

Visualizing Critique: montage as a practice of alternative media

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At first look, episodes of social and political resistance in such disparate places and times as a Colorado mining town in 1903–1904, Berlin during the 1920s and 1930s, events leading up to the Partition of India in 1947, and AIDS-related protests in New York City during the 1980s may seem to have little in common. Yet, despite their many important differences, what they all share is the appearance of montage as a means of visually expressing radical critiques of the existing social orders. As used in this essay, ‘montage’ refers to the selection, editing or altering of existing images, phrases or symbols, and their reassembly into a new work that expresses a critique of the dominant.

While the presence of montage in these and other places, times, and contexts is relatively easy to establish, the significance of this observation is much more elusive. Thus, the purpose of this essay is to articulate a perspective from which one might begin to discuss its significance, as well as to suggest the outlines of a history of montage as a popularly available means of visual critique and form of participatory alternative media.

Montage as Form and Practice

In studies of alternative media, the question of what role media play in the formation of oppositional social movements is central, yet broader attention to it is needed. Narrowly focused studies such as biographies of individual publishers, writers, journalists, publications, or organizations have yielded many insights into specific episodes, yet the resulting patchwork collection of accounts tends to hinder a broader understanding of the general media practices and necessary conditions upon which these individual cases rely [1]. Also problematic is the fact that an unknown but likely large proportion of alternative-media practice consists of non-serialized, non-published, and therefore non-archived and non-catalogued artefacts, including handbills, posters, circulars, protest signs, and other ephemera. To expand knowledge of these kinds of media, every effort should be made to continue to broaden traditional conventions of historiography and develop different approaches to rigorous investigation and analyses [2].

Because this essay suggests a direction for such a broadening, it is necessary to first briefly present a perspective from which this might be done. The title ‘visualizing critique’ is meant to emphasize two important points which comprise the approach taken here.

The first is the way in which popular critiques of society take visual as well as written form. At a tactical level, this is likely due in part to a felt recognition of the important role that images play in maintaining a dominant social order. If this is the case, then a

particularly useful way of opposing a dominant order would be to critique an important means of its perpetuation.

At a theoretical level, additional explanations can be offered why montage as a critique composed of commonly available, mass-produced images fits well the needs of dispersed, non-hierarchical social movements. Raoul Hausmann and other Berlin Dadaists in the early twentieth century saw montage as an aesthetic and political principle that sought to undo established, professionalized hierarchies of media production. As Ades notes, *montage* in German means “fitting” or “assembly line,” and *Monteur* “mechanic”, [or] “engineer”. Such a semantic heritage underlies Hausmann’s explanation of the term: ‘This term translates our aversion at playing the artist, and, thinking of ourselves as engineers (hence our preference for workmen’s overalls) we meant to construct, to assemble [*montieren*] our works’ [3].

Such a principle fits even better today’s availability of retail, per-piece photocopying as a popularized means of reproduction. Unlike other kinds of media production that require comparatively larger outlays of time, knowledge, and money (newsletters, videos, web sites, and the like), raw materials in the form of commercial images are in ready supply, and assembly via montage can be done by anyone. US anti-AIDS activist Loring McAlpin notes this by commenting, ‘If you’re angry enough and have a Xerox machine and five or six friends who feel the same way, you’d be surprised how far you can go with that’ [4]. In addition, as will be discussed, montages can be hand-drawn and passed from person to person, thus making it a technique available anywhere there are pens or pencils, and paper.

However, one cannot explain the persistence of montage nor its resonance in various contexts by referring solely to mode of production. Such an explanation would fall prey to a decontextualized technological determinism. Thus, the second key point suggested by the title ‘visualizing critique’ concerns the actual form of montage itself. By ‘form’, I mean not just a description of the actual artefact, but also the way in which form as common understandings about the meaning and significance of the artefact serve as a basis of social formations, oppositional and otherwise.

To grasp the significance of this difference, one first needs to posit the material nature of culture. To see culture as a continual process of the production of human society is to recognize that literature, the arts—indeed, all artefacts and activities—are not creations independent or passively reflective of the social world, but the practical embodiment of social relations which constitute the social world.

