was a bull’. © Vertov, 1999.

steer, enlarged for morbid fascination during the slaughterhouse reversal, all catalogue satisfactions which, out of context, are of dubious ideological merit (Figure 13).[49]

The inclusion of such ‘facts’ as persuasive attractions was itself a matter of discussion at the time of *Kino-Glaz*’s commission. Eisenstein’s polemic, ‘The Montage of Attractions’, published a year before *Kino-Glaz*, explained the attraction in theatre as

> any aggressive moment … that subjects the audience to emotional or psychological influence …. Emotional and psychological, of course, in the sense of *direct reality* as employed, for instance, in the Grand Guignol, where eyes are gouged out or arms and legs [are] amputated on stage. (1923, 87–8, emphasis added)

A year later, Eisenstein’s theorization of the attraction for film broadened its terms to suggest a more permissive functionality such as we encounter in *Kino-Glaz*. The attraction became

> any demonstrable fact (an action, an object, a phenomenon, a conscious combination, and so on) that is known and proven to exercise a definite effect on the attention and emotions of the audience and that, combined with others, possesses the characteristic of concentrating the audience’s emotions in any direction dictated by the production’s purpose. (1924, 40)

This theoretical concern, which Eisenstein and Vertov shared, was of course just one example of a widespread interest in audience control within the arts in Russia. To take another significant voice from Vertov’s formative years, Commissar of Enlightenment Anatoli Lunacharsky explained in 1919 ‘that cinema can accomplish [two] things with particular force: it constitutes, on the one hand, a visual clarion for the dissemination of ideas and, on the other hand, if we introduce elements of the refined, the poetic, the pathetic etc., it is capable of touching the emotions and thus becomes an apparatus of agitation’. He stressed: ‘*We must pay attention to these aspects most of all. … Tendentiousness is harmful only if it is petty*’ (47, emphasis added).

Vertov, in *Kino-Glaz*, clearly agreed; and he amassed political support to defend his enactment of such methods of persuasion. As we know, Lenin’s film proportion likely had been used by Vertov in part as an implicit defence for his anachronistic composite programme form. He also applied Lenin’s valuation of ‘entertainment’ to attempt to legitimate his ideologically questionable content. If sections of Vertov’s films were to border on the salacious, the sentimental, the aesthetic, the ‘trick’ or the ‘phantom ride’ nearly for their own sake, Vertov reasoned that their participa-

tion in a larger mixed-programme structure might retain the approval of authorities. Quoting Lenin, Vertov explains: 'if you have good newsreels, [and] serious education films, then it doesn't matter if some useless film … is shown to attract an audience' (1925b, 54).

Trotsky's comparable call, issued before the production of *Kino-Glaz*, for 'making amusement a weapon of collective education', and cinema, a rival to the 'beer-shop' through 'attracting' and imaginative images (1923, 95), might also have provided a useful political foundation. Vertov's attractions aimed to serve these diverse and ideologically pragmatic ends. His theories on advertising and naïve spectatorship provided ways for him to accomplish this by disguising and packaging argumentation within entertainment likely to appeal to his target audience.

Theorizing attractions for an ideal(ized) audience

As we have seen, ideological 'products' embedded in or inflected by calculated entertainment goals inform *Kino-Glaz*'s sequencing and structure. This material of contested value,[50] as well as a variety of 'unnecessary' attentions given to sentimental shots of anonymous mothers and children, 'happy' families of animals, cute little dogs, and fate-tempting cats (Figure 14), etc., were meant in part to delight, disarm, and loosen up viewers to receive and later recall ideological messages (a strategy with which today's viewers of commercials and advertisements are especially familiar).[51]

In his treatise on advertising issued the year before *Kino-Glaz*, Vertov explained his convictions about the utility of this oblique form of persuasion. 'Advertising Films' details effective ways to influence his primary audience through such composite means:

> Traveling from town to town in the countryside, from village to village, [film wagons] … have major significance for advertising and propaganda. In particular, the demonstration (*disguised as some engaging subject matter*) of the advantages of the agricultural machinery of a particular firm will help to distribute the machines of that firm. *If the peasants don't understand everything perfectly*, still someone will easily remember the brand of machine that rescued the film characters from their trouble. (1923a: 29–30, emphasis added)

Vertov again discusses this philosophy in a section called 'An Example of Bad Advertising'. He explains,

> A good advertisement is one that draws the viewer out of his indifference, and only when he's in a state of tension and restlessness, presents to him the product being advertised. *Such are the pictures that make the viewer laugh, that astound him with their trick effects, captivate him with their characters' unusual adventures*; such, finally, are

Figure 14. 'A peasant', 'In the railroad cars', 'Tavern Mosselprom is located under the Pioneers' club house', and 'At the mill'. © Vertov, 1999.

> pictures whose advertising is latent; they imperceptibly introduce the products advertised into the absorbed viewer's consciousness. (ibid., 30–1, emphasis added)

Bad advertisements for Vertov are 'blatant, … exposing their own desire to advertise and be advertised' (30–1). Effective advertisements are not 'swallowed like medicine' but slip into subjects 'unknowingly … during bursts of laugher'. 'Special effects vividly impress the product on the subconscious of viewers who have been prepared by the preceding films' in a programme (31).

Vertov's conviction about effective messaging through special effects also can be found within his earlier theory 'On Filming Newsreel Subjects' (1922). In answer to the question 'What must and can be done now in Russia?', he insisted that 'maximum invention during all kinds of filming … and printing' could prepare viewers through cinematography 'for the reception of new things'. It also could 'instill revulsion' for typical film dramas. This prescription relied on a variety of 'tricks', including, as *Kino-Glaz* would incorporate later, 'trick comic studies' (1922a).

Making this hybrid form of entertainment and instruction more acceptable and effective, Vertov argued that his target audience was not yet dependent on bourgeois film's counterproductive mode of seamless delivery. This audience, having even less (or no) experience with theatre or film, as a *tabula rasa* could be more easily conditioned to accept an alternative hegemony of communist film.

Bourgeois film taste, according to Vertov, had been interfering with the reception of his work within other audiences. Vertov asserted 'there was no need to worry about the audience of NEPmen'; his films addressed 'workers' clubs, rural-cinemas-on-wheels, village reading rooms and so forth (especially where cinema is being shown for the first time)' (1925c, 51). Although 'one of the chief accusations leveled at [Cine-Eyes]' by critics was their unintelligibility 'to the masses', in 'On the Significance of Nonacted Cinema', Vertov countered, 'On the contrary, … we have brought the movie screen closer to the uneducated viewers, which is particularly important at present. … Workers and peasants turn out to be brighter than their self-appointed nursemaids' (1923d, 37–8).

Claims made by 'On the Significance of Newsreel' reinforce our understanding of his dedication to this particular audience:

> Newsreels, the best examples of which are the issues of *Kino-Pravda*, are boycotted by film distributors, by the bourgeois and semi-bourgeois public. But this state of affairs has not forced us to accommodate ourselves to established, philistine taste, … such as love or crime dramas. *It has only led us to change our audience*. (Vertov (1923c), 32, emphasis added)

The influence of Vertov's focus on proletarian and rural spectatorship has been underestimated by critics, even though it followed his politics and historical precedent. In fact, as Yuri Tsivian explains, 'among Russian intellectuals of the 1910s, it was a matter of good taste to prefer the outer city districts to the center. … Sharing the "naïve" unmediated reactions of working-class audiences' was a way of 'establishing contact with the people' (1994, 26). Within Russia by 1909, audiences were said to prefer 'predominantly realistic film' and were especially 'flattered by seeing pictures of [their] own daily life on the screen'. They also supposedly were drawn to films 'depict[ing] horrors, catastrophes, and of course anything even remotely to do with sex' (Flanyor. 1909).[52] As we have seen, *Kino-Glaz* strategically deploys

such attractions a decade and a half later to gain the attention of a similarly conceived social group.

