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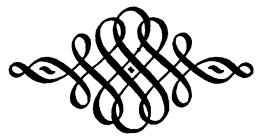

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As the *Hollywood Quarterly* has developed through the nearly six years of its existence, it has become increasingly clear that the material it prints and the audience it addresses are no longer drawn predominately from Hollywood. Hence for over a year the editors of the *Quarterly* have been discussing the desirability of giving the periodical a new title that would be a more accurate indication of its interests and contents. With these considerations in mind, the editors have selected the present title: *Arts and Communications Quarterly—A Journal of Film, Radio, and Television,* which will appear for the first time on the next issue.

The format and the numbering of the volumes will mark the unbroken continuity of the journal.

The Documentary Dilemma

BASIL WRIGHT

BASIL WRIGHT is one of the founders of the documentary film movement. Film director, author, critic, and broadcaster, he has made numerous motion pictures, including *Night Mail* and *Song of Ceylon*. He recently completed *Waters of Time*, a four-reel imaginative documentary about the river Thames and the Port of London.

THE GROWTH and development of the documentary movement has been sufficiently rapid, sufficiently large scale, sufficiently notable in impact, for it to attract to its service quite a percentage of film makers in many parts of the world. Some twenty years ago the documentary thesis offered, apart from anything else, a chance of freedom from the irons of the commercial cinema. Because documentary was concerned with a new use of film—a use for public education and public enlightenment—it provided immense opportunities for experiment with the film medium. New uses involved new techniques. For some years the artist had a field day. The results—or some of them—are still around for all to see and admire.

But at the same time, the new uses and new techniques involved new methods of diffusion. It was a case of new producers creating a new market based not on box-office receipts, but on audience needs and audience reaction. In fact, a new system has been involved in which the finance of production has no direct relation to the system of distribution, and the cost of making the film is not recouped from the people who see it.

In this case, therefore, the film maker seeks subvention more from those who seek to disseminate ideas than from those who seek the direct sale of commodities. He is concerned with information services, with public relations, or with propaganda.

In distribution he is concerned not mainly with mass audiences seeking entertainment in public cinemas, but rather with group audiences whose mood tends toward the acquisition of informa-

tion, of skill, of knowledge, and toward the discussion of social, economic, or aesthetic problems common to the group members.

The success of documentary arose from the fact that it set out to meet a need to which the commercial industry did not cater. It was a real need, and therefore both finance for production and the organization of new audience circuits could be achieved—and on a large scale.

With this the meaning of the word "documentary" split in two. On the one hand, it refers to the new methods of approach to public information and enlightenment through film. On the other, it still retains its original reference to the work of the individual artist who seeks to use film for "the creative interpretation of actuality." At least part of the documentarian's dilemma arises from this dichotomy of meaning.

The fact is that in documentary, as in any other complex of organized film production, the real artist is likely to find a number of obstacles in the way of his creative instincts. But it is also the fact that in documentary, as elsewhere, there is a need for competent directors numerically superior to the genuine artist. For every Flaherty or Lorentz or Sucksdorff you need a dozen X's, Y's and Z's.

We can observe several stages in the development of new means of creative expression through film concurrently with the organization of new distribution to new audiences. As the audiences grew—and with them grew the source of sponsorship—so the screen artist had to decide between the glorious isolation of the individual, and the communal service demanded of that individual within the confusing complex of modern civilized life. Rightly or wrongly—I believe rightly—most of the artists chose to identify themselves with the duties implied in the latter setup. Many of these felt that their creative abilities might best flower within the area of civic duty. In the transitional period—that in which documentary passed from experiment to consolidation—this attitude served well enough. But the mere act of creatively

supplying known social needs brought into existence, of itself, greater demands, greater diffusions; and with these came a call for wider multiplication of production. This could only be met by multiplication of producers; and let it be said that not least of documentary's merits is that this new demand brought into action the talents of hundreds of sincere and competent persons. But most of them were not artists. They had no need to be; their job was one demanding high skill—technical, methodological, ideological—within a field of visual instruction of the widest potentialities. Indeed, so clear were the inferences of this new endeavor that sometimes a technician, seeking new methods of informative expression, found himself in the process becoming an artist *malgré lui.*

In any case, the true artist, observing the truth as he sees it and translating it into screen terms according to the canons of his art, is bound to find in the present world of documentary—consolidated rather than experimental, systematic rather than eruptive—a number of difficulties between his ideas and their expression. His patrons, if disappointed, do not want their money back, but the *quid pro quo* they demand may not coincide with the artist's intention.

Committees of experts or of government officials spill conflicting theses and directives all over the script. Open statements are qualified, simple stories complicated by ifs and buts. In extreme cases, the final film proves so unpalatable in content—and the nearer it is to a work of art, the more unpalatable it will be—that it is consigned to a sponsorial oubliette and never reaches the audience for whom it was intended.

The documentary director's need for enlightened patronage is therefore paramount. And the enlightened patron is one who asks for a good film first and his particular hobbyhorse second. Both governmental and industrial sponsors can often do themselves as much good by the prestige of a fine film as by the message value of a competent piece of hack work. In the United States one may

quickly cite Flaherty's *Louisiana Story* and such films as Lorentz's *The Plow that Broke the Plains* and *The River*. British examples are numerous—it may be sufficient to mention the work of Humphrey Jennings whose untimely death in Greece last fall deprived the film world of an artist whose uncompromising integrity forced many a sponsor into surprised, reluctant, but finally admiring submission.

In the making of my recently completed film, *Waters of Time*, under the sponsorship of the Port of London Authority, I was myself in the happy position of working to a brief which demanded a film of aesthetic integrity first, and a description of dock virtues second. In cases like these, the challenge to the artist is positive. He has to be good—or else. In opposite cases, he finds himself, only too often, dissipating his creative energies in attempts to find a way around directives of a totally nonfilmic nature.

But, with a few exceptions, enlightened patronage is rare today. Who at this moment is competing for the services of a Flaherty or a Lorentz? Where, in Britain, are the new artists of the younger generation? Can it be that the humdrum and established routine of documentary film making holds less attraction nowadays? And if so, where are these youngsters to go? If they belong to the true realist tradition, it is unlikely that (with rare exceptions) they will find much encouragement in the feature studios either in Britain or in California.

To these pessimistic questions there are positive answers. There is still, as we have seen, a slender area of enlightened sponsorship. There is the continuance of *avant garde* work in France, Italy, and particularly in the United States (the Whitneys, Deren, Angers, and many others). There is the possibility of a new form of pooled finance, coming perhaps from governmental sources, as in Britain where a new section of the Film Finance Corporation, under the direction of John Grierson, is likely during 1951 to support the production of inexpensive films whose approach will be neither that of the conservative box office nor of the industrial or

governmental sponsor. And despite the terrible lunacies of the international scene, there are still possibilities—in some cases probabilities—of large-scale film work under the direct aegis of the specialized agencies of UN: The World Health Organization and the Food and Agriculture Organization in particular.

Nor should the present dilemma of documentary be allowed to become a one-sided hard-luck story. If the possibilities I have enumerated are correct—and I think they are—they are to be had for the taking. If they are not taken, it will be the fault of the documentary people themselves.

For it must be remembered that the beginnings of documentary were not a matter of film subjects falling from heaven into the laps of starry-eyed film enthusiasts. Documentary began because the starry-eyed cinéastes rolled up their sleeves and set out to sell their new ideas to a hard, cold world. They had to work as hard at precept as at practice. They fought—and fought vigorously—for the chance to experiment with their medium in order to put it to new and creative uses. Today and tomorrow it will be their own funeral if they remain content with the ordinary levels of their now organized industry (and I do not for a moment decry its social importance) without continuing the battle at those higher levels on which the art of the film—under one of its many banners and one of its finest—illumines the fundamental problems of human kind with a realism which rises above reportage or exposition to the pinnacle of aesthetic completeness and creative satisfaction.

The UN in Hollywood: A Lesson in Public Relations

RICHARD PATTERSON

RICHARD PATTERSON is now working for a Master of Arts degree in theater arts at the University of California at Los Angeles.

Films exert the most powerful influence in our lives. . . . Value patterns, actual behaviour, the outlook on life generally, are manifestly shaped by film influences. . . .

J. P. MAYER, *Sociology of Film.*[1]

IN THE past ten years, three governmental or intergovernmental organizations have recognized this power of Hollywood motion pictures and have tried to educate the public obliquely by injecting their ideas into entertainment films.

Before the last war, the Office of the Coördinator of Inter-American Affairs, to create better relations between the United States and South America, worked from the top down so far as films were concerned. John Jay Whitney, in charge of the Motion Picture Division, went to the financial heads of the film industry in New York and showed them that it would be good business to aid in improving relations with the Latin-American countries. The presidents of the companies cleared the way for coöperation between the studios and an office set up by the coördinator in Hollywood. This coöperation worked in three ways: First, the companies turned over to the CIAA any short films that it wished to re-edit and sound-track in Spanish and Portuguese and send to Central and South America in 16-mm. form, balancing films on countries south of the border which it showed in the United States. Second, supplying a specialist on Latin America, who worked closely with the "international representatives" in each studio, the CIAA secured the coöperation of Joseph Breen and his staff in what was then the Hays Office and succeeded in keep-

[1] J. P. Mayer, *Sociology of Film* (London: Faber and Faber, Ltd., 1948), p. 17.

ing out of scripts and off the screen any material that might be offensive to Latin-American citizens. Third, through its Hollywood office the CIAA suggested to the studios material of all sorts—stories, scenes, backgrounds—that, projected on the screen, would cause a favorable reaction in the southern republics. The work of the CIAA was highly successful; millions saw the 16-mm. films about the United States and many more millions were favorably impressed by the interest that Hollywood pictures began to take in Latin-American stories and backgrounds. With the end of World War II, two other government agencies took over the work of the CIAA in and out of the film field, and the Hollywood office closed down.

The Office of War Information also recognized the power of the Hollywood films to inculcate ideas, and it, too, established an office in Los Angeles during the war, in addition to making films of its own. Where Whitney and the CIAA used an economic argument on the heads of the companies, the OWI employed the pressure of a national emergency to force Hollywood to censor out material that would be harmful abroad and to insert favorable propaganda.

Now, after the war, the United Nations—without economic arguments or the wartime power of our government behind it—has found a measurable solution to the problem of using the entertainment film to educate and inform the vast film audience.

In a resolution passed unanimously on February 13, 1946, the United Nations General Assembly stated: "The United Nations cannot achieve the purposes for which it has been created unless the peoples of the world are fully informed of its aims and activities." To carry out this conception and to supplement the coverage by press and radio, the UN Department of Public Information established its Film Division. This organization works in two general ways: The first is through its own film unit which makes newsreels and documentaries; the second is through the "stimulation of film production with little or no cost to the Organization.

Assistance is given in the form of research materials, treatments, scripts, ideas for film and raw stock.'"[2]

The newsreels and documentaries have proved necessary and though there are commercial newsreel companies constantly at work at Lake Success, the UN Film Division produces and makes available film coverage on all the UN activities. If, for example, the Belgians want films of all the speeches made by their representatives, they can have them at a very low fee that just covers the laboratory costs. The documentary work has also been comprehensive, as the following selections from a pamphlet of the Department of Public Information show:

Battle for Bread; two reels, 17 minutes. A film concerned with food. The greater need for its better production is movingly shown as the only way to feed all the peoples of the world. This is not a story of what might have been done; it tells what is being done by the United Nations today.

First Steps; one reel, 11 minutes. Sensitively handled, it deals with training of crippled children. Academy award for best documentary film.

Screen Magazine No. 3; one reel, 13 minutes. The UN story behind this headline: "Earthquake in Ecuador." The earthquake lasted 8 minutes—the country faces 20 years of reconstruction. The UN, through its Member Nations and the Specialized Agencies, is helping Ecuador to alleviate the suffering of its people and to rehabilitate the land.

But the UN Department of Public Information realized that it was not reaching the vast audience that saw Hollywood films, and therefore two of its top men—Jean Benoit-Levy, the noted French director and then head of UN film activities, and Benjamin Cohen, assistant secretary general in charge of Public Information—met to consider the question, "How can we contact the motion picture industry?" They saw very potent reasons for sending a UN representative to Hollywood. First, if he could interest producers and writers in UN activities, UN would get millions of

[2] "UN Report on the Department of Public Information," September 27, 1950.

dollars' worth of publicity for the price of one man's time and a secretary's wages. Further, they were convinced that the fiction film has a psychological effect on audiences that goes beyond that of any other mass medium, because pictorial "reality" stimulates belief. These two UN officials knew that they could not force Hollywood, through financial or governmental power, to make propaganda pictures to convert its public, but they thought it possible to interest the studios in using occasional episodes and turns of plot that might condition audiences to accept the UN as part of their daily lives through seeing and hearing frequent mentions of it on the screen. Then, when they read references to the UN, the stereotyped image of an organization given to unpleasant wranglings and haranguings would be replaced by the truer impression of high purposes and humanitarian actions.

The motion picture industry itself recognized the persuasive power of its films when it established the Motion Picture Production Code, which states: "The enthusiasm for film actresses, developed beyond anything of the sort in history, makes the audience largely sympathetic toward the characters they portray and the stories in which they figure. . . . Hence the audience is most receptive of the emotions and ideals presented by their favorite stars." Farther on the code states another principle that applies to the UN's relations with Hollywood: "Correct standards of life shall be presented. When right standards are consistently presented, the motion picture exercises the most powerful influences. It builds character, develops right ideals, inculcates correct principles."

A UNESCO committee in Hollywood made some efforts to interest the industry in the UN, but the only specific results were achieved by men or women on the committee who had got an occasional allusion to the UN into a film that they worked on. Obviously this was insufficient, though it pointed the way. There was a need for a single individual in Hollywood who would devote his entire activity to this task.

Mogens Skot-Hansen was selected because his background fully qualified him to represent the UN in Hollywood. He had collaborated, with Carl Dreyer, on the script of the noted Danish film *Day of Wrath*. In the mid-thirties Skot-Hansen had entered the Danish Ministry of Education, while he directed films, wrote screen plays, and eventually became responsible for the entire film production of the government. From 1940 until the autumn of 1946, he had headed the Ministeriernes Filmudvalg, the Danish government's documentary film unit. Arthur Elton, in *Documentary in Denmark,* says of this period:

> Skot-Hansen brought to the films a knowledge of civil service procedure and a sense of public purpose. To these qualities he soon added first rate technical skill, for he quickly became not only an ingenious script-writer, but also a capable director and film editor and developed a lively appreciation of the importance of non-theatrical distribution. Today he is one of the best documentary producers, and his special qualities have enabled him to find a compromise between the rigid civil service procedure and the creative freedom without which artists cannot flourish.[3]

In 1947 Skot-Hansen had joined the UNESCO Film Section under John Grierson and soon became head of the UN's European Film Office in Paris.

In May, 1949, he arrived in Los Angeles. His over-all objective had been established—to build up a good contact between the motion picture industry and the UN, and to get the UN mentioned as often as possible in the entertainment films that are seen by close to 200 million people every week. The problem facing him was how to approach people?

The UNESCO group in Hollywood had been active long before he arrived, and Skot-Hansen was well received by such people as Myrna Loy, Valentine Davies, George Seaton, and Frank Capra; but he felt that he must move slowly and discreetly. He did not want to create the impression that he had come there to pres-

[3] Arthur Elton, *Documentary in Denmark* (Copenhagen: Statens Filmcentral, 1948), p. 7.

sure the industry or to try to censor films. This could not lead to a proper and free relationship between the UN and the motion pictures. A resolution of the UN General Assembly, adopted on February 13, 1946, had set the right pattern: "The UN should establish as a general policy that the Press and other existing agencies of information be given fullest possible access to the activities and official documentation of the UN."

Skot-Hansen succeeded in his first purpose—to make Hollywood recognize the UN's honest desire to coöperate and not to try to dictate. Hollywood's reaction generally agrees with that of Luigi Luraschi, head of the International Department at Paramount Studios: "We do not consider Mr. Skot-Hansen a pressure group. He is representing an international organization in which we all participate."

Beyond that, he had to convince the industry that he had something to offer. The industry wanted to know how well Skot-Hansen understood the film as an entertainment medium. Hollywood had found it hard to make a government agency, the Office of War Information, understand and accept the fact that extraneous matter really detracts from a picture and defeats its own purpose. But OWI had been in a hurry. It had a job to do and it had to do it fast, so it had been a bit unreasonable. Skot-Hansen's aim was to get the motion picture industry to use his files of UN material, but he recognized that this material must add something to a film entertainment-wise.

Most motion pictures take anywhere from ten months to two years between the conception of the writing and the completion of the film. However, Skot-Hansen could present his material effectively only during the period of script writing and then perhaps during only its early stages—from one to three months. This means that he had to know when a particular script was being contemplated or written. He could find this out either from a trade journal or from one of the contacts that he had in each studio, contacts who not only kept him informed, but who also

could arrange introductions and meetings whenever necessary. He then got in touch with either the writer, the director, or the producer and showed him that the UN had something that could help his film.

For example, if Skot-Hansen discovered that someone was thinking of making a film about the destruction of the world, he immediately contacted the producer and pointed out that if the world faced destruction, it would be imperative that there should be a meeting of the UN. He then offered either to act as technical consultant or to get whatever material was needed. And, what is more astounding, he would do it free of charge.

Skot-Hansen also supplied free-lance writers with story ideas and material on the UN. Perhaps a writer had a vague idea about writing a story set in contemporary Egypt. Skot-Hansen remembered an article in his reams of daily mail from UN headquarters about the World Health Organization's fight against a cholera epidemic in Egypt. He would then have a treatment written, or acquire relevant material from the UN, and send it all to the writer. If the writer turned out a good script for an entertainment film, then Skot-Hansen might be able to help him by putting it before possible producers.

Skot-Hansen supplemented this sort of activity by carefully screening his mail and regularly sending to writers, directors, and producers such dramatic bits of information as, "UN Narcotics Commission reports that there were eight tons of opium recently smuggled into Thailand by ingenious means" or "International Committee for Coördination of Locust Control reports successful counterattack against locusts in Nicaragua." Through pamphlets and news items, he not only offered some suggestions for films, but also kept his office constantly in peoples' minds so that they knew where to come when they wanted new ideas, backgrounds, and heroes. While he was trying to get the right material to the right people at precisely the right time, he still had to strike a very delicate balance between the attitude supposed to befit a repre-

sentative of the UN and the much more relaxed and friendly behavior that would be the most effective with the motion picture industry.

The more specific and personal approach that Skot-Hansen adopted resulted in the injection of much UN material into feature films. Producer George Pal, for example, included an emergency meeting of the UN in *When Worlds Collide,* and Andrew Marton has in production *Storm Over Tibet,* a film dealing with a UNESCO expedition to the Himalayas. Ivan Tors' main character in the screenplay of *Nowhere to Go* is a man coming to this country as a displaced person brought by the International Refugee Organization, and Robert Riskin and Julian Blaustein had Dorothy McGuire in *Mister 880* portray a French interpreter behind the scenes at Lake Success. For Frank Capra and Bing Crosby, Robert Riskin wrote *Here Comes the Groom,* mentioning UN relief work among European children, and he has announced his intention to produce *The Girl from Bogardus* about a delegate to the United Nations.

Skot-Hansen's work has been made easier by the current trend in motion pictures away from star vehicles and toward greater emphasis on truly contemporary story material. Through such successful films as *Home of the Brave, Pinky, All the King's Men, Crossfire, Gentleman's Agreement, Intruder in the Dust,* and *No Way Out,* Hollywood has learned that there is money in facing serious contemporary issues. The studios are seeking fresh and important and newsworthy themes, but any proponent of a vitally important institution or movement still faces the problem of how to get the sympathetic attention of producer, writer, and director. Skot-Hansen's solution of this problem is personal, of course, yet it is an important lesson for anyone who wants to see our screen present material important to a world in crisis.

From Book to Film: Mass Appeals

LESTER ASHEIM

LESTER ASHEIM is assistant professor in the Graduate Library School of the University of Chicago and teaches courses on popular culture and the mass media of communications. He assisted Dr. Bernard Berelson in the preparation of the volume *The Library's Public* for the Public Library Inquiry, and has contributed articles to various professional journals.

This article, like Mr. Asheim's previous "From Book to Film: Simplification" which appeared in Volume V, Number 3, of the *Hollywood Quarterly,* is based on material from his doctoral dissertation *From Book to Film,* submitted at the University of Chicago in 1949.

