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James Barke

Politics, Cinema and Writing Scottish Urban Modernity

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Keir Elder

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Chapter 4 – Cinema: The Muse in Tar and Feathers

The city is itself such a psychogeographic landscape. It is a collection of the mental, mnemonic and affective fabric – the maps – designed by its inhabitants and passengers [...] Film is part of this delicate urban fabric, the web of time.¹

Giuliana Bruno

In James Barke's early novels, as well as his 'early years' autobiography, there appear numerous references to cinema and cinema-going; these become particularly fore-grounded in *Major Operation*, his most innovative urban novel. The author's expressed desire to ground his fiction in real experience, coupled with an apparently irrepressible propensity for social commentary, reflects the mass culture of cinema having established a prominent place in Scotland's cultural landscape to become a regular feature in the life of the urban citizenry. Given Barke was a resident in Glasgow from around late 1918 – 'the only big city I would care to live in or near [...] the vital centre of Scotland'² – during the worldwide proliferation of cinema as mass entertainment, his literary negotiations with the medium seem in some way inevitable. The symbiosis of city living and cinematic form, as well as the phenomenological aspect of cinema-going, provide much of the impetus for this chapter. Interrogating examples of Barke's writing throughout the 1930s, considering what evidence is available of the author's own experience of cinema, and framing these in the context of a writer keen to reflect a modernised Scottish culture, we may draw conclusions about the relationship between literature, the urban environment and cinema.

This chapter will also propose a more complex relationship between literature and film, one which the filmmaker Grahame Smith terms 'interpenetration.' David Seed argues that this term is one that encompasses 'dialogue, encounter, [and]

interrelation' between the cinematic medium and modernist literature as they emerged from a 'common pool of narrative and representational techniques.'³ This interrelation, in its most basic guise, manifested in cinematic techniques, such as montage and a 'heightened visual awareness,' becoming established in literature, and in writers (notably H. G. Wells and Graham Greene) becoming involved in writing for the screen. The more precise focus of this chapter will develop from discussions of Barke's personal experience of cinema and move on to an attempt to understand the relations between urban and cinematic space and how they reveal themselves in one particular Scottish literary intersection, *Major Operation*. Moving beyond the more readily traceable influences that appear in his writing, we can carry out a closer analysis of the thematic and formal elements of a cinematic literature produced by the author in his city novel.

Though primarily known for his series of novels about Burns, James Barke had a much wider scope in terms of his engagement with Glasgow's cultural scene. Barke was an active member of Unity Theatre for many years, and also the Glasgow Citizen's Theatre Society, where he tended to be in perpetual artistic conflict with its president, James Bridie. Barke's first one-act play, *The Gregarach*, was staged at the Athenaeum Theatre, Glasgow, from 23 March 1926, running for five nights. His enthusiasm for stage plays was evident during the closing years of the 1920s and *The Gregarach* was produced a full seven years prior to his first novel being published. From the arc of his creative output, it appears that becoming a successful playwright was the primary direction of his ambition at the time. In a review in *The Scottish Player* by John Brandane, *The Gregarach* received critical plaudits as a 'true work of art' that was deemed 'true to Scottish history, and to the psychology of the wild race it depicts.'⁴ Brandane went as far in his review to suggest that 'the seed of Scottish

Drama has been truly sown.’ The plaudits received for this early one-act production signalled the beginning of a relationship with the theatre that rather waned for Barke throughout the 1930s as success in producing stage-plays became more elusive and his novel writing moved to the fore. Never completely abandoning his desire to write for the stage, his relationship with theatre had a resurgence during the War years with productions of *The Night of the Big Blitz*, *Major Operation*, and *When the Boys Come Home*.⁵

By the conclusion of the War, Barke was regularly producing novels in his ‘Immortal Memory’ series, writing plays (and having his previous plays touted around international agents), as well as engaging in discussions about film treatments for some of his earlier work. Negotiations were not always fruitful. Indeed, they frequently faltered or merely fizzled out, but the signs were that by 1945 Barke was approaching his creative production with some sense of optimism and a renewed vigour on all fronts. For instance, in September 1945, Herbert Marshall, director of the film company Musarts Limited, London, wrote to Barke expressing his interest in *The Land of the Leal* and asking if he had ‘ever made a synopsis or treatment of it for submitting to a film company?’ Marshall assured Barke that he could ‘get in right at the top’ and would be able to direct ‘the British equivalent of *Gone with the Wind*.’⁶ In the same letter Marshall informs Barke that his plays had ‘arrived safely in Moscow, but no further developments yet.’

The author’s hopes that some of his work would translate to the film medium have their roots in his early pre-occupations with cinema. By no means straightforward, Barke’s developing relationship with cinema could be characterised as ambiguous. Though clearly engaged with the medium, his antipathy toward the standard Hollywood fare of the late 1920s and 1930s is expressed in his early novels,

and on occasion bubbles to the surface of these texts as invective against the distorting and culturally bereft fluff of idolised film stars and romanticised escapist fantasy: Barke's narrator in *Major Operation*, for instance, tells the reader that 'the wise-cracking of Hollywood gets into the brain...so America becomes the cultural centre of the world.'⁷ This critical motif retained a certain continuity expressed in, and on occasion expressed about, Barke's writing. One correspondent, identified only as O.H., writing a letter to Barke in 1940 suggested that one of the characters in his play *The Night of the Big Blitz* was 'handicapped by borrowing most of his early speeches from the language of American films.'⁸ While taking issue with the influence of cinema on the speech pattern of this actor, the correspondent could not entirely blame Barke for introducing this, acknowledging that this was in fact 'true to life' and that 'films have had a curious influence on Glasgow working-class speech.' The bone of contention was not an unrealistic effect but its 'curiously flat' impact on stage.

Despite general and recurring criticisms of the influence of American films – at its most sinister, a culture-corrupting imperial force from across the Atlantic – Barke was not dismissive of the entire spectrum of cinema. As a committed Socialist, Barke was moved by the power of post-Revolutionary cinema and the craft of filmmakers such as Sergei Eisenstein, Dziga Vertov and Vsevolod Pudovkin. The propagandising potential (or ability to reveal the reality of the workers' situation and relationship to the economic base, depending on one's viewpoint) of remarkable cinematic epics like *Strike* (1925), *The Battleship "Potemkin"* (1925), and *Mother* (1926), was the politically-charged antithesis to the disposable whimsy and romance relentlessly churned out by the capitalist-driven studio system. But Barke's political convictions did not preclude an appreciation of certain aspects of Hollywood output. As he informed his publisher, Collins, his tastes included 'Greta Garbo, Mae West,

[and] the Marx Brothers,' as well as Pudovkin. As the considerations of the nature and effect of cinema on Scottish culture in his novels suggest, Barke clearly had a more complex relationship with the cinema than one derived solely from political allegiance, and the author recognised the medium's social and cultural significance.

Film Society of Glasgow

Contained within the James Barke archives are three programmes for the Film Society of Glasgow (FSG). Founded in 1929, the FSG followed the lead of the London Film Society that was launched in 1925 at the New Gallery Kinema, Regent Street, by Ivor Montagu.⁹ The original London-based Society had been founded for the purposes of offering members 'programmes of remarkable breadth, combining avant-garde films, scientific films and other types of documentaries, classic shorts and features, and commercial films of distinction from around the world.'¹⁰ Similarly, the FSG was formed by a group of enthusiasts with an interest in the craft and intellectual possibilities of cinema. The first of its kind in Scotland, the FSG could also, by the time of its dissolution in the 1970s, boast of being the longest running society of its kind in the United Kingdom.

Two of the programmes relate to meetings held in 1933 and the third to a meeting in 1938. The obvious implication of their presence in the archive is that Barke had attended these meetings, and this not unreasonable assumption raises the question: was Barke a member of the FSG? If it transpires he was, then from this we may deduce that, firstly, his attitude to cinema was not as pejorative as some of the narrative commentary of his early novels would suggest. The author's membership of the Film Society would allow us to go further and even describe him as something of a cinema enthusiast. Secondly, from the surviving records of other FSG film

programmes, it is possible to identify the specific films that would have been accessible to Barke that were otherwise unavailable on general release. At the very least it can be argued in all probability that he would have viewed those films screened at the 1933 and 1938 meetings detailed in the archived programmes.

While Glasgow had plenty of seats available for the public to attend films on general release, it was only through specialist film clubs that access could be gained to a more diverse range of films from German, Russian, French, Scandinavian or other Continental film-makers. An inference that may be taken from examining Barke's disparaging statements in his fiction about American cinema is that he was more favourably disposed toward films with a 'worthy' content. These films tended to emanate from a Leftist political base, i.e. Soviet or Left-leaning German cinema prior to those national film industries being stifled by the Stalinist reaction against 'formalism', and the effective Nazi take-over of production, respectively.

Another factor to consider is that film screening was really just another business venture inextricably at the mercy of economic profitability, which meant the standard fare for the public picture houses consisted of popular Hollywood or, to a lesser extent, mainstream British films that would provide the highest fiscal turnover. However, questions of censorship by the British Board of Film Censors (BBFC) also had a bearing on the availability of certain films. Though not officially operating as a state censor, from 1912 the BBFC was a film industry-founded body designed to preempt (though not entirely supersede) the censorial power of the local authorities. Moreover, close ties to government ensured that the values and interests of the ruling classes were foremost in the Board's considerations.¹¹ Most pertinent to this study, *Battleship Potemkin* and *Mother* were both banned for what was deemed pro-

revolutionary propaganda. In his essay 'Cinema and State', Julian Petley describes the situation whereby,

Bans on the great Russian classics, on [...] newsreels critical of Nazi Germany and Fascist Italy, on 'references to controversial politics', 'relations to capital and labour', 'subjects calculated or possibly intended to foment social unrest or discontent', [had the result] that in 1937 [there was a certain] pride in observing that there is not a single film showing in London today which deals with any of the burning questions of the day.¹²

The sole way to get past this ban was to show these films at private screenings organised by film societies.

Did Barke gain access to these films as a member of the Film Society of Glasgow? Though meticulously maintained in the post-World War II years (whereby changes of address, member resignations, and subscriptions were all carefully noted in full for each season) FSG records for the years 1929 – 1939 are unavailable. Either they were not kept with such a level of attention to detail; or (as seems more likely due to the continuity of C. A. Oakley as Secretary before and after the War) the pre-War records have been lost. As there was a break in meetings during the war years when the Society was all but dissolved, it is also possible that the records were disposed of as obsolete on the re-instigation of the Society at the end of hostilities. Therefore, in the absence of documentary proof of Barke's membership, secondary supporting evidence must be used in order to build a case. The purpose of so doing is partly to ascertain which films Barke is likely to have viewed during the late 1920s and early 1930s in order to establish what specific influences – direct and indirect – the cinema may have had on his writing; in more general terms, to establish how the nature of Barke's relationship with the cinema can illuminate the role that cinema played in shaping the cultural life of Scottish society. As stated above, from the

presence of the FSG programmes in the archived material it is reasonable to assume that Barke attended at least these three meetings of the Society. After all, it would seem unlikely he would retain the programmes as keepsakes without having some tangible association with the events they advertise. Using these programmes as a starting point, we can assemble a wealth of information about the nature of the Film Society and can also begin to gain an insight into the likely cinema experience of Barke himself.

When instituted in 1929, the reasons for the existence of the FSG were simple, but certainly by 1933 had become manifold. Its most rudimentary purpose, clearly stated in its manifesto, was to provide a facility for enthusiasts to view some of the more aesthetically commendable and intellectually challenging films of the era. This is further confirmed by the FSG describing itself as a ‘society of 600 persons [...] seeking to be intelligently interested in the cinema.’¹³ Each film screened came with a qualitative review in the programme, and by 1938, in the furtherance of progressive film-making, the Society was annually presenting a cup in its name at the Scottish Amateur Film Festival. In fact, its commitment to cinematic appreciation was codified in the second article of the FSG’s constitution, which stated its *raison d’être*: ‘To advance the art and technique of the Cinematograph, silent and in sound, in all aspects, and to promulgate an interest therein in Scotland.’¹⁴

Further to this, in a pamphlet produced in 1947 to commemorate the 150th meeting, there is a potted history of the Society’s inception and establishment which reflects this continued aesthetic ethos.

The late twenties was a period during which many people who had become accustomed to going to the cinema were discontented with the entertainment currently being provided for them. The industry had by then come completely under the domination of the American; and the British, French, German, Scandinavian and other

films which had once brought a breath of variety into the picture houses, had all but disappeared from the screen.¹⁵

Thus the agenda of the FSG was not a politically motivated one, as tended to be the case with the various Workers' Film Societies, but was solely and consciously aesthetic.

However, the interest in screening quality films, and particularly (though not entirely exclusively) films from outside of the all-pervading American film industry – an industry inescapably and most obviously underpinned, sustained and artistically restricted by the framework of its capitalist market-economic base – could provide the politically-minded (such as Barke) with a *de facto* 'Left' film club. This key role as an outlet for the screening of artistically or politically radical films positioned the film societies in the vanguard of socially-conscious cultural change. In this regard the FSG, though devoid of an overt ideological motivation and certainly claiming to be viewing films with a politically impartial eye, offered the people of Glasgow an opportunity to become enthused by artistically radical or Leftist ideological films which were otherwise unavailable to the general public.

The underpinning aesthetic values and high-brow frowning of the Society on films of lesser artistic credentials is amply illustrated in the programme for the meeting of 26th February 1933. This event began with a screening of a populist-sounding film directed by Victor Saville, *Sunshine Susie* (1931), described in a rather terse editorial review:

“Sunshine Susie” cannot be said, however, to be a great film [...] The sets are not spectacular and in a few cases seem to have been rather hastily or cheaply constructed. The acting is no more than adequate. The photography is splendidly efficient but unimaginative. And yet the film has been a great success [in terms of revenue generation at the box-office].

One may wonder that with such a downbeat appraisal of the film's production values, why show the film at all? An answer to this question may be provided in the FSG programme of 15th October 1933 which lists the culmination of the evening's screenings as an address to the members of the Society by Victor Saville. It can only be a matter of speculation as to whether any particularly taxing questions were put to Mr Saville about his direction of *Sunshine Susie*. It seems unlikely, as following his visit to the FSG, Victor Saville was made an Honorary Vice-President, joining John Grierson, the eminent British documentary film-maker, as a holder of this title. This suggests the Society was keen to be recognised and patronised by film-makers, and despite the disappointing review of *Sunshine Susie*, Saville had a long track-record of popular features. In addition, he was a complementary figure to Grierson, perhaps suggesting the FSG's 'catholic' approach to genre.

At the February meeting, acting as a counter-balance to the unremarkable *Sunshine Susie*, and as if to remind the members of the commitment of the FSG toward intellectual cinema, there followed a short experimental film titled *Ein Lichtspiel: Schwarz-Weiss-Grau* (1932). According to the programme notes, the director, Professor Moholy-Nagy, was 'the well-known designer of abstract paintings and photographs.' The programme goes on to describe the action in this particular piece as a film in which Moholy-Nagy had 'photographed from a number of carefully considered angles an abstract sculpture which took him the best part of three years to construct.' This avant-garde film is an examination of light reflecting on the turning gears, cogs and spheres of Moholy-Nagy's kinetic sculpture and producing a kaleidoscopic effect of fragmented, alternating brightness and shadow (fig. 7a – 7l).¹⁶ The willingness to screen such films that ignored the narrative possibilities of

conventional cinema in favour of highly impressionistic, visual modes illustrates how seriously the Society regarded its remit for pursuing the intellectual and high-cultural aspects of film-making.