Theories of advertising, backed by experience with peasant and proletarian taste, clearly seem to have rationalized for Vertov *Kino-Glaz*'s synthetic juxtapositions of scenes and 'film phrases'.[53] In the context of 1920s Soviet cinema, however, unexpected objects of focus, mixed reception demands, inexplicable organization, and unpredictable temporal unfolding bore aesthetic associations that came with critical risks. As a result, *Kino-Glaz* found itself dismissed by some as either sloppy storytelling or frivolous art.[54] Understanding *Kino-Glaz* requires finally overcoming this limited either/or hermeneutic.

Misreading Kino-Glaz

Vertov chose not to follow classical cinema's seamless shot integration and narrative arc, nor to fall back on historical precedents to justify his poetics as explicitly (for example) as did Eisenstein with dialectical montage.[55] *Kino-Glaz*'s structure varied from newsreel, documentary, classic cinema, and early cinema (exactly). Yet its aesthetic departures arguably lacked the requisite thoroughness of a successful avant-garde 'other'. As a result, genres since its commission have had difficulty accommodating its form, and critical acclaim has been limited. Recent criticism of *Kino-Glaz* as problematically 'uneven' reflects this perpetuated misconception. For scholars such Hicks (2007), 18, who follow early critics such as Vladimir Erofeev (1924), 106,[56] *Kino-Glaz* achieves 'continuity' only when the activities of the film's Young Pioneers are central; that is, when *Kino-Glaz* most evidently reflects dominant narrative patterns which, as we have seen, Vertov's new film language aspired to exploit but subordinate.

Vertov's 'non-played' camera experiments, promoted as unguided by determinative scripts, also continue to be misperceived as Formalist pursuits lacking concern for predictable utilitarian ends. Unfortunately for Vertov, such difficulties with critical reception have not been restricted to *Kino-Glaz*. For example John Grierson, the 'founder' of documentary, levelled a related attack at Vertov's later work, *Man with a Movie Camer*a, clearly exemplifying a common slippage for critics as they try to come to terms with Vertov's 'unstable' form. As Grierson explained, 'there is no story, no dramatic structure … it is not a film at all: it is a snapshot album' (1971, 122).

Approaching *Kino-Glaz* with this either/or conception of form and genre misses Vertov's systematic commitment to variety. This strategy mistakenly reads the interruption of various prevailing forms of continuity as an indication of structural inadequacy or absence of meaningful effect; and it assumes a 'dominant' of failed linear argumentation or decadent avant-garde abstraction.[57] Both perspectives discourage recognition of *Kino-Glaz*'s form as a rhetorical composite designed to reach a specific audience for whom variety was calculated to appeal. They also critically overlook the currency of attractions in early-1920s debates over effective methods of audience control. Vertov of course was capable of rendering standard narrative effects and deploying traditional argumentation (as we perhaps see most clearly in the Young Pioneer scenes praised above). And his 'control' of montage editing was not necessarily inferior to Eisenstein's.[58] It was, however, between these strategies and theoretical contexts that his work fought for distinction.

