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The City Viewed The Films of Leyda, Browning, and Weinberg

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Jay Leyda's *A Bronx Morning* (1931) opens with images of rapidly shifting abstract patterns intercut with street views taken from the window of an elevated train. The patterns, distorted reflections thrown onto various surfaces, move by with such speed that they are difficult to identify. The alternate and more naturalistic shots of passing street views, however, contextualize the abstractions as a particular kind of visual experience. These more familiar images with their views of pedestrians, traffic, and streets include within them the edges of the train window from which the shots were taken, literally re-framing and motivating the abstractions as details of shadow and light cast upon the passing cityscape.

These dual representational strategies—abstractions and rhythms available only to the camera, and more easily recognizable imagery rooted in Albertian perspective—recall, broadly speaking, the categories of avant-garde and nonfiction film as they were discussed in the 1920s and 1930s. Yet, almost coincident with the entry of this terminology into the medium's critical vocabulary, challenges to any easy correlation between signifying practices and categories began to appear. Nowhere was this challenge more systematic than in the wave of city films that culminated in productions such as Walter Ruttmann's *Berlin: The Symphony of a City* (1926), and resonated throughout the production of American counterparts.

In the pages that follow, the city films of Jay Leyda (fig. 12.1), Herman G. Weinberg, and Irving Browning are examined in terms of the two discursive realms within which they were most often positioned, and



Figure 12.1.
Photo of Jay Leyda and Serge Koussevitzky, no date. Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art,
Film Stills Library

which they did the most to challenge: that is, the nonfiction film and the avant-garde film.¹ More than any other production category of the period, the city symphony and its variants managed simultaneously to broaden existing notions of the nonfiction film and to re-work the aesthetic agenda of avant-garde practice.

In the case of documentary, the city films of Ruttman, Dziga Vertov, Leyda, and Browning, among others, introduced an alternative to the two dominant nonfiction strategies of “description” (travelogues, for example) and character-based “interpretation” (as in *Nanook of the North*, 1922). In the case of the avant-garde, the social spaces and conditions encountered by city filmmakers often seemed to redefine the aesthetic implications of formal devices drawn from movements such as *Neue Sachlichkeit*, Precisionism, and Dada, directing them toward an actively critical and socially committed end. The frequent presence particularly of European city films in the screenings and critical reception of both

documentary and avant-garde communities attests as well to the flexible nature of these categories prior to their institutional reification. In this context, the films of Leyda and Browning, and to some extent Weinberg, may be used to interrogate the status of these emerging critical categories and interpretive communities.

The avant-garde city films produced within the United States, with the major exceptions of Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler’s *Manhatta* (1921) and Robert Flaherty’s *Twenty-Four Dollar Island* (1927), appeared in the wake of such films as Ruttman’s *Berlin*, Jean Vigo’s *A Propos de Nice* (1930), and Vertov’s *The Man with a Movie Camera* (1929). The films upon which this essay focuses—Leyda’s *A Bronx Morning*, Browning’s *City of Contrasts* (1931), and Weinberg’s *Autumn Fire* (1933)—together with Weinberg’s *A City Symphony* (1930) and Lewis Jacobs’ *City Block* (1934) and *As I Walk* (1934), for example, seem indebted to the continental “city symphonies” in specific ways. Not only do they construct the city as a dynamic physical and social experience rather than simply as a space to be described and documented, but they also share the use of many distinctive signifying practices with their European predecessors. And their makers more often than not began their productions already well informed of the broader cultural orientations of their continental counterparts. But while in many senses derivative, these films also lay claim to a distinctness rooted in domestic conditions of production, together, of course, with the visions of their creators.

Poorly received upon their initial appearance and all but ignored over the intervening years, American experimental city films of the early 1930s suffered a fate common to many marginalized production areas—that is, the loss of potentially key films together with production documentation.² Absent even from the canon of city films, and with minimal claim for influence of any kind on subsequent generations of filmmakers, the films of Leyda, Browning, Weinberg, Jacobs, and the others nevertheless appeared at a crucial moment in the history of both documentary and avant-garde production and reception.

FROM DOCUMENTARY TO AVANT-GARDE

The New York City Writers’ Project’s organization of article and review citations in the pages of *The Film Index*, while by no means representing a universally accepted typology, nevertheless provides an insight into the

period's conceptual framing of the medium.³ The breakdown of the "factual film" into four subcategories is particularly interesting in light of the crossover status the city film would occupy in the early 1930s. The *Index* draws a revealing distinction between the "descriptive" function of so-called interest films (i.e., newsreel and record films, travel films), and the "interpretive" function of documentaries, finding very different production patterns for films and criticism within each of these categories.⁴ Documentary films, according to the *Index*, are "factual films conceived as dramatic interpretations of reality. Related factual films, considered to be less interpretation than description, information, novelty or record, will be found under the several divisions of Interest films, Newsreel and Record films, and Travel films."⁵ The bulk of the documentary entries appear between 1929 and 1935, and the category is described as "a genre relatively recent in development." Interest, record, and travel films, by contrast, have the bulk of their entries for the years prior to 1915 "by reason of the diminished attention paid individual interest [travel and record] films following the advent of the feature film."⁶

The *Index's* definition of documentary as "interpretive" owes a great deal to John Grierson's *Moana*-inspired formulation of the term. The interpretive process, in this case, included strategies generally associated with the classic Hollywood cinema, bound together with a sense of imagistic "realism" consistent with the earlier interest, record, and travel films, characterized by the *Index* as "descriptive." "Descriptive" films tended to foreground their unplayed status and minimize reliance on characters or story, constructions evidently seen as "interpretive" by the editors of the *Index*. From a position of historical hindsight, the "progression" from description to interpretation might be reframed more broadly as a shift in nonfiction representational strategy—a change in interpretive mode—rather than as an assertion of generic difference.⁷

Rooted in the dominant representational practices of the nineteenth century and the Victorian didactic tradition, early nonfiction film, so often retrospectively labeled naive, maintained a remarkably stable set of signifying practices.⁸ The first two decades of city films, for example, tended to position the camera as a viewfinder on the world, emphasizing spatial exposition through relatively long takes and minimal deployment of analytic editing techniques, in the process maintaining the urban iconography widely circulated through stereographic photography and postcards by the turn of the century.⁹ *Nanook*, by contrast, emblemized

the shift to a narrative conception of documentary, one more voyeuristic than exhibitionistic in orientation, to use Tom Gunning's distinction.¹⁰ The construction of an elaborate artifice dependent upon sets, story, and psychologically credible characters, and the effacing of narrative agency, all contributed to a documentary form with far greater similarity to the classical Hollywood cinema than the preceding decades of nonfiction production.