As has been mentioned, one of the principal benefits of the formation and membership of the Society would have been its ability to circumvent censorship by the BBFC and local authorities that otherwise, and often for spurious reasons, prohibited screening some very worthy examples of film-making. As an instituted Society, the Glasgow organisation was able to obtain access to these films and show them on a strictly-regulated, members-only basis at its meetings. How rigidly this ‘members only’ policy was practically enforced it is difficult to tell, though certainly, and for obvious reasons, the literature produced by the Society suggests that they observed these rules to the letter. As the Society would have also had to comply with strict fire regulations for its meetings, it is perhaps not so unreasonable to accept its claimed enforcement of the rules at face value. This being the case, the probability of James Barke being a member of the Society is increased as he would have been unable to attend the film screenings otherwise; as this note from one of the 1933 programmes indicates:

IMPORTANT NOTE: This programme is being sent to all of last season’s members except those who have intimated that they are not continuing their membership. The number of new applications is astonishingly large and, in spite of the capacity of Cranston’s [Picture House, Renfield Street, which had a seating capacity of 850¹⁷], there is a possibility that some of these applications will have to be declined.

Such pressure on space at the meetings must surely have meant that guests were unlikely to be guaranteed accommodation should they wish to attend a specific meeting.

An inspection of the accounts for the early years of the Society certainly suggests that guests attended in relatively small numbers.¹⁸ Admittedly, this merely builds toward a circumstantial case suggesting that James Barke was likely to have been a member of the Society, though we can argue more strongly that he attended, in whatever capacity, the meetings to which the 1933 and 1938 programmes relate. However, there exists a tantalising allusion contained within the 150th Meeting Commemorative Pamphlet as it relates the more salient events of the 1932/33 season. One of the notable events of this season was the member-proposed motion to serve coffee in the cinema following the screening and thus allow the members to discuss the merits of the films just viewed.

The Council opposed the idea – far from the cinema management being willing to bring in staff to serve coffee late on Sunday evenings, they wanted to lock the doors on us as soon as possible. A persuasive member carried the meeting with him, however, by offering to run discussions. And so, after every show, some twenty or thirty members gathered together in the café. Needless to say the persuasive gentleman did not find it convenient to turn up even once – it seemed he had forgotten that he had a bus to catch home to Paisley. Those who did meet, however, proceeded, under the able leadership of one who has since made a name for himself in the literary world, to whack the Council good and hard for not getting better films.¹⁹

Though the editor of the pamphlet has undoubtedly shown an appropriate decorum in not naming the man who was to become a literary figure, for the purposes of this study it is a rather aggravating omission. We may note, of course, that it was not until 1933 that Barke published his first novel, *The World His Pillow*, and only with the 1939 publication of *The Land of the Leal* and his subsequent series of novels about the life of Burns that he achieved a significant measure of commercial success. However, as

we further examine the issue it becomes more and more plausible that this unnamed ‘man of letters’ to whom the pamphlet refers was indeed James Barke.

Despite the studied avoidance by the society of a political position, emphasising as it did the purely aesthetic aspects of cinematographic art, Barke’s personal appreciation of the medium – or at least his appreciation of the importance of the medium – does seem to be well catered for by the programming schedule of the FSG. Barke’s occasional novelistic tirades against the ‘dreary anaemic Hollywood pornography’²⁰ of standard cinematic fare are in step with the aspirations that the FSG held for the cinema. Political preoccupations aside, crucially for Barke membership of the FSG would have afforded the only opportunity to access the work of the innovative Russian and German film-makers of the era. While the existing records fail to conclusively demonstrate his membership of the Society in the early 1930s, we can turn to a close examination of Barke’s novels and re-read them with reference to the screening itinerary of the FSG to uncover further support for the assertion of his cinematic interest and influences. Looking at the programme for the 1933 season, the season in which there is a reference to the membership of the unnamed ‘literary figure’, a compelling argument can be made for the influence of a particular film excerpt on Barke’s writing and his cinematically-inflected visualisation of the cityscape.

At the FSG meeting that took place at King’s Cinema, Charing Cross, Glasgow on Sunday 26th February 1933, the third film scheduled was *Street Scene* (1931), a United Artists Corporation film directed by King Vidor. To gain a flavour of this film and gauge the qualitative nature of the programme editor’s preview, it may be useful to quote this document in full:

“Street Scene” is a better film than “Sunshine Susie” – at least, according to the notes of the members of the Film Society [of Glasgow], although the earnings of the films

might show that the British public disagrees with us quite emphatically. The inclusion of the two films [*Sunshine Susie* and *Street Scene*] in the same programme provides, however, a unique opportunity for comparing their strengths and weaknesses. Allowances must be made of course for their completely different themes. But they have one quality in common. Each sets out to establish in the members of its audience an emotional condition. Reference has been made to the “happiness” of “Sunshine Susie”. “Street Scene” tries to create an unpleasant feeling, at first physical rather than mental, of heat and the inability to escape from it. A rather grim inevitableness permeates its sequences.

“Street Scene” does not set out to be “entertainment”, even though it is said to point a moral that “kindness is all anyone wants.” It is the screen version of one of the most important theatrical plays of the American post-War period and it won during its year of production the Pulitzer Prize. Its author is Elmer Rice and the recent German psychological influence on American literature is most noticeable in this work. There may be mentioned among the qualities of the film which are generally held to give it distinction: the continuity; the simple directness of the treatment of twenty-four hours in the lives of drab people living in a mean street; the tenseness; the speechless sequence before the murder; the sense of heat and suffocation (the fumes from the asphalt can be smelled); the rhythm of the twenty-four hours; the reliability of the characterisation.

It is clear in the assertion that *Street Scene* ‘does not set out to be entertainment’ that the FSG keeps uppermost in its considerations its credibility as a group dedicated to the appreciation of film from a defined intellectual position: that ‘the recent German psychological influence on American literature is most noticeable in this work,’ bolsters the academic tone of the programme synopsis.

What *Street Scene* does do is represent the claustrophobia and bustle of an American city from the perspective of a working-class area of New York and, having something in common with Joyce’s *Ulysses*, renders a ‘treatment of twenty-four hours in the lives of drab people living in a mean street.’ Set in New York, *Street Scene* could also be said to evoke the locale of Dos Passos’ *Manhattan Transfer* and the syncopated rhythm that is an inescapable but hard-to-define element of big city life.

But it is the programme note's description of the film's intention to create 'an unpleasant feeling, at first physical rather than mental, of heat and the inability to escape from it' that alerts us to the suggestive parallel that exists between this cinematic rendition of the city and Barke's own novelistic one in *Major Operation*.

In the film's opening sequence there is a montage of shots arranged to convey to the viewer how the oppressive heat wave has taken hold in one of the less salubrious areas of New York: children play in the spray from a fire hose; a cat darts toward a chunk of ice dropped by a delivery man, before skulking off into the shadows as a ruckus of children scramble for the prize; an electric fan whirs at full pelt; a dog lies panting on the sidewalk; a deliveryman swats flies away from his carhorse; women throw windows wide open and converse with passers-by on the street (fig. 8a – 8j).²¹ It is a skilfully layered visual compendium of the city as it copes with the blistering heat and displays the stylistic influences of a classical Eisenstein montage or Ruttmannesque 'city symphony'.

Portraying Glasgow at the height of summer, in the second episode of *Major Operation* – and one that Barke entitles pragmatically 'Heat Wave' – we encounter a closely paralleled technique of montaged images:

Windows were flung open to admit wafts of germ-laden air. Children did not require to be chased out of doors: they ran of their own accord. Cats crawled into midden recesses for coolness: dogs lay panting on the cement paving. Sparrows fed listlessly on horse-droppings, seeming only to have enough energy to avoid traffic passing over them.²²

Not only is this a textual version of the cross-sectional collision of images so prevalent in the cinema (and particularly Soviet cinema), we can also see that the range of images are so similarly composed as to defy any credible assertion that cinematic visions of the city such as Vidor's did not have at least some measure of

influence over Barke's later novelistic ones. While the image of children cooling in the water from the fire hydrant has now become a staple, or more accurately perhaps, a cliché, of the US cinema indicative of city heat, the image of the skulking cat, the panting dog and the women ventilating the windows are not likely to be immediately called to mind without having been previously suggested as symptomatic of a city gripped by a heat wave. The economy and effectiveness of the montage in *Street Scene* clearly made an impact on Barke when writing *Major Operation*.²³ In spite of his general distaste for American cinema, it is precisely this that has taken hold of Barke's imagination and precipitated his own representation of the uncharacteristically sweltering streets of Glasgow in *Major Operation*. This demonstrates the tendency of the cinematic image to 'bleed' into the visual consciousness, in this case of the city in heat wave, and the psychological equation of the screen representation of one urban environment, New York, with another of lived experience, Glasgow.

Soviet Films

Influenced as he clearly was by this depiction of city life from an American film, Barke was generally eastward facing, and his artistic sympathies and political ideology ultimately aligned most closely with the Communist Party of Great Britain; the early years of the FSG were obliging in providing the facility to view some of the pivotal Soviet epics of the era. In their inaugural season in 1929/30, the FSG screened Pudovkin's *The End of St. Petersburg* (1927), a film that commemorated the tenth anniversary of the October Revolution and established the director as among the finest exponents of Soviet montage. In the second season, Pudovkin's *Mother*, *Storm over Asia* (1928) and Eisenstein's *The Battleship "Potemkin"* were included in the

programme. What made these films different from their Hollywood contemporaries (alongside questions of form) was the fundamental ideological difference in Soviet and Western film-making. The Soviet government authorised films to be produced for the purpose of the political ‘education’ of the population, whereas the market economies of the West ensured that films were produced principally for profit, though also within certain conservative, ideological and moral parameters.²⁴ Barke expressed a pejorative view of cinema production organised on the principles of market-driven economics throughout his writing career and we can detect the nascent formation of this view in an early essay entitled ‘Newspaper Leader on the Place of Cinema’. Written as part of his University of Glasgow Preliminary Examination course in 1922, the author warned, ‘we must save our cinema from Private Enterprise, romantic idealism and the either hopelessly stupid or maliciously corrupt, American producer.’²⁵ Given his subsequent political affiliations and sensibilities, it is no surprise that Barke would be critical of the effects of American cinema that established themselves within the population of Scotland and instead find himself drawn to Soviet cinema.

Reading the climactic death scene of *Major Operation*, one is immediately struck by the evocation of Soviet cinema’s propensity for political melodrama:

Anderson saw [the mounted policemen] advance. He rushed into the street and tried to lift MacKelvie. The task was beyond him. Beside MacKelvie lay a red flag emblazoned with a yellow hammer and sickle. He picked it up. He found himself standing in front of MacKelvie’s body holding the pole in front of him. Anderson felt himself possessed of terrific strength, felt there was nothing he would not defy. Only one thing mattered to him – MacKelvie must not be trampled to death by horses [...]

He held the pole with the drooping banner before him. The roar of the crowd seemed to shatter the drums of his ears. For a moment there was a mist before his eyes. A horse reared before him, champing frenziedly on the bit, its fore feet pawing the air.

The pole struck the policeman on the shoulder, toppling him sideways from the saddle. The force of the impact knocked Anderson on his back. As he hit the ground an iron hoof plunged on his chest, caving it in.²⁶

Compare this scene with the climax to Pudovkin's *Mother*, shown in the 1930/31 season by the FSG and having been banned for its pro-revolutionary content, certain not to have been screened anywhere else in Glasgow. This was a Soviet state-sanctioned film loosely based on a Maxim Gorky novel. Cara Marisa Deleon describes the climactic scene:

The film actively promotes the revolutionary movement and its association with workers and the common person, and climaxes its sentiment in the final scene. When the demonstration becomes violent, the flag, symbolizing their cause, is dropped by its slain holder. The title character takes up the flag and stands motionless against the soldiers as tears roll down her steadfast face in a moment of supposed realization regarding the cause. The camera shoots her profile in a close-up; then, within the frame, the fluttering flag obscures her face, symbolically displaying the unification of mother and revolution. She walks towards the advancing soldiers, who trample her to death.²⁷

The careful arrangement of intercut shots shows her son, Pavel, lying on the ground having been struck down by a bullet from the Tsarist troops; a flag fluttering in the air; the alarmed faces of the people as panic erupts in the crowd; the lines of soldiers firing into the crowd; and people fleeing from the scene as bodies fall to the ground. As Pavel's mother attempts to wipe the blood from his forehead, the soldiers are seen to mount their horses in preparation for a charge. As the camera fixes in a close-up shot on the flag dropped at Pavel's side, his mother's hand steadily moves into the shot and defiantly grasps its fabric. His mother (unnamed in the film to emphasise her role as a symbol of class type or an 'everywoman') then stands holding the flag and sets herself against the charging horsemen who trample her to the ground (fig. 9a –

9i).²⁸ The stylistic confluence between Barke's Glasgow demonstration and Pudovkin's cinematically-rendered uprising is hard to ignore. The demonstration in *Major Operation* seems to go beyond the appropriation of the universal symbols of workers' struggle and actually replays the scene from *Mother* reconceptualised in the streets of Glasgow with the proletariat facing the authoritarian instruments of government. Indicative of the scene's notoriety, Charlie Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936) uses the same motif rendered for comic effect, where Chaplin's character, trying to alert the driver of a construction truck that a red road-works flag had fallen off the bed of the vehicle, finds himself inadvertently at the head of a Communist march enthusiastically waving the flag. The demonstration is swiftly broken up by police and Chaplin's character continues his run of bad luck at the hands of an unforgiving capitalist system.

Taking Barke's political affiliations into consideration, it would seem intuitive that his appreciation of the power of cinema would be one that centred on the output of the Soviet film-makers. On the basis of the opening of *The Green Hills Far Away: A Chapter in Autobiography* (1940), in which Barke relates his travels round the North of Scotland in the company of 'an English student of the film producer Pudovkin,' it is this particular Russian film-maker for whom he harbours most appreciation, saying of his companion, 'we had much in common, were indeed brother soldiers on the philosophic and cultural front.'²⁹ Later in the book, when recalling his attendance at a circus as a young boy, Barke compares this experience with his subsequent experience of cinema:

The cinema can bring the universe before our eyes and it is only as yet in the infancy of its development. But there was a quality of intimateness and stark reality about that circus that no cinema has yet achieved [...] And yet there are effects the supreme genius of cinema, Pudovkin, can achieve with simple things like a falling chain [...]

And Eisenstein, with a reed trembling in the wind, can make me hold my breath in wonder.³⁰

The ability for a contingent image to lodge in the consciousness and evoke an emotional response is pinpointed here by Barke as one of the particular powers of cinema. He also suggests that the world is opened up and the personal experience expanded by cinema's propensity for bringing the wider world into the purview of even the most marginal or insular populations.

