

Panel C4

Sala Emiciclo
Early Animation



Christine Veras

Rediscovering the Zoetropic Editing

Much of the enchantment of the zoetrope lies in the elegant simplicity of its structure. There are no tricks or difficulties in using or manipulating it. Once the sequentially drawn strip is placed inside, the cylinder is spun, and the animation is seen when looking through the slits. This century-old device is well-known among animation scholars and practitioners, and its use has become a given.

During my PhD research I have encountered references to the “Zoetropic Editing” in the article of Nicolas Dulac and André Gaudreault titled “Circularity and Repetition at the Heart of the Attraction: Optical Toys at the Emergence of a New Cultural Series” (2006) that led me to the catalog of the London Stereoscopic & Photographic Company (c.1870s) which listed many designs for this “new” optical device, the zoetrope, also known as the *wheel of life*. The catalog already suggested the interplay between zoetrope strips that created animated variations by combining different strip’s designs inside the same zoetrope drum. Surprisingly, this playful suggestion of use of the zoetrope strips got lost, and although being recovered by the research of few scholars and collectors, its knowledge and use is still not very popular.

The amazing result of the strips combination can be easily associated with contemporary film editing praxis. Thus, it is possible to state that the visual continuity of movement was already created and proposed by this early optical device, decades before the advent of cinema. Its result is similar to the cut used in film editing techniques, although the length of the action is much shorter and structured on a loop. A narrative is also constructed of loops, and the “linearity” upon which most of the Western stories are based—is composed of fragments inscribed in a major spiral structure. Therefore, this paper aims to review the Zoetropic editing, exploring its imaginative potential for constructing proto-narratives turning to Sergei Eisenstein studies about film montage for redress support. In his *Film Sense* (1975), Eisenstein highlighted the natural human tendency to create associations when objects are placed side by side, and that is what happens when one plays with the Zoetropic editing.

Biography

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Christine Veras has a B.A. in Animation and a M.F.A. in Visual Arts both from the School of Fine Arts at the Federal University of Minas Gerais (UFMG), Brazil. Currently she is a PhD candidate at Nanyang Technological University, School of Art, Design and Media in Singapore. Her PhD research in *Animated Art Installations: Astonishment and the Quest for an Expanded Animation Experience* uses physical and digital multimedia strategies to connect animation and contemporary art installations to provide a unique experience for the public. She is the inventor of a Zoetrope

variation called *Silhouette Zoetrope* (US Patent Number: 9,488,903) that was elected worldwide as one of the TOP 3 Optical Illusions of 2016.