The efforts of Ruttmann, Vertov, Eugene Deslaw, and others with the city film of the late 1920s provided an alternative for nonfiction representational strategies—one that *A Bronx Morning*, *City of Contrasts*, and *Autumn Fire* would reference. These films drew upon the earlier exhibitionistic mode, this time reformulated by modernist movements such as Cubism, Futurism, and Dada, and *Neue Sachlichkeit*. Often specifically indebted to the deployment of compositional and cutting techniques in films ranging from *Ballet Mécanique* (1925) to *Potemkin* (1925), the city film reworked these techniques in terms of the site-specific tangibility and social construction that the period's urban subject entailed. "Documentaries" within Grierson's sense of interpretation, these films nevertheless broke from the narrative trajectory which *Nanook* had mapped out and which films such as *Rien que les Heures* (1926) followed, profoundly changing both the style of urban depiction and the parameters of nonfiction representation. Non-city films would follow in this vein (for example, Joris Iven's *Phillips-Radio*, 1931, and Ruttmann's *Mannesmann*, 1937), but the widely circulated and reviewed city film served as the primary site for the articulation of this documentary alternative.

A new conceptual orientation appeared not only in the nonfiction film, but in that other category in which city films were often discussed—the avant-garde film. The impact of the city film here is more difficult to chart, since avant-garde or experimental practice is by definition far less systematic and evades easy formal codification. Nevertheless, at least within the particular avant-garde discourses referenced by certain city films, a reworking of the aesthetic agenda seems apparent. City films often contributed an explicitly critical edge to the deployment of avant-garde technique, leading to a far more "politicized" effort than that evident in other experimental, more personally expressive, films.¹¹

The point is obviously overdetermined, and it would be a mistake to attribute the politicization of the cinematic avant-garde to the city film.¹² Yet, in their address of concrete living and working conditions, of specific

physical, social, and economic environments, these films emblemized the shift from an essentially romantic tradition of self-expression to a socially engaged and often critical aesthetic.

The agents of this approach were usually intimate with the tenets of modernism either as practitioners in other art forms or as critics. The centrality of individuals active in photography, painting, music, and poetry (such as Strand, Sheeler, Lázló Moholy-Nagy, Ruttmann, Leyda, Weinberg, and Browning) in the city's cinematic reformulation attests to the array of aesthetic influences to which this particular film form was subject.¹³ Despite divergent aesthetic referents, their city films simultaneously addressed the urban realities before the camera and the film medium itself.

Ute Eskildsen's discussion of *Neue Sachlichkeit* and photography in this period offers a useful insight in this regard.¹⁴ Eskildsen argues that the ideology of objectivity in the photographic medium (always a problem, given its dominant cultural construction as realist) developed in two main directions during the 1920s. In the first, the camera was used as a "mechanical recording device," portraying the pro-filmic object in the form that most accurately resembled its appearance. In the second, the camera was used as a resource for new visionary perspectives, emphasizing the materiality of the medium itself as a means of extending perception.¹⁵

Films such as *Berlin* embody both of these concerns, extending them to a durational level. *Berlin* analyzes and reconstructs the visual and temporal rhythms of human, animal, and mechanical processes, of the city as an object, organism, and mentality, and the day as its organizing principle. Through compositional and editing strategies, Ruttmann also manages to develop and exploit a dissonance between the screen as transparent access to "reality" and as a formal graphic surface in its own right. The formal concerns so evident in the promotional campaigns for *Berlin* and *The Man with a Movie Camera*—the photomontage constructions of Umbo and Vladimir and Georgi Stenberg—were consistent with the efforts of such Dada-inflected artists as Hanna Hoch and Paul Citroen, suggesting the synthesis of these dual approaches in static terms. Even in the absence of the films themselves, these widely circulated photomontages implicitly addressed the construction of realism, strategies of fragmentation and restructuring, and the potentials for visual rhythms. And the durational extension of these concepts and strategies served as a key stimulus for the American film practice that followed.

AMERICAN EXPERIMENTAL CITY FILMS

Experimental, amateur, independent, avant-garde—the nomenclature may have varied, but the filmmaking constituencies and their stylistic reference points often overlapped. America's avant-garde in this broad sense owed a specific and frequently acknowledged debt to the European modernist tradition. Beyond the major galleries and exhibitions that served both as a showcase of the new and a meeting ground for shared concerns, public critical coverage of movements such as Cubism, Constructivism, and Expressionism was extensive and largely well-informed in the 1920s.¹⁶ This aesthetic discourse crucially shaped the avant-garde that would emerge in American film production.

Manhatta's production provides an early example of European modernism's generalized influence on American city films. One of the first systematic reworkings of urban imagery, *Manhatta* broke from the traditional ordering of the city's image, mapping the contours of a new formal vocabulary. Paul Strand's work with Alfred Stieglitz and his increasing concern with "clear focus" photography and "accidental" abstraction and segmentation merged with Charles Sheeler's discovery of a "new direction," which Sheeler attributed to Francis Picabia, Man Ray, and Marcel Duchamp. *Manhatta's* violently angled compositions, its planar abstractions of surface and volume, and its imagistic specificity all reflect the synthesis of these two sets of concerns. The film's vision of intersecting spaces and forms, massive shifts in scale and human placement within it, relied upon a break from the street-positioned camera obscura, and at the same time asserted the materiality of surface both of objects *within* the image and of the screen-projected image itself. A vision of the city familiar to the observer on the street was abandoned through this energetic reorientation of perspective. In contrast to earlier city films, where claims for visual dynamism were created through camera movements, *Manhatta* relied upon compositional construction and contradiction.¹⁷

European modernism, and, more specifically, modernist film practice, deeply influenced the subsequent American avant-garde, although the route was sometimes circuitous. Leyda wrote of *A Bronx Morning*:

Thanks to my devotion to journals it had echoes of *Rien que les Heures*, *Berlin*, *L'Etoile de Mer*, *Ballet Mecanique* before I ever saw those films, *The Man with the Movie Camera* (the first Soviet film I saw in New York),

and there's even one shot that derives directly from the cover photograph on an issue of *La Revue du Cinema!* Never underestimate the influence on filmmakers of print and photoengraving.¹⁸ (fig. 12.2)

European film practice also influenced Weinberg's production of *Autumn Fire*. "I never saw Steiner's *H₂O*, but I know Kirsanoff's *Brumes d'Automne*, a sort of "forerunner" of *Autumn Fire*, s.v.p. I don't know where there's any echo of Dreyer in it tho' there is of Ruttmann's *Berlin*, and of Eisenstein's explosive cutting and overtone montage."¹⁹

Leyda's experience, like that of Weinberg and even to some extent Sheeler, seems based upon a translation, a re-presentation, of the tenets of European modernism. Affinities of intent and content bind American and European city films together, particularly in terms of earlier nonfiction approaches to the city. But despite frequent reliance on shared techniques, the representational strategies of the American avant-garde reveal a systematic reworking and reformulation of European impulses.