It is almost certainly this 'student of Pudovkin' who was the author of a letter to Barke, dated 11 November 1935, from his address in Moscow, recalling 'that wonderful trip with you round the bens and glens,' before going on to ask:

Did you ever get Joyce's book [*Ulysses*]? For I made arrangements, sent money, and it was to come from France. That was the delay at first. You know the reason. Please confirm whether you received it or not.³¹

While this is indicative that *Ulysses* was mentioned in correspondence with a filmmaker, it is unclear whether 'Joyce's book' was ultimately to go to Moscow or was for Barke's own personal use. Crucially, it indicates a certain triangulation between the writing of Joyce, Barke and the experience of the cinema. It is also an interesting insight into the relative ease with which censorship orders could be overcome in Britain and possibly the Soviet Union. It is a tantalising possibility that the student's interest in the book may have been aroused either by the publicity afforded the novel by virtue of Karl Radek's vociferous attack on it at the Soviet Writer's Congress of 1934, or by Eisenstein's lionising of it as a future template for the sound film around this time. What is revealed in personal correspondence is that prior to the 1930s Barke had not read *Ulysses*, but by the early years of that decade, and prior to the publication of his own first novel, he had.

The Hammers of the Clyde

It is evident throughout Barke's novels of the 1930s and from his miscellaneous papers that, in the wake of his move to Glasgow in 1918, the cinema played a part in his cultural development. From the 'Newspaper Leader' essay on cinema to newspaper cuttings of the programme of films screened at his local cinema in Girvan during his relatively brief residence in the Ayrshire town in 1950s, it is apparent that an interest in cinema remained with him until his death in 1958. However, one of the more intriguing items located in the archive of James Barke's papers is a four page typescript entitled 'Film Investigation: "Clydeside,"' with a suggested alternative title for the film being 'The Hammers of the Clyde'. Though undated, the abstract for the script clearly shows that it was to be a wartime propaganda film, though how this squares with Barke's political views may be a matter for some discussion and conjecture.³² One can only imagine that in the wake of the Nazi-Soviet Non-Aggression Pact, the parameters of Barke's commitment to Communism would have been redrawn and his large-scale domestic political ideals put on the back-burner. The purpose of the film is explained by Barke at the beginning of the script:

The general idea of the film would be to show the high degree with which Clydeside generally, and the shipyards in particular, are imbued with the spirits necessary to win the war.³³

From a political perspective, Barke's apparent willingness to make a wartime propaganda film is all the more intriguing in light of his views expressed in a letter sent to film and stage-play producer Herbert Marshall. The letter is dated 30th August 1942 (perhaps significantly it is after the June 1941 Nazi invasion of the Soviet

Union) and follows Marshall's rejection of the script of the stage-play of *Major Operation*:

Why somebody isn't able to make some sort of showing with M.O. in London passes my comprehension – considering what Glasgow did with it. My national sentiments become exacerbated. Roll on victory. Maybe then we will achieve national independence within the framework of national soviets. For without national independence there is no future for writers like myself. Culturally we are completely at variance with the London “sphere of influence.” Even after the war we will be more drawn to Moscow, New York and maybe even Berlin than we can ever be towards London. At least until all memory of the evil that London has done us is blotted out – by the work of the English proletariat. Maybe we look too far ahead.³⁴

Marshall's reply perhaps gave Barke food for thought as regards the necessity of conquering the threat of Fascism before any of his Socialist ideals could even be considered:

Glad to hear from you. Sorry I have been unable to do anything with “Major Operation”. But surely you can see that at the moment we couldn't dwell on internal problems of that nature, we have to attack everything from the point of view of the Second Front. It is nothing to do with the nationality concerned!³⁵

The Second Front to which Marshall refers was a new prioritisation of support for the Soviet War effort and new alliance with Britain. With this in mind, and considering his deep regard for the worker-hero types that he envisaged as populating the shipyards of Clydeside, perhaps his particular brand of Scottish nationalism – one underpinned by the desire for a considerably grander-scale design of a framework of national soviets – provides an explanation as to how Barke could reconcile the scripting of a government propaganda film: promotion of Scottish industry in the furtherance of its post-War break from England and substantive emergence on the world stage. It may be the case, of course, that Barke would also relish the opportunity to emulate some of the great film-makers of the previous decades.

In his screen-play we can detect the convergence of Barke's cinematic sensibilities and his acute awareness of the cinematic qualities of the cityscape in the way in which these elements move into the foreground. The opening sequence of Barke's film treatment is, in his own description, a 'short impressionistic montage effect' set against a sound-track of music, shipyard noises or commentary. This montage effect of city scenes is intended to act as 'something like... flick-over album leaves' in order to convey a 'significant general idea of Glasgow and environs' to the viewer. The typescript of Barke's film does not elaborate on what this impressionistic montage of the City should specifically include. However, we can gain an idea of what he visualised from a hand-written note retained with his papers, also titled 'Film Investigation: "Clydeside"' which details the following city views:

Introductory shots

Long shot of the River

Long shots of Streets (Argyle and Dumbarton Road...)

Traffic at Union and Argyle

Sauchiehall + Renfield St.

Anniesland X when B. S. Workers are going to work

Dumbarton Road at Yarrow [indecipherable] and Elderslie [?] Dock

Clydebank at John Browns

-

Street scene should also include Govan Road and Maryhill Road

-

Subway traffic at Maitland Street and Govan Road.

-

South side traffic (for differences in human types should be introduced where possible.)

On the basis of this cross-section, it would seem that Barke felt that the essential character of Glasgow could be conveyed with the establishment of a representative

topographical background, an emphasis on the housing prevalent in Glasgow – ‘tall, gaunt tenements’ – and a glimpse of the ‘base of the social-economic pyramid’ that was largely formed by shipbuilding on Clydeside. Encapsulated in this is the socio-political prism through which Barke views the City of Glasgow: into the tradition of representation of big cities by means of collision montage, he injects his Leftist politics and emphasises the primacy of the workers in the fabric of this modern Scottish urban landscape.

Barke’s visual contrasts are overtly class-conscious ones – ‘differences in human types should be introduced where possible’ – with Dumbarton Road then being a location where the fault-line between Scotland’s urban working class and its middle class became visible. Set on the north bank of the Clyde, Dumbarton Road runs from the environs of Kelvingrove Park westwards along the River, eventually merging with Great Western Road as they snake through the outskirts of the City. Dumbarton Road thus not only facilitated movement in and out of the Clyde shipyards but also traffic in and out of the well-heeled Kelvingrove and City Centre areas. Andrew Ramsay’s working-class observations of Dumbarton Road in *Land of the Leal* are of a place where,

the over-dressed crowds seemed to walk up and down...aimlessly. What aim could their perambulations have had? [...] There was no *purpose* in the crowds’ listless activity. They stared at each other in passing – consciously and unconsciously; but Andrew felt everyone’s eyes observing him, scrutinising, questioning.³⁶

Andrew, a working-class man employed at the Clydeside shipyards, directs his gaze at the ‘aimlessly’ wandering middle-classes and he feels that by virtue of the class schism, the suspicious middle-class gaze is naturally going to be locked on him. This is where the classes encounter each other in a visual parade each self-consciously noting the other.

As can be seen in his directions, Barke proposes that images of the clamorous commercial heartland of Glasgow in the centre of the City at Union and Argyle Streets, then Sauchiehall and Renfield Street, be juxtaposed with the crowds at the industrialised area at Anniesland Cross and the hordes of workers emerging from Yarrow's Shipyard onto Dumbarton Road. The tone of this collision montage is undoubtedly socio-political and designed to suggest that the captains of industry who populate the high-end city streets are sustained in their position by the toil of the masses of workers in Clydeside's shipyards, the industrial engine room of Glasgow's economy. Barke's impulse to collide these images to illustrate the lives of the divided classes – the 'difference in human types,' as he puts it – is one that derives from a tradition established most significantly in cinematic form in films such as Cavalcanti's *Rien que les heures* (1926), Ruttmann's *Berlin* (1927) and Vertov's *Man with the Movie Camera* (1929). Though the last-mentioned is a post-Revolutionary Soviet film which was primarily concerned with exploring the medium of film rather than developing a critical socio-political commentary of the Russian regime, all these films provided techniques that fed into the documentary film movement; indeed, Cavalcanti himself became a celebrated practitioner of the documentary genre in the 1930s in Britain. Barke's proposed cinematic venture draws on the possibilities of the cinematic medium, retains the feature of a stance dominated by class comparison and Leftist political consciousness, and uses the established practices of modernist city symphony film-makers to re-imagine Glasgow while foregrounding the Clydeside shipyards and workers and thereby highlighting a uniquely Scottish context.

Cinema City

Recalling his early assertion that the cinema ‘can bring the universe before our eyes’, we can see that the vitality of cinema, with its educational, social and political utility, would appeal to Barke’s Socialist tendencies. And it is plain that his personal experience of (and interest in) cinema was wide-ranging, leading to an appreciation of the potential and influence of the medium. Evidenced by his sketching of the propaganda film ‘Clydeside,’ Barke was clearly, at least intellectually, engaged with the possibilities of film and, whether entirely aware of it or not, significantly influenced by cinema’s visual modes. However, there are further implications for his apparent aspiration to appropriate the dynamic effects of cinema in his literary representation of Glasgow and thereby subvert the established discursive versions of the city.

In the early decades of the twentieth century, the close association that existed between cinema and city was the subject of a considerable body of discourse with some of the most prominent figures of cultural Modernism entering the debate. Ezra Pound’s observation that ‘the life of the village is narrative,’ while ‘in the city the visual impressions succeed each other, overlap, overcross,’ and are ‘cinematic,’ is one that lies at the very heart of modernism and the multiperspectival consciousness of the modern city.³⁷ Furthermore, as they are contemporaneous in the accelerated phase of their respective development, cinema and city are, David Clarke asserts, ‘imbricated to such an extent that it is unthinkable that the cinema could have developed without the city,’ while the city has ‘been unmistakably shaped by the cinematic form.’³⁸ In Duncan Carmichael’s arrival in Glasgow from the Highland estate of Balcreggan in Barke’s first published novel, *The World His Pillow* (1933), we gain a sense of the jarring multiperspectives of the city’s visual impressions as they usurp and supplant Pound’s narrative modes of village life:

The people all seemed to be dressed in their Sunday best – and yet it was only Saturday. The huge picture houses! What would it cost to get inside them? What a lot of money one must need to live in Glasgow! And what an enormous shop this Pettigrew and Stephen. What a difference from Willie Peddie’s two-windowed affair in the High Street of Glenaraig: the women’s underclothing so blatantly displayed on the models for every one to see. And the green conductor and the punching of two green tickets. But still the never-ending shops and the pavement flow of humanity. Where could all these people possibly come from? Were all great cities the same? Edinburgh, Manchester, Birmingham, Leeds, London. London! What must it be like? Impossible to imagine. Or New York, Berlin, Paris, Vienna, Madrid or Rome? And when everything else flashed past, there was always this unending pavement flow of humanity. In Glenaraig one had a personality and a history. One was recognised. But here – a mere nobody in a crush of nobodies.³⁹

The shift from Highland village to Glasgow is necessarily going to be an overwhelming assault on the senses, but in this passage Barke not only conveys this phenomenon, but also alludes to features of urban living that the newly arrived Carmichael is yet to connect: ‘Were all great cities the same?’ He ponders the problem unaware that he has already registered the means for divining an answer. And the answer, of course, lies in the ‘huge picture houses.’ As Alasdair Gray’s character Thaw was subsequently to muse in *Lanark* (1981):

Think of Florence, Paris, London, New York. Nobody visiting them for the first time is a stranger, because he has already visited them in paintings, novels, history books and films. But if a city hasn’t been used by an artist not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively.⁴⁰

Thaw’s novelistic meditations occur 50 years on from Carmichael’s, but the central conceit holds true. When Carmichael discovers the cost of entry to the picture houses, he will also discover New York, London and Paris. Taking issue with Gray’s assertion by proxy, Colin McArthur argues in his essay ‘Chinese Boxes and Russian Dolls: Tracking the Elusive Cinematic City,’ that the term ‘artist’ is too limited and

Thaw should, more accurately, refer to *discourse*, thereby encompassing newspaper copy and newsreel footage.⁴¹ All of these forms of discourse combine to create a kind of collective impression, the concept of the ‘urban imaginary.’ One cinematic expression of this concept can be seen in the representation of Paris in different media at the beginning of *Rien que les heures*. It may be argued, too, that Thaw (were he to be considering Scotland in the 1930s, rather than in the 1980s) should include the proviso that nobody *who lives in a modern city* is a stranger to cinema’s cityscapes, as it is demonstrable that Carmichael, having no previous access to the picture houses, knows nothing of these exotic urban locations. Thus, cinema in the 1930s is largely the preserve of the city-dweller and the portal that creates a network of mediated knowledge across other great cities.

Illustrating the dominion of the city as the cinema’s natural habitat, in *The Green Hills Far Away* (1940) Barke relates his tour of the Highlands of Scotland along with his Moscow-resident friend, during which they meet a girl in a remote village. When the girl ‘spoke intelligently of *The Blue Angel* and conducted some conversation in French,’ Barke’s travelling companion ‘began to rave.’⁴² As Barke describes it, his friend was ‘incredulous when I informed him that the girl had never seen a cinema and that here in the wilderness we were sixty miles from the nearest railway station.’⁴³ So synonymous was cinema-going with city-dwelling, Barke’s friend was astonished that in this remote rural location he happened upon someone who knew of the film. Barke’s purpose in relating the story is principally to demonstrate to the reader that Scotland is maybe not such a cultural backwater as the wider world, and much of the indigenous population, suspects; in doing so he also neatly illuminates the city/cinema association. Barke does, however, allow the mystery to remain for his friend and reader alike as to how the girl had come to know

The Blue Angel, though we may speculate that newspaper reviews or publications pertaining to the cinema may have been the source of her knowledge. Perhaps she led a considerably more cosmopolitan life than her bucolic surroundings immediately suggested, or, less likely, had happened across the film by virtue of a remnant of the exhibition tradition of early cinema, whereby a picture show would travel as part of a fairground. Further to this meeting, it appears that Barke's friend was rather besotted by the girl, described as 'of such incredible physical and facial beauty' that he was driven 'crazy.' Barke goes on to say that the 'cinema of Russia, Germany, Scandinavia, England or America had produced nothing in any way comparable to her.' Notably, it is not the *countries* that have produced nothing comparable, but the *cinema*, which had taken on a metonymic function for nationhood.

Returning to Duncan Carmichael's efforts to overcome his hitherto rural linear narrative instincts and adjust to life in Glasgow, it is with a distinctly heavy heart that, on turning into Renfield Street, he sees a dense crowd and considers the 'many young girls and many young men' to be suffering from an 'overdose of motion pictures.'⁴⁴ This is the malaise that Carmichael, the interloper from the countryside, diagnoses of the crowd. On his own first visit to the picture house, Carmichael's instinctive resistance toward this alien medium is tested to the full:

He had often had the desire to enter a picture house. But the palatial entrances always frightened him. He was too shy to enter alone. Now that he was in one of them he began to feel excited. For somewhere below a jazz orchestra was playing a crazy fox-trot that seemed pornographic. It was foreign and alien. He began to feel hostile as the orchestra redoubled its efforts and burst out into an obscene frenzy. His blood would not beat to this rhythm of lust. And yet there was a devilish fascination about it, just as there was about the painted half-naked strumpet who wriggled her hips on the screen with monstrous lewdness. In a flash he understood Rabelais. Rabelais was gross and obvious like a heap of steaming manure. But this was mental masturbation. This converted sex into a slimy serpent which bit an aphrodisiac poison into the

blood...But the strumpet was false like everything else. She turned out to be a parson's daughter; and the picture flicked out with her weeping on the breast of a New York financier.⁴⁵

Carmichael's visceral and lascivious reaction to the film clearly unsettles him. In his trip to the cinema he does not merely see all the experiential possibility analogous to that of the city, he feels it as a physical effect, though he persists in trying to suppress his fascination and maintain his demeanour of rural, Presbyterian disapproval. That the 'strumpet was false' and merely the illusion of a virtual presence, he will quickly discover, is of little or no consequence. Cinema, as with the city itself, is an assault on the senses and Carmichael recognises that to wring the most from it his 'blood' must 'beat to this rhythm of lust.'

