

Tricked Into Truth: *Why We Fight* and Frank Capra's Movements of the Mind

**Tricked into Truth:
Why We Fight and Frank Capra's Movements of the Mind**

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Thesis submitted to the

Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences

University of Technology Sydney

In fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts

2019

CERTIFICATE OF ORIGINAL AUTHORSHIP

I, Richard Sowada declare that this thesis, is submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Master of Arts in the Faculty of Arts and Social Science at the University of Technology Sydney.

This thesis is wholly my own work unless otherwise reference or acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all information sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

This document has not been submitted for qualifications at any other academic institution.

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***This research is supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program
Scholarship***

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Abstract

Between 1942 and 1945 Hollywood director Frank Capra produced a series of seven films made for the United States War Department and designed to educate and motivate American civilians and service people regarding America's role in WW2 and America's relationship with those it was fighting with and fighting against. Entitled *Why We Fight* (*WWF*), I contend the series represents an underappreciated and under researched foundation of post-WW2 avant-garde cinema where a filmmaker usually associated with traditional values (Gallagher 1981, p. 21) and a commercial and establishment position (Girgus 1998, p. 58), changed the course of American experimental, avant-garde and found footage film.

My research explores and defines Capra's new form of collage and found footage-based cinema via the principles of geometry, music and mathematics pioneered by Capra in his production of *Why We Fight* and the creative impact of this work on American post-WW2 avant-garde cinema and 'sample' culture of the 21st century.

This thesis applies the formal parameters of *Why We Fight* to key works from the found footage tradition in order to demonstrate the ways in which Frank Capra's forms, structures and strategies connect with the screen geography, geometry and psychology of avant-garde film. This thesis makes the case for renegotiation of Frank Capra, experimental filmmaker, and demonstrates the influence of his *Why We Fight* series post-WW2 and contemporary avant-garde film cultures.