Figure 12.2.
Frame enlargement from *A Bronx Morning* (1931), directed by Jay Leyda. Courtesy of George Eastman House

In the context of films such as Ruttmann's *Berlin*, Vigo's *A Propos de Nice*, and Vertov's *The Man with a Movie Camera*, American productions have often been received as tentative, even naive. Several factors account for this. American avant-garde city films in many cases were the first motion pictures produced by people engaged largely in other activities (in this context, the nomenclature "amateur" seems appropriate). Excepting Sheeler and Strand's *Manhatta* and Flaherty's *Twenty-Four Dollar Island*, the city films under discussion emerged after 1930—that is, after (to borrow Jacobs' term) the "Golden Age" of Europe's avant-garde, and after a growing politicization of the American experimental scene.²⁰ Erratic exhibition opportunities and the different social organization and place of artistic movements and support groups in Europe and America all combined to create very distinct modes of production. Contrasting the level of production support enjoyed by Ruttmann (through Fox-Europa) and Vertov (Ukrainian Film and Photography Administration) with Leyda's reliance on photography jobs for *Vanity Fair* and *Arts Weekly* to finance *A Bronx Morning*, or Weinberg's work as a theater manager and film critic to underwrite *A City Symphony*, puts the production process in better perspective.

These distinctions are not intended as an apologia. They simply attest to the very different cultural place and function of the avant-garde in America and its structural distinction even from the European models it so often emulated. Despite a shared stance in terms of urban depiction, despite shared reference points, the two movements expressed themselves in substantially different fashion.

Leyda's *A Bronx Morning*, Browning's *City of Contrasts*, and pieces of Weinberg's *A City Symphony* in *Autumn Fire* all share a common legacy with the seminal and distinctive image base of Strand and Sheeler's *Manhatta*. Leyda, Browning, and Weinberg's films reveal a compositional insistence on sharply defined and intersecting planes of building mass, light, and shadow. Sequences of rapid cutting intensify the extremity of perspective and radical shifts in shot-to-shot relations, extending the graphic exhilaration of space to an emphatically durational level. Neither European urban space nor architectural structures encouraged this photographic approach, although its formal genesis in the work of the Analytic Cubists (most clearly seen in Citroen's *Metropolis* photomontage series) suggests distinctly continental origin.

Yet a common heritage with films like *Berlin* also structurally links Leyda's and Browning's films. An event-oriented, vaguely chronological

structure—with clusters of thematized shots grouped around occupations, gestures, locations, time of day, and so on—recalls the overall organization and sequence-editing strategies of the European city film. Leyda's repeated intercutting of revolving barbershop poles and mannequins (fig. 12.3) evokes Ruttmann, as his extended series of intercuts including repeated torso shots of a heavily breathing woman and a coal truck slowly raising its bed recalls Fernand Léger. But despite structural similarities and even possible quotations, a difference in orientation emerges with consideration of the individual films.

A BRONX MORNING

Jay Leyda came to New York from Dayton, Ohio, in 1930 in response to Ralph Steiner's advertisement in the *New Yorker* for an "assistant on experimental films."²¹ He came as a published poet with photographic



Figure 12.3.
Frame enlargement from *A Bronx Morning* (1931), directed by Jay Leyda. Courtesy of George Eastman House

experience, familiar with the contemporary American and continental arts scene, at least as represented in journals like *Arts Weekly*, *Theatre Arts Monthly*, and *Der Querschnitt*.²² Leyda initially assisted Steiner, and later Julien Levy, in, among other things, providing photographs for *Vanity Fair*, *Arts Weekly*, and other periodicals. This employment offered far more than the fiscal means to produce *A Bronx Morning*. It thrust Leyda into the center of a community in the process of defining key aspects of modernism in photography, painting, literature, and film.²³ Judging by his poetry, Leyda entered the New York scene firmly positioned within the progressive wing of a traditionally conceived fine arts aesthetic. Within two years, he would embrace a far more politicized notion of the arts, as his activities with the Film and Photo League and departure for the Soviet Union suggest. *A Bronx Morning* stands at the juncture of these two orientations, although shortly after its completion Leyda would dismiss the film as "ideologically, filmically, politically" removed from his beliefs.²⁴

Although Steiner and Levy shared a commitment to formal innovation, celebrating the new vision possible through progressive continental and domestic art movements, they differed not only in their respective roles as creator and dealer, but in their appraisals of the ends served by artistic production. Steiner, who enjoyed an international reputation as a photographer, maintained an active interest in film. His filmmaking activities in the period around Leyda's involvement with his studio mapped a shift from formal aesthetic concerns (evident in *H₂O*, 1929) to social concerns (*Hands*, 1934) that paralleled Leyda's own development. And Steiner's interaction with members of the Film and Photo League, like Leyda's, reinforced his growing sense of film as a weapon in the struggle for social justice.

Levy, by contrast, both depended upon the patronage of an economic elite and held firmly to a transcendent rather than an overtly politicized aesthetic. He organized important retrospectives of American and European photography in his Madison Avenue gallery during 1931 and 1932, presumably with Leyda's involvement.²⁵ (Among the Americans represented were Strand, Sheeler, Edvard Steichen, Clarence White, Stieglitz, and Steiner; Europeans included Eugene Atget, Moholy-Nagy, Man Ray, Helmar Lerski, and Umbo.) A passionate and well-connected proponent of the avant-garde in photography, painting, and film, Levy worked with Dudley Murphy (Léger's cameraman on *Ballet Mécanique*) in the Cosmopolitan Studios, maintained active involvement with film, and

frequently used his gallery for informal screenings of continental and American avant-garde films, including Leyda's *A Bronx Morning*.²⁶

Leyda, of course, had his own agenda. He had come to New York with considerable awareness of independent film, at least as presented on the pages of *La Revue du Cinema*, *Hound & Horn*, *Close-Up*, and *Theatre Arts Monthly*, and shortly after his arrival contributed to the amateur filmmaking community by publishing technical tips in *Amateur Movie Makers*.²⁷ While Leyda's specific rationale for producing *A Bronx Morning* remains unclear, he offered at least three motives: learning about film by making one; using the project to attract Guggenheim support and as a springboard for subsequent projects; and using the film to gain admission to Eisenstein's classes.²⁸ Whatever the reason, his conception of the project, although obviously informed by his sense of the cinematic avant-garde, clearly positioned it as a "travel film." In a letter to Caroline Lejeune of *The Observer* inquiring about the film's dismal British reception, Leyda wrote:

You have asked for and advocated "films of travel" in your book, that is, films that give one a feeling of the place as well as facts about that place. I find myself in the position of having made a film that I may be mistakenly putting in this class, and having it intensely disliked by the audiences it was meant for. It is a short film, considered by me simple and communicative, about a place that in addition, has hitherto been untouched by a movie camera. It is neither an exotic nor a romantic place. Because of this, and because it is so near to an American audience, I have never attempted a public showing in America.²⁹

Although the film had indeed been publicly (but not commercially) screened in New York at Levy's gallery and at the New School for Social Research, Lincoln Kirstein's review suggests at least one reason for the film's poor reception: "The film is a documentary background of a part of New York and the photography is competent. Mr. Leyda has chosen to eliminate human figures and hence his continuous background is merely a background to which there is no foreground."³⁰ Leyda agreed, faulting the film for its formalism and lack of social engagement.