On his next trip to the picture house, we can see that the necessary rhythmic adjustment is happening in Carmichael's sensual circulation.

Before Charlie appeared on the screen Duncan was sceptical...But Duncan had half a notion that he was some slap-stick fool with a fund of third-class humour. He was pleasantly disappointed. As soon as he saw the Rookie on Parade he was filled with an exquisite ecstasy of delight. By jove! he thought, if he can keep this up he will be a genius. Charlie had little difficulty in keeping it up. And Duncan was so amazed, so engrossed, that he completely forgot about Constance. Not that it mattered; for Constance had completely forgotten about him. Chaplin was exquisitely pathetic. Duncan saw a good deal of his own experience burlesqued by this symbolical figure that is always bilked of its due. And yet, half the time Duncan existed as one great chuckle. He even burst out several times into an immense guffaw. God! it was excruciatingly funny! The man was a masterpiece in himself. He had only to nibble at the cheese of the rat-trap and the whole tragedy of the neglected and the forgotten was immortalised. The Universal Private at last awoke from his dream. Duncan awoke too, to find that he had now a sweeter sense of proportion: he felt on quite agreeable terms with the world. He was even reconciled to the idea of the orchestra playing the national anthem. He went out into the rain with Constance as if nothing needed worrying about for the rest of the night.⁴⁶

Carmichael no longer feels despondent that it is all ‘false’; he is swept up in the phantasmagoria of sound and light. In the screen entertainment he sees humour, pathos, tragedy, social comment and, most significantly, he identifies with Chaplin’s character. The film Carmichael sees is *Shoulder Arms* (1918), set on the Western Front with Chaplin’s hapless and put-upon soldier going through his full repertoire of physical comedy. Having given himself over to the effect, Carmichael even blasphemes: ‘God! it was excruciatingly funny!’ – a sure sign that Carmichael is shifting the fundamentals of his character and realigning his ethical framework to that of the city. When he tells Constance of his post-picture house exhilaration – ‘But I never felt so absolutely care-free in my life [...] I feel positively happy’ – it is apparent that he has joined the ranks of the young men and women who suffer an ‘overdose of motion pictures.’ From this point on, though he is ultimately to return to Balcreggan, and he is still personally at odds with capitalism, Carmichael begins to traverse the city’s commercial and social nexus with far greater ease, boosted by his cinema-aided adjustment to modernity.

The Cinematic Consciousness

Up to this point in the study, the emphasis has been placed on the overt influence and appearance of cinema in the early novels of James Barke. While there is a discernible trace of the influence of cinema and a developing cinematic consciousness in his earlier novels, the contention to be made here is that *Major Operation*, in its near-exclusive setting of the modern Scottish metropolis, is where Barke’s cinematic consciousness comes to fruition. In *Major Operation*, life does not seem to be very much easier for his characters, particularly once it transpires that George Anderson’s bourgeois existence is built on foundations of sand. But it is in

this novel that Barke proves himself to be a cultural affiliate of the more progressive film-makers of the era and by which he effectively stands in for (as well as implicitly critiques) the absence of expressionist film-making in Scotland. Scottish film-makers seemed to shun the possibilities for representing their own landscape and vigorous aspects of modernity that had been embraced by Sergei Eisenstein, Walter Ruttmann, Dziga Vertov and King Vidor. In fact, impressionistic films of Scottish big city life are virtually non-existent prior to the Second World War, and only *Waverley Steps* (1948), a fly-on-the-wall railway documentary inspired by Ruttmann's *Berlin*, but not nearly matching its vision and technique, emerges to 'break the mould' in the years afterwards.

There were occasional and isolated instances of impressionistic film-making in Scotland during the 1930s, most notably *Hell Unltd* (1936), produced by Norman McLaren and Helen Biggar from Glasgow School of Art. Now available via the BFI Screen Online website, the film is highly political and described thus:

The film mixes animation, acted footage, archival footage and titles, editing the images at an extremely rapid tempo. It is structured not as a narrative but as a sequence of images, each relating to a political theme, often announced in the titles. In this sense, the film addresses its audience in the form of a lecture or a political broadcast, yet in a highly innovative manner. The film counters the contemporary government's claims to have reduced spending on weapons of destruction. It begins with a chart of spending on health, education and armaments over the years. As the years peel away into the 1930s, the armaments bar gets higher and higher, eventually bursting out of the chart...Biggar and McLaren's main strategy is to employ animation techniques to show the 'truth' behind official government declarations (often denoted by titles or live footage). Perhaps the most striking sequence follows a clutter of titles and footage showing the government boasting about economic revival. There follows a cut to a man listening to the speech on his radio, and then – in animation – to plants in his room sprouting monstrous growths, including grenades and fighter planes.⁴⁷

Unusual for having been made by students of art rather than a workers' film movement, it serves to illuminate the absence of impressionistic films of any nature, and particularly the lack of those dealing with the everyday life of the Scottish citizen.

Typically, though born in Scotland in 1902, it would be hard to argue that the avant-garde film-maker, novelist, photographer and critic, Kenneth MacPherson came under the auspices of a Scottish film movement. Pursuing his career away from Scotland, McPherson was located in England and the United States, where his associations and collaborations tended to be with notable English and American artists. A leading proponent of Eisenstein's film montage and experimental film-making, McPherson made the avant-garde film *Borderline* (1930), starring H.D., and founded the film journal *Close-Up* in 1927. If we retrospectively project Thaw's comment back to 1930s Scotland – 'if a city hasn't been used by an artist not even the inhabitants live there imaginatively' – it can be argued that by this criterion Glasgow at that time was imaginatively uninhabited.

A counter-argument could also be raised to the implication of McArthur's assertion that the wider discourse of newsreel partly fulfils this imaginative function. Recording and replaying occasions such as royal visits, sports days, and the Empire Exhibition of 1938, it could be argued, does not so much reflect the plurality of imaginative experience engendered by life in Glasgow as produce a homogenised illusion of reportage for each extraordinary event. In common with the progressive film-makers around the world who 'championed the city's aesthetic and cultural virtues',⁴⁸ in *Major Operation*, Barke tried to capture the sense of the multiperspectival city that both fed into and fed off the cinematic medium.

As is evident from a small selection of photographs that exist of the stage-play version of *Major Operation* (over which Barke retained creative control) his artistic

vision suggested an influence of expressionist forms (figures 10a – 10b).⁴⁹ The hospital set is oversized and cavernous, the uniformity of the ward suggestive of a large-scale city hospital, all highly resonant of the hospital scene in King Vidor's expressionistic city film, *The Crowd* (fig. 11a – 11b).⁵⁰ Barke's stage emulation of Vidor's cinematic vision of life in the modern metropolis, aggregated with his demonstrable interest in 'big city' novels and films, and the cinematic form in general, hints at a desire to appropriate these modes in order to capture the essence of modern urban life in its Scottish manifestation. From his sketched screen-play, we can see that Barke felt that his city could be adequately and accurately presented in film form, while from his novels we can discern a similar sentiment regarding the possibility for a cinematic literary style. As argued earlier, Scottish city literature of the era tended to be dominated (and rather stultified) by either urban kailyard or gangland novels; the nature of cinema's contribution towards a discursive Glasgow – and consequently Scotland – equally tended towards Tartanry, a term used to describe the kitsch film adaptations of Scottish historical novels, or towards the straightforwardly documentary. Thus literature and cinema of the day essentially either avoided or largely misrepresented issues of Scottish urban modernity and it is this representational void that Barke, particularly with *Major Operation*, attempted to fill. In this respect Barke is a Scottish exemplar of David Seed's thesis on the interrelation between cinematic and literary techniques, with his large- and small-scale structural montages in *Major Operation* and his demonstrable, though ultimately unrealised, ambition to write for the screen in 'Clydeside'.⁵¹ The effect of the small-scale montages can be demonstrated in the following excerpt from his novel. As the temperature rises,

The better class pubs arranged displays of bottled beer in ice. Others following the example of Mr Tim O'Rafferty, carted down to the cellar a consignment of stout and

brought another cooler up [...] Fans were switched on in the city tea-rooms and salmon mayonnaise was prominent on the menus: though lemon sole had to be stocked against normal demand.⁵²

Barke's use of montage repeatedly emphasises the class-divide in a meaningful collision of images within a larger episodic montage structure that alternates between working-class life and middle-class pursuits.

Derived from techniques synonymous with Soviet and European film-making, the cinematic influences in style and form pursued by Barke in the literary medium can be argued to anticipate the developments in the Scottish documentary film movement of the 1950s. The author's yoking of his literature to cinematic techniques pre-dates this phase of the Scottish documentary by a good two decades. It is approximately contemporaneous with the development of British film documentarism, a nascent industry that itself maintained a disproportionately Scottish dimension in terms of its doyen, John Grierson, and many of the personnel with whom he worked. The prevalence of Scots active in documentary film-making is perhaps betrayed in the subject matter of the first documentary film that Grierson produced, *Drifters* (1929), which followed the fortunes of the Scottish herring fleet.

But while Grierson was pursuing an ever-evolving 'adventure in public observation,' which, in Lara Feigel's opinion, maintained a 'Marxist focus on the process of production'⁵³ (an agenda presumably agreeable to Barke), the novelist's literary experiment, in its formal aspects, actually foreshadowed later developments of the film documentaries of the 1950s. This 'Scotland on the Move' discourse involved the use of 'innovative metonymic techniques [...] montage editing and other borrowings from the Soviet cinema' in producing a 'breed of short 'propaganda' films.' *Major Operation* can be viewed as a literary predecessor to this film

discourse, establishing a cross-media continuity in the development of an aesthetic in Scottish cultural output.⁵⁴ Though careful not to overstate the influence of Barke's innovation with these techniques, the very least that could be claimed is that both he and the Films of Scotland committee shared a common source of aesthetic influences that eventually came to characterise representations of modern Scotland.

The Dangerous Labyrinth

In this regard, we may firstly deal here in summary with the issue of the appropriateness of cinematic writing to represent the experience of the urban, the habitat of the majority of Scotland's population. In a parallel with the emergence of the modern city (in broad terms) between the Industrial Revolution and the First World War, there developed a 'notable tradition of urban anthropologist-detectives,' such as 'Engels, Baudelaire and Simmel.' Held by James Donald as examples of those who transcended 'politics, poetry and sociology,' they put themselves at the heart of the 'dangerous labyrinth,' to articulate the new experience of the city, identifying it as both 'problem and possibility.'⁵⁵ At this point we may speculate that this dialectical notion of the city's problem and possibility would certainly have appealed to Barke's Leftist political conviction and seems to lie absolutely at the core of his novel. The link between the city environment and the cinema pivots on the visual spectacle that increasingly forms the experience of the urban. Again, we may usefully return to Pound's observation that 'the life of the village is narrative,' whereas the shift to the city's specular mode ensures that 'the visual impressions succeed each other, overlap, overcross, they are cinematographic.'⁵⁶ As Pound implies, in the era of modernity the 'dangerous labyrinth' went into a phase of acceleration, with transport, communications and pervasive commodification, contributing to the maelstrom of the

city; modernists recognised the clamorous rhythms of the city and what James Donald refers to as the ‘constructed reality of film’ as analogous. ‘Cinema goes and city dwellers alike,’ Donald asserts, ‘become Baudelaire’s man of the crowd: “a *kaleidoscope* equipped with consciousness”.’⁵⁷ Donald’s deliberate conflation of Baudelaire’s concept of the *flâneur* and Poe’s ‘man of the crowd’ suggests a measure of continuity in the development of the city spectacle and a relative uniformity (in a sense) in reaction to it. Providing formal expression to this ‘kaleidoscopic consciousness’ was the challenge for artist, writer and filmmaker.

Striving to represent this sensory assault in one particular medium, Donald cites the multiplication of perspectives implied in the art of the Cubists – in his example Picasso, Braque and Delaunay – as having ‘exploded the illusions of spatial homogeneity and depth created by the conventions of linear perspective.’⁵⁸ Multiperspectival images recognised the ‘simultaneous realities’ and the condensation and intensification of time in the ‘street, the automobile and the train.’⁵⁹ But, it may be contested, the limitations of the still image fell short of truly representing the unique whirl of multiple perspectives and ‘complex, multilayered temporality’ of the modern metropolis; this notion of the ‘whirl’ can be exemplified in the motifs of the city that proliferate in Ruttmann’s *Berlin*, the most memorable being the spinning spiral advertisement in the shop window on which the camera focuses, an appropriation by the filmmaker of the vortex as a most apposite symbol of the modern city (fig. 12a).⁶⁰ As demonstrated in this particular film treatment, a more satisfactory ‘remedy’ to representation of the kaleidoscopic consciousness was available in cinematic editing. According to Harvard psychologist Hugo Münsterberg (writing in 1916) this filmic technique was the formal expression that allowed the viewer to have the experience of being ‘simultaneously here and there.’⁶¹ Thus the analogies

between cinema and city can be succinctly underscored by Ian Aitken: considering filmmaker Alberto Cavalcanti's successful use of fragmentary and contradictory conjunctions in *Rien que les heures*, Aitken suggests it is 'futile to attempt to represent the experience of modern, urban existence in a linear, realistic way, and [...] only a fragmented, juxtapositional style of filmmaking will succeed.'⁶² The assertion to be substantiated in the remainder of this chapter will be that Barke's novel was written under the influence of a cinematic consciousness. This was a technique not only willingly adopted by the author as the ideal mode for chronicling the experience of the urban, but was also appearing in a secondary manifestation due to his emulation of Joyce's cinematic 'city' novel, *Ulysses* (1922).

In an article entitled 'Literature and Film' published in *Outlook* in 1936, Norman Wilson argued that films would increasingly influence forms of literature. Though he doubted at that time there could be said to be a 'genuine cinematic literary form,' his article did suggest how experience of the film medium generally modified and refined the perspective, and therefore the sensibility of the viewer:

The film has brought new horizons and new experiences within the orbit of the common man. As a result not only does he now know more facts and understand more about the world at large, he is vicariously familiar with a greater number of sensations and emotions than he is ever likely to experience at first hand throughout a lifetime. Take an obvious example. Flying is increasing in popularity but there are still millions of people who have never risen off the ground in an aeroplane. Yet so many films contain incidents enacted in the air that there must be few filmgoers who do not have a fairly accurate idea of the sensation of flying. They know the appearance of the earth's surface viewed from the clouds and are as familiar with the tree-tops of Africa as with the sky-scraper roofs of New York.

The result of this vast new knowledge and increased sensibility is that the writer has at his command an immense range of symbols, images and analogies able to be appreciated instantly by the average reader. A word thus serves where once a purple passage of descriptive verbiage was a temptation if not a necessity. The

growing tendency to write imagistically and economically may be attributed to an awareness, conscious or unconscious, of the phenomenon.