When the material nature of culture is grasped, the analysis of cultural forms becomes crucial—not, as cultural theorist Raymond Williams notes, ‘by way of illustration but, in many cases, as the most specific point of entry to certain kinds of formation’ because doing so is an investigation of specific and complex processes of social organization [5]. Expanding on this point, Williams regards the form of an artefact as ‘a specific structure of social relationships’ at various scales and locations:

‘internally,’ in that the signs depend on, were formed in, relationships; ‘externally,’ in that the system depends on, is formed in, the institutions which activate it (and which are then at once cultural and social and economic institutions); integrally, in that a ‘sign-system,’ properly understood, is at once a specific cultural technology and a specific form of practical consciousness ... [6]

That form can be seen as a social relation is evident in at least two senses. One is that any form—therefore, any work—makes use of established conventions if it is to be

understood. Even the most avant-garde work depends on (an) already established set(s) of conventions in order for viewers to understand its avant-gardeness [7]. A second sense is in terms of what the work actually accomplishes: the evoking, positing or proposition of a relationship, and, also, the evoking, positing or proposition of ‘an active relationship to the experience being expressed’ [8]. When the relational nature of form is recognized, one sees that works of all kinds embody ‘crucial assumptions and propositions’, not only at the level of ideology or explicitly stated attitude, but relationally, ‘in the ebb and flow of feeling from and to others, in assumed situations and relationships, and in the relationships implied or proposed ...’ [9].

When montage is thus conceptualized as a form of congealed, but active social relationships in specific contexts, one can see more clearly what cultural role it plays in the formation of oppositional social movements. Media artefacts that are made and distributed by advertising agencies, commercial publications, and the like depend on the presence of a capitalist mode of production, not only in the sense of themselves being industrially conceived, composed, and manufactured, but also in the sense of common understandings about the purpose of society and the roles people are to play in it, such as the equation of consumption with pleasure and the role of people as consumers of commercial products. By using widely known commercial artefacts as their basic material, but by adding, editing, or otherwise recontextualizing them, montage critiques not only dominant modes of production (visually demonstrating the possibility of a non-commercial mode of media production) but dominant social conventions and relations of capitalism and other cultures of oppression.

Importantly, simply describing the artefact alone is still insufficient for such an analysis, because, again as Williams notes, the specific historical contexts in which the artefact was produced ‘*make all formal meanings significant and substantial [emphasis original] ...*’ [10]. Thus, montage—or any other kind of media artefact—is no universal, magic method that guarantees results. As a principle of composition, montage has been put to use for many purposes, including propagandizing on behalf of Soviet consolidation of power in the 1920s and for commercial commodity advertising soon after in many Western countries [11]. Thus, the context of its use is crucial for evaluating its fit and intended role(s).

The emphasis of this materialist perspective can perhaps best be put as the difference between viewing artefacts as decontextualized products and viewing them as historical practices. Williams defines a practice as ‘work on a material for a specific purpose within certain necessary social conditions’. The study of media as practices therefore consists of the recovery of the concrete making of media artefacts, such as materials used and the means of obtaining them, and modes of their productive organization and distribution. Of equal importance is the recovery of the necessary social knowledge that enabled such activities, such as traditions of composition, the organization of colloquial manufacturing, and of generally deployed strategies of public interpretation, as well as the place and significance of such activities in their respective historical contexts [12]. When understood as a practice, the contextual analysis of form thus becomes a means of analysing what must be seen ultimately as ‘a special kind of material practice: that of human sociality’ [13]. In this way, a focus on what Williams calls the specific social history of material cultural production can broaden approaches to media history as well as to the understanding of the full range and significance of media in oppositional social movements [14].

The following discussion of montage as a practice of composition, production, and signification seeks to suggest the scope that can be gained through such an approach. In

its most politically charged use, montage emerged as the result of print-capitalism and the constant necessity of finding an oppositional media practice as participatory as it is resonant [15]. The contours of its emergence, development, and use can therefore suggest much about the potential of participatory alternative media then and today.

From Folk-art to Labour Propaganda and Avant-garde Art

Although commonly regarded as an invention of the early twentieth-century European avant-garde or based in early theories about the aesthetics of film, montage has much broader, transnational roots [16]. Generally speaking, the appropriation and refashioning of found materials into new signifying relationships describes the full range of human work on the natural world. More specifically, when considering montage as a general practice of composition, a diverse set of examples can be seen as related. Among those referred to by various scholars include African tribal emblems; twelfth-century Japanese text-collages; a mosaic-style textual practice of thirteenth-century Kabbala; eighteenth- and nineteenth-century butterfly-wing collages; German folk-art weather charms and lace valentines; widely practised European and American hobbyist experimentation with photography in the nineteenth century; personal scrapbooks of newspaper articles and advertisements; and other kinds of assembled works that, in the words of one author, were ‘practised almost everywhere that paper might be found’, using such diverse materials as cigar bands, lithographed scenes, advertisements, box and bottle labels, and postage stamps [17].

In the West, these folk-art roots provided the productive basis for early uses of montage as political critique. Examples demonstrate the relative ease by which a critique could be composed and produced by reframing resonant cultural resources through their juxtaposition with other images or phrases, with the result of critically exposing contradictions of the dominant.