IN THE first article in this series, I noted that, despite the immediate influence of artistic considerations, story values, or "the message," the ultimate influence on the form of the film is the audience. The audience as here defined is the body of moviegoers in the general sense—the mass audience as it is known to the producers, not as a group of individuals but as a total number of paid receipts at the box office. The effectiveness of a film upon the audience, the kind of things that the audience wants to see, are measured by total response to any film or film type in terms of mass attendance. The public influences the film by majority vote, and its ballot is the ticket of admission to the theater.

However, the producers of films are not limited to the perusal of last month's box-office receipts for clues to mass audience preferences. The history of folk literature, the annals of the theater, the responses to popular magazines, radio programs, and best sellers of all kinds provide additional insights into the kinds of appeals which consistently win support from the greatest numbers. From the troubadours to the writers of soap opera, from Shakespeare to the pulps, the producers of popular literature and art have kept an eye on the audience, developed a sensitivity to its reactions, and injected into their creations the kinds of action, characterization, and thematic material which that audience seemed to like best to see and hear. In this article, the film adaptations of twenty-four novels will be analyzed in terms of these mass appeals, using

categories descriptive of the characteristics of popular art which have proved most attractive to general audiences.[1]

One of the basic appeals of popular art from its earliest beginnings has been its ability to take the individual "out of himself"; to provide him with a release from his own troubles in the contemplation of events removed from personal reality; to create, for a time at least, an "escape" from personal cares. The "escapist" character of popular art need not be a fault. The catharsis demanded of tragedy by Aristotle performs an escapist function even though it be of a different order from that performed by a romance in a modern magazine for women. The kind of escape provided, rather than escape itself, is a gauge of seriousness in art.

Judging from the twenty-four films in the sample, "escape" is defined very narrowly by the motion picture producers as content which requires no effort on the part of the spectator except passive acceptance of preponderantly pleasant and unchallenging ideas. Even in the case of the presentation of serious subject matter, the primary purpose of the entertainment film is to divert but not disturb, to excite the emotions but not the mind. The assumption seems to be that those who wish to be entertained do not wish to think, as though the two processes could not possible occur simultaneously.

Yet dramatic conflict presupposes a problem, and the presentation of problems, often related to those which face members of the audience themselves, occurs constantly on the screen. That this still qualifies as "escape" results from oversimplifying the solutions of those problems to such an extent that they bear little or no relevance to real solutions.

This oversimplification may be accomplished in many ways. One way is to reduce the universal problem to a single-faceted

[1] The novels are: *Pride and Prejudice, Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights, The Good Earth, Victory, David Copperfield, A Tale of Two Cities, In This Our Life, The House of the Seven Gables, For Whom the Bell Tolls, Les Miserables, The Light That Failed, Main Street* (filmed as *I Married A Doctor*), *The Sea Wolf, Of Human Bondage, Kitty Foyle, The Grapes of Wrath, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, Alice Adams, The Magnificent Ambersons, Anna Karenina, Huckleberry Finn, Tom Sawyer, The Virginian.*

personal one which can readily be solved in a highly individual manner, ignoring its wider implications. Another is to personify in a single individual the source of the evil, thus diverting audience attention from the basic sources of conflict. Another is to place the emphasis on sensational, exaggerated, and melodramatic aspects of the problem rather than upon the normal or representative ones. A fourth is to direct the attention toward the theme of romantic love, so that all problems are subordinated to the single one of bringing boy and girl together. And finally, the whole may be resolved through a "happy ending" that tends to convey the idea that the spectator's problems, too, will be resolved automatically and without effort on his part.

In this, the second of four articles, the first three of these methods of treatment (solving universal problems through personal solutions, individualizing evil, and emphasizing sensationalism) will be considered as they are reflected in the adaptation of novels to the screen; in a third article, the influence of the love story and of the happy ending upon adaptations will be discussed.

The reduction of the plot to a single-line study of a personal problem results from several considerations. In my first article I discussed the producers' conviction of the need to simplify for the benefit of movie audiences. Other factors are the length limitation of standard feature pictures, the desire to utilize the camera for the more, rather than the less, active parts of the story, and the demands of dramatic construction that call for a tighter, more concentrated organization of the material. In the novel, the shaping factors outside the individual which influence his conduct, complicate his existence, and circumscribe his personal control over destiny are often introduced through secondary and subordinate plot lines. In the film, these are usually eliminated in favor of the main, action-filled series of incidents which can be resolved by an individual solution.

Of the twenty-four films in the sample, fifteen, or 63 per cent, eliminate the universal implications of the novel by concentrating

upon a single plot line or upon plot action rather than upon the representativeness of the story. To cite but two examples, the film version of *Victory* resolves the problem of evil by having its hero punch the villain in the nose (the universal implications of the problems of mental detachment in a world of force finding no expression in such a personal situation), while the suicide of Anna Karenina in the film version is the culmination of an unhappy love affair rather than a tragedy growing out of a particular society and its mores.

Only three of the films in the sample—*Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, The Grapes of Wrath,* and *A Tale of Two Cities*—may be said to retain to any appreciable degree the same kind of universality that is conveyed by the book. In all three of these cases, the film takes time out to emphasize the broader aspects of the problem through moral-pointing asides and incidents that provide digressive background at the expense of unity of action. From the standpoint of pure cinema technique, such film treatments are considered by many critics to be less good than the more tightly constructed, less diffuse, more visual presentation.[2] It should be recognized, therefore, that the dramatic form of the film may well render it less suitable to the presentation of complex problems in their full complexity than the discursive form of the novel, and that what seems to be "oversimplification" may result from the psychological limitations of the medium as well as from the intellectual limitations too readily ascribed to the producers.

The elimination of universal implication is also accomplished in the personification of evil in one character, through the all-black characterization of the villain discussed in my previous article. Through such a device blame can be shifted from society to the individual and the problem can be reduced to a personal rather than a universal one. The solution then becomes merely a matter of besting the villain; that done, the problem no longer exists and the audience need not consider its broader implications.

[2] See Allardyce Nicoll's analysis of *A Tale of Two Cities* in his *Film and Theatre* (New York: Thomas Y. Crowell and Company, 1936).

Thus, the regimen of Lowood Institution in the film version of *Jane Eyre* seems to be not a boarding school system typical of the period, but merely an isolated instance in which is felt the imposition of the warped personality of Brocklehurst. Once Jane leaves the institution, the problem is dropped. Similarly, the Jean Valjean of the film version of *Les Miserables* is merely the scapegoat of a vindictive policeman rather than a pawn in a social system of which Javert is equally a victim. Twelve of the twenty-four films in the sample center the evil specifically in individuals in this way, making the problem appear to be personal and isolated rather than universal.

The recognition of the technical advantages of the motion picture camera and a knowledge of the appeal which sensationalism holds for mass audiences leads to a logical expectation that the popular film will utilize the camera's special ability to depict the sensational. As used in this study, the term "sensationalism" embraces several methods of treating the content of the film, all of which are distinguished by an element of exaggeration in presentation. A dictionary definition of exaggeration designates it as the enlargement or increase "beyond the normal," and if we take the "normal" to be the presentation of an action, setting, or characterization as it is in the novel, the definition serves very well to indicate the sense in which the several aspects of "sensationalism" are used here.

The technique of such exaggeration takes many forms. It may inflate and enlarge single incidents, events, or instances to make them larger, more "colossal" or more "dramatic" than the instances upon which they are based. It may concern itself with surface appearance and trappings, increasing the physical beauty of the protagonists, the luxuriousness of their surroundings, and the elegance of their dress. It may heighten the emotional effect of scenes by artificially prolonging suspense or intensifying the part played by coincidence, surprise, and the striking juxtaposition of events, stressing sentimental exploitation of emotion for emotion's

sake. Or it may manifest itself in an increased amount of movement and action that gives to the film a heightened sense of speed and energy far above that conveyed by the novel.

The tendency of the film to multiply, expand, and embroider is a traditional joke. The films in the sample provide some typical examples of this tendency to make things a little bigger, more numerous, or more "colossal." In the film version of *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* the fight with one small tank is transformed into a battle with a whole parade of tanks. In the novel, Jane Eyre is punished by being made to stand on a stool for half an hour; in the film she stands upon the stool all day and far into the night. In the novel *Of Human Bondage,* Philip gets a case of influenza; in the film it is built up to pneumonia.

Nineteen, or 80 per cent, of the twenty-four films exhibit at least one such scene of exaggeration and overstatement, and most of them have more than one that may be so described. Yet the sample represents a rather special case of film production, in which fidelity to the original novel is likely to be more carefully retained than in adaptations from less widely read and beloved novels.

It should be noted, however, that such exaggerations are not necessarily motivated solely, or even in part, by a vulgarian penchant for ostentatious display. The increase and enlargement of characterization and action are often dictated by the dramatic construction itself. The film may actually prove more faithful to the tone and spirit of the book through such exaggerations, which can be used to compensate for changes introduced by the requirements of the different medium. In presenting highly passionate characters like those in *Wuthering Weights,* for example, the novelist has the leisure in which to build up a picture of their intense natures through a multiplication of illustrative instances. The film, limited in the number of examples it can show and the amount of interpretive commentary it can include, must present more highly colored action to equal, in the shorter space, the same intensity.

Another form of exaggeration is the glamor represented by the physical characteristics of the film players themselves. The stars, on the whole, are presented as handsomer, more beautiful, cleverer, more worldly, etc., etc., than the average filmgoer. They are the embodiment of the romantic dreams of the vast middle class who, for the space of an hour or two, can identify themselves with such creatures as they would like to be. The result is a larger-than-life presentation of personal appearance which is quite different from the larger-than-life character drawing of the novel. Jane Eyre, in the film, is not the plain heroine of Brontë; she is merely a somewhat subdued Joan Fontaine. Hepzibah, in the film version of *The House of the Seven Gables,* is not the soured, scowling old maid of Hawthorne, but a partially deglamorized Margaret Lindsay. The film's Heyst in *Victory* is not the balding Swede of Conrad, but Frederic March with a large moustache.

In every instance the film version is almost inevitably forced to glamorize its presentation to a certain extent by the very fact that the parts are portrayed by Hollywood players. The glamorizing of the stars, which is part of the organization of the industry, carries over and affects even those films which do not themselves deliberately build up the glamor aspect of star exploitation. However, when the novel itself presents a "romantic" hero or heroine such apparent glamorizing of appearance as results from casting need not be out of keeping with the intention of the original. Under such circumstances, the appearance of the star is merely a modernization of the type rather than glamorizing.

Overelaborate staging and costuming is a traditionally cited fault of film production, and critical appraisal of the total film output is frequently marked by attacks on the extensive wardrobe provided for the poor working girl, the spacious rooms and expensive furnishings which are meant to represent a white-collar apartment, and the comparative luxuriousness with which the average film character lives as contrasted with reality for the average filmgoer. The films in the sample are not a typical cross section

of total film output in that only eight of the twenty-four deal with contemporary life, and only five of these deal with life in America as it might be experienced by members of the audience. Of these five only *Kitty Foyle* exhibits the kind of glamorizing of which the films are inclusively accused. *Alice Adams, The Grapes of Wrath,* and *In This Our Life* reproduce the costume, housing, and appearance of the novel's prototypes without softening or heightening, while *I Married a Doctor* departs from its original, *Main Street,* in another direction—if anything, it exaggerates *less* than the novel.

But *Kitty Foyle* is typical, in every aspect of the adaptation, of the daydream character of film characterization. The glamorizing process carries through from the casting of Ginger Rogers in the title role and the Hollywood wardrobe provided her, to such added incidents as Wyn's renting an entire night club for a night, or taking the orchestra with him to his own hotel to accompany the continued festivities, or inundating Kitty's apartment with flowers on the night of the Philadelphia Assembly. While the film retains a scene or two of Kitty's crowded apartment shared with two other girls, such scenes are played for comedy, and no attempt is made to convey the day-to-day monotony and routine of the white-collar girl.

The extent to which glamorizing in the sense of overelaboration enters into period stories is difficult to gauge, since the mere fact of visual presentation inevitably gives the effect of greater stress on costume and setting. In such a film as *Pride and Prejudice,* for example, settings must be provided and costumes designed before the action can be portrayed on the screen, whereas the book spends hardly any time at all on the description of dress and setting, leaving to the reader's imagination the normal dress and surroundings which would accompany a story set at the end of the eighteenth century (contemporary, not period, for the author). The air of romantic glamor which clings to the billowing skirts, the carriages, the country estates of this earlier day is an automatic aura

which the film cannot avoid, however realistically it reproduces the period.

That such glamor is completely unpremeditated is, of course, quite probably a misrepresentation of the case. Hollywood spares nothing in reproducing the costumes of the time in their richest rather than in their most typical manifestation, nor does it stint in utilizing every opportunity for multiplying the richness and variety of setting and costume. The film adds a lavish garden party to the script of *Pride and Prejudice,* which provides ample opportunity for enlarging the scene and multiplying the costumes; *Wuthering Heights* adds two party sequences which accomplish a similar purpose. The multiplication of scenes and the costumes needed to accompany them is also, in part, a response to the need for variety of backgrounds imposed by the visual character of the film. Such visual variety, whether designed to glamorize or not, again automatically increases the atmosphere of glamor which attaches to the film adaptation.

The contrived situations typical of melodrama are another example of enlargement "beyond the normal." While any work of art is contrived in the sense that selection and order are imposed by the artist, the special nature of melodrama, as the term is used here, is the *exaggerated* manipulation of character and events which underlines the theatricality of its presentation. The events and eventualities depicted in melodrama may fall within the realm of possibility, but they are a constant strain upon probability. The primary aim is to create striking, exciting, and suspenseful situations. Incident and situation are important rather than character; sentimental and romantic appeals are emphasized; coincidence and surprise are manufactured in order to heighten the sensational character of the action. That such material, utilizing as it does the vivid action and a minimum of static analysis, is well adapted to depiction by the camera has been recognized by film makers from the earliest days.

One of the standard melodramatic tricks of the cinema which

was early introduced into the fiction film, and which finds its way also into the films in the sample, is the "chase"—the culminating race against time or from villainy with which the action of the film reaches a thrilling climax. Four of the films in the sample add to the script a chase which is not in the book: Hyde's flight from the police in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* Huck's last-minute rescue of Jim from the lynch mob in *Huckleberry Finn,* Stanley's attempt to escape in a speeding car in *In This Our Life,* and Tom's flight from Injun Joe in the cave in *Tom Sawyer.* Two others add a chase-type climax by stressing the pressure of time to add suspense: *The House of the Seven Gables* uses a crosscutting technique to show the inexorable closing in of avenging discovery on Judge Pyncheon; *The Good Earth* builds up the locust-plague sequence into a time-ridden struggle against disaster, in the triumph of which lies the solution to all the problems facing the protagonists.

The chase is not a motion picture invention, of course; many novels, both contemporary and from the past, contain climactic sequences that fit into the pattern. The flight through the sewers in *Les Miserables,* and the attempt of Andrès to get through the lines in *For Whom the Bell Tolls* are chase-type sequences. The film versions of both novels retain these sequences in full.

Other melodramatic stereotypes appear in the action in the sample films, some as reflections of the action of the novel, and some as extraneous additions that the film invents for purposes of heightening suspense and sensation. Heroic self-sacrifice is an old stand-by of both the melodramatic novel and the melodramatic film. In the book *A Tale of Two Cities,* Carton's death for his friend is typical of melodrama; in *For Whom the Bell Tolls,* Robert Jordan's hopeless delaying action is a more sophisticated variation on the same theme. Both instances are retained intact in the scripts. In addition, two films add new sequences based on this theme: in *The Sea Wolf,* Van Weyden allows himself to be killed in exchange for the safety of Ruth and Leach,[3] and less

[3] The film also adds another such incident in the death of Johnson, who drowns himself in order that the others may succeed in their escape plot.

melodramatically than this (but more melodramatically than in the book) Alice Adams shoulders the blame for her father's swindle even though she imagines that in so doing she will lose the man she loves.

Dramatic coincidence is another cliché of melodrama. Such an incident as the double death of Ham and Steerforth in *David Copperfield* is typical, and the incident is retained in full in the script. In *Tom Sawyer,* the presence of Injun Joe in the cave is another melodramatic stretch of coincidence, made doubly melodramatic by the chase which follows (and which the book does not include). Two of the films invent coincidental action without precedent in the book. In the script of *The House of the Seven Gables,* a parallel construction is contrived whereby the hero maneuvers the villainous Judge Pyncheon into a situation identical with the one with which the judge had ruined the hero years before. The novel's poetic justice is not so ideally consummated. In the book, *Main Street,* Carol assists Dr. Kennicott at an amputation performed on one of the neighboring farmers. In the film version (*I Married a Doctor*), the patient is Erik's father, who suspects Carol of enticing his son away from the farm. The result is a dramatic scene in which the father accuses the doctor of taking away his literal right arm, and Carol his figurative one.

While such strains upon dramatic happenstance are not unusual on the screen, it should be recognized that they are not peculiar to the film form. In at least five instances in the sample, the film version actually reduces the amount of melodramatic coincidence which the book provides. The scripts of *The Sea Wolf, Les Miserables, A Tale of Two Cities, David Copperfield,* and *Jane Eyre* eliminate some of the strained coincidences and melodramatic plot tricks—a long-lost brother, a fortuitous and unexpected legacy, for example—which mark the novels. Because of its reduced length and the closer juxtaposition of coincidental events, the film's unaltered use of such incidents would serve to make even more obvious the contrived character of the circum-

stances. As it is, the emphasis upon incident in the film reveals the bare bones of melodrama more clearly than in the novel, which conceals them through the additional passages of analysis, explanation, and justification.

An increase in action in itself is not necessarily sensationalism. Capitalizing on the peculiar advantages of the camera prompts an increase in active presentation of story material that is merely a translation from the verbal to the visual, and examples of this kind of added action abound in the films in the sample. Such visual equivalents of the book's content can hardly be called sensationalism.

The line between the normal increase of active presentation and abnormal exaggeration of it is a fine one. Visual presentation by its very nature tends to increase the amount of active detail and to make more vivid the action it depicts. Many actions which may be described in such a way as to be generally acceptable would be too harrowing for the average audience is shown directly upon the screen. And many others, which are no more sensational than the description in the book, will appear overstated merely because of the additional sharpness which visuality entails.

The addition of action to the film adaptations may be considered as a continuum, one end of which is the least extreme alteration represented by the literal visual equivalent of the verbal, and the other marking the most violent change—the addition of completely new action, without precedent in the book, for the purpose of creating sensation for its own sake. Typical of the latter are such additions as the death of Injun Joe in the film *Tom Sawyer,* as he falls screaming into an abyss; the incident of Louis in *The Sea Wolf,* who climbs into the rigging, denounces Larsen, then leaps to his death on the deck below; the murder of Ivy in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde,* and the final fight in *Victory.*

The central portion of this fine line between violence and nonviolence is devoted to those aspects of the action which are carryovers from the novel, but with additional active fillips injected

by the scriptwriter. They may consist of a single bit of action, as in the trial scene in the film version of *Tom Sawyer,* where Injun Joe throws a knife at Tom (added) before he leaps out of the window and escapes (identical); they may change the action for purposes of providing greater movement without altering the sense, as in *The Light That Failed,* where Dick's death in the book occurs as he stands in the besieged camp whereas the film presents it as occurring as he leads a cavalry charge from that same camp in that same battle; they may add much action and detail as in *Les Miserables* to which the film adds detailed presentation of the floggings Valjean receives in the galleys, whereas the book conveys a sense of this violence indirectly.

The establishment of the extreme of such a continuum can perhaps be accomplished, but the gradations represented by the changes shown along the central portion of the line involve too many subjective factors to make an objective presentation meaningful. Is such a scene as the final one in *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*—in which the film portrays Hyde as changing, in his death throes, back to the aspect of Jekyll, whereas the book depicts Hyde dying, with no metamorphosis—to be considered a new one, added for the sake of violent action, or merely an altered one which conveys visually and in a dramatic climax what the book explains verbally and at great length following the high point of the action? Is the scene in *Tom Sawyer* in which Injun Joe leaps through the window, fights his way through the crowd, and escapes in a careening wagon actually more intense than the book's "Quick as lightning the half-breed sprang for a window, tore his way through all opposers, and was gone!" or is it merely an example of the more active nature of visual presentation? To avoid such discussion, involving as it does so much of subjective reaction to the scene in its context, I decided to summarize this aspect of adaptation with the total figures: thirteen (54 per cent) of the twenty-four films in the sample alter scenes with details of more or less violent action, with certain films providing not one but

several instances in which such alterations may be ascribed to the purpose of adding a note of sensationalism.