What can be termed the literary close-up is today almost as familiar in poetry and prose as it is on the screen. The isolation and magnification of image, character, or seemingly irrelevant incident is a common practice of impressionism, but I doubt if it would be so readily understood and appreciated if readers were not already familiar with the process on the screen. The inward eye has developed telescopic properties and the mind a new sliding scale of values.⁶³

Here Wilson posits the value of the virtual experience gained in cinema particularly to the writer. And it is evident that Wilson felt that the knowledge brought to bear in an imaginative interaction with the urban environment – an interaction integral to the film medium – had undergone a significant refiguring in the three decades since the inception of cinema as a popular entertainment. This ‘inward eye’ was the newly identified phenomenon which inflected Barke’s most experimental novel and the property to which he appeals in his work.

Wilson’s thesis on the perceptual adjustment brought on by cinema and pertinent to the city environment very much applies to Barke, a valuable exemplar of the lived experience of this phenomenon. The author grew up immersed in the experience of the rural mode of living to which Pound referred, until in his teenage years he moved to the urban environment. His adjustment to the city developed with a growing awareness of the prevalence of cinema in Glasgow – his 1922 essay ‘Newspaper Leader on the Place of Cinema’ implies his early engagement with the medium – and how it shaped his knowledge of city life. Barke’s shifting experience through childhood and into early adulthood has its corollary in the development of his fiction throughout the 1930s, his earlier novels in some (qualified) regard conforming to the literary tradition of representing Scottish culture as largely rural. *Major Operation*, on the other hand, suggests he was a writer come to terms with a

necessarily impressionistic view of his urban environment to present the ‘essence’ of modern Scottishness to the reader. In an era when the novel was being usurped by the cinematic medium as the ‘foremost art form of narrative realism,’ and in the absence of any Scottish film industry to speak of, it seems inevitable that an additional burden would weigh on Scottish novelists, requiring that they adopt a fresh approach to ensure Scotland’s society was adequately reflected in literary culture.⁶⁴ The alternative was to stagnate with an increasingly outmoded literary tradition in a rapidly modernising world where the visual image was increasingly holding sway.

Making a case for Barke as a pioneer in the Scottish literary context, one of the features of his writing is his overlaying of a cinematically-informed consciousness onto the experimental literary exposition of his political sentiment. In some respects, this was the privilege enjoyed by the novelist over the film-maker. This is not to suggest that authors were completely free of restrictions on form and content when it came to having novels published, however the demands on mainstream filmmaking were such that films were far more directly affected by economic imperatives than overt censorship. Produced within a studio system, films had to appeal to the largest possible audience and ‘therefore [...] avoid stirring up class antagonisms.’⁶⁵ In this process, ironically, the very public who were the victims of class division were the ones who, by a ‘democratic’ process, i.e. consumerist negotiation, of mainstream film-going, ensured that this antagonism was masked from view.

An idea of the scale of this market democracy of mass entertainment can be gained from the statistic that suggests there were ‘about 963 million cinema admissions in Britain’ during 1934. The enduring popularity of cinema is further emphasised by Lara Feigel who reports film director Alexander Korda celebrating the ‘fact that nineteen million people a week visited the cinema’ in Britain during 1937,

Korda citing this as ‘no better example of “effective democracy”’ and that ‘popular taste dictated the subject-matter of the films’.⁶⁶ Though arguably commendable, this enthusiasm could be deemed a touch idealistic, failing to consider the power of the cinema to mould public taste and its ability to keep the population complacent and docile by offering a readily accessible escape from the conditions of their existence. In this regard there could be considered to be an ongoing battle for the nation’s conscience as well as its aesthetic eye in Scotland in the 1930s. Barke did not fail to articulate these concerns in *Major Operation*.

This most modern of Scottish novels adopted a particular formal mode to relate the city experience. One of the principal structural differences from the established practices of the Scottish novel up to this point was the introduction of a ‘multiplication of perspectives,’ as a means of ‘acknowledging the existence of simultaneous realities and also condensation and intensification of time in the street, automobile and train.’⁶⁷ In this task there is deployed throughout the novel a large cast of around one hundred and twenty characters, some who make only a fleeting appearance, others who interweave the story; some are the merest aural impressions, others rush past as part of the shifting visual tableau. With this multiplication of perspectives, Barke provides a rare example in Scottish literature of one of Modernist literature’s defining precepts. Evident in *Major Operation*, the perspective flits from character to character throughout Glasgow setting the precedent in a kind of visual overture by montage.

For others there were: cricket at the pitch of the West of Scotland at Hamilton Crescent, football sports at Muirhall, trotting at Birnmill and a pipe-band contest and Highland dancing competition at Renfrew [...] by eleven o’clock the conductors opened the ventilators of the tramcars – by now fully convinced that the day, even for June, was really warm. Shopkeepers on the sunny sides dropped their shades: ice-cream vendors prepared against record consumption and hurriedly reviewed their

stock of lemonade and soft drinks, coalmen sweated and groaned [...] soft goods managers tore their hair because they had not laid in a sufficient stock of the new season's bathing costumes, summer frocks and tennis shirts [...] Fruiterers smiled to the discomfort of butchers: the ever gullible public were certainly eating more fruit.⁶⁸

Discernable in this excerpt is an itinerary of shots from a newsreel topical of the leisure, the transport network, and the commercial daily life of the city, all underpinned by a suggestion of simultaneity. Equally, in its formal disruption and presentation of the scope of daily city life the novel is highly resonant of the work of filmmaker Walter Ruttmann and the City Symphony genre in general.

Barke's desire to promote, and belief in the efficacy of, the montage technique has its most tangible manifestation in the staging of the play of *Major Operation* by the Glasgow Unity Theatre at the Athenaeum Theatre, Glasgow in December 1941. In the published script the opening directions describe the following:

The curtain rises to reveal, on our left hand side, a corner of Jock MacKelvie's working-class kitchen in South Partick, and, on our right hand, a corner of George Anderson's sitting room in his Milngavie villa. It is Saturday, towards midsummer in the year 1927: early in the afternoon.

Jean MacKelvie is engaged on some domestic washing. She is standing behind a tin bath, which is resting on two kitchen chairs.

George Anderson comes in carrying an early edition of "The Glasgow Evening Star". He has just seated himself at the side of the fire and opened up the paper when his wife, Mabel, comes in.

Mabel comes forward and helps herself to a cigarette.⁶⁹

The split-set of the opening Act produces a montage effect more sustained than that which it is possible to achieve in the novel. True 'real time' simultaneity is achieved and the contrast in the living conditions of each class, separated across the geography of the city, is shown side-by-side to the audience: obstacles of time and space are overcome. Sketches made by the author in the planning of the stage production reveal

the extent to which he planned to employ the split-set throughout the play, even having planned a graveyard set combined with an indoor set for the final scene. The assumption is that the majority of these elaborate sets had to be shelved for economic or logistical reasons. For his 1940 play, *The Night of the Big Blitz*, Barke used another split set to expose class difference:

‘Act One – Section of Turkington’s [working-class shipyard foreman] kitchen and Blainer’s [upper-middle class shipbuilder] living room.

We see the combined sections of the kitchen in Thomas Turkington’s tenement dwelling in Clydevale and the living-room of Edward Blainer’s residence on a small estate near Bearsden.’⁷⁰

This was a theatrical device that Barke clearly felt had significant merit and one that strives to emulate the same social and political revelatory function as film montage.

This split-set technique of montage and simultaneity had been employed on stage in Britain a few years previously by W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, albeit to evoke more ideological and cultural, rather than class, contrasts in their stage-play *On the Frontier* (1937 – 38). As the stage directions for this production indicate, the ‘Ostnia-Westland Room’ utilises a divided stage and furnishes the left and right to ‘*suggest differences in national characteristics, and also in the nature of the two families that inhabit them.*’ The Westland home is described as ‘*academic*’ and the Ostnia home as ‘*comfortable, reactionary, bourgeois.*’ Though class contrast is not the object of Auden’s use of the split set, it is clear that this stage-play montage mode lends itself to making implicit comparisons across boundaries. The directions are at pains to point out that the frontier between the two countries does not literally pass through the space but it is to convey the ‘idea’ of that frontier and that the two groups of characters ‘*seem absolutely unaware of each other’s existence.*’⁷¹

Further testament to Barke's enduring cinematic sensibility occurs in the directions at Act IV, Scene 4, of *Major Operation* which aspire to be cinematic in their dramatic effects.

*The room is in darkness, and a pencil spot of light shines down on Anderson. He is pale and in obvious mental distress. From his left comes the Voice of Jock MacKelvie, as if projected from Anderson's mind. From behind him comes the Voice of Marion MacLean. From his right comes the Voice of Mabel Anderson. All the voices are recognisable; but they have undergone certain modifications, and the tone is rather more indicative of poetry than of prose, or perhaps more indicative of good prose rather than colloquial speech.*⁷²

The stage lighting, 'modified' voice-overs and clear psychological agitation of the scene all seem at once to gesture back to the cinema of German Expressionism and forward to elements characteristic of film noir. The voice-overs act as expressions of inner torment, recalling and bringing together the voices of Anderson's mentor and friend, his thwarted love interest and his estranged wife respectively, as they pull his character this way and that across class, ideological, and personal boundaries. There is also the simulation of a cinematic close-up by an effective stage equivalent that sees the actor picked out by a single beam of light, thereby drawing the audience's gaze to his expression and eliminating all the extraneous space around the point of focus. Use of lighting effects was not only integral to the very production of cinema film but also a hugely important aspect of the filmmaker's craft. In this stage direction, the chiaroscuro effects that underpinned German Expressionism and were so vital for dictating mood in the film noir it influenced are again brought to mind. Due to the staging of this scene, it assumed a pivotal role in the play, one reviewer remarking that 'the play reached its magnificent best in the dream scene...the tortured soul of a human being, beset by all kinds of problems, was revealed.'⁷³

The Metonymic Function

From the cinematic techniques that were valuably and variously assimilated by Barke into his fiction and stage-plays, we may return to Wilson's article from *Outlook* where he asserted that, thanks to cinema, the writer had 'an immense range of symbols, images and analogies able to be appreciated instantly by the average reader.'⁷⁴ Due to their proliferation on the cinema screen, certain visual signifiers were becoming universal, and as a result, Barke could profit with an economical metonymic technique in his portrayal of the city scene. In the following example, the bowler hat, a symbol of political and social division, takes on multiple significations. Worn by George Anderson parading through Renfield Street it is the very icon of capitalist success and social standing; in the shipyards of the Clyde, it retains a modicum of that signification of standing – or at least suggests a social aspiration – but one which, far from transporting the wearer across a class divide, serves to imply instead their professional, supervisory function, but in a restrictive working-class context.

In the sun their bowler hats shone grey with dust. A foreman might dress much as he liked but his headgear had to be the bowler hat, symbol and survival of the Holy Victorian Empire and Scottish Presbyterianism.⁷⁵

The dust-covered bowler hats in this context are a paradoxical, ironic subversion of a symbol of the capitalist businessman. Worn by the upper working-class Glasgow shipyard foremen in a city with a raw religious divide, there are, in addition, undercurrents of sectarianism due to the associations of the headgear with the Orange Order and, as the narrator suggests, Scottish Presbyterianism. The context of social class therefore determines the symbolic weight and ideological hue of the bowler hat.

However, for a readership in the 1930s the bowler-hatted workers would also, to some degree, recall Charlie Chaplin's similarly attired, iconic screen tramp who appeared in many short films and features between 1914 – 1936, thus rendering a gloss of comic absurdity to the already socially-contradictory garb of the foremen. Identifying them with an urban poor rather than the successful businessmen of Renfield Street, the dust covering plays a pivotal role in subverting the image. Of course, the bowler hat does not derive its multi-faceted symbolism purely from cinema, but here gains piquancy and its metonymic functionalism from film.

Both the enduring potency of the symbolism and the bowler hat as metonym are illustrated in a scene from the propaganda film *Let Glasgow Flourish* (1952) made by the socialist Dawn Cine Group. The Group was seeking to expose the extent of Glasgow's housing problems and the inadequacy of the Corporation of Glasgow's public housing plan. As well as utilising the montage technique by this time commonplace in Scottish documentary filmmaking, the film is politically didactic and ostensibly relates the story of the 'storm of protest that swept the city council from power.'⁷⁶ Using footage from an actual protest march to signal large-scale objection to the proposed Merrylee Housing Project, intercut with staged dramatic scenes, the Dawn Cine Group sought to highlight the extent of the housing problem by showing the disparity in conditions for rich and poor across the city. Following footage of the gathering forces of the march, the scene cuts to exterior shots of City Hall; then to a shot suggesting the interior, where a close-up reveals a hat rack dominated by bowler hats. Cutting to (staged) scenes of political activism where protestors leaflet voters at a polling station and chalk slogans onto the pavement, there is a close-up of a ballot box with a disembodied hand entering the frame to cast a vote. Back to the sequenced exterior shots of City Hall and to the interior shot of the same hat rack, another

disembodied hand removes a bowler hat and replaces it with its antithetical class symbol, a flat cap. This shot concisely conveys the message and means of social and political change, concluding the ‘cause and effect’ montage sequence. In this case the middle- and upper-class domination of the Corporation of Glasgow is revealed to the audience, though a certain section of that audience might also perceive the city’s malaise of sectarianism and the widely-held view that the Corporation maintained an anti-Catholic, Presbyterian bias.

As an illustration of the span and universality of this very specific form of cinematic symbolism, an example of this metonymic device is employed to similar effect in Sergei Eisenstein’s *Strike* (1924). Set in a Russian factory that undergoes an uprising by the workers, when the workers assume control of the factory, the manager – who is subordinate to the Director, a man identifiable by his rotund figure and top hat – wearing a white suit and straw boater rather incongruous with the grimy industrial surroundings, is wheeled in a barrow by the mob to an embankment and thrown into a filthy pool of water. As he splutters his way to the bank, the camera lingers on his now dislodged straw boater floating in the pool. Briefly cutting back to the sodden manager, the camera again seeks out the now tattered and muddied, semi-immersed straw boater, the image seemingly preferred to the soaking manager as a symbol of authority irreversibly deposed from power (fig. 13a – 13f).⁷⁷ With a keen appreciation of Russian socialist cinema, Barke provided a measure of continuity between Eisenstein’s use of metonymy and its appearance in a Scottish political film in the 1950s; the author could be argued to be in some small way a literary acolyte of the former and precursor to the latter.

The Ideological Function

Drawing on the power inherent in such ideologically coded film scenes, Barke employed a 'camera-eye' technique in *Major Operation* that time and again suggested the unfeasibility of the neutral registering of an image. Each literary image drawn by Barke strives to develop the notion of an underlying political relationship and power imbalance. For instance, the visual consciousness of Barke's middle-class characters seems to be influenced by their social status and is an often idealised one, more readily abstracted from any feeling of involvement in the scene. The Anderson party travel to Inverary by car:

As they topped the hill above Old Kilpatrick the Clyde opened before them, shimmering in the sun. Even the oil tanks at Bowling were transformed. A blue funnel boat was going down the river, fresh from a repaint at Govan Dock. She slid across the sylvan background of Erskine Estate: fantastic, unreal. A dirty coaler passed her: belching smoke. Dignity and impudence.⁷⁸

Not only are the Anderson party viewing the scene through the 'screen' of the car windows, they are also consuming the cinematic images with a class-conscious, aesthetic organising principle. The image of the funnel boat is described as 'fantastic' and 'unreal' in the way an image on the cinema screen is both fantastic and unreal. It is presented as something of surface appearance which is there to interest the eye but not in any sense tangibly present. The majesty of this boat for the party signifies a certain intuitive 'dignity' that places it in opposition to the less-than-aesthetically-grand coaler, which equally intuitively is assumed to be imbued with 'impudence'. Deep-rooted, sub-conscious class coding is implied in the imagery of the scene. The additional charge of irony to this scene is that the presence of the coaler is one of the essential mechanisms of Anderson's hitherto successful business life and is involved in the process that has ensconced him comfortably in the middle class. The visual interplay between the funnel boat, the coaler and even the Andersons' car affords the

reader a cinematic sense of the juxtaposition of these images to further emphasise the economic link between them in the process of capitalism.