A Bronx Morning, as mentioned, generally offers multiple points of view of a given subject. The opening shots of abstract patterns created by the reflected light and shadows of a passing train create visual interest through the constant shifting of apparent screen depth. The film shifts

between these full-screen abstractions and a secondary perspective that calls attention to the position of the viewer—replicating a "familiar" perspective framed by the window of the train through which all is seen. This approach recalls the prelude of Ruttmann's *Berlin*: abstract, even disorienting, imagery is followed by a perspective that serves to naturalize it (a device echoed somewhat differently in *The Man with a Movie Camera*). Throughout the film, whether exploiting the abstract visual potential offered by high-angle coverage of pedestrians' shadows on the streets or swish-pan coverage of pigeons in flight, the editing process reframes abstraction to reveal its grounding in ordinary experience.

This process, which recontextualizes the abstract within a fabric of easily comprehensible causal motivations, is evident on a compositional level as well. At several key transitions in the film, a slow wipe seems to occur—an effect actually caused by the extension of a building's awning within the shot over the range of the frame, so that the moving awning or its shadow intrudes across the image. This image addresses the dual strategy described earlier, preoccupied with the object while simultaneously foregrounding the mode of presentation in a manner consistent with modernist practice. It compresses the concerns motivating much of the film's editing strategy into a single composition embracing alternate meanings and contexts.

Leyda's use of fragmentation strongly distinguishes him from his European counterparts. Rather than using analytic editing to articulate process or to imbue spaces and objects with special qualities (for instance, the evocative status of *Berlin's* early-morning street scenes, or the frantic pace of its morning rush-hour sequence), Leyda uses it to draw the viewer's attention to the specificity of the object. At the same time that the film creates this sense of the particular, it maintains a carefully studied compositional balance.

One sequence, for example, involves a series of sunlit apartment building façades, with the camera on a directly perpendicular axis. The intensity of light and shadow, together with the tranquility and stillness of the buildings' carefully etched and balanced surfaces and windows, recalls the compositions of Edward Hopper. The sequence, moving from multiple long-shot façades to closer details of individual units, stands in sharp contrast to *The Man with a Movie Camera* or *Berlin's* exclusively graphic use of similar compositions. Despite its calculated formal balance, the sequence encourages a sense of tangibility by drawing us ever closer to the experience of a particular space at a specific moment.

One senses a "particularity" or concern for the specificity of objects in Leyda's approach, shared in Browning's *City of Contrasts* and the work of the Precisionists, that the European city films lack, despite broadly shared technique and subjects. This "particularity" recalls Barbara Novak's characterization of the American representational tradition: "Through it all, the *thing* dominated, amounting, in fact, to a preoccupation with *things*, amplified by concerns with light, space, weather, and time that were often additional routes to the character of an environment shaped by things, as well as extensions from the world at large to the thing."³¹

The continual appearance of the signs of American commerce reflects this preoccupation with the particular in another way. The state of the American economy in 1930–1931, apparent in numerous sale announcements and store windows, is more generally evident in the omnipresence of consumer culture and its decline, combining to give the Bronx an economic specificity that Berlin, Montparnasse, and Nice lack. Browning's *City of Contrasts*, far more emphatic in its critical vision of the economy, nevertheless remains rooted in the particular rather than, as critics often noted of European counterparts, the metaphoric. One has the sense that Leyda shares social concerns with Ruttmann and Deslaw, acknowledging economic inequity as part of life's fabric, but his emphasis on carefully structured form and his respect for the specificity of objects and light lack the critical rhetorical edge of Vigo, Vertov, and Browning.

CITY OF CONTRASTS

Reversing the usual career pattern of amateur filmmakers, Irving Browning worked in motion pictures first (with the Vitagraph Company), before turning his attention to still photography.³² In 1922–1923, he opened the Irving Browning Studios in New York and concentrated on architectural and commercial photography, documenting the construction of the Daily News and Chrysler buildings, as well as life on Fifth Avenue, the Lower East Side, the city's rooftops, and "Hooverville" shanty towns. Many of these images, in terms of both subject and composition, recur in *City of Contrasts*. Interested in photomontage, Browning refined the production process for clients like *Cosmopolitan*, quickly gaining a reputation as a specialist in this area as well. The film is deeply indebted to this interest, and includes photomontage constructions as well as their

durational extension through the editing process.³³ Browning's awareness of avant-garde European developments, whether in photomontage or film, remains unknown, although *City of Contrasts* contains images and sequences reminiscent of continental city films, and Browning maintained active contact with European photographic colleagues. For example, his film contains an extended evening sequence of lights in the city, closely paralleling the finale to Ruttmann's *Berlin* and the whole of Deslaw's *La Nuit Electronique* (1930).

Browning's inclusion with such Film and Photo League luminaries as Ralph Steiner, Margaret Bourke-White, and Bernice Abbott in an exhibition at the League's first annual Motion Picture Costume Ball in 1934 suggests an alliance with the organization and members of the New York experimental filmmaking community.³⁴ And the pointed social criticism of many of the "contrasts" in his film reinforces the sense of ideological affiliation with progressive causes.

In this sense, *City of Contrasts* builds upon a different approach to the city than that apparent in *A Bronx Morning*.³⁵ Superficially the film is structured upon chronology, much like its continental counterparts, and geography, where it departs from the rather generic (or nontouristic) urban visions of Leyda, Ruttmann, and Vigo. Browning instead covers New York as a kind of tourist commodity with visits to Chinatown, Washington Square, 42nd Street, and so on, initially suggesting a traditional travelogue. Yet the contrasts promised by the film's title work to undercut any such comparison. The static image under the film's title depicts a dense cluster of variously angled skyscrapers, foregrounded by a curved, elevated train track defining the top of the frame. The composition, with its compressed and jumbled structures, appears to be a photomontage (recalling the advertising stills for *Berlin* or Citroen's work), which the film's second shot, clearly a photomontage of people and places, seems to confirm. The third shot, a return to the first image but this time in motion, subverts and even contradicts our access to the space. The "contrasts" promised in the film's title have begun—contrasts in scale, composition, direction, and even in our perception of the image as static or in motion. These opening three shots suggest two dominant strategies that pervade the film: contrast, evident in theme, composition, and editing, and the exploitation of illusion.