In general, it is violence rather than mere action which has elicited the most frequent attacks upon the films. They are accused of emphasizing and enlarging upon the brutal, the vicious, and the cruel, and of catering to the most bloodthirsty and sadistic tendencies in their audiences. In view of the continued popularity of the theme of violence in such folk literature as the fairy tale, the ballad, and the epic, it would seem a reasonable hypothesis that the film adaptation would tend to increase the emphasis upon these aspects in order to capitalize upon proven popular preferences.

The hypothesis, however, has not been borne out by this investigation. Violence, of course, is a relative term. The point at which exaggerated and intense action passes into outrageous and improper action varies with the context of the situation. For the purposes of this discussion, violence is taken to include that which is viciously brutal and cruel, not merely strenuous and intense. In terms of such a distinction, the film versions of the novels in the sample have generally suppressed more scenes of violence than they have added; the changes in the direction of increased action have stopped short of the kind of violence which popular condemnation defines.

Ten of the films in the sample (42 per cent) eliminate one or more scenes of action which may be defined as violent, whereas of the thirteen films mentioned above as having added strenuous action, only seven (30 per cent of the total sample) add action which may be defined as violent, and five of these are films which eliminate other scenes of violence which are in the original novel.

The omissions from the other eight films illustrate the same tendency to soften the novel's brutality. The death of the dog on the highway in *The Grapes of Wrath,* Torpenhaw's eye gouging in *The Light That Failed,* details of the street fighting in *Les Miserables* and the fight between Heathcliff and Hindley in

Wuthering Heights are typical of sequences which the film could certainly handle technically, but which would add a gratuitous viciousness to the total effect that was not desired. Upon the evidence obtained from this sample it appears that violence in itself alone is not enough to recommend the retention of a scene or a sequence in a film, and that the general condemnation of the film industry for its unwholesome concern with such thematic materials is ill-founded.[4]

In addition to the accusation that the film overemphasizes violence is the related one that it also overemphasizes sex. Again, the films in the sample fail to support this popular belief. Of the twenty-four, only *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* can be said to place greater emphasis upon illicit sex than does the book, an emphasis which arises less from a sordid preoccupation with disapproved conduct than it does from the objectification of abstractions which filmic presentation requires. In order to convey to the film audience a sense of what the book merely describes as "evil," "monstrous," "depraved," "infamous," the film creates depictable action to illustrate the meaning of the terms. The sexual character of the conduct which modern society considers evil is therefore given in the film an objective existence which exists only in the mind of the individual reader of the book, and the extent to which the film actually exceeds the bounds of the readers' imaginings is something which can be clarified only by each reader himself. In terms of measurable instances of emphasis upon sex, the film does go beyond the novel in this one example.

That the other films are less outspoken than the books on matters of sex is undoubtedly a result of the restrictions placed upon the film by the Production Code. Popular interest in sex, as demonstrated in the best sellers in other entertainment fields, would

[4] I recognize that the sample is not a perfect cross section of the total film output. Gangster films, detective and mystery films, and class B thrillers are not represented, and these are the kinds of films most likely to exhibit the characteristics of violence under discussion. Such films, however, are not representative of the total either; and it is worthy of note that the adaptations do not necessarily take advantage of the precedent set by the novels, but actually minimize the amount of violence when selecting for inclusion in the script.

lead to an expectation that the films would capitalize as fully as possible upon this interest, and pre-code film production tends to support the expectation. The conflict between the code and popular taste is nowhere better demonstrated than in this area, and the compromises required by the industry's acceptance of the code would make an interesting and extensive study in themselves.

The extent to which the film provides sexual stimulation outside of its story line is again a matter of individual judgment. The physical attractiveness of film players and the sentimental and romantic music which accompanies the film are sexual excitants that are deliberately so used in film making, but the latent sexual symbolism in almost any physical object and the inadvertent revelations which any imaginative creative work makes manifest to the modern student of psychology provide sexual stimulations which no code can control. An analysis of such implications in the films in the sample is beyond the scope of this study, but the extent to which such investigations may be carried is illustrated in the studies by Parker Tyler.[5] In the light of such investigations it becomes clear that nothing could possibly be presented on the screen which could not be susceptible to imputations of hidden sexual meaning.

[5] Parker Tyler, *The Hollywood Hallucination* (New York: Creative Age Press, 1944); Tyler, *Magic and Myth of the Movies* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1947); et al.

(This is the second of four articles)

U. S. Film Journalism—A Survey

ERNEST CALLENBACH

ERNEST CALLENBACH first became interested in films through the work of the Documentary Film Group, a student organization at the University of Chicago. In Paris, in 1949, he made an informal study of the French motion picture. He is now continuing his studies at the University of Chicago. Part of the material for this article was prepared by BRUCIA FRIED of New York City, and part by ALFRED G. BROOKS, a student in the Theater Arts Department at the University of California, Los Angeles.

THE OUTPUT of film journalism is immense. It would be useless—as well as impossible—to catalogue it all, and it is difficult to assess its importance in even approximate terms. The field appears to be a fertile one for sociological study; many varieties of non-specialized journalism have arisen around the film industry, each fulfilling a somewhat different function and having a different internal organization and audience. Forms vary in the United States today from fan-magazine splashes to abstruse articles in the little reviews. No one knows how many million words pour yearly into the public's ear on the multiple interests generated by the film industry. A general survey, however, may help to give some idea of the nature and tendency of nonspecialized film journalism in the United States.

Everyone who buys a newspaper knows the fan magazines; newsstands are blanketed with some two dozen of them, each one filled with reports on the private lives of stars and inside accounts of the Hollywood whirl. The business and pleasure of the movie capital merge in the dream world of "movieland," and there, somehow, the familiarity of Main Street is combined with the glitter of a glamorous, though pasteboard, earthly paradise. The fan magazines bring their readers a kind of secondhand life which, judging by sales figures, must enliven the fantasies of many. But the fan magazines, serving the assembly-line celluloid product,

[1] We here omit consideration of film periodicals as such, trade papers, and technical publications; for an account of these more specialized aspects of film journalism, see Arthur Rosenheimer, Jr., "A Survey of Film Periodicals, II: The United States and England," *Hollywood Quarterly*, Volume II, Number 4 (1947).

partake of its peculiar insubstantiality. Perhaps a few fan-magazine readers would maintain, upon inquiry, that they think Hollywood is "actually like that," but it seems probable that the national idea of the film industry is more largely conditioned by the fan magazines than most inhabitants of the movie colony would enjoy believing. And this idea conditions, in turn, the fans' expectations in regard to product. The Hollywood world depicted by the fan magazines would, as a matter of course, be looked to solely for films of the assembly-line variety. Occasionally an article does break through to the reality of the film-producing world, or to the actual lives of the people who keep it going. However, for the habitual movie-goers who read fan magazines, the present situation tends to become the only conceivable one; and films or film makers who do not fit the pattern seem abnormal, stupid, or perhaps un-American.

The review columns of daily papers furnish two main kinds of material: gossip or publicity materials, and genuine reviews. Dailies of considerable circulation ordinarily print movie-review columns to which they assign a regular reviewer, but in small cities and rural areas the attention given to films is often confined to syndicated gossip columns or studio-originated advertising disguised as news releases. In volume, such stuff creates a fraudulent and hypnotic haze of mock evaluation, and it is unfortunate that it is circulated so widely. The situation assumes importance when we remember that many American filmgoers are reached only by these surreptitious plugs—and the fan magazines.

Considerable effort has been devoted to obtaining material on genuine reviewing. Two types have been distinguished, newspaper and magazine reviews, and an attempt has been made to ascertain the background of the persons responsible for them and the day-by-day content of the reviews.

A fairly extensive selection of large-circulation newspapers was studied in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, three of the

country's great metropolitan areas. Because papers have not been identified in the descriptions below, they are tabulated here:

PAPER	FREQUENCY OF REVIEWS	REGULAR REVIEWER
Chicago *Daily News*	Daily with some omissions	Sam Lesner
Chicago *Herald-American*	Daily	Ann Marsters
Chicago *Sun-Times*	Daily	Doris Arden
Chicago *Tribune*	Irregular; several per week	Mae Tinee
Los Angeles *Daily News*	Daily	Ezra Goodman
Los Angeles *Times*	Daily, with some omissions and special articles	Edwin Schallert Philip K. Scheuer
New York *Daily News*	Irregular; several per week	Dorothy Masters Kate Cameron
New York *Herald Tribune*	Daily except Sunday	Otis L. Guernsey, Jr.
New York *Post*	Daily	Archer Winsten
New York *Times*	Daily, with special articles Sunday, by Crowther and others	Bosley Crowther
New York *World-Telegram and Sun*	Daily, with some omissions	Alton Cook

(NOTE: Both the Los Angeles papers covered have gossip columns which are carried on in part by the reviewing staff; this arrangement is not found elsewhere.)

There is, of course, some difference in the films that are available for review in different cities. Theaters in the three areas under consideration present more foreign and revival showings than those in any other American cities with the possible exceptions of Philadelphia and San Francisco. New York enjoys about twice as many such showings as does Chicago or Los Angeles, and it seems to have a larger public that takes a serious or semiserious interest in films as they are covered in the press.

Beyond this, intercity differences are vague and hard to assess. The most respectable newspaper reviews, from the standpoint of film analysis rather than simple value judging, are beyond doubt those in the New York *Times*.

Movie reviewers write in general independence of the "policy" of the papers in which their reviews appear—naturally enough, since with a few exceptions reviews do not deal with material of political or social significance.[2] In cases where specific bias might be expected, we failed to find anything material; thus, for instance, the rabidly Anglophobe Chicago *Tribune* does not deny that British films are often well made, in spite of their origin.

Background material was secured for all but a few of the regularly assigned critics. To minimize personal reflections, the critics discussed below are not identified.

Critic A has been writing reviews for many years; previously, he had experience in teaching dramatics. He does no film writing aside from his critical columns, but gives occasional informal lectures. He reads *Variety* and miscellaneous reviews, especially British reviews of American pictures, and he reads occasional books about film making. Unlike some reviewers, Critic A thinks that his columns have a good deal of effect; his mail is sizable. His columns are short and slanted to a wide popular audience; his paper also publishes a considerable quantity of gossip material.

Critic B, who occasionally writes for magazines, was a general amusement journalist before becoming a reviewer. He gives lectures from time to time, and once gave a course on films. He reads the trade publications extensively, though not regularly, and regards *The New Yorker* as his favorite magazine. He reads a great many books on movies, but did not name any. Most of his mail is directed to particular points, and is quite favorable; Critic B inclines to think that a good segment of the audience pays attention to reviews. He tries to keep from imposing his opinions on his readers, and gives considerable information on quality and content.

Critic C was an assistant drama critic prior to fourteen years of

[2] On checking the infrequent reviews of the New York *Daily Worker*, which is definitely of minor consequence in the critical world, we did find comments on social content, somewhat churlish in tone. Real social criticism of films practically never occurs in the newspaper world, although it is rather frequent in certain periodicals (see below).

film reviewing. He writes for magazines, makes a more or less annual lecture tour and speaks at universities, and clubs. He reads most of the books on films which are published, and mentioned books by Seldes, Powdermaker, and Vardac; his coverage of magazines includes the *Hollywood Quarterly, Sight and Sound, Film News, International Photographer,* and *American Cinema.* He is the best-informed critic writing in any of the papers examined, and his responsible attitude is apparent in his columns. He feels that there is a considerable response to his columns, especially with regard to foreign productions, where critical evaluation can greatly influence a film's financial success.

Critic D has been writing reviews for several years and did miscellaneous reporting previously; he also serves as amusement editor for his paper. He does no outside writing on films and doesn't feel that any of the film magazines are particularly important; he does not habitually read any. He does cover quite a few books, however, mentioning ones by Powdermaker, Schary, Eisenstein, and Kracauer. To him, film reviews are important only in the metropolitan areas of the United States. In his own columns he tries to give both information and appraisal; he feels that he writes for fairly acute readers, and devotes attention to foreign and better American productions.

Critic E began his journalistic experience as a sportswriter, got into feature work and wrote pieces on Hollywood stars. He has been movie editor since before the war, and tries to give his columns a popular slant. He reads the trade papers, but little else.

Critic F went through journalism school and did postgraduate work. He began writing film reviews immediately afterward, and has handled film reviewing since the department was first created on his paper. He reads a few trade papers and once in a while a book on the movies. He tries to be objective in evaluating films, and does not hesitate to be severe when the film deserves it; his columns are popular but fairly consistent in taste. He feels that his columns have a considerable body of attentive readers; like

all his colleagues, he thinks that as movie-goers become more selective, the importance of the reviewer will increase.

Critic G was originally a librarian, but shifted to the music and drama field and finally became interested in films. He has written columns for several years, and does occasional coverage of other entertainment areas such as radio, television, and nightlife. He reads little extra material on films, speaks on films occasionally, and once gave a course of lectures in a college. His columns are written to appeal to a wide audience; they display rather erratic judgment.

Critic H was formerly employed by a studio in a publicity department but had no direct production experience. (None of his colleagues has done production work either except Critic I, below.) He has written reviews for many years, together with articles for magazines. He reads most current material dealing with the motion picture industry and attempts to give a really honest judgment on the pictures he reviews; he aims at a compromise between what he imagines the audience will think and his own opinion. He finds that the studios consider him impartial when he praises one of their productions, a scoundrel when he pans one. Like Critic F, he feels that as people begin to shop for movies the role of the critic becomes more important, but at present he receives little indication of reader response.

Critic I went to Hollywood in the 'twenties with a script that he had written, but it was never produced there, although it afterward won a prize in the East. He writes personal-opinion reviews in which he strives to make responsible evaluations; he reads the national magazines and trade papers, but does not let their reviews influence his judgments. He read publications which deal with audience response and film making; however, he feels that he is writing into a vacuum, since reader mail is practically nonexistent. (He gets occasional crank calls about "errors.") To Critic I, critical influence is negligible except in regard to "art" films, to which a more discriminating audience is attracted.

Critic J writes columns which cover various aspects of the film-making world, but in most of his columns he does not discuss completed films. He seems to feel that the reviewer is less important than the gossip purveyor; he slants his columns to "the average moviegoer." He reads the trade papers, and writes for various magazines.

Thus, in summary, none of the critics interviewed has come from the production world, although all of them have some contact with personalities in it, mostly in passing. Only two have undertaken any serious attempt to acquaint themselves with the literature of films, though several others read the general run of current publications. Most of them imagine themselves to be writing from the standpoint of the common man, but a discouraging proportion do not think that their work has any marked effect on their readers.

To get a more precise idea of just what is said in the columns a simple content analysis scheme was devised. Preliminary inspection and some familiarity with the columns suggested three main categories of content.

1. General remarks on the film as a whole, its over-all qualities, unity, significance, or appeal.

2. Summaries of plot or story, sometimes in abbreviated synopsis form.

3. Comments on performances.

Additional categories were found to be required, and were set up as follows:

4. Mention of production staff: director, producer, writer, composer, original author, etc.

5. Break down of technical qualities: camera, script (dialogue or situation), music, etc.

6. Remarks on relationships between films: noting remakes, suggesting comparisons.

7. Reports on current production activities, gossip, etc.

Other aspects suggested by inspection of film literature in

general (attitudes manifested in films, influences of films upon audiences, meaning "behind" films, etc.) received practically no treatment in the sample studied.

A wide sample of columns was examined in the light of these categories, and content counts made for each. An attempt was made to pick random periods in order to minimize variations caused by holidays and other factors not relevant to the average review. Since writers change from time to time, and since regularly assigned reviewers sometimes have other people write columns, the situation hardly permits rigid description. On the whole, the review activities in the great press seem to remain constant, and the picture we obtained of what is said, day by day and month by month, remains reasonably valid. The chief characteristic of these critical writings is, in fact, their extreme uniformity from the content standpoint.

The first three categories received from the critics about twice the attention paid to the other categories. Films are not discussed from the point of view of production detail, and comment is focused only on the film itself. These comments, moreover, are almost all of the type which would be equally applicable to stage drama; there is little consciousness of the film as a form different from the theater. Reviews seldom display awareness of the film as a medium. The film is a *fait accompli;* it is subjected to critical scrutiny only over a restricted area. Evaluations are made within the familiar machinery of theatrical tradition: plot, character, theme, diction, and also, occasionally, music and spectacle, to round out the Aristotelian hexad. The film as a peculiar genre, marked by mobility, ellipsis, and material symbolism, is nowhere discerned. It is startling to perceive the extent to which films are thought of as canned theater; the considerable variety of the product, both domestic and foreign, is largely ignored. Audience expectations are narrowed and the flexibility and vitality of the film industry suffer in the long run.

Among the first three factors, "story" receives more attention

than the other two. Character is conceived as something which makes a story possible. For persons holding this view, characterization can be markedly stereotyped, acting skill can be lowered, in conformity with the demands of the star system, and stock situations become the easy way out.

Of the subsidiary types of comment, mention of production staff is more frequent than any of the rest. "Production staff" usually refers to producer and director. Other members of the production team are noted when they are also producer, director, or star, or when their names have gossip value.

Comments on technical points are exceedingly general, of course; space limitations make it impossible to particularize, and real attention can seldom be paid to filmic devices without going into detail.

Gossip materials, and notes on interrelationships between films, are used chiefly as connective material in columns, except in three cases (Critics H, I, and J). Most of the writers interviewed seem to have an effective memory for the films which they have covered in their reviewing careers, but few have tried to acquaint themselves with earlier work or with the films that have been outstanding in the development of the medium; they preserve in this an essentially amateur point of view, which at least keeps them close to their readers. The numerical ratios revealed the following distribution of comments:

CATEGORY:	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
FREQUENCY:	64	65	59	32	33	19	6

(NOTE: These figures are, of course, approximate but suffice to indicate the over-all tendency.)

In view of the consistent, not to say repetitious, nature of the columns, it must be stated in fairness that few are actually offensive through dullness, though the perusal of many such reviews is exceedingly tedious. Almost all the reviewers are decent jour-

nalists; they manage to keep their writing lively, though only in a few cases with any distinction.

For those magazines of national stature that give routine coverage to films, brief summaries have been compiled. Editorial policies with regard to space and frequency change, so this list cannot be regarded as a permanent index, but it does provide an indicative survey.

From the mass-readership standpoint, the important publications among the magazines are the giant weeklies, *Life, Newsweek,* and *Time.* An attempt was made to discover the sources for the material appearing in these, but with only partial success (see below). These three magazines have, perhaps, as much weight among certain filmgoers as the entire daily press; they appeal to the "leaders" of American society—the college graduate, business-executive class. Backed by the prestige of huge circulations and presented in concise form, the film sections of these weeklies are influential in conditioning audience expectations and responses on a national scale.

Outstanding or controversial films draw comment from periodicals which do not frequently print film reviews, and articles on a variety of topics related to films find their way into sometimes unlikely places. Publications which print occasional film journalism range from *Collier's* (stories on Hollywood figures) through *The Atlantic Monthly* (serious contributions to film analysis and evaluation) to *The Audubon Magazine* (reports on documentaries).

Commonweal: Reviews appearing weekly and covering domestic films, heavily weighted toward characterization comments. Attention is also given to plot probability and types of human qualities portrayed. The reviews tend to treat the cinema in stage terms. No particular religious bias was noted in the sample examined.

The Library Journal: Reviews appearing weekly and covering domestic (and occasionally foreign) films. These reviews originate with an American Library Association committee. They include a listing of the producing

firm, original source, producer, director, and major players. A brief summary of the plot usually follows, with descriptions of particularly interesting incidents. There are two added sections, "Films Completed" and "Films Now in Production," which list credits as above.

Life: "Movie of the Week," covering both domestic and foreign films, copiously illustrated. Comment is hardly needed on this ubiquitous item. Usually taking the form of a running description with pictures, the articles also include background information on production, some description of producers and players, and comments of general interest. The processing of *Life* articles, after their initial composition, is a complicated affair involving a legendary number of subeditors. The resulting articles have the same anonymity as the reviews of the other big weeklies. *Life,* however, has published several feature articles on important phases of film making.

The Nation: Reviews appearing occasionally and covering both domestic and foreign films. General commentaries. Considerable detailed analysis is carried out; the cinema is discussed from a consciously cinematic viewpoint. Articles deal with one film at length and usually with several others in more summary fashion.

The New Republic: Reviews appearing about every other week, chiefly covering domestic films. General commentaries. More socially oriented than the majority of reviews, these sometimes attempt to relate film content to social context. They are frequently negative in tone, deriding sentimentality, Hollywood conventions, and "typical" presentations generally.

