Dziga Vertov, “Kino-Eye to Radio-Eye”

**III.** Montage means organizing film fragments (shots) into a film-object. It means ‘writing’ something cinematic with the recorded shots. It does not mean selecting the fragments for ‘scenes’ (the theatrical bias) or for titles (the literary bias).

Every kino-eye production is subject to montage from the moment the theme is chosen until the film’s release in its completed form. In other words, it is edited during the entire process of film production.

Within this continuous process of editing we can distinguish three stages:

The first stage. Editing is the inventory of all documentary data directly or indirectly related to the assigned theme (in the form of manuscripts, objects, film clippings, photographs, newspaper clippings, books, etc.). As a result of this montage-inventory, through the selection and grouping of the more valuable data, the pan of the theme crystallizes, becomes clearer, and emerges in the editing process.

The second stage. Editing is the human eye’s summing up of observations on the assigned theme (the montage of your own observations of reports by informants and scouts) A shooting plan, as a result of selecting and sorting the human eye’s observations. In making this selection, the author takes into account the indications of the thematic plan as well as the special properties of the “machine-eye,” of the “kino-eye.”

The third stage. The central editing. The summary of observations recorded on film by kino-eye. A numerical calculation of the montage groupings. The combining (addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, and factoring out) of related pieces. Continuous shifting of the pieces until all are placed in a rhythmical order such that all links of meaning coincide with visual linkage. As the final result of all these mixings, shifts, cancellations, we obtain a visual equation, a visual formula, as it were. This formula, this equation, obtained as a result of the general montage of the
recorded film-documents is a 100 percent film-object, the concentrated essences of “I see”-“I kino-see.”

Kino-eye is:

Montage, when I select a theme (choosing on from among thousands of possible themes);

Montage, when I make observations for a theme (choosing what is expedient from thousands of observations on the theme);

Montage, when I establish the viewing order of the footage on the theme (selecting the most expedient from thousands of possible groupings of shots, proceeding from the qualities of the film footage as well as from the requirements of the chosen theme).

The school of kino-eye calls for construction of the film-objet upon “intervals,” that is, upon the movement between shots, upon the visual correlation of shots with one another, upon transitions from one visual stimulus to another.

Movement between shots, the visual “interval,” the visual correlation of shots, is, according to kino-eye, a complex quantity. It consists of the sum of various correlations, of which the chief ones are –

1. the correlation of planes (close-up, long shot, etc.);
2. the correlation of foreshortenings;
3. the correlation of movements within the frame;
4. the correlation of light and shadow;
5. the correlation of recording speeds.

Proceeding from one or another combination of these correlations, the author determines: (1) the sequence of changes, the sequence of pieces one after another, (2) the length of each change (in feet, in frames), that is, the projection time, the viewing time of each individual image. Moreover, besides the movement between shots (the “interval”), one takes into account the visual relation between adjacent shots and of each individual shot to all others engaged in the “montage battle” that is the beginning.

To find amid all these mutual reactions, these mutual attractions and repulsions of shots, the most expedient “itinerary” for the eye of the viewer, to reduce this multitude of “intervals” (the movements between shots) to a simple visual equation, a visual formula
expressing the basic theme of the film-object in the best way: such is the most important and difficult task of the author-editor.

This theory known as the “theory of intervals” was put forward by the kinoks in a variant of the manifesto “We” written in 1919.

Kino-eye’s position on the intervals is most clearly illustrated in our work The Eleventh Year and particularly The Man with the Movie Camera.

-Dziga Vertov