Kino-Glaz's structural and generic indeterminacy was neither accidental nor evidence of poor execution. Its intricate negotiation of discourses and models, underpinned by theoretical writings, formulated a cinematic hybrid that responded acutely to the goals of a particular historical moment. Instead of developing a more radical alterity that risked institutional insecurity, 'un-intelligibility to the millions', and leaving popular bourgeois cinema intact, Vertov exploited a variety of popular instruments of pleasure and instruction to infiltrate and reconfigure this dominant model. His hope was that feature-length variety might 'sell' over standard fiction because it provided more value and enjoyment than simply the rise and fall of conventional narrative borrowed ignominiously from theatre and literature. Vertov's variety programme offered cinematic indexicality packaged in both gritty realism and composed pictorialism. It allowed for humour, fantastic possibility, and graphic clarity through animation and light and shadow play. It provided new knowledge, new aesthetics, and new ways of thinking about their acquisition. It furthered political identification with the advancing Soviet Union and helped to instil a new sense of work linked to communism's common causes. And, on top of all of this, it showcased the visual pleasures associated with all of life's domestic and carnivalesque experiences. In short, Vertov was thinking big. And our assessments of *Kino-Glaz* need to catch up.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. Shots and sequences from *Kino-Glaz*, here and throughout, are titled within figures according to the intercards which precede or describe them. For more on these shots, see n. 6.
2. A note on usage: Within this article, '*Kino-Glaz*' denotes Vertov's 1924 film. 'Cine-Eye' or, where cited, 'Kino Eye', references the broader movement.
3. By 'classical' here I refer generally to an Aristotelian telos that stages a causal passage from beginning to middle to end.
4. Russian Formalism of the 1920s argued that constituent features of film and other arts were determinative even at fundamental levels of materiality and articulation (Bowlt 1988, 138–9). From 1922 to 1924, at least 19 major Formalist studies were published (Lemon and Reis 1965, 137).
5. For example, in his review of the film, Boris Gusman (1924), 104 remarks that 'the viewer's train of thought, aroused by the beginning of an episode, is disrupted when the film moves on to the next subject, only to be aroused again for some other reason. Jolts of this kind', he argues, 'exhaust the viewer's attention'…
6. Scare quotes in MacKay 2011 do, however, suggest that this 'autonomy' is questionable. This essay follows current scholarly consensus within English-language publications, reflected for example in Tsivian (2004), and supporting materials for film retrospectives in 2004 and 2011, in recognizing that existing copies of *Kino-Glaz* 'available in the West … for reasons which are unclear' often contain an additional two minutes of footage at the end of the film presumed to be trailer material for two later films (Tsivian 2004, 407). Concluding shots of the raising of a radio tower, for example, appear in *Kino-Pravda 23* (1925). The exact nature of this additional footage, however, which follows the intertitle 'Mos-Soviet Provides for the Workers' Education' within Kino International's DVD release of this film (Vertov, 1999), still generally is acknowledged as uncertain, and will not be included within this discussion of the film. This follows

screening recommendations by archives such as MOMA (Museum of Modern Art), New York, and filmographies such as those compiled by Tsivian (2004), 407. Shots of *Kino-Glaz* within this essay are taken from the Kino International release. References to scenes and sequences follow this edit of the film, as well as the copy held by MOMA, New York, which are considered to be authentic. We also can look to early reviews and descriptions of the film, such as Belenson (1925, 103–4), whose chronology of scenes suggests correspondence with this extant version of the film. Problems associated with 'reading' *Kino-Glaz*, however, will be addressed below. For more on *Kino-Glaz* within the context of recent retrospectives, see the introduction to *Kino-Glaz* by Yuri Tsivian in the catalogue for the 23rd Pordenone Silent Film Festival, 9–16 October 2004 (Surowiec 2004). See also Tsivian 2004 for a discussion of the film and collection of early criticism, as well as the film programme for the Dziga Vertov film retrospective at MOMA, New York, 15 April to 4 June 2011 (Museum of Modern Art 2011), and John MacKay's associated article in *Artforum* (2011). See MacKay (2005) for more on the 'third wave' in Vertov studies inaugurated, according to MacKay, by the 1996 centenary.