The New Yorker: "The Current Cinema," reviews appearing weekly, covering both domestic and foreign films. Much attention is paid to foreign productions, and the home product seems to lose out pretty regularly. The columns concentrate on performances and dramatic probability, and their somewhat misanthropic summaries are often amusing, though not always informative. *The New Yorker* also carries a calendar of events with a section on films showing in New York theaters—a brief note is given on each.

Newsweek: "Movies," reviews appearing weekly, covering domestic (and some foreign) films. Terse summaries on the *Time* pattern (type of picture, characters and players, screenplay origin and plot précis) are woven in with evaluative comments on general handling. A punch line is ordinarily included toward the end. *Newsweek* is not quite so brash as *Time,* but has the same carefully offhand style. Its reviews are produced in much the same fashion as are those appearing in *Time;* they are less tightly written, however, and seem to be more stereotyped.

The Rotarian: Reviews appearing weekly, covering domestic (and occasionally foreign) films. General commentaries. Pictures are keyed for audience suitability; the reviews are preceded by a listing of director, major players, and type of film. One-line italicized evaluations are provided—

"discerning, satiric, artfully contrived," "weary," etc. Plot summaries are also given, often rather badly written; general comments and judgments are routine. A section on current films and an advance list is appended to each week's article.

The Saturday Review of Literature: "The Film Forum" and occasional articles, appearing weekly, covering both domestic and foreign documentary pictures. For several years this magazine has been one of the few periodicals to show a continuous devotion to serious film material. It gives regular attention to documentaries and presents supplementary articles on many phases of motion picture production and the use of films. The *Review*'s film section is informed, catholic in outlook.

Theater Arts: No regular film section. When articles about films appear, they are generally of good quality and bring in considerable material from film history and technique; neither popular nor technical, they appeal to an educated audience that takes a wide interest in drama and art.

Time: "The New Pictures," reviews appearing weekly, covering both domestic and foreign films, with illustrations. Comments are sprightly and customarily include an account of the plot, character descriptions with identification of players, and summary comments. The tone of *Time* reviews is terse and slightly self-conscious, with an abundance of coined and portmanteau words. The stylistic instrument does not, however, seem to probe any deeper than more ordinary tools. "Current and Choice." A series of three-line notes on current films of more than average value is appended to each week's review column. In January, *Time* devotes further space to "The Year's Best," a report on the choices of film critics assembled to pass judgment on the year's cinematic output.

Most *Time* reviews originate with a regularly assigned writer whose reviews pass through a long editing process. First a checker handles them, taking care of accuracy of references and scheduling reviews for appearance dates. A series of editors can thereafter amend the reviews as they see fit. Originators of reviews do not usually have production experience, although one former member of the staff had done script writing. The staff reads the trade papers, and maintains a fairly extensive library of books on films, together with a morgue on film information of various sorts.

Thus the magazines provide rather more varied critical fare than does the metropolitan daily press. Yet this variety is actually small; the diversity of film treatment in periodicals as opposed to newspapers is apparent rather than real, when one considers how much smaller a segment of the public is reached by magazines.

Like other aspects of the movie world, reviewing is extensively

stereotyped. The great public of the country is subjected to a barrage of cursory evaluation which tends to stifle rather than stimulate the application of imagination to motion picture fare.

But the stature of an art—however organized commercially and whatever its historical virtues—in the end depends largely on the alertness of its public. The present state of film journalism in the United States, then, is no great comfort to those who believe in the potentialities of the domestic cinema.

Films for Television

IRVING PICHEL

IRVING PICHEL, director of more than thirty feature pictures, recently completed his first film for television, *The Pharmacist's Mate,* which is discussed in this article.

DRAMATIC shows on television come in three forms: "live" shows sent out by television cameras as they are performed,[1] films made especially for television, and old motion pictures no longer in theater release. Motion pictures, though popular with viewers, are not ideally adapted to the television screen, save in being visual and in being, if we are not too literal about it, entertaining. The television play is a new thing and the television film bears a much closer kinship to the live show than it does to its parent theater film, as marriage is presumed to be a closer relationship (among adults) than that of children and parents. There are, certainly, family resemblances among all three forms, as well as differences. The live television play imitates many of the traits of the theater film, but it and its filmed counterpart set out to serve a new and special medium, whereas the theater film was made originally to serve a different purpose and to reach its audience differently. The theater film uses film as a medium; the television film uses it primarily as a facility, for the format of the television film is that of the television play, as are many of its techniques. Producers of television films in their use of the camera, their sets, lighting, direction, and acting imitate the procedures of the television studio, not those of the film studio. The reasons for this are in part economic, but only in part. The screen of the television receiver is the real determinant, and economic factors in television production grow out of the inherent nature of the medium.

These considerations became immediate to me in December,

[1] Kinescoped shows are not considered as a separate form, since they are photographed on 16-mm. motion picture film directly from a monitor tube during telecast for the use of network stations outside the range of the originating station. They bear the same relation to live telecasting that a transcription does to a radio broadcast. Film is simply a visual recording.

1950, when I had the opportunity of directing my first film for television. The program for which the film was to be made was—and, with the exception of this one venture, still is—a "live" show, the *Pulitzer Prize Playhouse*. The program originates in New York and uses for material plays, novels, and news stories for which Pulitzer prizes have been awarded or other works by writers to whom these awards have been granted. Its plays run one hour and are telecast weekly. Each play is rehearsed three weeks.

There were a number of reasons for making this particular production on film instead of producing it as a live show. First in importance, perhaps, was the fact that the play chosen for the experiment was scheduled for December twenty-second, the date closest to Christmas. Since the telecast was to convey the sponsor's Christmas greetings and the subject had some appropriateness to the season, it was desirable that all the outlets of the network over which the program is released be able to have the same program on the same date. This is not feasible with a live show which can be seen only on receivers within the range of the broadcasting station from which it goes out or through the coaxial cable. Other outlets may show the program on kinescope film but only at a later date. Other factors were a desire to learn whether a program could be filmed adequately for a sum within the weekly budget, and whether, possibly, filmed plays interspersed among the regular programs might not relieve the pressure on the producers of the series, who had to keep three productions under way.

The play chosen for the experiment was a dramatization by Budd Schulberg of a story by George Weller which had appeared in the Chicago *Daily News* during the war, telling of an appendectomy performed by a pharmacist's mate on an apprentice seaman in a submarine in enemy waters. In Mr. Schulberg's play, this took place on Christmas Eve. Perhaps the setting was a further reason for turning the play over to the film makers, who might be expected to do better with the interior of a submarine than a scenic studio could. We shall have more to say about this later.

Mr. Schulberg's play was, in itself, a first lesson in the difference between a screen play and a television play. It recognized what is possibly the greatest difference between the two media—the fact that the theater screen enlarges while the television receiver reduces. It is too early in the development of television to say that long shots are of no value, but it is clear that, at the present moment, scenes of any considerable scope, involving numbers of people, are ineffective. *The Pharmacist's Mate* told its story intimately, the action was close, and the scenes were automatically confined, since a submarine is cut up into small and crowded quarters. Moreover, perhaps in consideration of the fact that the play was intended originally for live production, the action was continuous although scenes shifted from one quarter of the submarine to another, conning tower to control room, wardroom to dinette to galley to engine room.

My first step in preparation for filming *The Pharmacist's Mate* was to view as many live or kinescoped programs as possible. I had already some familiarity with television studios and their camera techniques. I knew how the cameras were deployed so that, as each scene was played, one picked up a full shot, one was mobile and was used either to follow a moving character or to move into or pull back from a close shot, while a third might be used for close angles. Each camera might change its function according to the way the scene was staged. Thus, the director has available during the broadcast three angles from which to select the best one to go out over the air. Planning and rehearsal determines the duties of each camera at each moment of the performance. He cuts the picture as it is being played, thus having much of the advantage of the film cutter who has angles from which to select, with the important difference that the television director must make his selections on the instant. The shows I viewed revealed some of the handicaps that apply to this operation. Even with fairly extensive camera rehearsal, camera movement and placement must be done with great alertness, so a degree of improvisation is inevitable.

Framing and composition are often catch-as-catch-can so that what one sees on the receiving set is too often a rough approximation of a well-framed shot. Moreover, there seems to be no allowance made for the different sizes and shapes of television screen, each one chopping off more or less of the top and sides of the field shown by the camera's finder. The camera operator knows quite well what his camera is viewing. How much of it a viewer may see he has no way of knowing.

The second step in preparation was to investigate the methods used by producers making film for television. I found in several instances that films are often shot as live shows are telecast; that is, multiple cameras (usually three) are used very much as they are used in television studios. One camera may be used for full shots, one for moving shots, and the third for close angles. Occasionally, during the course of filming, one camera may be cut out and its position changed to a different angle before being switched on again. As a result, the cutter has three or sometimes four angles from which to choose so that the film can have all the variety and constantly renewed interest of motion picture film. This method, necessitated by the nature of live telecasting, was abandoned long ago in motion picture production, save in scenes of violent action where it would otherwise be impossible to match action exactly, or where, for practical reasons, the action can be played only once, or in scenes of great expanse where it is possible to pick up details of a broad action—as long as none of the cameras gets in the range of the others. The reasons for its abandonment as a standard film practice are several. First, it is difficult if not impossible to light a scene equally well for more than one camera. The intensity of light which is correct for one camera may be too great for one placed closer to the action or using a different lens. Second, it is difficult to get equally effective composition for more than one camera at a time. Ordinarily, the cameras will have to be focused more or less in the same direction so that reverse angles and cross angles are sacrificed for angles which vary chiefly in size

or scope. Usually, to place three cameras effectively, to stage the action so that it is equally good for all three, and to light the shot so that it will be photographed as well by all three takes more time than to shoot the three angles consecutively. There are, of course, exceptions. In shooting the scenes in the Old Bailey in *The Paradine Case,* Alfred Hitchcock used six cameras. However, each of these cameras picked up a separate close-up, so that actually six separately lighted and composed shots were photographed simultaneously. The advantage gained by the director in this instance was the sustained playing of the scene, not the manner in which it was photographed.

The *Bigelow Theater,* produced by Jerry Fairbanks, uses the three-camera system,[2] as do Snader Telescriptions and a number of other enterprises. This is done in the interest of economy since, although three camera crews are required, time is saved. The fact that the angles are not as well lighted or composed as in motion picture film is regarded as a small price to pay for the saving in time. In addition, since the same criticisms that can be leveled at the multiple camera technique apply equally to live television camera work, there is no lowering of the standard of photographic quality. Photographically, film shot by three cameras will be as good as the images transmitted by the television camera. In addition, it still has the advantages cited above.

Other producers of television film, among them Frank Wisbar who directs the *Fireside Theater* productions, use only a single camera. Since this means that each angle must be separately lighted and shot, economy of time can be effected only by limiting the number of angles shot, by simplifying camera movement, and by shooting, as far as possible, only the sections of scenes in each angle which the director intends using in the completed film. In other words, he must cut with the camera, allowing himself a minimum of overlap. This is, as a matter of fact, the method of

[2] Mr. Fairbanks uses 16-mm. cameras. Most producers shoot 35-mm. film and reduce prints. For certain technical reasons, 35-mm. film is easier to use.

the "quickies." Its successful application depends upon the skill and judgment of the director, who must visualize with a good bit of competence what he wants the final picture to look like, and be willing to forego the choice of angles and the editorial flexibility that a fuller use of film would guarantee.

The third and final stage of preparation for shooting *The Pharmacist's Mate* consisted of fitting the demands of the production into the limitations of the medium in which it was to be shown. These fell into three classifications, economic, technical, and artistic, though none of these is clearly separated from the others. I have already referred to the kinds of sets the film required. If it is true that television is most effective in close shots, it follows that the sets need not be spacious. This artistic limitation is in fortunate accord with the budgetary limitation that applies to television production. Likewise a technical limitation that we faced in being forced, because of cramped quarters, to film the picture with a single camera fitted into our economic limitation and, at the same time, gave us perhaps a better artistic result than we would have achieved with the simultaneous use of two or more cameras.

Nevertheless, the first factor we had to deal with was economic. Our budget was less than thirty thousand dollars. The action takes place in a submarine. Warner Brothers had built for their film *Operation Pacific* a remarkable interior of a submarine at a cost of $55,000, considerably more than our entire budget. It is conceivable that their set might have been rented. However, film producers are not, at this moment, disposed to encourage or cooperate with producers of television programs. Negotiations with the Warner Brothers studio might have culminated successfully, but they moved very slowly. The alternative was to ask Navy Department coöperation, including the use of a submarine. This was secured. The set problem was solved economically, and it may be taken for granted that the artistic end of complete verisimilitude was also served. There loomed, however, the technical prob-

lem of photographing the action of the play in a real sub. Unless one has been below deck in one of these amazing mechanisms, one can have no notion of how much gear is crowded into so little space. Add to this, not only the necessary players but a camera, its crew, a bare minimum of lighting equipment, and the sound recording equipment and its operating crew, and you begin to visualize picture making under unique conditions. There was no single camera set-up in which the camera was not pushed against a steel bulkhead, barely leaving room for the cameraman to get his eye to the eyepiece. In making several of the shots, a man had to sit under the camera and tilt it back against the camera operator, so that it rested on only two legs of its tripod in order to gain the last inch of space. The ceilings are so low that it was impossible to hang the microphone from a boom overhead and usually the sound man sat on the floor holding the microphone up in front of the players, just below the bottom frame line of the shot. In several instances, he had to lie on his back on the floor.

It was evident at once that the film could be shot only with a single camera using an extremely wide angle lens. This meant that shooting had to be planned with great care, leaving nothing to improvisation. The conditions of shooting and lighting had to be carefully studied in terms of the submarine itself, angles selected, and the order of shooting predetermined so that each camera move involved a minimum amount of work and rearrangement of equipment. The amount of film coverage and overlapping had to be restricted, bearing in mind, however, that we needed enough flexibility in cutting to time the film, not only dramatically, but to the exactly computed length imposed by the one-hour telecast schedule, minus only the main and end titles, the middle commerical break, and the credit titles.

Casting involved no unusual problems and was effected much as it would have been for any other sort of film.

I have said that the script itself conformed to most of the generalizations that can safely be made at this early stage in develop-

ment concerning the limitations of television as a medium.[3] The action of the story was not broadly physical. Its suspense was generated by the doubts and fears of the principal character as he undertook an operation he had never performed before upon which depended the life of a shipmate. It was contributed to by a host of objects within the scale of the television screen—a clock that marked the passage of the hour-and-a-half it took to perform the operation, the bent spoons used as improvised retractors, the depth gauges that indicated the effort to hold the ship steady below the surface of a stormy sea, the failure of lights, the continuation of the job under the faint beams of battle lanterns. Its tension was increased by the strained silences in which the task was performed, by the distrust of the executive officer, by the calming confidence of the skipper, and, at one point, it was brought near breaking point by the sound, amplified by sonar, of an enemy destroyer passing overhead, and made all the more frightening by the silencing of the sub's motors. The story was told wholly within the limits of the medium without resort to techniques which are regarded as essential in theater films though, so far as techniques are concerned, everything in the film could have been used in a theatrical film. In other words, it contained only shots which could be seen well on the receiver and did not require the magnification of a large screen.

In production, finally, there was a conscious effort to avoid some of what seemed to be liabilities of the live shows I had watched. These were flaws which stemmed from the relationship between television production and theater production. In some of the shows I had watched, staging strongly suggested the theater

[3] "We suggest that television lends itself to the development of a new kind of drama in which action is not, as in the film, predominantly physical, but psychological—both sight and sound serving to give overt expression to the covert operations of the mind.... Television, perhaps, lends itself to introvert adventures. It is a medium potentially more intimate and subtle [than film].... Visual language, which, as in great films, informs even inanimate objects with life and meaning by selective focusing of our attention and which, by lighting and angle, can make its silence 'speak volumes,' provides, perhaps, that supplement to words by which alone we may come to apprehend the shrouded fears and hopes and longings of our own subconscious world." Charles A. Siepman, *Radio, Television, and Society* (Oxford University Press, 1950), p. 357.

with its random and often meaningless crosses and risings and sittings. In the theater, this sort of movement is justified by the need to focus the audience's attention and to give life to the stationary setting. In both television and the screen this sort of movement for movement's sake is obviated by the possibility of changing the angle or the scale of the shot, and by the frequent changes of locale. In these same live telecasts, too, I observed a consciousness of the audience. The playing was accommodated to the position of the camera (the spectator) instead of the camera being placed where it could best catch the action at any given moment. The third theater characteristic was in the playing itself which, as in the theater, was "projected" not only vocally but in gesture and facial expression. In this intimate medium, I felt a sense of embarrassment as I watched actors acting so hard and showing so much. Performances which I might have accepted with admiration from the tenth row in a theater seating twelve hundred became, in the living room, unreal and forced. Even the theater screen, which can observe and project with great intimacy the smallest changes of feeling as shown by the face and the voice, is outdone by the television receiver which brings a player into the very room in which one sits and watches.

Accordingly, we tried to scale the acting not only to the confines of the minute rooms in which it took place—the conning tower or the wardroom of the submarine—but to the rooms in which it would be seen.

As a director schooled in films where vast space is at one's disposal, where an inconvenient wall can be removed to make room for a camera and for lights, it was my good fortune to have as a first assignment one in which the limitations of locale and technical resource were so completely consonant with the characteristics of the new medium.

There are certain advantages in filming television plays which become apparent when one considers the conditions under which a television play is broadcast. Since it must be continuously per-

formed, the television play requires extended rehearsal and there is no possibility of correcting errors as in film. Sets must be contiguous, multiple cameras must be used to achieve changes of angle or scene, changes of costume are difficult to manage so that the plays are bound somewhat to unity of time. The use of film obviates some of these difficulties. It facilitates changes of scene, the use of exteriors, the selection of more interestingly composed angles, and the achievement of more effective and significant cutting, or montage. These are attributes of film itself as a medium. For the rest, for everything that lies beyond these technical advantages, film must adapt itself to the characteristics, so far as they are known, of the television medium. Certainly, one who has worked for a number of years making motion pictures discovers, when he turns to television, that whatever technical mastery of film he has acquired must subserve the television screen and what he can learn about it. The step he takes is more than halfway toward live telecasting.

The Venice Film Festival—1950

TULLIO KEZICH

TULLIO KEZICH is, at twenty-three, one of Italy's more perceptive movie critics. He was assistant producer to Luigi Zampa in the making of the feature film *Hearts Without Frontiers,* and at present is assistant director to Herbert Jacobson on the film *Aquila,* now being produced in Trieste with a native cast. He is also writing a book on the American "western."

THE VENICE FESTIVAL suffers from the limitations of all international cinema festivals; that is to say, it has to find a compromise between the artistic requirements of the exhibition and the commercial interests of the various film companies which take part in it. Since it is not permissible to ask by name for certain films, the "Biennale" must rely on the honesty and good taste of the various national selection committees. But in truth, not all the films presented are worthy of appearing in an exhibition dedicated to showing the finest examples of cinematic art.

The 1950 festival in Venice, the eleventh since the founding of the exhibition, was characterized by the brilliant success of French cinematography, which carried off the greatest number of awards. And the awarding of the International Grand Prize, the "Leone di San Marco," to André Cayatte's *Justice est faite* was intended as an acknowledgment that, in general, the French selections were the most homogeneous and intelligent of all shown there. On the other hand, everyone admits that, even though many noteworthy films were shown at Venice in 1950, none was so far ahead of the others as to unqualifiedly deserve top honors. In awarding the Grand Prize, the judges (including critics and well-known personalities of the Italian cultural world) had to arrive at a compromise which, like all compromises, did not completely satisfy anybody. And it is perhaps significant to note that the Italian motion picture critics awarded their 1950 annual prize to a film that was not in the competition: Edward Dmytryk's *Give Us This Day.*

Chief among the French films shown, of course, was *Justice est faite*. Here Cayatte the producer has allowed himself to be taken in hand by Cayatte the lawyer and led into a courtroom, where a case of euthanasia is being tried. But in this film—unlike the Nazi film *Ich klage an* (*I Accuse*) and Michael Gordon's *Act of Murder*—the central problem is not the moral or legal aspects of euthanasia. Instead, the picture concerns itself with the idea of "justice" and how it is arrived at by the seven jurors called upon to judge a fellow man. The film explores the individual lives of each of these seven, their backgrounds and personalities, peculiarities and prejudices—all the elements which inevitably influence them in reaching a judgment of innocence or guilt. Cayatte tries to raise a protest against the procedure in the assize courts of France whereby, even now, a Vichy law permits three magistrates to vote on equal terms with jurors chosen at random. The story, however, is not conclusive on this point, and the chief attack in *Justice est faite* is directed against the right of man to judge his fellow man. This film of Cayatte pulls no punches, is well thought out, and is also impressive because of the uniformly excellent acting of the entire cast.