These strategies also form the basis for the film's social criticism and often cynical commentary. Browning's use of contrast is most apparent in extended social discrepancy sequences, where, for example, the film cuts

between an upper West Side mansion and an extensive waterfront shanty town, or between elaborately (and often absurdly) costumed doormen and human billboards and the more fortunate citizenry enjoying themselves in elegant restaurants, rooftop gardens, and spas.³⁶ But the structuring of these scenes suggests a broad critique of the social condition rather than a pointed indictment of particular social formations or economic practices, suggesting a position akin to Vigo's, as Leyda was closer to Ruttmann. Jacobs reports that the film was shot over six or seven years, which may account for the uneven development of the film's social critique.³⁷

Extremes of scale, perspective, direction, and motion pervade the film's images, often working in tandem to complicate the spatial cues of particular compositions. Horizontal elevated trains cut the predominantly vertical, static compositions of skyscrapers; massive silhouettes of foreground structures dominate highly detailed building surfaces; deep spaces contrast with flat surfaces; curves offset the rectilinear; and so on. The editing process carries this compositional complexity a step further. Contrasts between architectural mass and fragile human detail, between rooftops and street scenes, and between direction and tone in shot-to-shot relationships, all enhance the dynamic of the city while suggesting Eisenstein's theories of conflict.

This constant play with contradiction enhances the film's other dominant concern—the manipulation of illusion. For example, street vendors, most of whom are engaged in selling novelty items such as magic devices and illusion-producing gadgets, demonstrate their tricks for an audience (recalling Vertov's magician in *The Man with a Movie Camera*). In another sequence, the camera takes a more active role in the construction of an illusion as a shot of what appears to be a yacht bobs up and down, emulating the motion of waves. Only later do we realize that the scene is set on a rooftop sunbathing deck with a nautical theme, and that we have been the audience for a camera trick.

Editing both enhances and shatters these illusions. In the midst of a rooftop novelty sequence (the yacht-sundeck, gardens, and so on), Browning presents a rooftop scene of children playing under sprinklers. Cutting to another shot of what appears at first to be the same space, we see children diving into a pool and splashing about in relatively deep water. However unlikely it is that this, too, is on the roof, we are prepared for it. The next shot reveals that the pool is indeed on the ground, effectively reversing the expectations we have been led to develop. On a

simpler level, cutting between the Statue of Liberty and its replica atop the Liberty Storage Building sustains a process of spatial disorientation. Swish pans, used throughout the film to connect sequences and suggest spatial continuity (where it exists as well as where it does not), are exploited throughout the Liberty sequence. Just when we are sure that the pan is disguising a cut and location change, the space is revealed to be intact, and vice versa.

One of the most interesting uses of illusion emerges in an extended sequence on humans as advertisement, a subject very much a part of Browning's photographic career. The film shows men dressed as "British policeman," "Cossack," "farmer," and even top-hatted "gentleman," in close and medium shots, and only later reveals the men as sandwich-board carriers—walking advertisements. Browning holds the close head shots for what seems an uncomfortably long time, creating the impression that several of the men, too, are ill at ease under the camera's scrutiny, an awkwardness easily extended to their encounters with the general public. And, lest the point remain ambiguous, the next sequence provides the sharp contrast of elegant restaurants and rooftop leisure scenes, where we not only see differences in class composition but are kept from intruding by shot distance and brevity. Significantly, the film's only other use of lingering individual closeups occurs with unemployed men advertising their availability and references as they play accordions and drums on the street. The sequence powerfully communicates the commodification of humans, but the recurrent cynicism suggested by Browning's use of camera tricks blunts sustained critical analysis.

A CITY SYMPHONY

Trained as a musician at the Institute of Musical Art of New York, Herman G. Weinberg (fig. 12.4) worked as musical consultant and later publicist for the 5th Avenue Playhouse. In 1929, he became managing director of an important venue for experimental and European film, the Baltimore Little Theatre, which contributed to his work as a critic and subtitler of foreign films, and to his filmmaking activities.

Weinberg, deeply interested in the avant-garde films circulating in the little theater circuit, acknowledged their role in his creative formation. "My films contain fleeting passages here and there that, I think, are original; but, for the most part, they have been influenced by the



Figure 12.4.
Photographic portrait, Herman Weinberg. Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art, Film Stills Library

memories of passages in far more ambitious achievements."³⁸ Specifying Flaherty, Ruttmann, Eisenstein, Kirsanoff, Pudovkin, and Dupont as influences, Weinberg seems to have been far more traditional in his appraisal of avant-garde film's aesthetic status as personally expressive than Leyda, Jacobs, Steiner, and Browning, noting that "a sense of poetry is almost a *sine qua non* of expressive filmmaking, which is *au fond* a poetic medium."³⁹

Weinberg's inclusion in this essay is based on *A City Symphony*—sadly, a lost film. Yet some footage remains, recut into *Autumn Fire*, leaving us with some suggestive bits with which to speculate about his approach. *Autumn Fire*, a rich and evocative film, merits serious reappraisal on its own terms, rather than simply for the depiction of the city it contains. Its cutting strategies present the city as an externalization of character and emotion, metaphorically contrasting the city (man) with nature (woman), the water common to both realms linking them together. The specific treatment of elements within any one of these image-sets provides the character's emotional range. Despite this use of the city as metaphor, there are grounds to consider Weinberg's urban images as closely related to those in *A City Symphony*.

The urban images in the film reveal a striking compositional dynamism: extreme angles, exploitation of the massive façades and contrasting deep spaces of walled streets, the "urban heights and canyons" described by Jacobs in writing about *Manhatta*. Strand and Sheeler's approach to New York closely parallels Weinberg's compositional concerns, and their use of Whitman's poetry seems to reverberate with *Autumn Fire*'s romantic contextualization of the urban image. The film's romanticism runs deep, extending from Weinberg's conception of experimental film to his specific purpose in making the film—that is, wooing the actress he cast in the lead (fig. 12.5).⁴⁰

Weinberg's writings on film, particularly around the time of *A City Symphony*'s production, permit at least speculation as to his approach. In *Amateur Movie Makers*, Weinberg offered advice on the role of composition in film, using examples drawn from Eisenstein, Dreyer, and perhaps his own work. He argued that judicious composition would result in "pictorial expressiveness" equivalent to that of the dramatic film, with composition itself serving as a continuity motif. Contrasting the earlier "descriptive" with the new evocative mode of documentation, he wrote:

Which gives a greater sense of the height of a skyscraper—a scene photographed from a block away, which shows the complete building and



Figure 12.5.
Still from *Autumn Fire* (1933), directed by Herman Weinberg, with Erna Bergman. Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art, Film Stills Library

its relation to other buildings, or one made by shooting the building upward from the sidewalk, with the camera tilted to catch its remote peak? . . . It is the camera placement that gives the desired composition . . . to produce a definite, emotional effect.⁴¹

Such sentiments had been circulating in photographic form at least since Strand's efforts on the eve of *Manhatta's* production, and they continued to circulate, as *Close Up's* publication of Francis Bruguière's images of skyscrapers in 1933 attests.⁴²

Although we cannot be sure if the city sequences that appear in *Autumn Fire* replicate the cutting patterns of *A City Symphony*, Weinberg's use of contrast editing seems to grow from the strong graphics of each shot (fig. 12.6). Shot-to-shot conflict, with rapid intercutting, creates a sense of vertigo, of dynamic tension and rhythm. What little we know of *A City Symphony* comes through Harry Alan Potamkin's scathing review in the pages of *Close Up*, and suggests that these sequences may be intact. "It is a montage-film—if montage means, as it does not, the

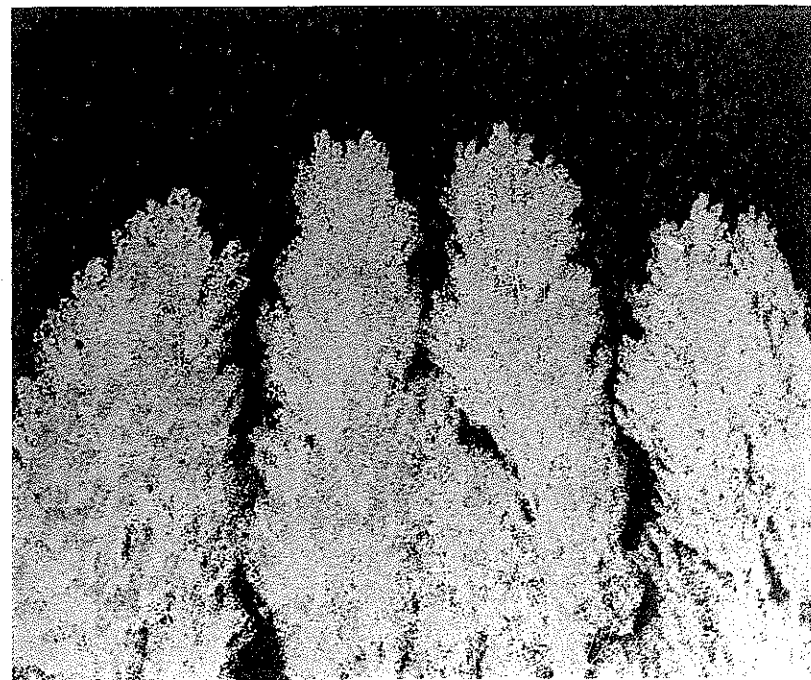


Figure 12.6.
Still from *Autumn Fire* (1933), directed by Herman Weinberg. Courtesy of Museum of Modern Art, Film Stills Library

pell-mell piling of fragments. . . . The entire film is unorganized, no pattern, rhythm, formal intention, is apprehended. And as for photographic work: it is a beginner's. . . . First films like first poems should be writ and discarded."⁴³ Perhaps Weinberg selected only the more successful bits for inclusion in *Autumn Fire*, or perhaps Potamkin was excessively harsh, but those urban sequences which remain strike the contemporary eye as visually compelling and highly patterned.

Potamkin's review, prominently positioned and withholding any encouragement whatsoever, may have prompted Weinberg to destroy the film and redirect his subsequent creative effort to an audience of one (although *Autumn Fire* was circulated and included in early experimental film collections). Given his romanticized understanding of experimental filmmaking as highly personal and expressive, his comments on unreceptive audiences, written in 1934, probably give a better indication

of his views: "It would never occur to these people to believe that they were incapable of appreciating the author's intent."⁴⁴

Because he also worked on the exhibition side of the experimental movement, Weinberg's views of audience reception, although still shrouded by the veil of artist intentionality, reveal something of the fate of these films. Speaking of the response to "certain exotic films" shown in the Baltimore Little Theatre, Weinberg wrote that the audience did not understand the films, is afraid of anything it does not understand, "and, being afraid, rejects or is bored by it, or shrugs it off in mirthless laughter."⁴⁵

Leyda's *A Bronx Morning* did not fare much better. One of the few reviews appeared in *The Cinema*: "'A Bronx Morning' an alleged impression of life in a suburb of New York was apparently designed on entirely new lines of continuity and composition. For that reason its significance must remain obscure, as indeed must the purpose of its production."⁴⁶ Apparently audiences responded rather more passionately. After the film's London premiere at the Film Society, Leyda had scheduled followup bookings at the Tatler Cinema, "a small theatre whose programs are devoted entirely to news and interest pictures." J. M. Harvey, Secretary of the Society, wrote to Leyda, breaking the news gently:

Unfortunately, for some reason which I cannot explain, the film was so badly received at its first two performances that the management had to cancel the bookings, and substitute something else. . . . I have known it to happen before in cases where an audience has considered a film too 'highbrow' for their taste. The Manager of the theatre himself was most enthusiastic about your film and was extremely distressed at its reception, which was inexplicable to him.⁴⁷

A paucity of substantial reviews makes the fate of Browning's *City of Contrasts* rather more mysterious. Like Flaherty's *Twenty-Four Dollar Island*, however, it seems to have been withdrawn after its initial release, reappearing in substantially altered form. Browning's images seem to have survived intact, but a nonstop, wisecracking voiceover narration by Ben Witzler was added, disrupting the argument and visual rhythm of the film.

In her response to Leyda's query regarding *A Bronx Morning*'s negative reception, Caroline Lejeune suggested a reason that may have applied generally to American city films of the 1930s:

I believe that your trouble has been mainly bad luck in coming out last, after a series of very similar films from the continent—English audiences have been so overdone lately with films of 'mean streets' in Berlin, Vienna, Amsterdam, Marseilles and all the rest of it that one more slice of everyday life . . . was more than they could bear! I think we are going through a psychological phase at the moment when film audiences are unconsciously demanding, not observation, but construction. They want to be assured that things are not as bad as they seem. . . . Two years ago, you could have got away with "A Bronx Morning." Today, I doubt whether you could even get away with "Berlin."⁴⁸

Yet, although quite possibly overshadowed by their European counterparts and playing to audiences weary of the real world, the city films of Leyda, Browning, and perhaps Weinberg and Jacobs nevertheless intervened at an important moment in the trajectories of both documentary and avant-garde. Reworking continental developments through the American vernacular, these films continued the project of invigorating documentary with a new language of rhythm and evocation, while infusing avant-garde practice with a dose of reality and a capacity for social criticism.