7. The heated rhetoric of Vertov's 'We' manifesto (1922b, 5–9), issued just after the institution of the NEP, was in part a reaction to this compromise with capitalism.
8. For more on the influence of ideas about medium specificity on debates within classical film theory, see Turvey (2008), and Gaudreault and Marion (2005).
9. Kuleshov (1974), 145, for example, praised D.W. Griffith's American illusionism, where 'one thing follows another in an uninterrupted logical connection'. He especially valued its efficiency, noting that 'Not one single episode can be discarded else the uninterrupted cinedramaturgical significance is lost'. Kuleshov (1987) regarded his own film, *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr. West in the Land of the Bolsheviks*, produced the same year as *Kino-Glaz*, as Russia's 'first American-style' film.
10. A general commitment to utilitarian production, opposed to 'laboratory art', gained favour especially after the 1921 split within the Institute of Artistic Culture (Inkhuk) that led to the development of Productivism. For Productivists, as Camilla Gray (1962), 243 explains, an object, be it a 'horse, a poem, a pair of shoes' (and, we might infer, a film) 'was the result of an organized pursuit towards a utilitarian end, of the aesthetic, physical, functional, qualities of materials involved whose form would emerge in the process of this pursuit'. Not coincidentally, Vertov's 'On the Film Known as *Kinoglaz*' (Vertov (1923b), 34) describes *Kino-Glaz* as the world's first film without actors, artists, directors, a studio, sets, and costumes whose 'final edit' (like all Cine-Eye projects) would, according to his 'Kino-Eye' (1926, 72), 'bring out the core of the film-object'. The need to justify 'the artist's role in the life of humans' was common to LEF artists such as Vertov (Bordwell 1972, 40).
11. A montage technique for insinuating affect through intercutting. The 'Kuleshov effect', arguably co-invented by V.I. Pudovkin, demonstrated through reception experiments that a single shot of an actor's indifferent expression might be experienced as alternately pensive, sorrowful, or happy depending on the shots that surround it. See Pudovkin (1949, 140–3).
12. By the end of the 1900s, genres such as the chase film, trick film, and news event film were gradually being replaced by, or integrated into, longer story films – a process theorized by Tom Gunning, André Gaudreault, and others as the move away from isolated 'attractions and astonishment'. Within this essay, references to film periodization follow Ben Brewster's more recent model that attempts to build on this historicization of forms to reconcile cinematic attractions/narrative integration and short/longer film length by postulating three overlapping phases in film history. According to Brewster (2004, 66–75), the first phase, the variety-theatre/fairground period (until 1906–7), is stylistically dominated by 'cinematic attractions' (discussed more below). Phase two (until about 1912) and three (which continues to the present) involve more elaborate film narrative.
13. It is useful to recall that agit-train film presentations in the 1920s also included lecturers, another feature derived from early cinema.
14. The Leninist Film Proportion directed that 'film programmes' should reflect a quantitatively fixed degree of 75% fiction and 25% non-fiction material.