Another French film worthy of special mention was *Dieu a besoin des hommes,* made by Jean Delannoy, written by Aurenche and Bost, and starring Pierre Fresnay. Here, without doubt, was a notable film. But we wonder whether it was not a special interest in the plot—the story of a sexton who, after the priest has fled, becomes a shepherd of souls—which made the greatest impression because of its vaguely Protestant overtones set against the generally Catholic atmosphere of the festival. Jean Delannoy, a director who, on other occasions, has proved as mediocre as he was ambitious, found in *Dieu a besoin des hommes* the breadth of real cinema: his story, set on the rocks of the Ile de Sein, has moments of great dramatic intensity, and the religious problem it presents is intimately communicated.

Other French films shown at Venice were Jean Cocteau's *Orphée,* Max Ophuls' *La Ronde,* Reinert's *Rendez-vous avec la chance,* and Nicole Vedres' *La vie commence demain. Orphée* does not deserve much consideration; it is a sale at bargain prices of all the weary, spoiled mythology of Cocteau, an ancient juggler who, because of his own anachronistic tastes, still considers the cinema as a place to display mediocre *boutades* and infantile tricks of the trade. Ophuls' *La Ronde,* on the other hand, is a film conceived under the sign of intelligence and good taste. Once more Ophuls returns to the delightful world of yesterday, to the Vienna of his own youth. As a film maker Ophuls is a romantic, and we were afraid that the basic flavor of the Schnitzler comedy—that of cynical amusement—would be missing when it was made into a film. However, Ophuls' *La Ronde* has struck the right note—disenchanted and at the same time gaily humorous—which smoothly spins the comedy along despite its rather artificial construction and mechanical development. To connect the ten episodes, the producer has inserted a narrator (played by Anton Walbrook) who roams in timeless space, brings about each event, welds the action together, and often sings ironic verses to a waltz melody by Oscar Strauss. The exceptional cast—Gerard Philippe, Simon Signoret, Reggiani, Isa Miranda, Daniel Gelin, Danielle Darrieux, Ferdinand Gravey, Simone Simon, and others—performs with style and intelligence.

Rendez-vous avec la chance is the story of a little black-coated worker whose marriage has failed, and who is incapable of seizing his chance of happiness when this is presented to him in the shape of a delightful girl who loves him and is ready to run away with him. Reinert, the producer, quite obviously has been influenced by several other films with the same general theme—the work of his countryman, Jacques Becker, a film of Mario Camerini's, as well as David Lean's *Brief Encounter* and Vidor's *H. M. Pulham, Esq.* Nevertheless, the film is not without originality and its subject is handled with a delicate touch. Reinert may also be com-

mended for having presented to us Danielle Delorme, a young actress of a considerable talent.

In *La vie commence demain* a peasant, played by J. P. Aumont, comes to Paris to visit the picture galleries and famous monuments. However, André Labarthe, a well-known journalist, reminds him of his duties as a citizen of this modern world, and urges him to investigate the fundamental problems of our society. The simple man from the country thereupon visits, in turn, Jean Paul Sartre, Jean Rostrand, Le Corbusier, Picasso, Gide, and other personalities of contemporary culture. In the end, the young man finds himself agreeing with Labarthe's comforting assertion that despite the peril of an atomic Armageddon, our world is on the threshold of a happy epoch. This film of Mrs. Vedres', who was responsible for the delightful *Paris 1900,* can be described as a series of authoritative statements that all point to one single pacifistic message. Although the device for linking together the various talks is rather mechanical and obvious, the presence of the personalities who act in the film and the exact formulation of certain essential problems confer upon *La vie commence demain* a conspicuous interest.

The British contribution to the festival at Venice was much less significant than the French, and consisted almost entirely of unimaginative and undistinguished films like *State Secret* and *The Dancing Years. Gone to Earth,* an ambitious technicolor picture made by Powell and Pressburger, would have been completely disappointing had it not been for Brian Easdale's musical commentary, which was awarded a prize by the judges. And Basil Dearden's *The Blue Lamp* merely copies—though not without a certain skill—the style of films like *Naked City.*

Of the American films shown at Venice, three aroused the most critical interest. John Huston's *Asphalt Jungle* was very well received; but while the award for best actor deservedly went to Sam Jaffe, who played the part of Doc, the picture failed to win any of the top prizes—a disappointment to the critics who felt it de-

served one. *Caged,* directed by John Cromwell, impressed many people. Its controversial subject was handled forcefully, and Eleanor Parker was outstanding—quite rightly the jury named her "best actress." And *All the King's Men* added to the stature of Robert Rossen as a craftsman with wide interests and a sure touch.

Other American films were much less popular. Although *Panic in the Streets,* directed by Elia Kazan, unexpectedly won one of the first prizes, it was considered rather ordinary despite the care in the general construction and the excellence of the photography of Joe MacDonald. *Once a Thief* does not reveal any particular gifts in director W. Lee Wilder, and in *Cinderella* Disney seeks in vain to return to the dream world of his early experiments in fantasy. *September Affair* was the least popular American film of all. It is as false as the posters of a tourist agency; even the acting abilities of Joan Fontaine and Joseph Cotten are not in evidence. The picture left only one pleasant memory—Kurt Weil's "September Song," sung splendidly by the late Walter Huston.

As for the Italian cinema, its best works could not be seen at Venice. De Sica's *Miracolo a Milano* and Pietro Gemmi's *Il Cammino della speranza* were not completed in time for the festival, and even Michelangelo Antonioni's interesting film *Cronaca di un amore* was not entered in the competition.

Roberto Rossellini was represented by two pictures: *Stromboli* and *Francesco, Giullare di Dio.* The *Stromboli* that we saw was somewhat different from the version released in the United States by RKO. An uneven film, slow in getting started, it is worth seeing for a magnificent Ingrid Bergman. But unlike Rossellini's *Città Aperta* and *Paisà,* it contains no valid message of universal appeal. *Francesco, Giullare di Dio* is an attempt on the part of Rossellini to bring the *Fioretti* to the screen. In line with present-day interest, he has cut out everything that savors of the miraculous in order to investigate the essence of Franciscan teaching. Endeavoring to put the stamp of realism on his story of St. Francis, Rossel-

lini has chosen real friars for his actors and, following his usual method, has done most of his shooting out-of-doors. *Francesco* has therefore nothing in common with a certain worship of the Saints which the Holy Year has brought back into fashion in Italy today. But even Rossellini's greatest skill cannot keep the film from being spotty; *Francesco* is a curious mixture of episodes that are excellent and other elements that are in the worst possible taste. However, Rossellini must be given credit for a careful handling of figurative values.

The best of the Italian films shown at the exhibition was Blasetti's *Prima Comunione*. Based on a story by Cesare Zavattini, it has, in some respects, the same plot as that of *Ladri di biciclette,* but transferred to a bourgeois plane, blandly evangelical and fundamentally optimistic; this time the hero does not lose a bicycle which is the only means of support of his family, but merely a parcel containing the dress for the first Communion of his daughter. The losing of the parcel is the pretext for a film which Blasetti, who has gone back to the style of *Quattro passi tra le nuvole,* knows how to handle with pleasing ease and almost René Clair-like fantasy. The principal actor is Aldo Fabrizi.

Zavattini also wrote the script for *E più facile che un cammello.* The Bible says: "It is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the Kingdom of Heaven." Zavattini has offered Luigi Zampa, the producer of *Vivere in pace,* a new variation of the theme of a rich man faced with death. Zampa has produced a modest but nevertheless amusing film, among other things offering Jean Gabin the chance to show his talents as actor in a role entirely different from those he usually plays.

The prize for the best Italian film went to *Domani è troppo tardi,* directed by the Frenchman Leonide Moguy. This is without doubt a controversial film from the moral point of view, since it faces up to the problem of sex education in the young. It has the merit of bringing to light a promising young actress, Anna Maria

Pierangeli, and of confirming the extraordinary gifts of Vittorio de Sica as an actor. But, apart from this, it is a somewhat slipshod work, based on an ingenuous and conventional scenario.

Among the works shown at Venice by other nations, we must mention Helmud Käutner's thriller, *Epilog* (made in Western Germany), not particularly out of the ordinary but brilliant technically; Gavaldon's *Rosauro Castro,* the only Mexican film this year of any interest; and finally the Swedish film, *Bara an Mor* (*Only a Mother*), made by Alf Sjoberg, the sentimental story of a girl who is abandoned by her fiancé because she has bathed naked in a lake, a film which has its moments of Nordic candor and freshness.

There are also some documentary films worth remembering: Haesaerts' *Visite à Picasso* (Belgium), *Pupila al Viento* (Uruguay), directed by the Italian Enrico Gras, and Lo Duca's *Rousseau le Douanier.*

In 1950 the Venice festival carried on with the retrospective exhibitions that were so successful in 1947 and 1948. Three "personal exhibitions" were dedicated to King Vidor, Marcel Carné, and Greta Garbo. The exhibition dedicated to Carné is fairly comprehensive and comprises *Drôle de Drame, Le jour se lève, Les enfants du Paradis,* and the recent mediocre *La Marie du Port.* Of the work of King Vidor we saw *Hallelujah* and *Our Daily Bread,* this last being the producer's personal copy which he kindly lent for the exhibition. The directors of the Biennale, on the other hand, could not afford to rent *The Crowd* and films of Garbo.

Serge Eisenstein

BORIS INGSTER

BORIS INGSTER, a screenwriter and motion picture director, worked with Eisenstein in Russia and later came with him to Hollywood, where Mr. Ingster chose to remain. This article is prepared from a lecture Mr. Ingster gave at the University of California at Los Angeles in connection with the showing of Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky*.

I MET Eisenstein for the first time, I believe, in 1922. I was studying to be an actor at that time and at my school I heard exciting tales about a young director who was doing some very interesting things at the "Proletcult" Theater.

Through some of my fellow students who were acting in the mob scenes, I managed to sneak in to the dress rehearsal of Eisenstein's latest production. I knew the play. It was an old comedy by the father of the Russian realistic school, Ostrovsky. The action, I remembered, took place at the home of a well-to-do Moscow merchant around 1860. Imagine my amazement when the curtain rose and disclosed a stage which was dressed as a Picasso-like version of a circus ring. The actors were doing somersaults all over the place; there was a trapeze hanging from the ceiling, and the leading lady was swinging back and forth on it; the leading man was walking a tight rope, balancing himself with a long pole, and, at the same time, speaking the famous lines of the big love scene. Incidentally, the part of the hero was played by G. Alexandroff, who later became Eisenstein's closest collaborator and is now one of Russia's leading directors.

I was amazed by what I saw, but by no means shocked. No Russian of my generation could be shocked by anything in the Moscow of 1922. The show was noisy, gay, and colorful, but, for the love of me, I couldn't discover any connection between it and the old play I knew so well.

After the performance, I boldly approached the young genius. If he had seen the trappings of a circus as the most suitable setting for the play, which he declared he had, why had he selected a

Western European circus—for example, the clown in loud checkered pants, which was the type known as the classical English clown. "After all, this is a Russian play," I said. "Why don't you go to the Russian jesters—to the old circus fairs we have in this country?" In answer, Eisenstein plunged into a long discussion of things which were brand new to me. He told me about *The Beggar's Opera,* and about the tradition of the clowns, and in what way the Russian theater owed its comedy to Shakespeare, Ben Jonson, and so on. And this was quite symbolic of Eisenstein. He was, in his cultural origins, a Westerner; a man who grew out of the Western European culture rather than in the national Russian school.

Then I asked him the important question: what was he trying to say with the amazing spectacle I had just witnessed? Eisenstein very willingly plunged into a long and eloquent statement of his artistic credo. The theater, he declared, was dying. It had been enslaved for too long by the playwright. It could be reborn only in a revolt against the tyranny of literary content, a revolt of the people who constituted the living theater—the actor, the stage designer, and the director. A written play belongs to literature, and those who are interested only in its content should read it in the privacy of their rooms. The stage belongs to the performers, for whom the play is merely an excuse, or, at most, a stenciled material on which their art is embroidered. And behind them stands the director, who coördinates their separate efforts into the harmonious whole. Only, Eisenstein sighed, he wished he could dispense with actors altogether and use puppets instead—the result would be much more gratifying.

This will perhaps explain the enormous impact the discovery of the motion picture had on Eisenstein. Of course, the possibilities of the motion picture as an art form had been discovered long ago in the West. But in Russia all through the years of war and revolution, we were completely cut off from any contact with the West. And when we first saw D. W. Griffith's *Birth of a Nation,*

the effect was simply overwhelming. Eisenstein immediately decided that the stage was a puny little dark closet in comparison to the unlimited scope offered by the motion picture camera.

He joined a group of early Russian movie makers consisting of Lev Kuleshov and Dziga Vertov, both former newsreel cameramen. During the day he set about eagerly learning the mechanics of motion picture photography, and the nights were spent behind the screen of the Dimitrovka Theater, which was the only house in Moscow showing American films. We joined him behind the screen, because none of us could afford to pay our way into the theater night after night, and fortunately the friendly manager permitted the young film enthusiasts to watch the show from the vantage point of Eisenstein—a vantage point that gave one a rather distorted view of the proceedings.

The Soviet government was equally impressed by the great potentialities of the film as an instrument of propaganda, and encouraged the growth of native movies. Eisenstein soon was teaching his own brand of cinema and heading his own production group. For a textbook he used a worn-out print of *Tol'able David,* which was so torn and scratched that it no longer could be shown in the theaters. The number of frames in each shot was eagerly counted; the sequence of shots analyzed; and great significance read into the film of which, I am sure, Henry King, who made it, was entirely unaware. A whole philosophy of cutting or montage was evolved, going considerably beyond the original discovery by the great D. W. Griffith that, in the motion picture, action can play simultaneously in several places; the simplest example is the classic chase in which the heroine is pursued by the villain, and the hero is racing to the rescue.

Eisenstein went farther. He demonstrated that you can join scenes separated not only in place but also in time and content, and by so doing, you can create a new content derived from the effect of one image upon the other. For example, if you cut from a close-up of a young girl to a snow-covered landscape, you suggest

the idea of innocence, whereas if you substitute the face of an old woman for the young girl's, and then cut to the same landscape, you suggest the idea of great age.

In other words, Eisenstein discovered that the motion picture has a language of its own, and the ultimate effect it has on the audience depends entirely upon the sequence in which the image-ideas are assembled. This method of cutting later became known as "Russian montage." Curiously enough, in Moscow it was first called the "American cut."

Film fascinated Eisenstein. Not only because of its unlimited scope, but because it was liberating him from his pet hates—the author and the actor. In his very first film, *The Strike,* he determined that he wouldn't use a conventional story or any professional actors. All he needed was a general theme, and he maintained that he could find among the people on the street all the characteristics, all the expressions, that he would possibly require. He evolved a theory of the "frozen emotion." He maintained that life froze into people's face some dominant characteristic or emotion, and that no actor could possibly reproduce that which took years to crystalize.

Although *The Strike* remained a rather halting first step, it already had in embryo all the virtues and all the weaknesses of Eisenstein's art. It contained some magnificently expressive close-ups, and the camera work was distinguished by the careful composition of individuals shots—anyone who saw the picture will remember the final shot of the mounted Cossacks who had ridden their horses right up the stairs in the tenement and out onto balconies and fire escapes at all levels of the five-story building. And yet the film lacked movement. As in all Eisenstein's efforts, the picture moved only in the sense of a succession of shots, with almost no movement within the individual scenes themselves. However, with all its faults, *The Strike* was a distinct achievement and profoundly influenced other Russian movie makers.

Then came *Potemkin.* It is rather curious that this great film

was an almost incidental afterthought. Eisenstein was commissioned to produce a film commemorating the first abortive Russian revolution of 1905. Long sequences were shot in St. Petersburg and in Moscow. There were tremendous mob scenes, a great deal of footage devoted to reconstruction of the most important highlights of those turbulent days. But somehow, in assemblage, the material didn't jell. It was partly due to the inferior film raw stock used, and partly to the photographic conditions in northern Russia. Eisenstein was in the depths of gloom. No matter what magic he tried with his scissors, the film refused to come to life. And the summer was at its end; outdoor shooting was no longer possible. Since nothing could be achieved inside the primitive studios then available, the situation looked hopeless.

Then Edward Tisse, the cameraman later identified with all of Eisenstein's work, returned from Odessa with tales of sunshine at the Black Sea coast and the unbelievable beauty of some of the features of the city. He told Eisenstein about the great marble stairs leading to the port, the magnificent, curving sea wall. This was good news indeed, for there was one episode of the 1905 revolution that had occurred in Odessa—the mutiny aboard the cruiser *Potemkin*. In spite of the fact that inquiries made at the navy were rather discouraging, because most of the Russian Black Sea fleet had been sunk by the sailors in 1918 to prevent its capture by the Germans, Eisenstein was certain that he could find some relic of a battlewagon, and he went to Odessa.

Another lucky break came his way. He managed to finagle from the government permission to buy a little film stock abroad. Then he went to work. Again there were no actors employed, with the exception of Eisenstein himself playing the priest from behind a huge black "muff," and of G. Alexandroff playing a martinet of a lieutenant. The film was completed in twenty-three days and Eisenstein returned to Moscow with a triumphant gleam in his eye. He knew that he finally had something that would be a pleasure to cut.

The success of *Potemkin*—originally intended as a mere sequence to round out the film called *1905*—was instantaneous, overwhelming, and universal. If anything, it won even greater critical acclaim abroad than in Russia itself. Overnight Eisenstein became an international celebrity, which caused some measure of annoyance among his confrères in Moscow. This led to some amusing incidents. N. Pudovkin, who is well remembered for his *St. Petersburg, The Mother,* and *Storm over Asia,* found somewhere a huge, shaggy hound, and called him Eisenstein. When people gathered at his house to argue motion pictures, he would turn to the dog and ask it for its opinion. The shaggy creature would give a couple of barks and withdraw to its corner.

Not to be outdone, we presented Eisenstein with a little dog, part Dachshund and part Pomeranian, and taught it to answer to the name of Pudovkin and sit up at Eisenstein's command. When the dog was sufficiently trained, Pudovkin was invited for dinner and shown how he was to behave in front of the master.

Ten Days That Shook the World followed *Potemkin.* This film was to commemorate the tenth anniversary of the Communist Revolution of 1917. One rather amusing incident stands out in memory in connection with this film. A certain scene called for the raising of one of the principal bridges across the Neva. A horse-drawn cab was supposed to drive across the bridge and be caught in the crossfire between the Whites and the Reds. The horse was to be killed and when the bridge was raised, the horse was to hang limply over the edge.

Now it so happened that this bridge is the main traffic artery connecting the industrial and residential sections of Leningrad. The authorities asked Eisenstein how long the scene would last. Eisenstein truthfully answered that it would be less than a minute. But he forgot to mention that sometimes it took several hours to get the shortest little scene on film, which is exactly what happened. As a consequence the life of the great city was almost paralyzed. Whereupon the local authorities had Eisenstein and the

entire crew thrown into jail, charged with counterrevolutionary sabotage. And it took the most authoritative intervention from Moscow to rescue the overenthusiastic movie makers. Whatever the cost, this particular shot became one of the most memorable scenes ever recorded on motion picture film.

There were some other great moments, but on the whole *Ten Days* lacked the unity and the dramatic impact of *Potemkin.* It met with a great deal of official acclaim, but was much less successful with the audiences. Several friends pointed out to Eisenstein that he was making a mistake in avoiding a tighter story structure and disdaining to use professional actors. Eisenstein refused to concede. Instead he did a great deal of writing in defense of his position.

His next film was *The General Line,* released here as *The Old and the New.* This was a film about farm collectivization, which was then sweeping the country. Again the film was a critical and official success, but there was no mistaking that the audiences were not interested. This time Eisenstein was a little disturbed and began to reëxamine some of his pet theories. Just then the news reached Moscow that movies had begun to talk, and Eisenstein decided to go abroad and see what it was all about.

Nothing came of his sojourn in Hollywood, and we have only incomplete fragments of a film he began in Mexico. However, the influence of his short stay in Mexico on its movie makers was profound and lasting and, until this day, one can discern in the work of such men as Figueroa some unmistakably Eisensteinian frames.

Upon his return to Moscow, Eisenstein found that the political climate in the studios had changed considerably, and that he was no longer recognized as the supreme master of the Soviet cinema. He was accused of "formalism," of "esthetic self-indulgence," and decried as a bourgeois individualist.