Furthermore, approaching and fully imbibing the spectacle of a toiling hiker, the group are again voyeuristically privileged observers in their motor car with the ability to achieve an accelerated rush of images as they drive through the countryside.

They approached a girl in full hiking kit. Clad only in a shirt, abbreviated shorts, thick hand-knitted socks turned down over a pair of heavy infantry boots, she carried on her back a Herbergan rucksack that in its enormous bulk suggested a weight of not less than fifty-six pounds. And yet the enormous rucksack was balanced by the girl's enormous thighs which, thick as Belfast hams, were sunburned a painful lobster red. As the weight on her back and shoulders inclined her spine forward, her hips were thrust backwards adding a grotesque and slightly Rabelasian touch to her ensemble.

Traffic automatically slowed down on approach and heads turned as they drew level. The Andersons were no exception.⁷⁹

Detectable in this excerpt, and derived from the same suggestion of latent sexual engagement with the visual spectacle, is a coincidence with (that most cinematic of modernist texts) *Ulysses*. In the 'Calypso' episode, Leopold Bloom, at the mercy of his libido, attempts to follow a servant girl as she walks home from the butcher's shop and maintains his pace in order to prolong his voyeuristic thrill. Bloom gazes longingly at her 'moving hams,' in the same terms of reference and the same manner as Anderson gazes at the hiker via the ersatz cinema screen of the car window in *Major Operation*.⁸⁰ Anderson is a voyeur, enjoying the spectacle from the sanctity of the car, which glosses the scene with an unreal quality forged in both the cinema and the city. The vehicle's occupants are thus distanced from the object of their gaze which for them effectively becomes a form of 'reality' entertainment from which they feel at a certain remove.

This effect, albeit used to illustrate a very stark social divide and make an overt political point, is noted by Keith Williams in his consideration of Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937) when the author reports the sight, witnessed from the window of a train, of a young woman 'poking a stick up a leaden waste-pipe,' remarking on her face exhibiting 'the most desolate, hopeless expression.' As Williams discovered in the course of his research of Orwell's original diary entry, the author had in fact walked past the girl – which explains how he managed to note her expression in such detail – but in the published book had shifted his own location to the train, 'a transparency framing the woman exactly like a lens, but also a barrier to closer contact.'⁸¹ Lara Feigel, commenting on the same discrepancy between diary entry and published account concurs with this motivation and characterises Orwell's editorialising as designed to 'attain a cinematic distance [and] his distance from his subject.'⁸² The implications here are at least two-fold: there is such a thing as 'cinematic distance' available to the consciousness and inherent in certain specular modes; the reporting of the real – documentary realism – is a highly undependable genre (and certainly a misnomer) that is eminently falsifiable and renders unstable the privilege assigned to the genre by many on the Left.

Evident from some of the more prominent film expositions of reality in the 1930s, there was established what could be deemed a realist aesthetic that was beyond a straightforward representation of the real: Grierson termed it the 'creative treatment of actuality.' As Neil Sinyard points out, Grierson's *Coal Face* (1935) uses 'Auden's verse and Benjamin Britten's music to aestheticise the angry observation' so that the inscribed characteristic of this aesthetic is a view that is 'identifiably middle class [...] an outsider who sympathises but who does not belong.'⁸³ To Sinyard's mind this rendered the excursion into documentary realism in fact an aesthetic treatment and

editing of reality for political effect. In general terms, the ‘social realism’ of the documentary makers could more accurately be termed a poetic realism, whereby more often than not ‘the film’s focus on the working classes [was problematised] by indirectly revealing the bourgeois position of the author/viewer created by the aesthetic.’ A more fundamental premise of this argument is one that warns of the danger of assuming the camera’s ‘neutral agency.’ As Bazin postulated, assumptions of the camera’s ‘innocence in the recording process’⁸⁴ that set film apart from other art forms and all but argued the formalist abstraction of the filmmaker could be contended merely to dupe the viewer into erroneously accepting it as an untreated revelation of reality. What can be said of film is that something has been – no more, no less. But there is no possibility of an ‘eye that is without affect’⁸⁵ as there will always be some collateral ethical or political inflection entailed in the recording of the image; in the case of the novel this effect is exacerbated.

Perhaps this gave rise to one of the freedoms more readily enjoyed by narrative film-makers as opposed to documentary ones, to avoid such scrutiny of their adopted position in that there was no assumption of an overt social or political agenda. This is not to say these films did not entail some effects of political and social commentary designed to simulate reality. Raymond Williams’ ruminations on naturalism and film-making may prove helpful here in that he recognised that naturalism retained ‘close historical associations with socialism’ and defined it as a ‘movement and [...] method [...] concerned to show that people are inseparable from their real social and physical environments.’⁸⁶ This definition shifts the onus away from the narrower, formal prescriptions of social realism, thereby opening up the possibility for reconciliation of aesthetic, innovative and radical treatments of ‘reality.’

Equally, notions of what constituted reality were being put under increasing pressure by the lived experience of the city-dweller, for whom rapid visual ‘intercuts’ and accelerated or compressed spatio-temporal processes were the norm. In consideration of the experience of modernity and the cinema, Michael Rogin summarised the effects produced by American filmmaker D. W. Griffith’s montage technique as having ‘collapsed the distinctions between images in the head and events in the world...[thereby creating] an art of simultaneities and juxtapositions rather than tradition and continuities.’⁸⁷ John Dos Passos, one of the era’s most overtly cinematically-conscious writers, similarly identified a shift in the visual culture of the United States, ‘from being a wordminded people,’ he proclaimed, ‘we are becoming an eyeminded people.’⁸⁸ Dos Passos recognised the value of the image and ‘an art of surface appearance’ that was nevertheless capable of subtly exposing the complex social and economic aspects that existed beneath that surface. Barke too was drawn to the surface appearance for its ability, when rendered in a specific way, to reveal the socio-economic base. Unlike Dos Passos, however, Barke found it hard to resist occasionally resorting to commentary, apparently harbouring a fear that beneath-the-surface conditions could remain concealed unless pointed out.

Though his writing indicates that Barke was occasionally concerned his message might be too subtle for his readers, his city novel emulated Dos Passos’ famous portrayal of New York in *Manhattan Transfer* (1927) by pursuing at least to some extent an approach similar to what David Seed describes as the American author’s ‘decentred method of description through brief narrative fragments.’⁸⁹ Identifying Dos Passos’ writing with the cinema, D.H. Lawrence declared it ‘like a movie-picture with an intricacy of different stories and no close-ups and no writing in between. Mr. Dos Passos,’ he reiterated, ‘leaves out the writing in between.’⁹⁰ For

significant swathes of Barke's novel, he too adopts a paratactic style with a lack of 'writing in between,' the constantly shifting perspectives ensuring a multiplication of views that remain highly mobile and expand the psycho-geographic space of each narrative tableau. Perhaps indicating a last-minute failure of his artistic convictions in some episodes, the narrative commentary does intrude on the roving camera like a documentary voice-over, which (unwittingly) makes it all the more apparent where other episodes are left to reveal their deeper meaning by the implications of their surface appearance.

In its early stages in particular, Barke's novel is heavily reliant on the implications derived from the montage of episodes. The overblown pomp and ceremony of the Burns' Club outing is in montage collision with the more modest gathering of the MacKelvie leader squad in the local pub after work. The comparison is established between the would-be grandeur of the pretentious, self-entitled drunks of the Burns' Club and the salt-of-the-earth honesty of the working men unsullied by the other group's excessive thirst for alcohol and social climbing. Though all of the same class, the members of the Club are aping the social mores of the middle and upper classes while the working men are, by comparison, relatively content and secure in their collective identity. There is a sense that the maintenance of the social position of the middle-class Anderson party and the superficial aspirations of the Burns' Club require a certain amount of public visual performativity, certainly when compared with the more natural interaction between the working men in the environment of their local pub. Barke's satirical, cartoon-like depiction of the Burns' Club was also an indication of the general disdain he, as a Burns scholar of considerable note, held for such organisations and foreshadowed the antagonism that was to develop between himself and the Burns Federation in years to come.

As the cross-sectional montage of episodes develops, Barke brings his class-consciousness, political conviction, social commentary and cinematic vision together. In an episode ironically entitled ‘Invitation to the Waltz’, walking home from the pub through the slum areas by the Clyde, Conner tries to persuade MacKelvie of the benefits of siding with the Independent Labour Party (I.L.P.) while Jock voices his political objections to the (real-life) I.L.P. leaders, such as Davie Kirkwood, Neil MacLean and, in the timeline of the novel, the then leader of the Labour Party and Prime Minister of a minority government, Ramsay MacDonald. Failing to achieve agreement by the conclusion of their conversation, the narrative notes that ‘the fact that MacKelvie was not going to join the I.L.P. made no difference to their friendship. First they were mates: comrades of the dock bottom.’⁹¹ Solidarity overcoming minor political difference is a core value of their class here established. Underpinning the characters’ political concerns, it becomes apparent that their conversation is geographically contextual; as the men walk through the most deprived area of the city their conversation takes on an added relevance and gravity, the need for political change to instigate social justice more obviously pressing. The reinforcing montage technique enhances this point, repeatedly intercutting between this conversation and the middle-class yachting party.

In the episode that immediately follows, ‘Sail on Loch Fyne’, the languid group on Rowatt’s yacht are untroubled by the need for conversation as they relax in loungers on the deck. Managing to isolate Rowatt, the object of her own adulterous romantic fixation, from the rest of the group, Mabel Anderson sums up the essential principle of their visit to the Loch: “‘Just think,” she said ingenuously to Rowatt. “Only two hours from Glasgow and yet we might be a thousand miles from civilisation!’”⁹² Mabel and Rowatt then engage in a mutually solipsistic discussion on

the unsatisfactory state of her current situation, their respective desires for the future, expressing the sense of entrapment they both feel, despite evidence to the contrary and talk of ‘doing the States’ for the summer. The reader sees the duo maintained in a rarefied atmosphere of class privilege where quotidian concerns are none too pressing and drama is artificially generated. In light of the previous conversation between Conner and MacKelvie, the frippery of this exchange creates a deep sense of irony with the talk of entrapment – entirely a psychological one and not the genuine economic and physical entrapment suffered by the working classes. Mabel and Rowatt’s conversation is further thrown into relief in the next episode in which Jean MacKelvie visits the cinema – ‘hoping for the best: prepared not to be disappointed at the worst’ – to see *She Sinned for Love*, after which she considers that ‘she was not enamoured of the sophisticated love-making of the foolish Hollywood puppets.’⁹³ Of course, in her scathing critique of the film Jean provides an unwitting and equally scathing comment on the characters of Mabel and Rowatt.

Not only are these episodes ironically juxtaposed to emphasise the disparity in conversation, character, lifestyle and expectations, but they are further linked by an apparently trivial yet telling action. As MacKelvie and Bill Conner set off through the streets ‘Conner handed MacKelvie a Woodbine,’ in what is an unspoken gesture that signals their comradeship and, for men on the breadline, this small act is one of presumably oft-repeated camaraderie. At Loch Fyne, Mabel’s emphatic proclamation of unhappiness ‘caused Rowatt to light a cigarette – and forget to offer one to Mabel.’⁹⁴ These minor but visual actions are highly cinematic in their underpinning of the collision of the episodes in the mind of the reader. This matching of the action – ‘parallel editing,’ as it were – creates a sense of simultaneity and supports the implications of the montage to reveal deeper psychological truths about the differing

attitudes of the working and middle classes. Conner unthinkingly handing MacKelvie a cigarette, and Rowatt equally unthinkingly failing to offer a cigarette to Mabel, contain their own subtle signification that requires simply the visual image and barest narrative discourse, free of extraneous commentary, to convey the message.

Returning to the journey of MacKelvie and Conner, the next episode is more straightforwardly entitled, 'The Smells of Slumdom'. The walk through Moore Street – 'the link between the respectable quarters of South Partick and its slum area adjoining the river'⁹⁵ – precipitates MacKelvie's interior monologue in light of his conversation with Conner: he considers his own political position, his working-class upbringing, and the prospects of ever achieving social justice. In contrast to the self-indulgence of Mabel and Rowatt in the surroundings of Loch Fyne, MacKelvie does indeed carry the weight of the world on his shoulders. And in working-class Glasgow he is continually reminded of the cause of his troubles, his senses assailed at every turn.

The Cinematic Technique

The presence of the cinema, and the influence of cinematic technique throughout Barke's novel, leaves the reader in no doubt as to its new-found centrality as the most affordable and accessible form of mass entertainment in the Second City. Even the great ideologue Jock MacKelvie attends the cinema, though perhaps exercising a measure of caution and reservation along the way. As the narrative voice explains: 'People attend the cinema to change one form of boredom for another: hoping for the best: prepared not to be disappointed at the worst. This was the MacKelvies' attitude.'⁹⁶ And it is an attitude one may expect from the earnest socialist: appreciative of the break from the rigours of life but aware that the dream

peddled by the film-maker is just that, an unattainable fantasy. For the character of MacKelvie, he is concerned that the cinema-goer must remain conscious of the entertainment as illusory escapism; one must guard against the dangers of failing to recognise the reality of society's economic fabric. The reader may suspect that this rather dour sentiment is one that Barke regards as fitting for the character of MacKelvie but, on this occasion, does not necessarily fully concur with himself. In this respect there is a distinction to be made between mainstream Hollywood cinema and political / artistic cinema production that would not have been available on general release and therefore would be inaccessible for the majority of the cinema-going population of Glasgow. The politically and socially conscious directors of Soviet, German and Scandinavian cinema were producing films far more commensurate with MacKelvie's internationalist Socialist views.⁹⁷ However, MacKelvie's only chance to see these films would be as a member of a Film Society, a convoluted and cumbersome plot device to introduce into the novel, as well as one incompatible with MacKelvie's selfless, austere character traits. More significantly, the demography of the Film Societies' membership tended more toward the middle class than the working class; the formation of Workers' Film Societies in some cities provided wider access.