15. In boasting of its arguably apocryphal abilities, Vertov's Cine-Eye promised viewers '"that which the eye doesn't see", the microscope and telescope of time, the negative of time, the possibility of seeing without limits and distances, the remote control of movie cameras, tele-eye, X-ray eye, high-speed eye, rapid filming, [and] animation filming'. Vertov also 'sold' the Cine-Eye film as a metacritical tool or hermeneutic for 'cinema-analysis'; and a '"theory of intervals" [and] relativity on the screen'. Lastly, but with just as much sensationalism, the Cine-Eye boasted of its ability to catch 'life unawares' (1926, 41).
16. The task of reconstituting pre-classical cinematic spectatorship in Russia, as elsewhere, is fraught. As Tsivian explains, most Russian audiences from 1896 to 1920 could not read or write. As a result, 'no trace of their response survives. Nor was this response clear to contemporaries' (1994, 1). Recent film history has shown that earlier, monolithic depictions of film audiences fail to account for significant variations in spectatorship due to exhibition venue, location, etc. Vertov's perceived audience, however, seems to have been less diverse, and his writings and film subjects suggest that his primary targets were workers and peasants. From personal experience and assumptions that were probably formed from popular notions about audiences for carnival and vaudeville, Vertov catered to a particular taste. Insofar as Vertov does not provide extended commentary on more culturally specific references to his ideal proletarian and rural audience, this essay recognizes in his generalizations and carnivalesque strategies his adoption of popular ideas about cinema's working-class audiences during its first phases. For more on the diversity of pre-classical audiences in the US, see for example, Musser (1990).
17. As Yuri Tsivian explains, *Kino-Glaz* centres on an opposition of 'New' Russia, Soviet youth organized into a non-gendered and politicized version of the Boy and Girl Scouts, and 'Old life', consisting of evils such as excessive intoxication, drug use, mental illness, black market dealing, and private market exploitation (Surowiec 2004, 46).
18. An early cinema show, depending on venue, might typically consist of several films, a slide show, and perhaps live acts with little or no continuity between items. In its earliest period, cinematic exhibitions also promoted films not by their content but by highlighting the novelty of its projection apparatus.
19. Within this essay, the concept of the cinematic 'attraction', adapted and developed in large part by Tom Gunning and André Gaudreault from Eisenstein, applies to the predominant address of early cinema, or 'kine-attractography' (1890–1910) (Gaudreault 2011), before the rise of longer story films *c*. 1906–7. In the attraction, display or 'showing' takes precedence over diegetic 'telling', temporal progression, and 'narrative absorption' (Gunning 1986). Within the context of *Kino-Glaz*, attraction refers generally to a film segment that seems to prioritize visuality for the audience through frontal modes of address and isolated attention to views, domestic scenes, and other popular subjects from early cinema over the development of a central plot. Vertov's strategic elicitation of cultural narratives embedded in associative display suggests as well a broader ontology of narrativity in film, reflected, for example, in Charles Musser's revision of Gunning and Gaudreault. Musser (1994) clarifies that many early-cinema surprises and displays are in fact functions of narrative or imbricated with narrative. Jacques Aumont's argument that even the simplest display of an object on film inescapably 'carries a whole array of values that it [the object] represents and narrates' – that 'every figuration and representation in film calls forth narration or an embryonic form of it' (1992, 69) also should be factored into our sense of 'attractions' as we investigate their use by Vertov. For more on Gunning's articulation of the attraction, see Gunning (1989); see also Strauven (2006).
20. Albert Leong (1974) provides useful background on the rest of the series. Series two and three were to contrast the Soviet and American worker by intercutting footage of each. Series four would configure the Soviet Union as 'A Sixth of the World' (which provided material for a film of the same title in 1926). Plans for series five, in three parts, juxtapose a visually chaotic world with one interpreted by social laws governing phenomena. Series six would bring to fruition class consciousness and an attendant refusal to labour for the bourgeoisie. The collapse of Goskino shortly after the commission, however, stopped production after only the first of the series. For summaries and an overview of Vertov's early films, including the *Kino-Nedelia* and *Kino-Pravda* series, see Surowiec (2004, 27–78).