The next few years he spent in obscurity and semi-exile in central Asia, teaching cutting in a local movie school. He was brought back by another political shift. The times now called for reasser-

tion of national spirit, and he was commissioned to produce *Alexander Nevsky.*

This film was the first talkie made by Eisenstein. It represented a kind of compromise between his old style and the demands of the day. His concept was gigantic, almost Wagnerian in scope, and for the first time he used a great actor in the central role. But despite the advent of sound, Eisenstein had approached *Alexander Nevsky* as he would a silent picture; he saw it as a story to be told in images, appealing primarily to the eye. In consequence, the film rose to its full heights only in the purely silent moments like the opening scene or the charge of the German knights across the frozen lake. The individual playing scenes were pathetically wooden, and I could almost hear Eisenstein sighing again for puppets.

Alexander Nevsky was in general disappointing, despite the distinguished score written for it by Serge Prokofieff. However, despite all its shortcomings, the film brought Eisenstein again to the forefront among Russian movie makers, and he was once more *persona grata* with the government.

His next picture was *Ivan the Terrible.* It was again magnificent in its pictorial concepts and hopelessly static in dramatic content. This film is particularly interesting because in it Eisenstein, whose compositions had always gone straight back to the great masters of the Italian Renaissance, turned for the first time to Russo-Byzantine sources. Every frame of *Ivan the Terrible* seeks its inspiration in ancient Russian religious art, in the ikons of the ninth century or the Byzantine mosaics of St. Sophia cathedral in Kiev.

This motion picture, while generally approved by the press in Moscow, led to renewed suspicion that Eisenstein was again up to his old tricks of "art for art's sake," "formalism," "disregard of popular appeal," and so on. He was permitted, however, to proceed with the filming of the second part of *Ivan the Terrible.* By then, the first part had been reëvaluated and found wanting, from

the official point of view. The second part of the film was never released, and, from some things I know, I believe that it broke Eisenstein's heart. Actually, there was no official disgrace, but he was not given anything else to do. Soon thereafter, he died.

Eisenstein was probably one of the very few pure artists that ever lived. And yet he lived in an age in which he was forced to deny it, in order to be permitted to function. Everything that is being done in Russia is based on science. Everything has to have a scientific explanation. If an artist cannot prove, dialectically, that to use red, not orange, in this spot is what is proper, he is not a good artist. So statements of Eisenstein's such as "making motion pictures is like plumbing" are not really as dogmatic as they sound. It was necessary for the man to appear to be dogmatic in order to beat down a constant attack for the mortal sin of what is known in Russia as "formalism," of being an artist and not a propagandist, of being an artist and not a teacher. He had to justify scientifically everything that he had done—done because his instinct, his feelings, and his understanding as an artist had so dictated to him.

If I were asked which were the great influences in Eisenstein's life as an artist, I would say the French painter Daumier, the drawings of Leonardo, which he always used as an illustration of the "frozen emotion," and Dickens, whom he considered the greatest scenario writer who ever lived. And actually, the greatest dream of Eisenstein's life was that someone would give him enough money, enough time to make a great picture out of a great Dickens novel.

Notes on Five Italian Films

LAURO VENTURI

LAURO VENTURI went to Rome to study Italian cinema after graduating from Harvard. He was assistant to Mario Soldati in the production of *Fuga in Francia,* and to Luciano Emmer in the production of Emmer's films on art. He is a regular contributor to several European periodicals, and his "Roberto Rossellini" appeared in Volume IV, Number 1, of the *Hollywood Quarterly.*

Cronaca di un amore

In *Chronicle of an Affair,* Enrico, an industrialist, asks a private investigator to inquire into the past of his young wife, Paola. The operative unearths an "accident" that enabled Paola to get rid of a school friend and to acquire the other girl's fiancé, Guido. The snoopings of the detective are reported to Paola and Guido, and bring them together again. Once more they fall in love. Paola persuades Guido to kill her husband. The night chosen for the crime, while Guido is waiting for the husband, Enrico overturns in his car and is killed. Guido abandons Paola.

This is a singular film in the general panorama of Italian production, inasmuch as it relies on psychological realism rather than on the realism of action. It deals, furthermore, with a class of society so far unexploited and unexplored by the Italian cinema: the high industrial *bourgeoisie* of Milan. And it is a daring, individual work, imbued with the taste and personality of its director, Michelangelo Antonioni.

Antonioni leans over his characters and dissects their emotions. The fourth-rate hotel bedrooms in which the lovers meet are amphitheaters, where the actors are crudely exposed to the unemotional eye of the camera, are bathed in a cold surgical light that reveals their smallest gestures and even brings out a glaring scar on Paola's forehead. Always a factor in this analysis, Antonioni's camera watches the actors from a high angle. His use of a fluid, "motorized" camera technique is not intended to create a mood, but simply to record the growing hysteria that already exists in the characters as he has conceived them. In other words,

his camera movements are not expressionistic, nor are they merely functional; they are introspective and thereby give an impression of the fright, uncertainty, and helplessness of the characters.

This can best be exemplified by two scenes, one which takes place in an office building, and the other on a bridge. As Guido Aristarco describes it in his article "Cronaca di un amore":

> Paola's classmate-rival lost her life by falling or being pushed down an elevator shaft; Paola violently criticizes her husband to Guido in a sequence that takes place on the stairs of an office building: the elevator is constantly in motion, interrupting the dialogue of the two actors, reminding them continuously of that other crime/accident. And the camera follows them as they climb higher and higher to escape being overheard, until, when Paola shouts her hatred of her husband, she leans over the balustrade to look down the elevator shaft.
>
> Planning the murder, the couple look over a bridge as the locale for it. After showing us the roads on both sides of the dried-up little river, Antonioni's camera pans slowly over the landscape to reach Paola in close-up; then it continues the movement to reveal Guido climbing up the bank and walking toward Paola. Slowly the camera moves around the actors, follows one or the other, surrounds them, almost touches them; thus the internal restlessness of the characters is conveyed to us.[1]

This technique requires a great amount of visual planning and imaginative cutting from scene to scene, as indeed Antonioni has done. More planning would have helped the script, however, for it tends to wander and to leave certain characters—Guido, for instance—only bare sketches in comparison with Paola, who bears the weight of the whole film.

Antonioni shows as little sympathy toward the environment in which the action takes place as he does toward his characters; the latter seem isolated from their environment, dwelling in a social and emotional vacuum of their own. Since Antonioni's culture and personal inclinations have enabled him to recreate with such keenness of understanding the psychological agitation of the char-

[1] Guido Aristarco, "Cronaca di un amore," *Cinema* (Milan), November 15, 1950.

acters, and his work in the documentary has helped him to reproduce so effectively the actual physical environment of the action (to scan the landscapes and the buildings as if they were actors in the film), it is a pity that he has not been able to visualize a more coherent and original milieu and give it some part to play. His documentary work, on the contrary, seems to hinder Antonioni in one or two instances when he falls into the temptation of keeping a shot on the screen for its decorative values even after the shot has fulfilled its purposes. On the other hand, Antonioni uses these pauses to keep his rhythm as constant as possible. The camera technique he has chosen for this film prohibits those fireworks of cutting back and forth that are usually served up when the action becomes dramatic. He prefers to keep the action inside the shot rather than create it by cutting, and this distinguishes him among Italian directors.

The music in the film is used as a *leit motif* of death, recurring whenever the former crime-accident and the crime-to-be are mentioned. It is scored for piano and saxophone and will, erroneously, remind many people of *The Third Man* music. It, too, is cruel and effective, and it sends shivers down the spines of those who expect the usual dramatic musical accompaniment for full orchestra.

Prima Comunione

At the beginning of *First Communion* a voice chants:

"It's Easter, it's Easter,
We are all good,
Let's write on the walls
Long Live Charity . . .
It's Easter, it's Easter,
We are all kind,
The writer and the director,
And Signor Carloni . . ."

Signor Carloni's goodness, however, is not exemplary. Irascible, loud mouthed, quick tempered, he detects insults everywhere and answers them with both fists, with the authority that a thriving bakery shop and a civic title give him. This is bound to get him in trouble as, on Easter morning, he sallies forth from his house in his brand-new car to fetch, in time for the ceremony, his daughter's first communion dress. He gets the dress, but on his way home loses it in a quarrel with a stranger. His struggles to find another dress, to postpone the ceremony by attempting to bribe the priest, and, on the side, to contrive a tryst with the high-class kept woman next door, make up the body of the film. At the end, when all hope is lost, a cripple returns the dress, in time for the communion.

This is the rarefied emotional atmosphere dear to writer Cesare Zavattini, which he plays in various registers: the light and folksy, as in *Quattro passi fra le nuvole* (*Four Steps in the Clouds*), the human, dolorous, and socially conscious, as in *Sciuscià* (*Shoeshine*) and *Ladri di biciclette* (*Bicycle Thief*), the comic and bourgeois, as in *Prima Comunione,* and the surrealistic and fantastic, as in *Miracolo a Milano* (*Miracle in Milan*).

Alessandro Blasetti has directed this farce at a fast-running pace. The shots follow each other disjointedly, as if Blasetti had either little idea of the general tone and of the position in the film of each individual sequence, or as if he had simply failed to create a rhythm that would have established and sustained this general tone of comedy. A spirited musical *leit motif* adds more speed. The general effect is one of jumpiness; there is no smoothness in either the direction or the cutting, both of which show no awareness of certain basic principles of film rhythm. The speed with which Carloni becomes involved in one incident and then another does not replace rhythm, and it is strange that such a swiftly moving film should seem so heavy handed.

The novel storytelling device of stopping the narration to go back over the previous scene and see what would have happened had Carloni been kind and polite, instead of mean and bitter, is

an ingenious and pleasing technique the first few times it is used. Eventually, however, it becomes a redundant running gag that tends to unbalance the film.

Blasetti seems to have directed this picture for laughs, and piled gag upon gag: the squeaking shoes that mercifully become silent during the middle of the film, only to begin squeaking again, louder than ever, when Carloni is in the echoing church; the retired colonel, so patriotic that, to him, even Easter is a national holiday and an occasion for unfurling flags; the beggar who has change for a thousand-lire bill in neatly folded ten-lire wads; the maid who breaks a pitcher at the beginning of the film and gets rid of the pieces only at the end of the picture.

These incidents of character are rendered by the actors as if they are fully aware of the comic qualities of their actions, presented in a theatrical manner that explicitly tells the audience to be amused without always actually amusing it. This lack of subtlety, a clash between the lightness of the plot and the pedestrian heaviness of the directing, cutting, and characterizations—as well as the pretentiousness of the moral message—prevents the film from reaching the level of poetic comedy which its makers intended. They came close, however, to achieving it.

When this film was shown at the Venice Festival, not one reviewer failed to compare it to René Clair's *Le Milion,* emphasizing the ballet-like movements and the humor of certain of the situations. Merits that the French film possesses—the perfect pacing, the visual construction of an homogeneous whole, the lightness of touch, the imaginative realization of the situation—are absent from *Prima Comunione.* Yet despite all its failings, the Italian picture has a realism of setting and atmosphere that gives it a superb tone of veracity; Blasetti's Rome is devoid of monuments and other pilgrim attractions, it is the Rome of crowded busses, lazy cab drivers, and sporadically functioning elevators. With *Cronaca di un amore* we had a realistic psychological study, with *Prima Comunione* a realistic comedy.

Il cammino della speranza

Two directors have attempted this year to speak of the peasants, of their plights and aspirations. *Road of Hope,* the first of the two films, deals with a group of Sicilian sulphur miners who abandon their island for economic reasons. A large group of Sicilians—all individually characterized with deliberate touches—moves up through Italy, encountering other people, meeting with adventure, discovering the variety of social, economic, and human feelings that weld the population of the peninsula into small groups, just as they did the inhabitants of the island. Cheated by a crook who collected all their money on the promise of getting them across the French border, the Sicilians are stranded in Rome, where the police order them to return to their Sicilian village. Some of the travelers get lost in the maze of the city and disappear. Others, defeated, accept return to Sicily. Still others continue their journey, but only a handful reach the French border. Within the group of Sicilians develop clashes that provide a love interest neither hackneyed nor out of place.

The beauty of the film rests mainly in its balance between folklore and realism, between the outside world and the group of emigrants. It is an arresting film that Pietro Germi has created, deeply Italian in the emotions it shows, in the characterizations, in the epic progression from sequence to sequence.

Epic realism has its difficulties, which Germi has successfully resolved by using a camera technique quite different from that employed by Antonioni in *Cronaca di un amore*—few camera movements, rapid cutting, concentration on reactions in close-ups. The rhythm is fast and steady, controlled to the split second. Instead of speaking too long and belaboring a point, Germi prefers to cut before it is completely said. The participation of landscape and settings is unobtrusive and yet essential; the actions and the moods of the more developed of the characters seem to be keyed to the specific environment in which they find themselves.

In one of the best sequences of the film, the setting has inspired Germi to such a degree that, through simplicity of means and austere cutting, he reaches sheer poetry. The young couple who were married the morning of the departure from Sicily finally succeed, after many days in third-class railway carriages, in being alone. They leave the barn where the farm hands are dancing, and run to a beech-tree grove nearby. One of their friends sees them leave; he grabs a guitar and follows them, then loses sight of them and sits on the grass to play. Practically all this sequence is in long shots within the dimly lit wood. The glimmering trees, the rapidity of the action, the stylized love scene between husband and wife, the slow guitar music—all contribute to a sense of lyricism.

The music, unfortunately, does not always rise to the standard of the film. Instead of keeping to native music throughout the picture, Rustichelli often has attempted to comment on the action with Wagnerian crescendoes for full orchestra—passages that not only disturb and obscure the film, which is built on austerely pure lines, but also clash with the infrequent but excellent native guitar playing.

For a director who has always maintained the absolute necessity of a well-constructed plot, here Germi has contradicted himself. *The Road of Hope* is not "constructed" in the academic sense of the word. It has no beginning and no ending; its sequences follow each other only in time. Progression here is mainly visual, and a *deus ex machina* is twice needed to push the story along. The "someone-is-ill-and-can't-travel" device is used to allow the two main characters to declare their love for one another, and the "coincidental reunion" to motivate a von Stroheim-like knife duel in the snow. However, these flaws in the script, determined by a commercial necessity to be traditional, do not lessen the value of the film, and the excellence of the direction, the photography, and the acting fully compensate for them.

It may be interesting to note that there is more than one

similarity between *The Road of Hope* and *The Grapes of Wrath:* similarities of concept, of environment, of directing. In many ways this picture is an Italian translation of the American film, done with intelligence and rooted in the soil on which it was shot. The same profound understanding that John Ford showed for his dust bowlers, Germi shows for his sulphur miners; with this both directors have achieved universality.

Non c'è pace tra gli ulivi

The second of the peasant sagas is de Santis' *No Peace among the Olive Trees.* The film itself would have passed unobserved were it not for its lavish production, pretentious camera technique, and the fact that de Santis has not accepted adverse criticism calmly, but has fought back in speeches and magazine articles.

The story that de Santis relates is largely a realistic one. A shepherd from Ciociaria returns from the war to find that his flock has been stolen by a rich landowner, a crude man not averse to the use of violence. After injuring each other and various members of their families in the struggle that follows, the shepherd and the landowner fight a final duel, the former armed with a rifle, the latter with a sub-machine gun. The shepherd comes out the winner.

To tell this realistic story de Santis has used a technique that makes full use of today's mobile camera. He is apt to descend from a long shot of the landscape to a close-up of an actor, follow the actor for thirty yards, turn twice around him and then soar up into the air again, without cutting once. De Santis' taste in frame composition is also highly academic; his actors are so obviously posed, and move so artificially from one position to another, as if they were drilling, that it destroys any feeling of veracity. All in all, the actors are so unnatural as to seem no more than abstractions. The whole opening sequence shows the soldier returning and meeting his fiancée, who meanwhile has been promised to the landowner. The couple never look at each other, but gaze at the horizon as they speak. They perform a kind of walking ballet

around the rocks, followed by the camera, and then embrace, still not looking at each other. This was commented upon—and not very kindly—by most reviewers, and de Santis answered them in a long article in which he said:

I have been faithful . . . to the reality of Ciociaria, even to that particular way of striking attitudes and of gesturing of the Ciociarian peasant, often exhibitionistic, at times even grotesque; to that custom among the young people to love each other without looking at each other (which is a reality that persists outside the limits of my region, and is common to all southern people, hidden and modest in the rule of their passions). . . .[2]

What de Santis has done is perhaps true to life. But if it is true, it is not credible; if it is real, it has not the appearance of reality, and therefore remains false. We could adopt Flaiano's answer:

When the actors take a position on a rock, legs wide apart, it is not to keep their balance, but rather to pose like a statue. . . . And with similar secret intentions they hold a rifle or carry a lamb around their shoulders. One is left with the suspicion that their poetry is second-hand poetry, and that it conforms to a design foreign to the reality it illustrates. . . .[3]

The directing here, even more formalistic than that in *Bitter Rice,* has therefore hidden the qualities that otherwise might have made it a good film. De Santis deliberately sought to create a popular epic tale of blood, superstition, and hatred, set against a peasant background. But in his effort, he fell prey to a far too complicated technique that was as far separated from the content of *No Peace among the Olive Trees* as, say, De Sica's technique corresponded exactly to the content of *Bicycle Thief.*

Francesco, Giullare di Dio

It is probably because there has never been another motion picture of this kind, that it is so difficult to speak of *Francis, God's*

[2] Giuseppe de Santis, "Non c'è pace," *Cinema* (Milan), November 15, 1950.
[3] Ennio Flaiano, film review in *Il Mondo* (Milan), November 25, 1950.

Juggler. The standards of criticism—personal and subjective at best—are here governed by personal sympathy and even affiliation. That is what happened at the Venice Festival. Rossellini had enlisted the help of two of the best-known Italian critics, but they found themselves practically alone in their appreciation of the film. One wrote: "Rossellini seems to have happily overcome many dangerous obstacles: his friars, his youthful Francis, his ascetic St. Chiara, move like so many flowers stroked by the wind in the vast Umbrian valleys; they are not figures but 'outlines' of figures, and a lyrical ecstasy is born in them because they are all fused in a single choral group governed by a single motivation, a single psychology."[4] On the other hand, another critic declared: "A Work like Rossellini's *Francis* is based on two assumptions: the genuine candor of its makers and the genuine candor of its public. Rossellini's whole past renders doubtful the first condition, and the public's present tastes exclude the second."[5]

The film consists of eleven episodes among the simplest and gayest of St. Francis of Assisi's self-recorded spiritual experiences. He and his friends face the difficulties of a friar's life with the most joyful, childlike, and candid reactions. This becomes at times sheer simplemindedness, and one is somewhat disconcerted to remember the revolutionary and dynamic power that that religious movement had, and which, in the film, is deliberately ignored by Rossellini.

His scope is quite clear: using the many painted interpretations of these eleven themes for visual inspiration, he draws, with the greatest possible simplicity, eleven pictures. Were it possible, I think that he would have done away with movement altogether. The film does not pretend to be a spectacle, but rather a morality play, a sacred representation. The moods of the film are innocence and delicate grace, joyful sacrifice, mortification, obedience, and love—just what the public has been accustomed to expect from motion pictures. These qualities inflame the little friars and cause

[4] G. L. Rondi, "Panorama del Festival," *La Fiera Letteraria* (Rome), October 9, 1950.
[5] Arturo Lanocita, "Francesco, Giullare di Dio," *Il Messaggero* (Rome), August 27, 1950.

them to seek in the valleys, in the woods, in the enemy camp, and in the towns occasions to try their faith.

There is coherence in this between the simplicity of the action, the sketchiness of the directing, and the friars' embarrassed acting. There is also coherence within Rossellini who, having tried a more or less "constructed plot" with *Stromboli,* returns to his natural element with these eleven sketches. As usual in Rossellini's work, some of the sequences interested and inspired him more than others. St. Francis kissing the leper, the meeting of Fra Ginepro and the Tyrant, and the final episode are well done, carrying a flavor of the times, of the spirituality of the characters, and an undercurrent of drama that renders them quite credible and at times poetical. In all the other episodes the concentration upon simplicity backfires, and the scenes hardly have a chance to get under way before they are over. Yet even in these, the landscapes, in which nature becomes identified with the emotions and actions of the friars, correspond to the spirit and the mood that Rossellini set as his goal. It is another step in Rossellini's search for himself, and although the results are unsatisfactorily far from *Open City,* he is still searching in the same direction.