One such example is 1903–1904 posters and handbills made by William (‘Big Bill’) Haywood during his activity as an organizer in the US of the Western Federation of Miners and, later, the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW) [18]. During a mining strike in Colorado and following the public statement by the general of the Colorado state militia ‘to hell with the [US] Constitution ... we are following the orders of [Colorado] Governor Peabody’, Haywood produced a poster with this publicly made statement reproduced as the headline ‘To Hell With the Constitution’, with parts of the Constitution ‘that had been violated by the soldiers and authorities of Colorado’ reprinted below it. A second, similar poster during the same situation was described by Haywood later as his ‘desecrated flag poster’ [19]. It consisted of a ‘rough picture of the US flag, with the caption at top, “Is Colorado in America?”’ On each stripe of the flag was a line noting the illegal actions of the state militia, such as ‘Martial Law declared in Colorado’ and ‘Habeas Corpus Suspended in Colorado’ [20].

Later instances of montage also relied upon the folk-art traditions noted above, but fully emerged in conditions that were ultimately a result of the expansion of capitalist economies and their increasing reliance on media industries. Major enabling developments include the immense growth in the material output of media companies, which relied on the ever-expanding role of advertising in capitalist economies [21]. A second development (made possible by the first) was the growing fact and common public experience of the flood of mass-media images that sought to promote a culture of consumerism [22]. A third development was the emergence of photography as a staple feature of mass-media products, which was also enabled by the emergence of a technical

means of photographs' mass-reproduction. Paired with this was the common understanding of photographic images as literal transcriptions of reality, therefore immune to human biases and subjective viewpoints [23].

These developments corresponded with crucial changes in the structure and experience of modern life. By the early twentieth century, montage was generally recognized and publicly deployed as a means of signifying the acceleration of commodity capitalism and the public experience of modernity. In few other cities of the world did the crucible of capitalism, mass media, and urbanism prove as compelling as in Berlin during the Weimar era, where 'almost no chronicle of the period failed to note or recall the sensations of life being speeded up and profoundly transformed'. As Lavin continues, 'montage was thought to echo the pace, the multiplicity, the disorientation, the thrill, and of course the fragmentation of modern everyday life' [24]. American commentators also noted its usefulness, as in an advertising-industry commentator's observation in 1929 that photomontage 'best reveals itself to the quickly moving eye', and therefore is 'ideally suited to the spirit of this age in motion. We no longer sit and contemplate. We move, and at ever increasing speed' [25].

The public experience and understanding of mass-media products, advertising, photography, and the acceleration of modern life as a central basis of the emerging capitalist state paradoxically also made the state particularly susceptible to critique. If consumerism, the aura of authenticity and transparency of photographs, and, perhaps most importantly, the role of mass media as agents of social control were to be generally understood as social conventions that perpetuated specific interests instead of as natural and neutral facts, the inevitability and legitimacy of the existing social order would be seriously compromised, and possibilities for its challenge would have greater room to emerge.

As a result of these new conditions, early efforts such as Haywood's were of a qualitatively different nature than those that came later. First, the images Haywood used were professionally made and produced explicitly for their critical use prior to their assembly. Second, the target of critique was primarily localized political repression. By contrast, later instances of montage often used actual media products instead of ones tailor-made, and the targets of critique were local manifestations of a generalized social, political, and economic order intertwined with the media industries [26].

Such differences corresponded to differences in intentions, materials, composition, and social role, with the foremost refashioners of the practice of montage being avant-garde radical artists in Europe in the early twentieth century. For them, montage was an important means of publicly critiquing not only dominant ideologies, but also the role of media in their perpetuation. As noted above, Haywood began to see the political possibilities of montage, but John Heartfield and others working in Berlin in the 1920s and 1930s took montage one step further. Instead of creating the images to juxtapose, they often used commercial images and artefacts in such a way as to critique the social conventions upon which such images depended for their interpretation and acceptance [27]. The hope in doing so was that the dominant's monological authority would be forever compromised by the recontextualization of particular images and artefacts [28].

For example, through montage, Heartfield redefined Hitler's cocked-wrist, platter-carrying variation of the Nazi salute as an open palm waiting for yet another pay-off from collaborating industrialists who backed his political programme from behind the scenes [29]. Another consisted of a photographic portrait of a working man seated in a chair, his body relaxed despite having his head wrapped tightly with newspapers, which, unbeknownst to him and contrary to the dominant convention of newspapers being a

window on the world, actually hid the world with their obscuring accounts. Yet another piece, titled ‘Mimicry’, portrayed Hitler’s propaganda minister Joseph Goebbels dressed in a tailored suit and standing behind and above Hitler as a beautician stands above a customer, draping a Karl Marx lookalike beard onto his boss, with an excerpt close-by from a newspaper story that noted how Hitler used Bolshevik symbols to ‘win over for the regime any workers tending to opposition’ [30].

Montage was deemed to be such a powerful means of critique that it ‘was used increasingly by all political factions in Europe and Russia in the decades before the Second World War’ [31]. Nazis regarded Heartfield’s critique so threatening that, to avoid capture, Heartfield soon had to operate in hiding in Hungary, enlisting the help of others to smuggle posters, reprints, and stickers back into Nazi Germany.