21. *Kino-Pravda* was well-received by audiences, but also prompted controversy in the press because of its polemical use of intercards and edited footage within 'newsreel'. See Bordwell (1972), 39.
22. This concern was especially relevant in the early 1920s as Heroic Communism's idealism and the NEP's pragmatism clashed during an uneasy transition.
23. As Seth R. Feldman explains, for example, in the 1920s 'the majority of talented film workers continued to gravitate toward feature-length dramatic film' (1977, 78).
24. He continued to attempt to overthrow feature-length fiction film even after *Kino-Glaz*'s relative domestic failure. See, for example, *Man with a Movie Camera* (1929), and Petric´ (1987).
25. For more on the conventions of early cinema and the development of 'early classical cinema', see, for example, Elsaesser (1990), and Musser (2004, 87–102).
26. These divisions reflect Vertov's attempt to reinterpret Lenin's Film Proportion to include Cine-Eye film. As Feldman recalls, 'in 1924, Vertov arranged a mass meeting in Moscow through which he hoped to force the reallocation of cinema resources by publicly proclaiming the existence of the "Leninist Film Proportion" at 45% Kino-eye newsreels, 30% educational and scientific films and 25% dramatic films' (1977, 77).
27. Vertov introduced his theory of the interval in his first major manifesto, 'We' (1922b).
28. As Vertov argued, *Kino-Glaz* 'is made as if the studios, the directors, Griffith, Los Angeles, had never existed' (1925a, 119).
29. As Yuri Tsivian explains, the 'impromptu nature and autarchy [of the early cinema program structure] placed it among the ranks of natural phenomenon' (1994, 127). This condition certainly could have contributed to Vertov's decision to renew this tradition, insofar the phenomenal status of a film would have helped to naturalize its propaganda and the attention to visual investigation central to Cine-Eye films.
30. Shadow play, of course, also was a form of pre-cinematic, 'primitive' screen entertainment, which favoured its inclusion within *Kino-Glaz*'s variety show.
31. The animation film *Soviet Toys* (1924), directed by Vertov and drawn by Ivan Beliakov and Aleksandr Ivanov, also involves humorous, graphic depictions of the effects of unhealthful consumption, and can be considered within this context.
32. See, for example, Ruttmann's *Lichtspiel Opp.1–4* (1921–5) and Hans Richter's *Rhythmus 21*, *23*, *25* (1921–5). Vertov's city symphony, *Man with a Movie Camera*, would also later be compared with Ruttmann's *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City* (1927). For more on this later comparison, see Tsivian (2004, 383–8).
33. For more on the relationship between Vertov and René Clair, see Michelson (1979).
34. Vertov often promoted a Cine-Eye resistance to typical notions of film closure and even argued hyperbolically that 'there are no individual films, there are no fulfilled commissions, [just] … individual exercises' (quoted in Surowiec 2004, 28). Although contradictions of this assertion can be found and inferred throughout Vertov's writings, his widely noted use of similar footage – or the same footage – within different films reinforces his openness to different compilations or arrangements of material. This programmatic approach recalls an early cinematic tradition in which films appearing within different exhibition programmes could generate different effects and assume different meanings. *Kino-Glaz*'s structure allows for different conceptions of the film in keeping with this decentralized Cine-Eye aesthetic, including the possibility of different edits, its theoretical place within an unrealized six-part commission, and its dialogic openness to different functions within larger, shifting film programmes.
35. Vertov regarded these Eccentric displays as plagiaristic, believing that Eisenstein's 'Factory of Attractions' stole from his 'Factory of Facts'. FEKS, 'The Factory of the Eccentric Actor', was founded in Petrograd in 1922 by Grigori Kozintsev, Leonid Trauberg, Sergei Yutkevich, and Georgi Kryzhitsky. For a useful overview of the controversy between Vertov and Eisenstein, see Petric´ (1987, 48–59).
36. As Vertov remarked, 'the film is gripping to watch, so as well as the experimental and ideological value of the work we should add its commercial value' (1925a, 120).
37. In this context, is useful to recall cultural myths surrounding the effects on early audiences of collision films such as Auguste and Louis Lumière's *L'arrivée d'un train en gare de La Ciotat* (1895) and Cecil Hepworth's *How it Feels to be Run Over* (1900).