Cronaca di un amore (*Chronicle of an Affair*). Production: Villani, 1950. Director: Michelangelo Antonioni. Script: M. Antonioni. Screenplay: M. Antonioni, Daniele d'Anza, Silvio Giovinetti, Francesco Maselli, Piero Tellini. Cameraman: Enzo Serafin. Music: Giovanni Fusco. The cast: Lucia Bosè (Paola), Massimo Girotti (Guido), Fernando Sarmi (Enrico), et al.

Michelangelo Antonioni was an assistant to Marcel Carné. Short subjects: *Gente del Po* (*Inhabitants of the Po Valley*), 1943–1947; *N.U.* (*Street Cleaners of Rome*), 1948; *L'amorosa menzogna* (*The Amorous Lie*), 1949; *Superstizione* (*Superstition*), 1949. Features: *Cronaca di un amore* (*Chronicle of an Affair*), 1950.

Prima Comunione (*First Communion*). Production: Universalia-Franco-London Film. Director: Alessandro Blassetti. Script: Cesare Zavattini. Screenplay: A. Blasetti, C. Zavattini. Camera man: Mario Craveri. Music: Enzo Masetti. The cast: Aldo Fabrizi (Carloni), Gaby Morlay (Mrs. Carloni), Lucien Baroux (the priest), Ludmilla Duranova (the kept woman), Andreina Mazzotti (the maid), Almirante (the colonel), et al.

Alessandro Blasetti has been a director for twenty years. His best and best-known films are *1860,* 1933; *Un'avventura di Salvator Rosa,* 1940; *Un giorno nella vita* (*A Day in Life*), 1946; *Fabiola,* 1949; *Prima Comunione,* 1950.

Il cammino della speranza (*The Road of Hope*). Production: Rovere-Lux Film, 1950. Director: Pietro Germi. Script: P. Germi, Federico Fellini, Tullio Pinelli. Screenplay: F. Fellini, T. Pinelli. Cameraman: Leonida Barboni. Music: Carlo Rustichelli. The cast: Raf Vallone (Saro), Elena Varzi (Barbara), Saro Urzi (Ciccio), Franco Novara (Vanni), Liliana Lattanzi (Rosa), et al.

Pietro Germi. Born in Genoa, 1914. Attended the Experimental Center of Cinematography, Rome, as an actor. Films directed: *Il testimone* (*The Witness*), 1945; *Gioventù perduta* (*Lost Youth*), 1947; *In nome della legge* (*Mafia*), 1949; *Il cammino della speranza* (*The Road of Hope*), 1950.

Non c'è pace tra gli ulivi (*No Peace among the Olive Trees*). Production: Forges-Davanzati-Lux Film. Director: Giuseppe de Santis. Script: Gianni Puccini, G. de Santis. Screenplay: Libero de Liberi, G. de Santis, Larlo Lizzani, G. Puccini. Cameraman: Piero Portalupi. Music: Goffredo Petrassi. The cast: Lucia Bosè (Laura), Raf Vallone (Francesco), Folco Lulli (Agostino), Dante Maggio (Salvatore), Maria Grazia Francia (Maria Grazia), et al.

Guiseppe de Santis. Films directed: *Caccia tragica* (*Tragic Hunt*), 1947; *Riso amaro* (*Bitter Rice*), 1948; *Non c'è pace tra gli ulivi* (*No Peace among the Olive Trees*), 1950.

Francesco, Giullare di Dio (*Francis, God's Juggler*). Production: Rizzoli, 1950. Director: Roberto Rossellini. Script: R. Rossellini. Cameraman: Otello Martelli. Music: Renzo Rossellini. The cast: Aldo Fabrizi (Nicolaio), friars from the Franciscan order.

Roberto Rossellini. Born in Rome, 1906. Films directed: *La nave bianca* (*The White Ship*), 1941; *Un pilota ritorna* (*A Pilot Returns*), 1942; *L'uomo della croce* (*The Man of the Cross*), 1943; *Roma città aperta* (*Open City*), 1945; *Paisà* (*Paisan*), 1946; *Germania anno zero* (*Germany, Year Zero*), 1947; *Amore* (*Love*), 1947–1948, consisting of two short films, *La voce umana* (*The Human Voice*) and *Il miracolo* (*The Miracle*), the latter recently shown as part of the trilogy *The Ways of Love; La macchina ammazzacattivi* (*The Evil-killer Machine*), 1948; *Terra di Dio* (*God's Earth*), 1949, released in the United States as *Stromboli; Francesco, Giullare di Dio* (*Francis, God's Juggler*), 1950. (For additional material on Rossellini, see "Roberto Rossellini" by Lauro Venturi, *Hollywood Quarterly,* Volume IV, Number 1.)

Drive-in Theaters: Rags to Riches in Five Years

RODNEY LUTHER

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THE NATIONAL PRODUCTION AUTHORITY'S recent "freeze" on all types of theater construction provides us with an excellent opportunity to pause long enough to assay the current strength and potentialities of what is by far the most promising new development in the motion picture industry—the drive-in theaters. These theaters, numbering only some 60 at the end of World War II, have risen from obscurity to a position of national importance in the period 1946–1951, and now number approximately 2,000. But even such an astonishing growth does not tell the complete story, since qualitative elements are of equal importance. For instance, although drive-ins now represent about 15 per cent of the total number of American motion picture theaters, they account for approximately 20 per cent of total theater receipts. In addition, they enjoy a most profitable income from the sale of food and other refreshments; it has been estimated that they sell four times as much as the average conventional theater.

Practically gone are the days when the efforts of the drive-in exhibitors to obtain recently released pictures were rejected by film distribution executives with such remarkable statements as, "We de not wish to discriminate against movie patrons not owning automobiles." More and more de luxe, well-run drive-in theaters are now obtaining second- and even first-run status, and are proving that they can succeed financially, compete effectively (even

against television), and still pay film rentals which many conventional theaters hesitate to assume.

In their struggle for recognition, drive-in theaters have faced such problems as municipal zoning regulations, highway commission charges of being traffic hazards, and even occasional charges by moralists of contributing to the deliquency of minors. Some of these charges have resulted from various personal and political motives and have seemed unfair, but drive-ins have had a commendable degree of success in meeting this class of challenge. In another area, which might be termed the "battle with the elements," drive-ins have made creditable gains against such occasional misfortunes as fog (with special projection filters), rain (with glycerine compounds that drain windshields in transparent sheets), and insects (with frequent DDT spraying of the area). Some enterprising exhibitors have even provided portable electric heaters during cold weather, and it has been reported that an air-conditioning scheme for year-round in-car comfort has been devised.

In what would seem to be the most serious problem, that of consumer acceptance of a new entertainment medium, drive-ins have shown a great measure of success. The American public is now spending as much to attend drive-ins—$300,000,000 a year—as it is on the legitimate theater, opera, professional football, hockey, baseball, college football, horse and dog tracks, and other amateur sports combined. Or, looked at in another light, the public spent, in drive-in admissions, at least 20 per cent of the full cost of the estimated 6 million television sets purchased last year. Thus the record of drive-in theaters, like that of television, has been phenomenal in the last five years.

In view of these numerous achievements, it is indeed paradoxical that the greatest difficulty which the drive-ins have faced, up to the present, is that of recognition by the motion picture industry itself. This struggle for recognition *within* the industry has been prolonged because of the efforts of the established, conven-

tional-theater exhibitors, and because the interests of the producer-distributors have been closely identified, often through direct control and ownership, with the bulk of American first-run theaters and the large existing chains of metropolitan and rural theaters.

Drive-in theaters early gained the animosity of conventional theaters: first, because drive-ins were a popular modification of the same entertainment medium; second, because drive-in business reaches a peak during each summer, when conventional theater grosses are at their lowest point; and, third, because the total business, or gross receipts, of conventional theaters has been decreasing ever since the last quarter of 1947. While it is impossible to deny that the drive-in theater is in competition with the conventional theater, some acceptance has been gained of the possibility that there is no cause-and-effect relationship between drive-ins and the seasonal and long-run financial disillusionments which have befallen the exhibition branch of the industry. For instance, conventional theaters have always experienced seasonal declines in attendance during the same summer months in which drive-ins are most popular. Moreover, it was quite natural for the peak attendance figures resulting from World War II to decline when other spectator amusements once again developed their prewar strength. In addition, there is some cause to believe that consumers' budgets were considerably reduced by the purchase of much-needed consumer durable goods such as houses, cars, and appliances. And finally, the advent of television as a postwar substitute for talking, thinking, and doing—particularly as a substitute for going to the motion pictures—cannot be denied. Accordingly, drive-in exhibitors, especially when identified with "old-guard" elements and not associated with highly competitive "situations," are now being accepted as partners by organized exhibitor groups.

With regard to the original stand taken by the producer-distributors, it can be noted that the transitional changes ordered by the U. S. Supreme Court in the all-embracing case of U. S. *v.*

Paramount, et al., in 1948, are finally taking effect. Happily for drive-in exhibitors, a brother of General William Tecumseh Sherman of Civil War fame, John Sherman, long ago allowed his name to be associated with the few vague paragraphs and dozen key words known as the Sherman Anti-Trust Act, the federal law under which the Department of Justice successfully prosecuted the five major, theater-owning motion picture producers (Paramount, RKO, 20th Century-Fox, Warner Bros., and Loew's), and three smaller firms, Universal, Columbia, and United Artists.

As a result of this costly litigation culminating in the Paramount decree, the five major firms were ordered to divorce themselves from their theater subsidiaries, and were ordered, together with the three minor firms, to modify a number of monopolistic and unfair trade practices. This decree aided drive-in theater exhibitors in two ways: it eliminated much of the tender paternalism which the eight most important producers of films had showered on their own theaters to the exclusion of others, and, in addition, rejuvenated competition among theaters and theater groups by means of the decree's divestiture and trade practice provisions. One net effect of the Paramount decree has been that drive-in theaters have had an opportunity to develop in an atmosphere and in a manner far different from what might have been the case ten or fifteen years ago. And although most drive-in exhibitors emphatically deny that they have been shown any degree of largesse by the industry since 1948, it is nevertheless true that they have benefited greatly by the decree. It just happens that they are in an industry where, as Morris Ernst once observed, the construction of a large, expensive theater will by no means assure a bid to the First-run Cotillion.

With regard to the construction of drive-in theaters, and the services offered by them, it is wise to proceed on the assumption that the exhibitor did not simply buy the nearest and cheapest five acres of land and begin operations with a total investment of, say, $50,000 in land, buildings, and equipment. While it is true

that a great number of drive-in theaters were first organized on such a basis, those that remain in that category are now in danger of being pathetically inferior to the modern drive-in theater in terms of potential services and ability to meet the competition of television and other entertainment. The truth is that drive-in theaters are now "Big Business," and most of the de luxe, 1000-car (and larger) drive-ins constructed during the last year or two represent an investment of a quarter to a third of a million dollars each. These theaters also earn a proportionately greater return for their owners, since one very rough guide is that drive-in theaters accumulate gross receipts each year approximately equal to the amount of money invested in the theater. Certain theater expenses, however, do not increase proportionately to increases in car capacity, and it is true that the larger, more modern drive-in theaters have secured greater patronage because of better services and "newer" pictures. The yearly profits of the most successful drive-ins have sometimes approached 30 per cent of invested capital, which is almost phenomenal in American industry, and significant numbers of drive-ins have earned net profits of 15 per cent to 20 per cent, compared to approximately 10 per cent returns for conventional theaters.

Drive-in theaters today range in size from 200 to 2,000 car capacities, covering ground areas of from 3 to 30 acres. A number of American drive-in theaters are of "twin" construction, possessing a sort of hourglass layout of facilities in order that two car-parking areas may face opposite sides of the same screen tower. But, whatever the capacity, modern drive-ins have been constructed only after careful studies have been made of such factors as seasonal weather conditions, whether or not "daylight saving" time will be in effect, the amount of investment which will be required, the booking practices and run and clearance conditions prevalent in the area being considered, the nearness and size of adjacent population areas, as well as conditions of population growth and trends, the average age and family make-up of persons

in the area, together with such factors as car ownership and income status, land availability and cost, zoning requirements, immediate and continguous street and highway facilities, and nearness to competitive theaters and the transportation facilities to them.

In the planning of modern drive-ins, another important series of decisions has had to be made regarding the various services which it has been found increasingly wise to provide. Drive-in theaters are often in a particularly advantageous position to offer a wide variety of entertainment and recreational services which go far in differentiating the sum total of services offered at drive-ins from those which can be offered by either television or conventional theaters. To the extent that drive-in theaters differentiate their "personalities," so also do they avoid direct competition with whatever might be offered by these two competing media, thus assuring a more stable future existence. A small minority of exhibition executives, including veteran showman A. J. Balaban, have predicted the rapid development of "super" drive-ins which would be entertainment centers offering such things as television shows, dancing, eating facilities, and possibly three different types of motion picture entertainment: a newsreel theater, an art or foreign picture theater, and a combination first-run and vaudeville theater.

While this trend toward complete "shopping centers" has long been evident in the merchandising of most consumer goods, largely as a result of the growth of automobile transportation, the most that the motion picture industry was able to do in this direction was to provide the ubiquitous popcorn stand, with occasional elevations to the rank of snack bar when complemented with soft drinks and prepackaged sandwiches. When it is realized, however, that these seemingly minor operations often provide the conventional exhibitor with a major share of his total profits—American theaters sell about $500,000,000 worth of candy each year, which is 30 per cent of all candy sales—it can be seen that drive-in theaters are in a most enviable position to capitalize on this lucrative

phase of theater operations, as well as dozens of other heretofore unthought of possibilities.

Specifically, drive-in theaters have experimented and pioneered in providing either restaurant facilities or almost complete snack bars, serving in the latter a wide range of hot and cold sandwiches, pastries, and ice cream specialties, as well as candy, popcorn, and soft drinks. In some cases, these are served at booths or tables facing the theater screen so that the picture may be watched at the same time. In other cases many of the commissary items are served directly to car patrons from small commissary wagons. In all cases, the patrons are urged to utilize these services to the fullest extent, and most drive-in theaters prolong intermission periods for just this purpose. What with these intermissions, the open air atmosphere, the high degree of family attendance, and the carnival nature of drive-ins, sales of these food items are understandably high.

But drive-in theaters do not stop there. In addition, most drive-ins provide playground areas and equipment for children. Some provide free miniature train rides. Others offer or sell pony rides, picnic areas, car washing, bingo, laundry service, bottle warming, merry-go-rounds, drug counters, book-vending machines, vaudeville, and dancing. Most drive-ins practice nonsegregation, allow pets and smoking, are handy for the aged and handicapped, and admit children under twelve free. Some provide seats for the "walk-in" trade, or for those who prefer to sit up front. With all this, they offer somewhat lower direct admission prices, and by their very nature eliminate parking fees and mitigate baby-sitting problems. Because of these factors there is little doubt that drive-in theaters offer strong attractions to certain identifiable types of patrons: those people who favor the ease, convenience, and special sense of informality that is characteristic of the typical drive-in; parents who ordinarily face the costly and troublesome problem of employing a baby sitter; and the aged and handicapped.

As a result, most drive-in theaters have enjoyed stable, if not

increasing, box-office receipts during the same five-year period in which the receipts of conventional theaters have consistently declined to a point at least 30 per cent below the peak year of 1946. As a group, drive-ins have steadily increased their patronage each year, although this increase was shared among ever-increasing numbers of such theaters. In addition, drive-ins have benefited from the highly profitable sales of food items, usually equal in dollar volume to 30 or 40 per cent (and sometimes as high as 75 per cent) of total admission receipts. They also benefit from the fact that operating expenses are probably no greater than those of comparable neighborhood theaters, that maintenance costs during winter shutdowns, if any, are modest, and that they often pay less for insurance and taxes due to location and other factors. As a result, the average drive-in has represented a far more profitable investment than the average conventional theater of an equal basic investment.

Since construction of new theaters has been halted by the federal government in an effort to conserve building materials, optical and electronic equipment (exhibitors detest being classed together with dance halls, bowling alleys and poolrooms, which were also affected by the order, almost as much as they resent the order itself), drive-in theaters now face a period of consolidating their gains on two fronts: customer relations and intra-industry relations. In carrying out these aims, drive-in exhibitors can best proceed by carefully analyzing the habits and characteristics, likes and dislikes, of their audiences. By so doing, they can act intelligently in directing their booking, advertising, sales promotion, and operating policies, and can also use objective evidence to indicate their true competitive status when dealing with other branches of the motion picture industry.

The present writer has directed the 1949 and 1950 annual drive-in theater audience surveys conducted in the Minneapolis–St. Paul metropolitan area, in which six suburban, subsequent-run drive-in theaters serve a population of over one million. With the

coöperation of these theaters, together with that of North Central Allied Association of Motion Picture Exhibitors and the School of Business Administration of the University of Minnesota, a stratified random sample of over 2,000 cars was selected at these drive-ins during various performances, on various days of the week and weeks of the month, and the patrons were questioned regarding several aspects of their theater-going habits. The complete results of the 1950 survey may be found in the annual *Theater Catalog*[1] issued during April, 1951. Some of the highlights of the 1950 survey are of general interest, and may be summarized in the following way:

1. A majority (54 per cent) of the cars at these Twin City drive-ins contained family groups with children.
2. Each car contained an average of 3.45 persons, made up of 2.48 adults and 197 children (under age 12).
3. The cars containing children contained an average of 1.8 children.
4. Nineteen per cent of the adults were in the 12–20 age group, 45 per cent of the adults were in the 21–30 age group, and 36 per cent of the adults were over 30 years of age.
5. Most adults attended in "pairs": 67 per cent of the cars contained two adults; another 14 per cent contained four adults.
6. The average patron drove a total of 17.6 miles in driving to and from the drive-in theater where questioned.
7. Nearly one third of the patrons attended drive-ins exclusively during the summer; one half of all patrons attended drive-ins a majority of the time.
8. Eighteen per cent of all patrons had television sets in their homes.
9. Average attendance per month at all types of theaters was 5.2 times during the summer, and 3.9 times during the winter.
10. Average attendance per month at drive-ins was .86 times during the summer of 1948, 2.5 times during the summer of 1949, and 3.25 times during the summer of 1950.
11. Thirty-seven per cent of drive-in patrons attended movies more frequently in 1950 than in 1949.
12. Thirty-eight per cent believed that "movies are better than ever."
13. Regarding drive-in patrons' preferences for types of movies, 33

[1] Philadelphia: Jay Emanuel Publications, Inc.

per cent preferred comedies; 23 per cent preferred dramas; 18 per cent preferred musicals; 14 per cent preferred Westerns; 8 per cent preferred romances, and 4 per cent had no preferences.

14. Thirty-two per cent of all drive-in patrons believed that the selection of movies available at drive-ins was not so good as at other types of theaters; only 14 per cent believed they were better.

15. The complaint most often mentioned by drive-in patrons was that the pictures shown were too old.

This 1950 survey indicates, just as its predecessor did, the strong element of family attendance at drive-in theaters. Many of these patrons represent part of the potential motion picture audience that the conventional theater has "lost," or could not attract. The age data also indicate that the composition of the typical drive-in audience is considerably different from the conventional theater audience, where it is known that attendance falls off rapidly after age 25 has been reached. Nearly one third of the drive-in patrons attend such theaters exclusively during the summer months, and many of these patrons probably find it difficult to attend any other type of theater. On the other hand, almost 40 per cent of total movie attendance by drive-in patrons continues to be at conventional theaters, and from the frequency of attendance data and other responses, it seem quite probable that attendance at drive-ins restimulates the movie-going habit, thus benefiting conventional theaters as well as the industry as a whole. Certainly the attendance data listed earlier indicate that drive-in patrons attend more movies than any other class of motion picture "fans."

There is probably no better illustration of the strong drawing power that drive-in theaters exert than the evidence that patrons, many of whom own television sets, will drive a total of nearly 18 miles, undoubtedly right past one or several conventional theaters, in order to attend a drive-in theater, even though a majority of the patrons believe that the picture shown are either not as desirable as, or older than, those showing at conventional theaters. Even though the precise drawing power of pony rides, laundry service,

and other attractions has not been determined, it is obvious that drive-ins offer a sum total of services and entertainment that consumers are finding difficult to resist.

To the postwar motion picture industry, any vehicle that so stimulates motion picture attendance should be more than welcome. Drive-in theaters, as a group, are the most dynamic force in the entire motion picture industry today. Their rapid and successful development has clearly illustrated that the public is still interested in new ideas and showmanship in the presentation of motion picture entertainment. The entire industry should pause to take a fresh look at this young but brilliant member of its family which can induce the public to attend movies with a degree of regularity and frequency unmatched since the end of World War II.