Yet, *avant-garde* Europe was not the exclusive centre of the practice of montage, as other examples illustrate. When combined with the spread of mass media and capitalism on the coattails of colonialism, the transnational folk-art heritage and accessible means of production characteristic of montage provided conditions for its use in non-West situations, such as the struggle of India to free itself from British colonial rule. For example, as presented in colonial-Indian school books, the British Isles were equal in size or larger than India. As a result, suggests one account, ‘children going to school had no sense of the size of their own country’. But an underground montage circulated during this time used popular knowledge with this depiction in order to critique its implicit judgements. The montage was an image that showed a map of India, but with all of Western Europe fitted inside it. As one account of this concludes, ‘For the first time, we realised what a power we were, how big we were.... The fight for independence somehow took on a new meaning [after seeing it]’ [32].

Popularizing Technologies of Production

While displaying and putting into practice through montage a critical awareness of the role of media in society, Heartfield’s work differed radically from the Indian example in that it was practised in a meticulous, professionalized, capitalized form out of the reach of the general populace. But, due to economic pressures to decrease further the cost and complexity of technologies of reproduction in order to create new markets, this barrier to general availability was soon breached through the development of lower-cost and more portable technologies. This put such technologies in the hands of a broader range of interests while also loosening the grip of conventions of practice prescribed by professional associations.

For example, the emergence of colloquial processes of reproduction assisted the development of the underground press in the US and elsewhere during the 1960s by making it possible for ink-on-paper drawings and typewritten copy (within the reach of a greater number of people) to be the basis for reproduction. Such changes also made possible the greater availability of less-expensive printing equipment to printers who were either indifferent to or active participants in the movement. Although still requiring time, training, and a modicum of capital, the possibility grew of popular participation in the practice of underground media, as did the emergence of different kinds of forms for representing and solidifying the movement [33].

While the invention of offset printing and the resulting lesser cost of reproduction was important, practitioners also developed a distinctive visual form for representing the tone and feel of the movement, which often relied upon montage [34]. For example, montages in the underground press that critiqued mainstream media forms, social relations, and

their role in maintaining the social order appeared in such ways as using standard advertising formats to ‘promote’ napalm [35]. Although the social and critical potential of montage was diluted in part due to the contradictory aim of freeing oneself in order to free society, what remained active was its comparatively low-capital nature, the ease with which it could be practised, and its capacity for critique. Practitioners of montage more contemporary than the 1960s underground press include (but are not limited to) Peter Kennard, Klaus Staeck, and the Dutch collective DAAR, which dealt with such post-1960s issues as nuclear proliferation, healthcare, and labour [36].



Montage in the Electronic Age

Montage as a current practice of alternative media has two basic variations. The first is a professionalized version in which practitioners create the images with which to assemble critical montages. This professionalized version of montage is closer to parody, defined here as the mimicking of commercial media products through their recreation and simulation. Although it seeks to develop a critical awareness of the relationship between mass media and social control, it nevertheless still requires often sophisticated technological expertise and equipment.

The second variation is a more resolutely popular version of montage, which uses actual media products, juxtaposed, reproduced, and distributed with generally available, deskilled technologies. Both variations indicate the existing limitations as well as the current potential of montage as a participatory practice of alternative media.

Examples of the professionalized version of montage can be found in a number of countries. For example, a political ‘anti-advertisement’ made during the 1989 presidential race in Brazil uses a montage aesthetic as the basis for its critique. Brazilian laws at that time required access to broadcast television only for major candidates, who predictably used it to promote their supposedly great differences from their rivals. However, a grassroots video production made and distributed at the time critiqued this process by depicting ‘a housewife [who] threw [these] candidates into her shopping cart as if they were detergent, then testified from her kitchen sink that [Workers’ party presidential candidate Lula] worked better than the others’, thereby appropriating the ‘expectations and frameworks of commercial television (and prepackaged politics)’ in order to critique them [37]. By using the form of consumer-commodity television advertising to talk about choices of presidential candidates, the anti-ad questions not only the actually quite narrow ideological range represented by ‘major’ candidates, but also the consumerist nature of the electoral system, the role commercial mass media plays in it by hawking candidates as if they were competing brands, and the lack of significant choice within a resulting atmosphere of banality and alienation.

A North-American example is work done by the Media Foundation, a non-profit organization established in 1989 and based in Vancouver, BC [38]. The activities most relevant to the current essay are what it calls its ‘subvertisements’. Enabled by revenue from sales of its quarterly magazine *Adbusters*, as well as by donations, grants, and time donated by alienated advertising professionals, it recreates the look and feel of mainstream advertisements in order to undercut them and the social conventions that work through them [39].