38. Recall, for example, the pre-cinematic motion studies of Eadweard Muybridge (1873), the high-speed photographs of Étienne-Jules Marey (1885), and the first period of reflexivity during which the 'cinematograph' was promoted in quasi-scientific terms and displayed conspicuously within the screening space. *Kino-Glaz* itself also makes explicit reference to the camera as a tool of temporal manipulation. For example, an intercard preceding a film reversal reminds viewers that 'Kino Eye shows how one dives properly'.
39. This resolution of March 1919 implicitly prefigured a central tenet of the Party Cinema Conference Resolution of 1929: that 'cinema furnish a "form that is intelligible to the millions" … secured by its entertainment quality, its proximity to the worker and peasant audience and a form that corresponds to the requirements of the broad mass audience' (Ol'khovyi 1929, 208). Such ideas of course were not new to the arts in Russia. The Russian artists of The Wanderers group in the nineteenth century, for example, also had employed verisimilitude and peasant themes to edify the 'common' people (a harbinger of the Soviet Realism to come).
40. It is noteworthy that early critics of the film, such as Vladimir Erofeev (1924), 106, recognized this context, although disapprovingly. Erofeev remarked that '*unusual* elements [including the elephant, the dead watchman, and mental hospital scene], alternating with technical tricks, … make [the film] entertaining'. He considered its use of temporal manipulation through slow, fast, and reverse motion, however, 'nothing new'.
41. See also Vertov's argument for understanding 'Kino-Eye as the union of science and newsreel to further the battle for the communist decoding of the world' (1924b, 41–2).
42. See Tsivian (2004), 11, and Gershon and Malitsky (2010), 74, who also highlight this film reversal in terms of its value to the exposition of the facts of production in the service of Marxism.
43. The opera *Victory over the Sun* first was staged on 13 December 1913 at the Luna Park Theatre in St. Petersburg. Reviving temporal manipulation from cinema's past to reinvent its future was, of course, not limited to Vertov's cine-poetics. Reversed films by the 1910s had found favour in early avant-garde circles, where they had been identified as 'futuristic' (Tsivian 1994, 61). For this reason, they likely appealed to Vertov's early aesthetic education.
44. See Vertov (1923b).
45. Within *Kino-Glaz*, Vertov extends, but does not limit, this machine aesthetic to the body. Later films, such as *Stride Soviet!* (1926) and *Man with a Movie Camera*, still feature attention to machines.
46. Vertov's excavation of art from labour through defamiliarization weakens Eisenstein's critique of his 'purely pictorial aim' (1929, 43). It also limits the force of Siegfried Kracauer's claim that Vertov 'thr[ew] out the cinema as a means of capturing real life' (1960, 155).
47. This 'magic' reversal sequence begins with a clock spinning backward, perhaps recalling a similar shot in Thomas Edison's *The Magician* (1900).
48. Constance Penley, for example, argues the opposite perspective; see Stollery (2000), 84.
49. Other questionable scenes in films by Vertov, such as the lascivious 'documentation' of a woman dressing in *Man with a Movie Camera*, might be understood in light of Vertov's strategic use of attractions to maintain connection with the audience.
50. While it may be the case that apparently digressive footage in *Kino-Glaz* – such as the Chinese conjurer, the dead night watchman, and the elephant on the streets of Moscow – recorded unplanned interactions (Surowiec 2004, 46), *Kino-Glaz*'s incorporation of this engaging material into a carefully considered thematic structure must then be understood as serving broader ideological goals.
51. These shots can be compared to similar images in Kuleshov's *The Extraordinary Adventures of Mr West in the Land of the Bolsheviks* (1924), Eisenstein's *Strike* (1924), and many films by D.W. Griffith. We also can look back to early cinema's many domestic scenes, such as the Lumières' *Repas de bébé* (1895), Thomas Edison's *Children Bathing* (1901), and animal favourites such as Edison's *Dogs Playing in the Surf* (1897).
52. While we cannot, of course, rely on this single commentary from 1909 to characterize 'working-class taste', its reflection seems consistent with other popular notions about cinema at this time. As Musser explains in the context of American cinema, 'sex and violence figured prominently in … motion pictures from the outset' (1990, 78). And for

Tsivian, following Miriam Hansen (1991, 232, 253), 'cinema as prostitution appears among the international tropes of film reception' (1994, 37).

53. As Vertov explains, 'A composition is made of phrases, just as a phrase is made of intervals of movement' (1922b, 9). It is important to keep in mind that Soviet theory's motivation to manifest new superstructures from reorganized bases encouraged the development of such new possibilities.
54. Roberts, for example, thinks the heterogeneous structure of *Kino-Glaz* 'surely undermine [s] the film's propaganda value' (1999, 40). Similarly, most of *Kino-Glaz*'s mixed reviews in Russia resulted from a perceived excess of experimentation with 'film language'.
55. Recall that Eisenstein added validation to his theory and practice of cinematic montage by tracing its evolution to the process of forging ideograms from hieroglyphs in Eastern language systems. Vertov provided no such contextualization. See Eisenstein (1929).
56. In his review of *Kino-Glaz*, Erofeev argued that 'the moments of propaganda with the Pioneers drown in the chronicle of events and tricks, and the whole thing turns into an unimaginable jumble' (1924, 106).
57. In Russian Formalism, the 'dominant' is the 'focusing component [that] rules, determines, [and] transforms the … components of a work or art' and 'guarantees the integrity of [its] structure' (Jakobson 1935, 755).
58. Emma Widdis (2003), 67, for example, makes the contrary argument.

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