To emphasise the escapist function of mainstream film, Barke lists the programme choice for Jock and Jean MacKelvie's trip to the cinema. Again he gently satirises the standard fare produced by Hollywood, devising such generic film titles as 'Ginger Love', 'Purple Passion', 'Love Deferred', and the slightly racy sounding, 'She Sinned for Love' (echoing the title of the Oscar nominated *She Done Him Wrong* (1933) starring Mae West and Carrie Grant). While these film titles are all inventions that serve a satirical purpose, the film that Jock and Jean decide to see is a comic short

called ‘Tenderfoot Tim’, starring Slim McGurk. It is interesting to note that, though Slim McGurk appears to be a fictional film actor, the title ‘Tenderfoot Tim’ did exist and was actually a British Boy Scouts Association promotional film released in 1936.⁹⁸ The title derives from a short-lived Vic Forsythe comic strip that appeared in American newspapers during 1913 – 1914⁹⁹, but it is at very least a note-worthy coincidence (taking cognisance of the very tight time-line between film release and book publication) that this is the film title Barke appropriates in his novel. If Barke’s is a conscious reference to the 1936 film then it would tend to reinforce Jock MacKelvie’s aversion to cinematic frivolity and the influence of Hollywood. For the 1930s reader, however, a further possible allusion in this reference may be to the proliferation of organised youth movements that were common to all parts of the political spectrum in the 1930s.¹⁰⁰ In either case it may have had a resonance for the 1930s reader as a rather odd choice of film for the couple on one of their relatively infrequent trips to the cinema.

Equally, explored in *Major Operation*, in the modern city, as has been noted, is the discontinuity of the fragmentary experience compounded by the ability to travel at increased speed. Viewing the world through the windscreen of car, tram or train is in itself an approximation of the essential properties of the film medium. The film’s effect of a ‘mobilised virtual gaze’ is posited by Anne Friedberg who traces a culture of movement and visibility from the dioramas and panoramas of the nineteenth century ‘into the twentieth century mobilisation of the consumer through the imaginary landscapes of cinema.’¹⁰¹ In *Major Operation* Rowatt’s desire for incessant motion is both a consequence and an essential facet of city life that finds its expression in his racing consciousness as he recreates the perceptual sensation of a speeding car seeking an unavailable escape. Rowatt’s interior monologue is testament

to the paradoxical accelerated mobility of the middle classes in the city and their desire to break from its hold:

Let's get a car that can do sixty at least: go like hell and all will be well. Get a move on. An even chance of escaping from the wrath to come. No very clear idea of where to go: all roads seem to lead to...the blues. Tried this one? No! Well, step on it.

Step on it: that's the key. Get a move on: somewhere! anywhere. But keep moving. A moving target is more difficult than a stationary one.¹⁰²

This impulse to constant motion is another suggestion of a form of alienation that can be allied to cinema's relentless flow of images and the constant motion of the capitalist city. There is neither respite from movement nor arrival at destination, merely the imperative to remain in motion. The 'blues', a term Rowatt (or rather Barke) culls from Hollywood's stylised screen versions of American cultural life, situates the influence for this interior monologue as coming from this cinematic context and sounds particularly alien set against the tradition of Scottish literature. The style of Barke's writing anticipates the American beat writers of the 1950s and 1960s and suggests a common thread of cultural influence as well as a reaction against it, i.e. to Hollywood cinema. This passage is particularly evocative of a literary rendition of a jazz music style, both this and the constant journey theme later developed in its most iconic guise by Jack Kerouac in *On the Road* (1957). Kerouac's spiritual quest motif is also a kind of rejection of the consumer journey. Rowatt's interior monologue shares less in common with the traditional Scottish mindset than it does with a 'modern' American urban consciousness; his life in the city is a conflation of his environment with the discursive locales of modernity produced on the cinema screen.

- ¹ Giuliana Bruno, 'Haptic Space: Film and the Geography of Modernity', in *Visualizing the City*, ed. by Alan Marcus and Dietrich Neumann (London and New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 13 – 30 (p. 26).
- ² James Barke, 'Living in Scotland', *The Scottish Field*, January 1956, cutting retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ³ David Seed, in the preface to *Literature and the Visual Media*, ed. by David Seed (Cambridge: D.S. Brewer, 2005), p. xi.
- ⁴ John Brandane, 'The Play: *The Gregarach*', *The Scottish Player*, 4.32 (March 1926), p. 4.
- ⁵ *When the Boys Come Home* was staged by the Glasgow Unity Theatre, Athenaeum Buildings Buchanan Street on Thurs/Fri and Sat, 21 June – 14 July 1945.
- ⁶ Herbert Marshall, in a letter to James Barke, dated 28 September 1945, retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow. The original dustcover to *Land of the Leal* sported a highly stylised picture reminiscent of a Hollywood poster, with a couple not too dissimilar to Clark Gable and Vivien Leigh, but in a Scottish rural setting, each clutching farm implements and gazing off dreamily into a romantic sunset. The effect is part-Hollywood, part-Highland romance, part-Soviet agricultural propaganda poster, which is an apposite image for the book and for the influences on the author's 1930s writing in general terms.
- ⁷ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 18.
- ⁸ A letter to Barke from 'O.H.', 3 Camstradden Drive, Bearsden, Glasgow, dated 3 November 1943, retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ⁹ The London Film Society is, in fact, a retronym, as throughout its existence, and by virtue of it being the first such organisation in Britain, it was merely referred to as the Film Society. For the purposes of clarity, I will continue to differentiate the Glasgow and London Societies by use of the retronym. Also, characteristically of the rivalry between the cities, there are claims that the Edinburgh Film Guild – also established in 1929 – was the first and longest running film society in Scotland, countered by claims that the Film Society of Glasgow was in fact the first and longest running. The argument is neither pertinent to this thesis nor likely to be resolved.
- ¹⁰ Lara Thompson, 'The Film Society is Formed, London', http://www.luxonline.org.uk/history/1900-1949/the_film_society.html [accessed on 18 June 2009]. For a more comprehensive survey of the history of the (London) Film Society, see Jen Samson, 'The Film Society, 1925 - 1939', in *All Our Yesterdays: 90 Years of British Cinema*, ed. by Charles Barr (London: BFI Publishing, 1986), pp. 306 – 313.
- ¹¹ Searle Kochberg, 'Censorship and Classification', <http://cw.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415409285/resources/cens.pdf> [accessed on 24 June 2011].
- ¹² Julian Petley, 'Cinema and State', in *All Our Yesterdays*, ed. by C. Barr (London: BFI, 1986), pp. 31 – 45 (p. 44).
- ¹³ From the FSG Programme, Fourth Season, 32nd Performance on 26 February 1933, retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ¹⁴ From the Film Society of Glasgow Constitution and AGM 'minutes' book, retained at the National Library of Scotland (Scottish Screen Archive), Montrose Avenue, Glasgow.
- ¹⁵ From the FSG 150th Meeting Commemorative Pamphlet, retained at the National Library of Scotland (Scottish Screen Archive), Montrose Avenue, Glasgow.
- ¹⁶ *Ein Lichtspiel: Schwartz-Weiss-Grau*, dir. Lazlo Moholy-Nagy (1932), http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWAXS5_Mqsl&feature=related [accessed on 29 November 2011].
- ¹⁷ 'Glasgow Demolished Cinemas', <http://www.scottishcinemas.org.uk/glasgow/demolished.php> [accessed 18 June 2009].
- ¹⁸ During season 1931/32, of a ticket receipt and subscription-generated income totalling £199, only £6 of this was attributable to guest tickets, representing only 3.4% of the total. What these accounts do not reveal, however, are the cost of membership subscriptions and the cost of an individual guest ticket, therefore it is difficult to translate these financial accounts into actual attendance numbers. In the absence of documentation to the contrary, we have to operate on the basis that there was a steady and comparable pricing policy for membership subscriptions and guest tickets. During the 1932/33 season, the guest to membership ratio drops to 0.6% and also shows a differentiation in membership tickets between 'ordinary' and 'student' tickets. We may speculate that this differentiation in 'ordinary' and 'student' memberships may well account for the drop in guest numbers, as students, previously only able to afford to attend occasional meetings, would have been able to purchase a reduced price concession membership. The following seasons show guest / membership attendance ratios of 4.3% (1933/34), 9.9% (1934/35), 8.5% (1935/36) and 15% (1936/37) respectively. From this we may deduce that in the early years of the Society, fully paid-up members made up the overwhelming bulk of the attendees at the film screenings.
- ¹⁹ From the Film Society of Glasgow 150th Meeting Commemorative pamphlet, retained at the National Library of Scotland (Scottish Screen Archive), Montrose Avenue, Glasgow.
- ²⁰ James Barke, *The Green Hills Far Away: A Chapter in Autobiography* (London & Glasgow: Collins, 1940), p. 151.
- ²¹ *Street Scene*, dir. by King Vidor (Samuel Goldwyn Company, 1931), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oFVJbNNWvXY> [accessed on 29 November 2011].
- ²² James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 18.
- ²³ King Vidor was one of the more artistic directors tolerated by Hollywood. For instance, his classic of urban alienation, *The Crowd* (1929) owes much to expressionistic city films.
- ²⁴ Cara Marisa Deleon, 'Ideology and Reality: Society and Vsevolod Pudovkin's *Mother*', in *Senses of Cinema*, <http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/06/40/pudovkin-mother.html> [accessed on 20 April 2009]
- ²⁵ James Barke, 'Newspaper Leader on the Place of Cinema', a hand-written essay, completed as part of the University of Glasgow Preliminary Examination in English, which Barke passed in April 1922, though he did not go on to fulfil this early academic promise, failing to take up a place at the University as an undergraduate. Essay retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ²⁶ James Barke, *Major Operation*, pp. 489 – 490.
- ²⁷ Cara Marisa Deleon.
- ²⁸ *Mother*, dir. Vsevolod Pudovkin (Mezhrabpom-Rus, 1926), <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Kl3jZtruxvA> [accessed 29 November 2011]
- ²⁹ James Barke, *The Green Hills Far Away*, p. 15. The film student in question remains unidentified beyond the first name, Arthur.
- ³⁰ James Barke, *The Green Hills Far Away*, p. 15.
- ³¹ In a letter dated 11 November 1935 and sent to James Barke by 'Arthur', Dongouerovskaya Slobada, Dom Za Kv. 113, Moscow, USSR, retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ³² Though undated, the content of the script suggests it was written by Barke sometime during 1941/1942.

- ³³ James Barke, 'Film Investigation: "Clydeside"', retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ³⁴ James Barke in a letter to Herbert Marshall dated 30 August 1942, retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ³⁵ Herbert Marshall in a letter to James Barke, dated 9 September 1942, retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ³⁶ James Barke, *Land of the Leal* (London: Collins, 1939; repr. Edinburgh: Canongate, 1987), p. 443.
- ³⁷ James Donald, 'The City, The Cinema: Modern Spaces', in *Visual Culture*, ed. by Chris Jenks (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), pp. 77 – 95 (p. 84).
- ³⁸ David B. Clarke, 'Introduction: Previewing the Cinematic City' in *The Cinematic City*, ed. by David Clarke (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 1 – 18 (p. 1).
- ³⁹ James Barke, *The World His Pillow* (London: Collins, 1933), p. 229.
- ⁴⁰ Alasdair Gray, *Lanark* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 1981), this excerpt being reproduced in David B. Clarke, 'Introduction: Previewing the Cinematic City', p. 19.
- ⁴¹ Colin McArthur, 'Chinese Boxes and Russian Dolls: Tracking the Elusive Cinematic City', in *The Cinematic City*, ed. by David B. Clarke (London & New York: Routledge, 1997), pp. 19 - 45 (p. 19).
- ⁴² *Der Blaue Engel* (1930) was a Josef von Sternberg directed film starring Marlene Deitrich as a dancer in a Berlin club who becomes the object of the affections of a well-to-do professor. It was screened by the Film Society of Glasgow during the 1933-34 season.
- ⁴³ James Barke, *The Green Hills Far Away*, p. 18.
- ⁴⁴ James Barke, *The World His Pillow*, p. 263.
- ⁴⁵ James Barke, *The World His Pillow*, p. 289. Also, the film referred to in this passage may be *Delicious Little Devil* (1919) starring Rudolph Valentino and Mae Murray, which is a tale of a poor Irish girl having to pretend to be a 'scandalous woman of the world' in order to get a job as a dancer in a cabaret. Ultimately she falls in love with the millionaire (Valentino) and has to 'establish her innocence' in order to marry. If not this film, it is likely a hybrid of this type and certainly one of similar theme and style. Information available at 'The Mont Alto Motion Picture Orchestra: Recordings', <http://www.mont-alto.com/recordings.html> [accessed 19 June 2009]
- ⁴⁶ James Barke, *The World His Pillow*, p. 291.
- ⁴⁷ Jamie Sexton, 'Synopsis of *Hell Untld*', BFI Screen Online, <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/440480/index.html> [accessed 27 June 2011].
- ⁴⁸ John R. Gold and Stephen V. Ward, 'Of Plans and Planners: Documentary Film and the Challenge of the Urban Future, 1935 – 52' in *The Cinematic City*, ed. by David B. Clarke (London: Routledge, 1997), pp. 59 – 82 (p. 61).
- ⁴⁹ These photographs, retained in the James Barke archive at the Mitchell Library, Glasgow, are of a stage version of the novel and are likely to have been taken at one of the Glasgow Unity Theatre performances of 1942 – 43. They are otherwise unidentified.
- ⁵⁰ *The Crowd*, dir. by King Vidor (MGM, 1928).
- ⁵¹ Barke did provide the script for an Anglo-Scottish Pictures Ltd. documentary *The Fair County of Ayr* (1948) commissioned by the Town Planning Committee of Ayr County Council for their 1949 Exhibition.
- ⁵² James Barke, *Major Operation*, pp. 18 – 19.
- ⁵³ Lara Feigel, *Literature, Cinema and Politics 1930 – 1945: Reading Between the Frames* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), pp. 67 – 68. Though Feigel asserts Grierson's 'Marxist focus,' this did not extend to an explicit economic critique given the nature of Government and corporate sponsorship of his documentary filmmaking.
- ⁵⁴ Ian Spring, *Phantom Village: The Myth of the New Glasgow* (Edinburgh: Polygon, 1990), p. 47.
- ⁵⁵ James Donald, p. 80.
- ⁵⁶ James Donald, p. 84.
- ⁵⁷ James Donald, p. 84.
- ⁵⁸ James Donald, p. 84.
- ⁵⁹ James Donald, p. 84.
- ⁶⁰ *Berlin: Symphony of a Great City*, dir. by Walter Ruttmann (Deutsche Vereins-Film and Les Productions Fox Europa, 1927).
- ⁶¹ Hugo Munsterberg, *The Photoplay: A Psychological Study* (London and New York: D. Appleton, 1916) excerpt reproduced in, James Donald, 'The City, The Cinema: Modern Spaces', in *Visual Culture*, ed. by Chris Jenks (London & New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 85.
- ⁶² Ian Aitken, *Alberto Cavalcanti: Realism, Surrealism and National Cinema* (Trowbridge: Flicks Books, 2000), p. 19.
- ⁶³ Norman Wilson, 'Literature and the Film', *Outlook*, 1.6 (September 1936), 75 – 80 (pp. 78 – 80).
- ⁶⁴ Neil Sinyard, *Filming Literature: The Art of Screen Adaptation* (London & Sydney: Croom Helm, 1986), p. vii.
- ⁶⁵ Neil Sinyard, p. 56.
- ⁶⁶ Lara Feigel, p. 3.
- ⁶⁷ James Donald, p. 84.
- ⁶⁸ James Barke, *Major Operation*, pp. 17 – 18.
- ⁶⁹ James Barke, *Major Operation: The Play of the Novel* (Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1943), p. 9.
- ⁷⁰ James Barke, typescript for *The Night of the Big Blitz* (1940) retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archive Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ⁷¹ W. H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood, 'On the Frontier: A Melodrama in Three Acts' (1937 – 38), in *W. H. Auden: Plays and Other Dramatic Writings 1928 – 1938*, ed. by Edward Mendelson (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 375.
- ⁷² James Barke, *Major Operation: The Play of the Novel* (Glasgow: William MacLellan, 1943), p.81.
- ⁷³ Jack Jones, 'Glasgow Jottings', a review of the stage play of *Major Operation*, in an undated (though assumed to be late 1941/early 1942 when the play was staged in Glasgow) newspaper cutting entitled 'Glasgow Jottings' retained in the James Barke Archive, Special Archives Collection, Mitchell Library, Glasgow.
- ⁷⁴ Norman Wilson, pp. 78 – 80.
- ⁷⁵ James Barke, *Major Operation: The Saga of a Scottish City* (London: Collins, 1936; repr. 1955), p. 31.
- ⁷⁶ *Let Glasgow Flourish*, (Dawn Cine Group, 1952), BFI Screenonline, <http://www.screenonline.org.uk/film/id/684532/synopsis.html> [accessed 12 September 2010].
- ⁷⁷ *Strike*, dir. by Sergei Eisenstein (Goskino and Proletkult, 1925).