For example, an authentic-looking spread for Marlboro cigarettes depicts a riderless horse grazing in a rural snow-covered field, with a tombstone 20 feet away presumably belonging to its rugged cowboy rider who died of cigarette-induced lung cancer. Others work more aggressively, such as ‘Absolut on ice’, which portrays the bottom of a

cadaver's foot in a halo of light, mimicking the way in which vodka bottles are displayed in Absolut's own advertisements. Penned on a buff-coloured tag strung around the cadaver's big toe is 'DOA'. The caption at the bottom reads 'Nearly 50 percent of automobile fatalities are linked to alcohol. Ten percent of North Americans are alcoholics. A teenager sees 100,000 alcohol ads before reaching the legal drinking age' [40].

The appropriation of specific ad campaigns is joined with general critiques of the commercial media system, such as a video subvertisement titled 'The Product is You'. It opens with a shaven-headed young man alone in his dark living room, watching television. We hear a medley of television advertisements, sports commentators, cheering crowds, and talk-show patter. The camera begins with a frontal shot of the viewer bathed in electric blue light, then tracks around him to the point where we are looking over his shoulder at the television screen he watches, seeing tattooed on his neck the distinctive black bars and numbers of a universal-pricing code. A sombre, male voiceover notes 'the living room is a factory ... [and] the product is you' [41].

Another prominent example of professionalized montage has been ACT-UP, a coalition of activists operating largely in New York City during (but not limited to) its 'heyday' of 1988–1992, and struggling to 'win publicly financed AIDS services such as outpatient care, hospital care and hospices and to expand [AIDS] research' [42]. As Aronowitz characterizes it, ACT-UP differed from less radical movements in some important ways. First, it ceded efforts to influence traditional electoral politics, because it regarded the established electoral system as a sham. Second, it ignored traditional boundaries of legitimate protest to make space for itself outside the 'entangling and moderating conventions of protest' [43]. Third, it distinguished itself in being an "ultra-democratic" style of organization which, tacitly, oppose[d] traditional statist notions of "leadership" [44].

Montage as a practice of composition and critique fit well such a strategy and mode of organization. Two examples are faux advertisements that critique the commodification and commercialization of AIDS policies and treatments. One uses the red background and lasso-swinging cowboy of Marlboro cigarette ads, but puts the head of then-President George Bush in place of the anonymous cowboy's, and layering over the image the headline 'AIDS Crisis'. The text at bottom, which typically contains the Surgeon General's warning about the health effects of cigarette smoking, reads 'WARNING: While Bush spends billions playing cowboy [in the Persian Gulf War], 37 million Americans have no health insurance. One American dies of AIDS every eight minutes' [45]. A second mimics an advertisement for Coca-Cola, using its solid red background and wavy white line, with the headline 'Enjoy AZT'. After noting the ineffectiveness of AZT as a treatment for AIDS and the US Government's reluctance to fund more research, it asks: 'Is AZT the last, best hope for people with AIDS, or is it a short-cut to the killing [AZT pharmaceutical developer] Burroughs Wellcome is making in the AIDS marketplace?' [46].

Despite their inventiveness, the means of production exemplified by these and others puts such work out of the reach of many people—in particular, those who do not have the training and the resources to engage in the video staging and filming or the sometimes sophisticated computer imaging. Although the Media Foundation attempts to open itself to a broader public by soliciting and reprinting readers' own 'spoof ads', and grassroots video organizations typically make available opportunities for training and borrowing equipment, the barriers of time and training needed to learn and use such technologies remain [47]. Recognizing this, some efforts to bridge these barriers have

taken place, including the development of new ways of organizing radical media work, such as that undertaken in the late 1970s and 1980s by Peter Dunn and Loraine Leeson in conjunction with trade unions and activist groups opposed to the gentrification of the Docklands areas of London [48].

However, other efforts by ACT-UP exemplify the deprofessionalized variation of montage. One example is ‘Know Your Scumbags’, a handbill made in part by cutting and pasting existing portraits of various religious leaders in order to protest the opposition of organized religion to the free distribution of prophylactics [49].

Another example is cultural critic Stuart Ewen’s self-titled project ‘BILLBOARDS of the FUTURE’. Using images from old magazines and newspapers, he assembled critiques of Reagan-era conservatism—mostly visual, sometimes with accompanying words—by highlighting its contradictions. Ewen photocopied and mailed copies to friends, relatives, and acquaintances, then distributed the rest on the street or put them up around the neighbourhood. Further reproduction through photocopying was easy and encouraged, and ‘friendship networks’ became the means of wider distribution. BILLBOARDS showed up in cities across the US, and in England, France, Italy, Holland, Greece, Southern Africa, and China. Of perhaps greater importance was their appearance in workplaces, such as one that depicted a “‘QUARANTINE” sign with one of those round, smiling faces [...] warning of exposure to the “EMOTIONAL PLAGUE””, which was posted by Long Island Lighting Company employees in a power plant. As Ewen explains, through montage the project invites anyone ‘by the obviousness and simplicity of production ... [that] “You can do this too! Try it!”’ In this way, ‘alternative messages were combined with a politics of popular expression’ [50]. Similar efforts can be identified in many other countries, such as that of the UK collective Rhinoceros, with an example ‘London Pageantry’ the combination of a tourist postcard with a news photograph of police in riot gear [51].