NOTES

Thanks to Elena Pinto Simon of New York University's Tisch School of the Arts and the staff of the Tamiment Collection at NYU's Bobst Library for access to the Jay Leyda papers; to Eileen Bowser of New York's Museum of Modern Art and to Wendy Shadwell and the staff at the New York Historical Society for help with the Irving Browning material.

1. I do not mean to suggest any set of essential distinctions between avant-garde and nonfiction, but rather seek to reflect period discourse.

2. Herman Weinberg's *A City Symphony* and Lewis Jacobs' several city films—*City Block* and *As I Walk*, for example—seem not to have physically survived even the 1930s. Several reports state that Weinberg's film was disassembled in order to provide the Manhattan footage for *Autumn Fire*, constituting the grounds for *Autumn Fire*'s inclusion in this discussion. See R. A. Haller, "Early American Avant-Garde Film, *Program Notes: Pittsburgh Film-Makers* (7 December 1979).

3. New York City Writers' Project, *The Film Index: A Bibliography*, vol. 1 (New York: Museum of Modern Art Film Library and H. W. Wilson Co., 1941).

4. This basic distinction is maintained in many general studies of documentaries, which tend to label the nonfiction films produced before *Nanook*—more than two decades worth of work—as “precursors,” “prophets,” or “prototypes” for the documentary proper. See, for example, Lewis Jacobs, *The Documentary Tradition: From Nanook to Woodstock* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1971); Eric Barnouw, *Documentary: A History of the Non-Fiction Film* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1974); Richard Meran Barsam, *Non-Fiction Film: A Critical History* (New York: Dutton, 1973). Although the contemporary literature on documentary has drawn upon a much wider range of discourses for its reconsideration and theorization of the form, attention remains largely directed to the films produced after 1922.

5. New York City Writers' Project, *Film Index*, p. 572.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 583.

7. For a closer look at the implications of this categorization, see William Uricchio, “Il patrimonio rappresentativo dei documentari,” *Bianco e Nero* 4 (1988): 56–78.

8. Early fiction (played) and nonfiction (unplayed) films fail to share techniques in some curious and significant ways. For example, camera mobility (tilts, pans, tracks) pervades nonfiction city films from 1900 onward, yet remains relatively rare in fiction films until nearly a decade later. Conversely, techniques such as the analysis and fragmentation of time and space through multiple shot angles, distances, and cutting strategies, common by 1912 in narrative cinema, appear far less frequently in nonfiction city films of the same period.

9. Charles Musser has pointed to the important role played by some exhibitors in explaining and even narrativizing these nonfiction subjects, practices that complicate the simple distinction in representational strategies asserted in the *Film Index* (and maintained in this essay for heuristic purposes). See Charles Musser with Carol Nelson, *High-Class Moving Pictures* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991), for an extended presentation of this practice.

10. In his discussion of the cinema of attractions, Gunning points out Louis Lumière and Georges Méliès' shared concern with cinema's “exhibitionistic” values, contrasting this concern with the voyeuristic strategies of the narrative cinema. The primacy of this exhibitionistic character—of direct audience stimulation or “making images seen”—was, Gunning argues, precisely what made film attractive to the avant-garde. See Tom Gunning, “The Cinema of Attractions: Early Film, Its Spectator and the Avant-Garde,” *Wide Angle* 8, nos. 3–4 (Fall 1968): 63–70.

11. The pattern films that followed in Berlin's wake, such as Ivens' *The Bridge* (1928) and *Rain* (1929), and Steiner's *H₂O* (1929), while formally similar to the city symphonies, tended to remain socially nonspecific, perhaps accounting for their more frequent categorization as avant-garde than as documentary.

12. Among the many complicating factors, ideological orientation is notoriously difficult to define or even locate as a force (producer's intent? period

reception?). The case against any essentialist ideological implications on the level of technique has been convincingly argued by Noel Carroll, *Mystifying Movies: Fads and Fallacies in Contemporary Film Theory* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1988), and even within the period, although artists like Hanna Hoch and John Heartfield saw photomontage as explicitly bound up with the project of ideological critique, many of their peers found the connection anything but evident. These issues aside, many in the period nevertheless associated specific formal strategies with a critical position toward the status quo. By the late 1920s and early 1930s, filmmakers like Eisenstein had demonstrated the critical potentials of certain “nonclassical” signifying practices, while from a very different direction the growing economic and political crisis helped to account for the growing explicitness of social criticism in avant-garde practice.

13. Although never produced, Moholy-Nagy's heavily illustrated sketch for a film, “Dynamic of the Metropolis,” appeared in his *Malerei, Fotografie, Film*, volume 8 of the *Bauhausbücher* (Munich: Albert Langen, 1925) and was reissued in 1927. While not a “city film,” Moholy-Nagy's project stands as a prominent exemplar of the form.

14. Ute Eskildsen, “Photography and the Neue Sachlichkeit Movement,” in *Germany: The New Photography 1927–1933*, ed. David Mellor (London: Arts Council of Great Britain, 1978), pp. 101–112.

15. While factions within *Neue Sachlichkeit* used these two approaches to argue for “objectivity,” a related debate took place among film critics and theorists, with the difference that “creationists” like Rudolf Arnheim and Bela Balasz essentially reframed what Eskildsen has presented as a second argument for pointedly antirealist ends; “realists” like Siegfried Kracauer and Erwin Panofsky inclined toward a sense of mechanically reproduced reality.

16. See Susan Platt, *Modernism in the 1920s: Interpretations of Modern Art in New York from Expressionism to Constructivism* (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1981).

17. Strand and Sheeler's *Manhatta* stands at an important juncture in terms of both urban depiction and the involvement in film of artists primarily associated with other media. For a fuller discussion, see Jan-Christopher Horak, “Modernist Perspectives and Romantic Desire: *Manhatta*, *Afterimage* 15, no. 4 (November 1987): 8–15, reprinted in an abridged version as Chapter 11 in this volume.

18. Jay Leyda, typewritten notes for FIAF Symposium, Lausanne (1979), Leyda File, Film Department, Museum of Modern Art (MOMA).

19. Letter, H. G. Weinberg to R. A. Haller, 7 August 1979. Cited in Haller, “Early American Avant-Garde Film.”

20. *Experimental Cinema's* concern with Soviet developments during its 1930–1934 run and the strong Soviet presence at the Film Arts Guild theater are instructive in this regard, as are the activities of the Film and Photo League.