Film Music of the Quarter

LAWRENCE MORTON

LAWRENCE MORTON is an arranger and composer of music for both film and radio. This is the tenth in his series of reviews of film music which was begun in Volume III of the *Hollywood Quarterly*.

SINCE IT is not an essential function of film music to provide subject matter for criticism, I cannot justly complain that the dozen or more scores that I have heard recently fail to suggest a central thesis for this quarter's comment. Yet most of them had some point of interest, and from my notes on these details I transcribe the most significant.

Bird of Paradise. Daniele Amfitheatrof composed and directed the lavish score for this lavish production; Ken Darby is responsible for the choral music, of which there is a great deal; Edward Powell orchestrated. Certainly these three minds operated as one on a single high plane of musical extravagance. A note of poverty is not once sounded, and there are no stylistic discrepancies. I cannot judge the authenticity of the Polynesian songs nor the correctness of their performance. It may be that the native choruses, long exposed to American and European influences (and no doubt to Fred Waring's radio programs), do actually sing as professionally as the chorus in this film, with excellent intonation, sensual tone, and a pervading slickness of style. But whether this music is authentic or not, it has a plushy sound that fits neatly into the whole pattern of the plushy technicolor production. So does the orchestral music, with its plushy low flutes, its overripe harmonies, and its luscious *tuttis*. Since nothing in the film has been calculated to appeal to the intelligence of a cultivated audience, there is no reason why the music should have embraced austerity. Yet it has a virtue: it tells no lies about the picture. And this is more than can be said about a score like that for *Born Yesterday,* which implied that it was Joan Fontaine (not Judy Holliday) who went to Vienna (not Washington, D.C.) where she had a charming amorous ad-

venture with (not a political education from) a dashing Austrian count (not an idealistic newspaper man) played by Tyrone Power (not Bill Holden). *Bird of Paradise* has a truth-telling score. That it is a horrible truth is quite beside the point.

The Blue Lamp. This is a British version of that familiar American theme, cops and robbers. Ernest Irving is credited with music direction, which means that he is responsible for all the realistic uses of music and for the absence of any underscoring. To eschew background music was a wise decision, since none was needed. Yet the sound track is busy enough, with exudations from juke boxes, a bit of singing by a chorus of bobbies with harmonica accompaniment, some street music that might have come from a hurdy-gurdy, and a wonderfully corny music-hall show. All of this is visually accounted for, and so are the street vendors' calls and the racetrack fanfares. But what was the source of the fragment from Chopin's "Funeral March," played during the scene where the slain policeman's body lies in state at the precinct station house?

Irving's documentary technique is fully justified except in his omission of main-title music. The film *per se* does not require it, but the conditions of theatrical exhibition do. In the theater, where *The Blue Lamp* was preceded by a technicolor visit to London that concluded with some stirring march music played by the Buckingham Palace band, the absence of any kind of heralding sound made a poor beginning. It was not necessary to fall back on that old Hollywood cliché, the fanfare. Any kind of attention getter would have sufficed—the *coup d'archet* of the French musical tradition or three backstage hammer beats, anything that might have warned the audience that it was time to stop talking. As it was, conversations continued well into the opening reel, and the couple behind me belatedly realized it with a loud "Gosh, this must be the picture!" Showmanship demands the musical main title even though the film may not. The musical directors of films like *Intruder in the Dust* and *Asphalt Jungle,* neither of which had any background music, were shrewder showmen than Irving.

Ways of Love (a trilogy consisting of *A Day in the Country, Jofroi,* and *The Miracle*). The first of these films, *A Day in the Country,* was scored by Kosma in the worst tradition of the old-time theater organist. *Jofroi* had no background music at all. The present distributors of the film recognized, however, that main-title music was needed, probably for the reasons I have just suggested apropos of *The Blue Lamp,* and so they filched a few feet of music track from *The Miracle* and pasted it onto *Jofroi.* It was not disturbing, until you heard it again where it rightfully belonged.

Roberto Rossellini's *The Miracle* might make a very good libretto for an Italian *verismo* opera, and the dramatic lyricism of this genre is doubtless what composer Renzo Rossellini intended to provide. But he possesses nothing comparable to the inventiveness and technical equipment of the composers who made *verismo* powerful in the theater. His endless sequences and repetitions are appalling, so that at the end of the film you are precisely where you were, musically, at the beginning. This is unfortunate in a film that already is deficient in narrative power as well as in attention to the time dimension. But the really serious fault in the score is that it does not know the difference between erotic and religious emotion. This confusion is of course central to the role of the peasant girl (Anna Magnani), and the whole point of the film is to show the tragedy of the confusion. The audience should be made aware of the tragedy, but it should not be expected to share the confusion. The music, that is to say, must grant that the girl's experience is, as she believes it to be, genuinely religious. This may not be true in a psychological, biological, or clerical sense. But it is dramatically true, and it is this dramatic truth that the music must defend. The music must be religious and, above all, compassionate. Renzo Rossellini's is neither. Its banalities and cheap expressiveness make the film precisely what the censors said it was. The composer of the music and the censors of the film alike have denied the miracle.

Payment on Demand. This is a typical Bette Davis drama with a typical Victor Young score. The most interesting musical feature of the film is not what is heard on the music track but what is written in the script. Two of the characters, the husband and the other woman, are spending a cozy, clandestine evening together. As is the wont of lovers in such circumstances, they talk about beautiful things, such as Music and Life. The particular point under discussion is a deeply philosophical one, having something to do with a certain kind of loneliness induced by a certain kind of music, in this case a recording of one more of those sentimental melodies dressed up to sound like a "concerto" for piano and orchestra. The philosophical resources of the protagonists are exhausted in a dozen or so lines of dialogue, which are sufficient to establish the Truth that music means just about what the listener wants it to mean. In about the same time Mr. Young demonstrates that the feeling of loneliness the lovers have been talking about is really nausea. One has only to listen to this fragment of dialogue to realize that so long as writers (directors and producers, too) cling to their semicultivated, anti-intellectual notions about what music means, they are going to get just the kind of music that Mr. Young writes. But then, what should one expect of writers who ask Miss Davis to speak, seriously, a line like this: "Life is what you make of it."

The Enforcer. It was interesting to see this film at a theater that was simultaneously showing former Mayor O'Dwyer discussing before the Kefauver Committee the very case, Murder Incorporated, on which *The Enforcer* was based. The Humphrey Bogart version is the more exciting. David Buttolph's score performs the rather primitive duties of underlining violence, mystery, and tension. It also bridges the present tense of the play to the past, the flashbacks being accompanied by a vibraphone haze (Mr. Young uses the same device in *Payment on Demand*) that makes the orchestral sound "melt" with the film. Buttolph employs his characteristically brutal and malign dissonances, which are just the

thing for this kind of film. He has a special knack, too, of holding back the final crushing blow of a climax. Sometimes it seems to be heard a split second later than the blow has been seen, so that the audience is hit in the solar plexus just after it has been dazed by a left to the jaw. It is a powerful device even though it seems a bit like piling Pelion upon Ossa.

The Thirteenth Letter. Alex North has written his first Hollywood score for this film, and it is full of fresh sounds and unconventional "spotting" of music. Its intentions were not always clear to me, and I suspect that North composed some of the early scenes with a too active awareness of the end of the picture. Thus, at the beginning, when Dr. Laurent (Charles Boyer) returns home from a trip, calls his wife and finds her not at home, the music has an emotional intensity that cannot be accounted for until the antagonism between them is revealed many reels later. And there were many other places where the emotional tensions in the music were not even implied by the screen. Film music must sometimes mark time; it must know how to do nothing but be there. But there were very good things in the score, too, such as the Sunday morning music and the dead march. Obviously North has immense talent and a great many good ideas. His inexperience in the dramatic film (he has scored many documentaries) is a shortcoming that Hollywood should take pains to correct. Evidently he learns quickly, for he already knows about the "luv theme."

A Bibliography for the Quarter

Book Editor, FRANKLIN FEARING

BOOKS

WHAT SHOULD be "done" about television—especially about children and TV? One has only to listen to conversations of parents, especially those in the higher intellectual brackets, to recognize a slight note of panic. In *Television and Our Children* (Longmans, Green & Co., Inc., 1951) Robert Lewis Shayon, coeditor of the radio and TV section of the *Saturday Review of Literature,* TV critic for the *Christian Science Monitor,* and Peabody Award winner, presents a calm and intelligent discussion of the whole problem which ought to allay the incipient panic. The eight chapters of this book first appeared as a series of articles in the *Christian Science Monitor.* In nontechnical language the author discusses the compelling emotional and intellectual needs of children in present-day society and why it is that TV *seems* to satisfy them. Whatever is "bad" here—and there is considerable disagreement among the experts as to how "bad" it actually is—is not caused by TV as such, but, Mr. Shayon says, is "only another symptom of a deep-lying trouble in our times." Panicky parents and anyone else interested in TV and its peculiar role should read this little book.

Another book on TV, also very readable but concerned with quite different problems, is *Movies for TV,* by John H. Battison (Macmillan, New York, 1950). The author's purpose is to "buffer the initial inexperience of the beginner on first beholding film equipment." The student, agency man, station personnel who expect to enter TV, or any reader who just wants to know what makes things tick should find the book worth reading. Part I contains chapters on the various types of equipment used in movie making and TV, kinescope recording, lighting, and color. Part II is devoted to programming problems including such topics as

choosing films for TV, newsreels for TV, commercials, scenery and props, and copyright and releases. Mr. Battison is associate editor of *Tele-Tech Magazine,* a member of the American and British Institutes of Radio Engineers, and conducts courses on TV subjects at New York University.

The *Perception of the Visual World,* by James J. Gibson (Houghton Mifflin, 1950), is a scientific book about how we see. The world of colors, surfaces, contours, and shapes, as well as the world of significant objects, people, and human action, is a world of visual perceptions. The study of these processes has always fascinated both the scientist and philosopher. It is convenient to date the systematic study of perception from Bishop Berkeley's remarkable *Essay Towards a New Theory of Vision* in the eighteenth century, although philosophers and others speculated and wrote about these problems long before the Bishop of Cloyne. The result has been a mountainous literature and a welter of data, theory, and metaphysical speculation. Professor Gibson has sifted this material and added the results of his own considerable experimental researches, and presents us with an account that is wholly admirable for its clarity and coherence. This book will be useful and interesting to all those concerned in any way with the manipulation of the visual world for the purpose of communication. The author is professor of psychology at Cornell University.

In *The Great Audience* (Viking Press, New York, 1950) Gilbert Seldes says he has "somewhat reluctantly been forced to the conclusion that our mass entertainments are, practically speaking, the great creative arts of our time." His basic thesis is that the creative aspects of these arts lie in the fact that they bring their audiences into being. This book is about that audience, the forces which control it, and some of the reasons why those forces have slipped into the hands of persons who are indifferent to their responsibilities. "We move," says Mr. Seldes, "beyond the aesthetic questions of the quality of a movie and beyond the moral question of whether the movies are good for people; we have to inquire

what kind of citizens, what kind of society, all the popular arts tend to create. And whether, in the present state of the world, we can afford to give virtually absolute freedom to virtually irresponsible individuals, letting them create, by their whim, the temper of the citizen's mind, his outlook upon life, the moral and intellectual climate in which he lives."

Mr. Seldes examines in some detail the great "entertainment industries" in seeking answers for the tremendous issue which he has raised. These analyses are both well balanced and exciting. They constitute, in fact, as penetrating a study of these media as has yet been made. In his discussion of the highly important topic of the characteristics of the audience and the effects of these media on it, it seemed to this reviewer that Mr. Seldes was less sure of himself. His apparent unfamiliarity with research techniques and some of the important research literature in the field is noticeable. He seems, for example, to be unclear regarding the nature of audience sampling techniques and their use in communications research. He appears to be much impressed by the program analyzer, a device for use in the analysis of audience effects, without clearly understanding the psychological limitations of the data which its use yields. Yet it is only through the data obtained by the use of these and other research tools that many of the fundamental questions raised in this book may even approach a solution. It also seems unfortunate that Mr. Seldes has not documented his sources more fully. For example, this reviewer would have liked to know the reference containing the highly specific data regarding the number of major and minor crimes, physical assaults, sadistic acts, and physical monstrosities in comic strips referred to on page 274. And, in a work of this scope, an index would have been very helpful.

This is an important and challenging book. The author does not pretend to answer the questions which he raises, but he does raise them and discusses them with the insight based on long and wide experience with the popular arts.

Leo A. Handel's *Hollywood Looks at its Audience* (University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 1950) is a lucid exposition of the major research techniques used in the field with which Mr. Seldes' book is concerned. Here will be found descriptions and evaluations of the various methods used by the industry to pretest and post-test films. These include the analysis of box-office returns, sneak previews, fan-mail analysis, the polygraph recorders—including the Lazarsfeld-Stanton Program Analyzer, the Cirlin Reactograph—the Hopkins Electric Televoting Machine and the Schwerin System, and the various types of interview and questionnaire methods. The kinds of data, which each of these methods contributes to the picture of the film audience, are simply and objectively discussed. Mr. Handel's book, however, is not limited to a mere description of audience research techniques. It contains summaries of the major investigations in the field. Part III is largely devoted to a review of the findings of recent research on the make-up of the motion picture audience, its preferences as to films and players, and its relation to the audiences of the other mass media. There are also chapters on the effects of films, admission prices, audience research in foreign countries, and a remarkably clear discussion of sampling methods. There is also a good chapter on the complex subject of content analysis.

This is a first-rate book, and it is recommended for all those who want an introduction to the field of audience research. It is, perhaps, a bit too definitely oriented from the point of view of the industry, but, as Dr. Lazarsfeld points out in the foreword, we do not have as yet any real integration of communications research and the broader concepts and problems of the social sciences. The material in the book is well documented and there is an excellent bibliography of some ninety titles.

Two recent books, though wholly different—one is fictional and one is factual—oddly enough are complementary. Both are about the making of a film in Hollywood. Budd Schulberg's *The Disenchanted* (Random House, New York, 1950) is a best-seller

novel about what happened when a decaying novelist, haunted by alcoholism and the ghosts of his previous achievements, attempts to collaborate with a young writer in the production of a script. *A Case History of a Movie* by Dore Schary (Random House, New York, 1950) is, as the dust cover states, the story of how the human and technical problems met in the making of a motion picture are solved. Mr. Schulberg's novel is about the writing of a script and the tragic outcomes of a trip to the New England college where the script is to be shot. Mr. Schary gives a realistic day-by-day account of the making of a film from the time it was synopsized by a story analyst until it has had a sneak preview and is established in a first-run house. But how different the two accounts are! Mr. Schary's account covers the minutest details of the whole fascinating procedure. The total picture is that of a number of highly skilled craftsmen intensely collaborating in a project to which all of them give their best, and give it with enthusiasm. Mr. Schulberg's novel delineates the interaction between an artist—whose major achievements are in his past—and Hollywood. It is, as everyone knows, the story of F. Scott Fitzgerald and his crack-up. It is also about Hollywood and the conditions under which the creative act of bringing forth a motion picture occurs. It is not a pleasant picture of earnestly collaborating craftsmen. How true is it? The essential facts, from which the novel has not departed, are found in the recently issued biography of F. Scott Fitzgerald by Arthur Mizener, *The Far Side of Paradise,* especially on pages 280–283.

Mr. Schary's account is also true. It is simply and unpretentiously written in a style that almost guarantees authenticity. This is a project that should have been done before and should be done again—not just for the enlightenment and entertainment of the movie-goer, but as a communications research project. A collection of movie "case histories," which objectively describe what happens at each point of decision from the time the film is a glint in somebody's eye until it is finished, would contribute basic data

to the psychology of collective behavior as well as to the mass media of communication.

One wonders what would happen if screenplays of feature films were available in print during the run of a successful film. There might be a number of people who would like to read the screenplay of the movie which they had just seen—or is it assumed that most of the people who go to movies can't read? There is probably something wrong with this idea, but, in any event, not enough screen plays are in print. Methuen & Co., London, has just issued *Three British Screen Plays.* The scripts are *Brief Encounter, Odd Man Out,* and *Scott of the Antarctic.* There is a foreword by Frank Launder, president of the Screenwriters' Association, and an introduction by Roger Manvell.

JOURNALS, RESEARCH, ETC.

The British Film Institute (164 Shafesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2) has brought out Numbers I and II in its new series of *Indexes* devoted to critical analyses of the work of important film directors. These were formerly issued as Supplements to *Sight and Sound.* Number I is devoted to the work of Carl Dreyer *(Day of Wrath, Jeanne d'Arc,* etc.), and is by Ebbe Neergaard. Number II is concerned with the work of Marcel Carne (*Les Enfants du Paradis, Les Visiteurs du Soir,* etc.), and is by Jean Quéval. The general editor of these scholarly studies is Gavin Lambert who announces that directors Frank Capra, René Clair, and S. M. Eisenstein will be subjects of the next studies in the series.

The National Council on Jewish Audio-Visual Materials has organized a Board of Review to evaluate films and film strips which have educational significance for Jewish groups. The *Jewish Audio-Visual Review* is the first in a series of reports of this board. It contains analyses of films and film strips under the headings: The Bible and Jewish Holidays, Israel, Intercultural Subjects, and Song Films. The National Council is sponsored by the American Association for Jewish Education, 1776 Broadway, New York 19, N.Y.

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Raymond D. Cheydleur, director of Educational Radio at Marshall College, Huntington, West Virginia, has issued *A Compilation of Radio Theses in American Colleges and Universities, 1918–1950.* The items in this useful bibliography were obtained from 83 colleges and universities and are classified under a variety of headings such as Business, Child Welfare, Commerce, Economics, Education, English, History, Industrial Arts, Journalism, Music, Psychology, Electrical Engineering, and Physics. Between six and seven hundred theses are listed, of which 101 were submitted for the Ph.D. degree. The theses listed are on file in the libraries of the universities and colleges which reported data for the survey.

Film Forum, the official organ of the Federation of Scottish Film Societies (Film House, 6–8 Hill Street, Edinburgh 2) contains shrewd reviews of important films and lively articles on related subjects. In the December, 1950, issue, Crawford Robb in an article entitled "Ten of the Best" exposes himself to enemy fire and makes a selection of the nine films which are, in his opinion, the great "classics," leaving the tenth spot unfilled. His definition of a "classic" is deceptively simple: "A great work particularly related to the culture of its time." Here is his list: *Intolerance, La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc, Moana, The General, The Blue Angel, Citizen Kane, The Covered Wagon, Potemkin,* and *Henry V.* In the January, 1951, issue of the *Forum,* George C. McElroy vigorously disagrees with Robb both as to definition and as to the films that belong on the list. His list—he has more than ten films— includes *Alexander Nevsky, The Informer, Mayerling, Bicycle Thief, The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Great Expectations, Stagecoach,* and *A Night at the Opera.* His definition excludes films that are primarily notable for technical achievements, and his justifications for the items on his list make lively reading.

The current issue of the *Public Opinion Quarterly* (Winter, 1950–51) contains a penetrating article by Ralph M. Goodman

entitled "Congress on the Air." The author argues that the broadcasting of the proceedings of the national legislature is both feasible and desirable. Broadcasts have already been made of the proceedings of provincial parliaments in Canada, the New York City Council, and the Connecticut State Legislature.

Burton Paulu, manager of KUOM at the University of Minnesota, has compiled *A Radio and Television Bibliography of Books and Magazine Articles Published between January 1, 1949, and May 1, 1950*. The items are classified under a variety of headings which include Government, Social Aspects and Criticism, Programs, Research and Audience Impact Studies, Education and Radio Broadcasting, and Facsimile. The bibliography is in mimeographed form and may be obtained from the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis 14, Minnesota.

French Film Publications (August 1944 – December 1948)

A Preliminary List to a Basic Bibliography—Part II

ALEXIS N. VORONTZOFF

ALEXIS N. VORONTZOFF was a French film student at the Institut de Filmologie before joining the Films and Visual Information Division of UNESCO, in Paris, as research assistant. He contributed "Bibliographie du Cinéma" to *Annuaire du Cinéma, 1948* and *Le Tout Cinéma, 1950*. The first part of the bibliography published here appeared in Volume V, Number 2, of the *Hollywood Quarterly*.

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Doussau, J. *Le Théâtre et le Cinéma au service de la pensée chrétienne et du sentiment religieux en France*. Paris: Editions du Foyer Français, 1946. 32 pp.

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(To be continued)