Alternative Media as Popular Pedagogy

Recovering the specific social history of material cultural production of montage heightens our understanding of it and the historical possibilities of alternative-media practice. First, it emphasizes the importance of historical conditions for individual actions. The centrality of commercial mass media in capitalist societies, widely available means of colloquial reproduction, and widespread familiarity with image-based advertising and promotion are recognized as constitutive and necessary for the production and interpretation of montage. Accounts of the products without their context misses this relationship.

Second, it underscores the difficulty with which montage as a means of participatory media production escapes professionalized forms. In many instances, the form may be used while the underlying social relations of production negate the form’s social and political potential. Accounts of specific products without also analysing relations of production also misses this determining dynamic.

Third, such an analysis makes possible a finer recognition of the varieties of alternative-media practice, as well as the gulf that separates centralized forms from participatory forms. Perhaps the greatest difference between them is that between elite-driven propaganda and a popular, critical pedagogy as the teaching/learning of a critical method. Instead of embodying a set of ideas to adopt, montage has been and can be more democratically used as a means of both teaching a way of seeing (thus perpetuating awareness of its use and possibilities) and of representing the contradictions

in modern societies in all their variety from many different viewpoints and social positions [52].

Thus, the significance of the use of montage in many places, times, and contexts is ultimately how it suggests the persistence of an ongoing social, political, and cultural struggle within modern societies. On one hand, it infers the large-scale and widespread experience of capitalism and the deep entanglement of commercial media industries with its operations. Yet, on the other hand, it also reminds us of a persistent popular recognition of this situation and equally persistent popular efforts to make critical, mobilizing responses to it.

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NOTES

- [1] Many reasons exist for the skimpy historical record left by producers, ranging from paranoia to carelessness, as well as to the collective production process in which the staffs routinely changed. See Joseph Conlin, *The American Radical Press 1880–1960*, 2 vols (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1974), 3–8. Exceptions to such studies are increasingly frequent. See for example Amy Beth Aronson, ‘Sons of Liberty and Their Silenced Sisters: “ladies” magazines and women’s self-representation in the early republic’, in M. Harris and T. O’Malley, eds, *Studies in Newspaper and Periodical History; 1995 annual* (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1997), 17–32. See also the collection of essays in D. Kahn and D. Neumaier, eds, *Cultures in Contention* (Seattle: Real Comet Press, 1985).
- [2] Michael Harris notes this lacuna in studies of the serial. See ‘Locating the Serial: some ideas about the position of the serial in relation to the eighteenth-century print culture’, in M. Harris and T. O’Malley, eds, *Studies in Newspaper and Periodical History; 1995 annual* (Westport: Greenwood, 1997), 3–16.
- [3] Dawn Ades, *Photomontage* (New York: Pantheon, 1976), 7.
- [4] Quoted in Karrie Jacobs and Steven Heller, *Angry Graphics; protest posters of the Reagan/Bush era* (Salt Lake City: Peregrine Books, 1992), 14.
- [5] Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 138.
- [6] *Ibid.*, 140.
- [7] *Ibid.*, 166.
- [8] *Ibid.*
- [9] *Ibid.*, 167.
- [10] *Ibid.*, 168.
- [11] For examples, see various essays in M. Teitelbaum, ed., *Montage and Modern Life, 1919–1942* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1992).
- [12] Although they favour the verbal over the visual, approximating the intention of the current essay are studies of political satire as a tradition of critique. See for example Marcus Wood, *Radical Satire and Print Culture, 1790–1822* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994); and Gary Dyer, *British Satire and the Politics of Style, 1789–1832* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997).
More visually oriented are works on theatre. Examples include Daniel Gerould, ‘Representations of Social and Political Reality in Modern Polish Drama and Theatre’, *Polish Review*, 30(4) (1985), 365–72; Peter Jelavich, *Berlin Cabaret* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1993); Kathleen Cioffi, ‘Communism with a Theatrical Face: STS and the Polish October of 1956’, *Theatre Survey*, 35(2) (1994), 19–29; and Alan Lareau, *The Wild Stage: literary cabarets of the Weimar Republic* (Columbia, SC: Camden House, 1995).
Representative of the range of work on political caricature include such studies as Barnett Baskerville, ‘19th Century Burlesque of Oratory’, *American Quarterly*, 20(4) (1968), 726–43; Fritz Behrendt, ‘The Freedom of the Political Cartoonist’, *Twentieth Century Studies [Great Britain]*, 13/14 (1975), 77–91; Joyce Beiley, ‘Jose Clemente Orozco (1883–1949): formative years in the narrative graphic tradition’, *Latin American Research Review*, 15(3) (1980), 73–93; Anthony Petti, ‘Horses of Instruction: beasts in Canadian political cartoons of the Victorian era’, *Victorian Periodicals Review [Canada]*, 16(3–4) (1983), 109–25; Celestino Fernandez and James Officer, ‘The Lighter Side of Mexican Immigration:

- humor and satire in the Mexican corrido', *Journal of the Southwest*, 31(4) (1989), 471–96; Elizabeth Childs and Michael Paul Driskel, 'The Secret Agents of Satire: Daumier, censorship, and the image of the exotic in political caricature, 1850–1860', *Proceedings of the Annual Meeting of the Western Society for French History*, 17 (1990), 334–46; Laura Schor, 'Politics and Political Satire: the struggle for the right to vote in Paris, 1848–1849', *European Legacy*, 1(3) (1996), 1037–44; and Diana Donald, *The Age of Caricature: satirical prints in the reign of George III* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1996).
- [13] Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, 165.
- [14] Quotations are from *ibid.*, 160, 162. In addition to *Marxism and Literature*, particularly useful for this essay is *The Long Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961). See also Hanno Hardt and Bonnie Brennen, 'Introduction: communication and the question of history', *Communication Theory*, 3(2) (May 1993), 130–36.
- Exemplifying such an approach to the study of photography is John Tagg, *The Burden of Representation: essays on photographs and histories* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988). Only recently has a sustained focus on images and practices emerged in US labour history. See Paul Buhle and Edmund Sullivan, *Images of American Radicalism* (Hanover, MA: Christopher Publishing House, 1996).
- Studies of the book as 'print culture' have recently broadened in this way. In addition to Harris, 'Locating the Serial', see Jürgen Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: an enquiry into a category of bourgeois society*, T. Burger and F. Lawrence (transl.) (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1989); Roger Chartier, *The Cultural Origins of the French Revolution*, L. Cochrane (transl.) (Durham: Duke University Press, 1991); Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism*, rev. edn (London: Verso, 1991); Michael Warner, *The Letters of the Republic: publication and the public sphere in eighteenth-century America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990); and James Danky and Wayne Wiegand, eds, *Print Culture in a Diverse America* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1998).
- [15] The phrase 'print capitalism' is from Anderson, *Imagined Communities*.
- [16] Christine Poggi, *In Defiance of Painting: cubism, futurism, and the invention of collage* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1992); Katherine Hoffman, 'Collage in the Twentieth Century: an overview', in K. Hoffman, ed., *Collage: critical views* (Ann Arbor and London: UMI Research Press, 1989), 1–37.
- [17] Douglas Kahn, *John Heartfield: art and mass media* (New York: Tanam Press, 1985), 106–13; Diane Waldman, *Collage, Assemblage, and the Found Object* (New York: Harry N. Abrams, 1992), 7–15; Cynthia Wayne, *Dreams, Lies, and Exaggerations; photomontage in America* (College Park: Art Gallery at the University of Maryland, 1991), 14; Eddie Wolfram, *History of Collage; an anthology of collage, assemblage, and event structures* (New York: Macmillan, 1975), 7–14; Thomas Leonard, *News for All: America's coming-of-age with the press* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 125; Norman Laliberté and Alex Mogelon, *Collage, Montage, Assemblage; history and contemporary techniques* (New York: Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1971), 1; Claude M. Bromley, *Crazy Camera; secrets of photomontage* (London and New York: Focal Press, 1943); Michel Frizot, 'The Ancestry of Photomontage', in *Photomontage; experimental photography between the wars*, S. Whiteside (transl.) (London: Thames and Hudson, 1991) [no pagination]; Harriet Janis and Rudi Blesh, *Collage: personalities, concepts, techniques* (Philadelphia: Chilton, 1967), 1–4.
- [18] Salvatore Salerno, *Red November, Black November: culture and community in the industrial workers of the world* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1989), 129–31.
- [19] Reproduced in Martin Green, *New York 1913; the Armory Show and the Paterson Strike Pageant* (New York: Charles Scribner's and Sons, 1988), 182.
- [20] William Haywood, *Bill Haywood's Book; the autobiography of William D. Haywood* (New York: International Publishers, 1929; reprint edn 1966), 140–41; Melvyn Dubofsky, 'Big Bill' Haywood (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 30–31.
- [21] Roland Marchand, *Advertising and the American Dream; making way for modernity 1920–1940* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985); Susan Strasser, *Satisfaction Guaranteed; the making of the American mass market* (New York: Pantheon, 1989).
- [22] Stuart Ewen, *All Consuming Images; the politics of style in contemporary culture* (New York: Basic Books, 1988); Simon J. Bronner, ed., *Consuming Visions; accumulation and display of goods in America, 1880–1920* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1989); Jackson Lears, *Fables of Abundance; a cultural history of advertising in America* (New York: Basic Books, 1994); various essays in Martyn J. Lee, ed., *The Consumer Society Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2000).
- [23] Tagg, *Burden*; Ades, *Photomontage*, 7; various essays in Alan Trachtenberg, ed., *Classic Essays on Photography* (New Haven: Leete's Island Books, 1980); John Berger, *Ways of Seeing* (London: Penguin