21. Steiner's work received attention in at least one venue with which Leyda was familiar before coming to New York: *Theatre Arts Monthly*. “Stage Settings in

the Streets of New York: Four Photographs" appeared in February 1927, and "Dramatic Photography: Four Studies" appeared in January 1930.

22. Leyda's early publications include "Half-Soles," *The Whirl* 1 (1930); "It May Have Been the Sweet Evening" and "The River," *Blues: A Magazine of New Rhythms* 8 (Spring 1930). Authors published in this issue of *Blues* included William Carlos Williams and Gertrude Stein. Leyda also had some experience as an art dealer. He recalled that his sale of a sculpture of Henry Ward Beecher to Mrs. Rockefeller permitted him to purchase the camera used in the production of *A Bronx Morning*. "Note sur *A Bronx Morning*," *Travelling* 55 (1979): 85.

23. During his first years in New York, Leyda was on familiar terms with Alfred Stieglitz, Alfred Barr, Lincoln Kirstein, and members of the Film and Photo League, among many others. Leyda retained much of his correspondence from this period. See the Correspondence Files, especially Boxes 1 and 4, Jay Leyda Papers (JLP), Tamiment Collection, Bobst Library, New York University.

24. Jay Leyda to Michael Rowan, *Cinema Quarterly* (Edinburgh), 3 July, 1933. Box 4, JLP. Despite this opinion, Leyda attempted to have the film shown in workers' clubs such as the London Workers' Film Society as late as 1933.

25. The Julien Levy Gallery at 602 Madison Avenue opened on 2 November 1931 with a retrospective of American photography. Exhibits during the first year included "Surrealism: Paintings, Drawings, Photographs," "Modern Photography," "Modern European Photographers," and "Photographs of New York by New York Photographers." Levy is perhaps best known for having saved Atget's work from destruction, but his gallery also became an early center for the U.S. exhibition of Surrealist paintings, drawings, and photographs. See Julien Levy, *Memoir of an Art Gallery* (New York: G. P. Putnam's, 1977).

26. For a detailed example of Levy's film exhibitions, see Lincoln Kirstein, "Experimental Films," *Arts Weekly* 1 (25 March 1932): 52, 62. A columnist characterized Levy's screenings less generously, while giving a glimpse into the range of period filmmaking activities: "Julien Levy returned from Paris in July with some esoteric films, one, I understand, being one of the most tremendous dramas ever done in the films, the others being criticized as being tinged with art snobbism. . . . Lincoln Kirstein and Henwar Rodakiewicz made a 16mm movie of life on Cape Cod. Margaret Bourke-White and Jay Leyda also worked on a film. Leyda did *A Day in the Bronx* with Leo Hurwitz." Walter Gutman, "News and Gossip" [undated, uncited clip, probably 1932], Box 10, JLP. I have not been able to substantiate Leo Hurwitz's collaboration on *A Bronx Morning*. On Levy's photographic interests generally, see David Travis, *Photographs from the Julien Levy Collection, Starting with Atget* (Chicago: Art Institute of Chicago, 1976).

27. Leyda's "Tips on Topicals," *Amateur Movie Makers* 6, no. 1 (January 1931): 13-14, is particularly interesting in light of his film.

28. Leyda clearly had other film projects in mind, as demonstrated by his correspondence with Walter Sidler in 1930 regarding Sidler's translation of a

Leyda scenario, and as outlined in his 1931 Guggenheim application. See Box 4, Box 10, JLP.

29. Leyda to Lejeune, 6 June 1933, Box 4, JLP.

30. Kirstein, "Experimental Films," p. 52.

31. Barbara Novak, *American Painting of the Nineteenth Century* (New York: n.p. 1969), p. 262.

32. Letter, H. V. Browning (Browning's wife) to Wendy Shadwell, 3 November 1981, Browning Collection, Landauer Collection, New York Historical Society (NYHS). See also the Browning Photograph Collection, NYHS, and Wendy Shadwell, "The Browning Collection at the New York Historical Society," *American Society of Picture Professionals* 14 (1983): 1-3. The details of Browning's career remain sketchy. He worked as a motion picture cameraman at least in the 1930s and 1940s, specializing in ringside boxing coverage and newsreels (for Universal Newsreel, among others). In later years, his primary interest was Camera Mart, Inc., where he manufactured and sold specialty photographic equipment.

33. Browning's renown as a photomonteur was such that the film's announcement in *Experimental Cinema* described it as "done entirely in multiple exposures." The film contains only two such shots. "Experimental Cinema in America," *Experimental Cinema* 5 (1934): 54.

34. Frank Ward, The Film and Photo League invitation letter, 18 April 1934, Browning Collection, NYHS.

35. Although the MOMA's viewing print and original nitrate negative (obtained from the Museum of the City of New York) contain a wisecracking voiceover narration by Ben Witzler, Eileen Bowser reports that the picture negative was full silent aperture, and this, coupled with the film's more appropriate running speed at 18 fps, indicate that *City of Contrasts* was produced as a silent film. On the basis of this analysis, I have dealt with the film as a silent print, and have not taken up the relation of the soundtrack with the images. See also Eileen Bowser, "The Museum of Modern Art Department of Film: Recent Acquisitions" (unpublished notes, 1978), Browning File, Film Department, MOMA.

36. Browning's socially perceptive contrasts—and, indeed, many of his images—were echoed in Francis Bruguière's observations on New York City, published in "Pseudomorphic Film," *Close Up* 10 (March 1933): 19, 22.

37. Lewis Jacobs in *Travelling* 56-57 (Spring 1980): 103.

38. Herman G. Weinberg, "A Statement on Experimental Work in Cinema," *Film Comment* 4, no. 4 (Summer 1968): 23.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 22.

40. Herman Weinberg, "Autumn Fire," *Travelling* 55 (1979): 82-85.

41. Herman G. Weinberg, "Composing Each View," *Amateur Movie Makers* 9, no. 6 (June 1934): 250.

42. "Note on Five Bruguère Photographs," *Close Up* (March 1933): 25. The introduction to these images stated, "*Close Up* has probably not printed before pictures so intrinsically dynamic, so innately motivated and complete." The commentary goes on to position the images with terms like "transcendental," "mystic," "impressionistic," and "romantic."

43. H. A. Potamkin, "Movie: New York Notes," *Close Up* 7 (October 1930): 251-252.

44. H. G. Weinberg, "Audiences, the Dears," *Motion Picture Herald*, 20 October 1934, p. 44.

45. Ibid.

46. *The Cinema*, 13 December 1939, clipping file, Box 10, JLP.

47. Letter, J. M. Harvey, The Film Society, Ltd., to Jay Leyda, 19 May 1933, Box 3, JLP.

48. Letter, Lejeune to Leyda, 14 July 1933, Box 4, JLP.