- ⁷⁸ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 46. The phrase 'Dignity and Impudence' is the title of an 1839 painting by Sir Edwin Landseer, which depicts a Bloodhound and a West Highland Terrier sharing a kennel and illustrative of the title. Image at <http://www.tate.org.uk/servlet/ViewWork?cgroupid=999999961&workid=8348&searchid=10600&tabview=image> [accessed 15.02.2012]
- ⁷⁹ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 48.
- ⁸⁰ Katherine Mullin, 'Joyce, Early Cinema and the Erotics of Everyday Life', in *Roll Away the Reel World: James Joyce and Cinema*, ed. by John McCourt (Cork: Cork University Press, 2010), pp. 43 – 56 (p. 46).
- ⁸¹ Keith Williams, 'Post / Modern Documentary: Orwell, Agee and the New Reportage', in *Rewriting the Thirties: Modernism and After*, ed. by Keith Williams and Steven Matthews (London and New York: Longman, 1997), pp. 163 – 181 (pp. 170 – 171).
- ⁸² Lara Feigel, p. 79.
- ⁸³ Neil Sinyard, pp. 57 – 58.
- ⁸⁴ David Martin-Jones, *Scotland: Global Cinema; Genres, Modes and Identities* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009), p. 175.
- ⁸⁵ Alan Spiegel, *Fiction and the Camera Eye: Visual Consciousness in Film and Modern Novel* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia, 1976), p. 61.
- ⁸⁶ Raymond Williams, lecture given on 21 July 1985, published in *Talking Films: The Best of The Guardian Film Lectures*, ed. by Andrew Britton (London: Fourth Estate, 1991), pp. 103 – 131 (p. 113).
- ⁸⁷ David Seed, *Cinematic Fictions: The Impact of the Cinema of the American Novel up to the Second World War* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2009), p. 128.
- ⁸⁸ David Seed, pp. 128 – 129.
- ⁸⁹ David Seed, p. 129.
- ⁹⁰ David Seed, p. 130.
- ⁹¹ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 67.
- ⁹² James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 68.
- ⁹³ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 94.
- ⁹⁴ James Barke, *Major Operation*, pp. 65 – 70.
- ⁹⁵ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 71.
- ⁹⁶ James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 93 – 94.
- ⁹⁷ As well as producing its own films, prior to the Nazi's *de facto* appropriation of the film industry by legislative control in 1934, from 1926, the International Workers' Aid-founded Prometheus Film BmbH distributed and exhibited Soviet films, thus making 'Berlin... the gateway for Soviet films into the outside world.' Richard Taylor, *Film Propaganda: Soviet Russia and Nazi Germany*, 2nd edn (London and New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998), pp. 139 – 145.
- ⁹⁸ British Film Institute, Film and TV Database, <http://ftvdb.bfi.org.uk/sift/title/13897> [accessed 26 February 2009]
- ⁹⁹ 'San Francisco Academy of Comic Art Collection, Newspaper Comic Strips: Series I: Comic Features', http://cartoons.osu.edu/finding_aids/sfaca/t.html [accessed 26 February 2009]
- ¹⁰⁰ The most notorious example, of course, being the youth arm of the Nazi Party, the Hitler Youth, though the Communist Party of Great Britain, in common with other socialist organisations in Europe, also had a youth movement in this era.
- ¹⁰¹ Anne Friedberg, *Window Shopping: Cinema and the Postmodern* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993), p. 2. Reproduced in Allen Meek 'Benjamin, the Televisual and the "Fascistic Subject"', <http://www.latrobe.edu.au/screeningthepast/firstrelease/fir998/AMfr4e.htm> [accessed 20 February 2011]
- ¹⁰² James Barke, *Major Operation*, p. 100.

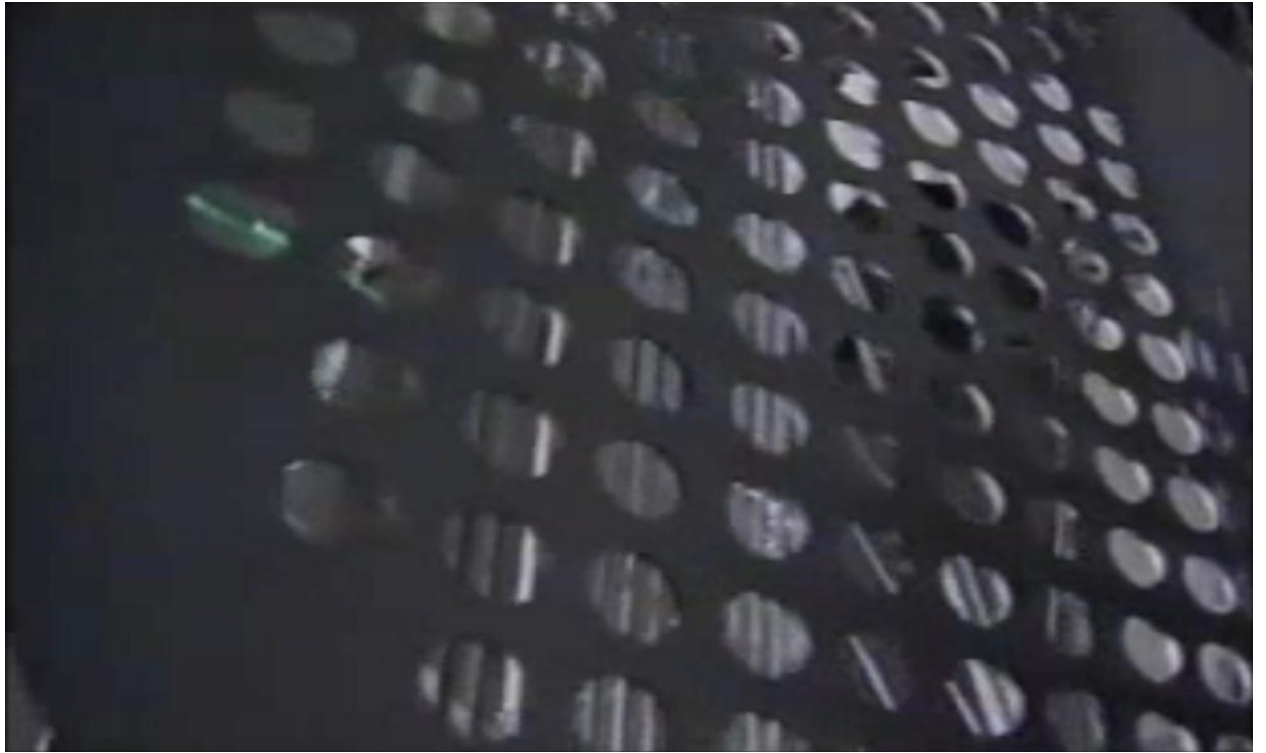


Fig. 7a

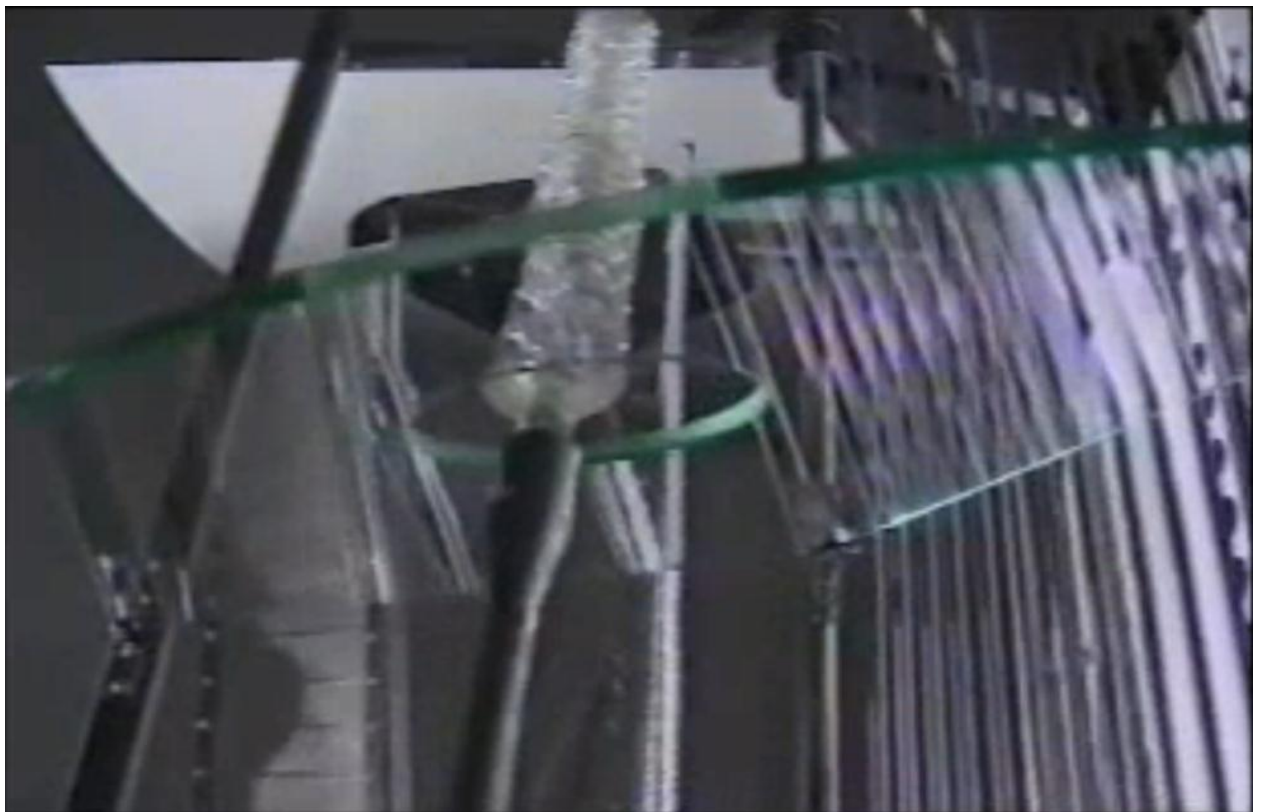


Fig. 7b



Fig. 7c

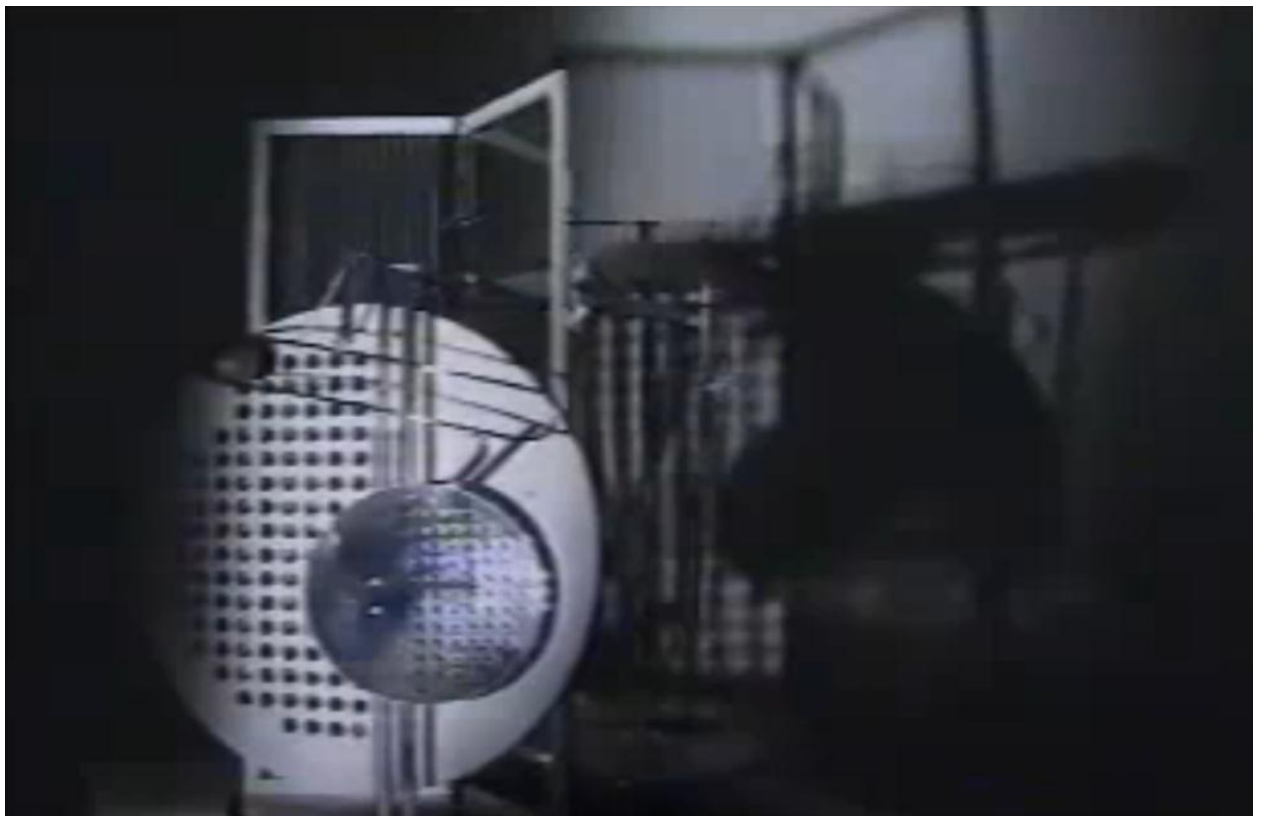


Fig. 7d



Fig. 7e



Fig. 7f



Fig. 7g



Fig. 7h



Fig. 7i



Fig. 7j



Fig. 7k



Fig. 7l



Fig. 8a



Fig. 8b



Fig. 8c



Fig. 8d



Fig. 8e



Fig. 8f



Fig. 8g



Fig. 8h



Fig. 8i



Fig. 8j



Fig. 9a



Fig. 9b



Fig. 9c



Fig. 9d



Fig. 9e



Fig. 9f



Fig. 9g



Fig. 9h



Fig. 9i



Fig. 10a



Fig. 10b



Fig. 11a



Fig. 11b



Fig. 12a



Fig. 13a



Fig. 13b



Fig. 13c



Fig. 13d



Fig. 13e



Fig. 13f