- and BBC, 1972); and Timothy Druckrey, 'From Dada to Digital; montage in the twentieth century', *Aperture*, 136 (Summer 1994), 4–7.
- [24] Maud Lavin, *Cut With the Kitchen Knife; the Weimar photomontages of Hannah Höch* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), 47–49; Peter Fritzsche, *Reading Berlin 1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1996).
- [25] Douglas McMurtrie, 'The Photomontage—A New Illustrative Technique', *Printer's Ink* (26 December 1929).
- [26] Often the two methods were combined, as in Heartfield's work. David Evans and Sylvia Gohl, *Photomontage; a political weapon* (London: Gordon Fraser, 1986), 21.
- [27] Peter Selz, 'John Heartfield's Photomontages', in John Heartfield, *Photomontages of the Nazi Period* (New York: Universe Books, 1977), 11.
- [28] Kahn, *John Heartfield*, 73–103.
- [29] Heartfield, *Photomontages*, 46, 120.
- [30] *Ibid.*, 70, 123. A complete, annotated English-language catalogue of Heartfield's magazine work is David Evans, *John Heartfield AIZ; Arbeiter-Illustrierte Zeitung Volks Illustrierte 1930–38* (New York: Kent, 1992).
- [31] Ades, *Photomontage*, 8, 12.
- [32] 'Remembering Independence', interview with Madhur Jaffrey, 'Morning Edition', National Public Radio (US), 14 August 1997, <<http://www.npr.org/>> (accessed 2 February 2001).
- [33] Robert Glessing, *The Underground Press in America* (Bloomington and London: Indiana University Press, 1970); Roger Lewis, *Outlaws of America; the underground press and its context: notes on a cultural revolution* (Baltimore: Penguin, 1972).
- [34] Glessing, *Underground Press*, 39–49; Lewis, *Outlaws*.
- [35] Stuart Ewen, 'BILLBOARDS of the FUTURE: a brief history', in J. Becker, G. Hedebrö and L. Paldan, eds, *Communication and Domination; essays to honor Herbert I. Schiller* (Norwood: Ablex, 1986), 251–52; Lewis, *Outlaws*, 76.
- [36] In addition to various essays in Kahn and Neumaier, *Cultures in Contention*, see Evans and Gohl, *Photomontage*.
- [37] Patricia Aufderheide, 'Latin American Grassroots Video: beyond television', *Public Culture*, 5(3) (1993), 585–86.
- [38] A manifesto from its director is Kalle Lasn, *Culture Jam; the uncooling of America* (New York: Eagle Brook, 1999).
- [39] *Ibid.*, 131–34; Jim Boothroyd, "'Adbusters' Take on a Consuming Passion", *Montreal Gazette* (20 December 1997), B1.
- [40] 'AdBusters: spoof ads', <<http://www.adbusters.org/spoofads/>> (accessed 2 February 2001).
- [41] 'AdBusters: the product is you', <<http://www.adbusters.org/uncommercials/product/>> (accessed 15 March 2000).
- [42] Stanley Aronowitz, *The Death and Rebirth of American Radicalism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), 132.
- [43] *Ibid.*, 131.
- [44] *Ibid.*, 134.
- [45] Reprinted in Jacobs and Heller, *Angry Graphics*, 84.
- [46] Reprinted in *ibid.*, 85.
- [47] For example, see 'Adbusters: jammers' gallery' at <<http://adbusters.org/creativeresistance/jamgallery/>> (accessed 2 February 2001).
- [48] Peter Dunn and Loraine Leeson, 'The Changing Picture of Docklands', in Kahn and Neumaier, eds, *Cultures in Contention*, 14–35.
- [49] Jacobs and Heller, *Angry Graphics*, 88.
- [50] Ewen, 'BILLBOARDS', 241–42, 252–53.
- [51] Evans and Gohl, *Photomontage*, 103.
- [52] The pedagogical value of montage is increasingly recognized in classrooms as part of media-literacy curricula as well as in critical projects of individuals distributed via the Internet. Examples include the BADvertising Institute's critiques of tobacco advertising (<http://www.badvertising.org/>), and 'If Tobacco Ads Really Told the Truth', which displays work done by Californian high-school students (<http://www.mvusd.k12.ca.us/hs/cshsweb/index1.html>).