Lumière, Méliès, Benjamin
move from 50-sec, 17m shots of Lumières to
magical narratives of Méliès
Méliès introduces edits
both share an interest in the products of science & industry
trains, Lyons street scenes, Verne-like rocket to moon
how does perception of realistic or fantastic in film differ from theatre?
example of leaf blowing, does shock of magic differ?

How is one to assess the technical & social novelty of film?
Does the novelty alone of new technologies give them a positive
quality of social transformation? Obviously not.
And do new techniques imply any “aesthetic imperatives”? Maybe,
maybe not.

“The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” (1936)
written under influence of rise of Fascism, Benjamin & Brecht
reception and interpretation of art happens in social context
producer/author not sole source of meaning
Attempt to read changes in artistic production in a Marxian vein; this materialist emphasis leads to some interesting theses about the relationship between modes of production and modes of audience reception.

The programmatic nature of Marxian perspective also leads to some tendentious arguments, to make film & photography politically necessary tools, that film is somehow necessarily a more progressive blend of art & science.

Aura = testimonial history of object, authenticity
also seems to imply a kind of “aesthetics of reconciliation” (Adorno)

Original, cultic aura of work “withers in . . . mechanical reproduction” (221)
1) reproduced object of perception
2) distances & masses reached, not immediate relationship
3) object separated from domain of tradition, original social context
Are we losing history w/ reproducibility (221)

Is there a “sense of the universal equality of things” (223)

Does the actor of film become more like a prop? (232)
    at the same time becomes more a kind of aura as celebrity?

What effect of art becoming designed for reproducibility?

Does it hold true that the “distinction between author & producer is about to lose it basic character” (232)

Usefulness of uselessness in art
    Dadaist destruction of aura
        not contemplation or distraction, but shock into action
            épater la bourgeoisie
        does shifting, shocking editing produce analytic response, or a new kind of perceptual inertia? (238)
Warhol, Birth of Venus after Botticelli

Performing the Past, Spring 2001, Lecture 7

Warhol, 100 Cans

Warhol, Mao

Warhol, 4 Marilyns Reversal Series
Epilogue

Fascism takes control of film medium & suppresses its critical function, proposes aura of dictator, aestheticized politics examples today?

John Heartfield, Adolf the Superman: Swallows Gold and Spouts Junk