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Notes on the British Cinema

GAVIN LAMBERT

GAVIN LAMBERT, who lectured on this subject at the University of California, Los Angeles, has written film criticism for various English newspapers and periodicals. He was an editor of *Sequence,* and in 1949 became editor of *Sight and Sound* and director of publications for the British Film Institute. In 1945–55, he wrote and directed an independent feature *Another Sky,* to be shown in the United States later this year. In 1956, he came to Hollywood as personal assistant to Nicholas Ray, on *Bigger than Life,* with James Mason. Mr. Lambert is now working, with Nicholas Ray and René Hardy, on an adaptation of the latter's novel *Bitter Victory.*

IN 1928, a distinguished French critic, Léon Moussinac, published a book on the history of the motion picture. His chapter on the British cinema was rather short. It said, "There is no such thing." This was perhaps a little unkind; but, at the same time, not so far from the truth. By 1928, after all, the American cinema had produced—to name only the great figures—Griffith, Chaplin, and Stroheim; there had been the classic Russian, German, and Scandinavian periods; a great deal of experiment and adventure in France. The British cinema grew up late.

It has, naturally, its primitives. The pioneering period, like most pioneering periods, is full of charm. There are wild one-reel comedies, violent and surrealist and free, less personal than those of Zecca or Méliès, but engaging for their invention and surprise. There is also *The Edwardian Lady About to Retire in her Boudoir at Hove, near Brighton* (1903), which is the most dignified and complicated piece of strip tease in the world, and deserves to be more widely known than it is.

In the Edwardian period, also, our most famous pioneer, Cecil Hepworth, began making films. His *Rescued by Rover,* about a heroic dog, is mentioned in many textbooks as an early example of parallel crosscutting, and is an able, precocious piece of work. Hepworth continued as a film director until the end of the silent period; most of his films are careful, un-vulgar, and well mounted. Creatively, though, his spirit seems dull and over-sentimental, too close to that of the three-volume Victorian novel. Like some other

quiet Englishmen, Lewis Carroll and James Barrie, he liked virginal heroines. *Comin' Thro' the Rye* (1924) has a very charming one, Alma Taylor.

What, however, had happened in British films by 1928—and what Moussinac presumably didn't know about—was that two young directors, Alfred Hitchcock and Anthony Asquith, had made their first films. Hitchcock's included *The Lodger* and *The Ring,* both melodramas, the first set in suburban London and the second with a popular boxing background. They were modest, but their style was vital. They had a realism in their backgrounds, a social accuracy in their observation, that was almost revolutionary at the time; and their narrative was sharp, fluent, dynamic, discarding the lethargic theatrical traditions that dominated most of their contemporaries.

Asquith's early films, *Shooting Stars,* a comedy of manners set in a film studio, and a melodrama, *Cottage on Dartmoor,* were also entertaining, sophisticated, and adventurous in their use of the medium. Hitchcock had clearly been influenced by German films, by Pabst and Dupont especially; one sees this in his creation of atmosphere, his lighting style, his use of objects for symbolic purposes. Asquith had been influenced by many things: by Soviet cutting, by René Clair's use of pantomime in comedy, and, when he made his first sound film, *Tell England* (1931), with its impressive scenes of the Battle of Gallipoli and their lateral tracking shots, by *All Quiet on the Western Front.*

Hitchcock was given his first chance to make films by a young producer called Michael Balcon. Later, in the thirties, their partnership produced some outstanding work—*The Man Who Knew Too Much, Sabotage, The 39 Steps.* In these Films, Hitchcock deepened his exploration of everyday backgrounds and patented his own formula for melodrama. The extraordinary erupted out of the ordinary. Unmentionably sinister acts might occur in a dentist's waiting room or a suburban cinema, at a respected Scottish landowner's mansion or a children's tea party. His famous climaxes, involving scenes of public violence, were staged

at a London music hall, in Piccadilly Circus, on a seaside pier. The most dignified-looking British matrons had a habit of producing revolvers from their handbags, and obscure little bank clerks or vaudeville artists were revealed as members of an espionage gang.

So, for his own special purposes, Hitchcock took care to develop realistic backgrounds, ordinary characters. His films were also significant from Balcon's point of view. When Balcon took over Ealing Studios in 1938, his first productions, a boxing story called *There Ain't No Justice* and a film set in a Welsh mining village, *The Proud Valley,* showed the same concern with social accuracy, the same taste for everyday life. This was extended by the best Ealing wartime films (*Went the Day Well?, Next of Kin,* etc.) and by the famous comedy cycle that followed later. *Hue and Cry* and *Passport to Pimlico* with their London locations, *Tight Little Island* with its Hebridean frame, imposed fantastic comedy—just as Hitchcock had imposed fantastic melodrama—upon familiar surroundings.

The documentary movement, it is often claimed, was responsible for injecting realism into the British feature film. There seems little real evidence for this. Few documentary directors moved over to features (the notable exception being Cavalcanti, associate producer and director at Ealing from 1940–47). Few feature producers or directors showed much interest in documentary at the time. Nor did the general public, since these films were not widely shown. The realistic style had been set earlier, by the first Hitchcock and Balcon productions.

Where the documentary movement might have had real influence—in feature films that dramatized social problems—it was sadly ignored. The social film that is such a vital tradition of American film making has never flourished in Britain. Carol Reed tried it in one of his earlier films, *The Stars Look Down* (1938); this had excellent mining backgrounds, but an impossible A. J. Cronin story.

Perhaps the difficulty was that documentary never gave much

of a lead in human terms. Its best films were about objects—trains, boats, gas stoves; or about fish, smoke, etc. Early in the movement's career, two remarkable films were made—*Housing Problems* by Edgar Anstey and *Children at School* by Basil Wright. These used real people, a candid camera style. But the general trend moved away from them, toward the often brilliantly made but rather coldly abstracted *Nightmail, Song of Ceylon, Shipyard,* and *Smoke Menace.* Later, of course, isotypes came in. Wasn't there, even, a hint of slumming in these bright progressive films, a little like the contemporary poets who felt obliged to add pylons etc. to their imagery?

The realistic line that had begun with Hitchcock and developed in the years to come was, besides, socially unprogressive. Hitchcock was not concerned with social criticism; nor are other British directors, except on the most perfunctory level. This deeply convinced acceptance of the status quo has wide implications. The trappings of realism—i.e. that backgrounds should not look like sets, and people should be "natural"—are common to all British directors. The meaning of it does not seem to interest them very much. This finally becomes clear in postwar films like *The Third Man* or *Breaking the Sound Barrier;* the issue was, so to speak, deferred during the war, because it was then proper to make films of collective effort and pride and not to criticize too much; after the war, it is remarkable that only one minor film took any notice of one of the great happenings of the day—the Labour Government experiment. Except, of course, to make the usual jokes.

Meanwhile, something very important besides Hitchcock and Balcon happened in the British cinema during the thirties. This was the arrival of two Hungarians: first, Alexander Korda in 1933, then Gabriel Pascal in 1938. Of the two, Korda's impact was undoubtedly more spectacular and lasting, but indirectly we owe to Pascal as many good films as to Korda.

Korda's *Private Life of Henry VIII* (1933) is generally described as a landmark. A landmark because it was the first British

film to receive wide international distribution; because it made a lot of money, enough for Korda to obtain backing from an insurance company and build Denham studios, then the largest in the country, for his firm of London Films; because it made Charles Laughton a star, and it launched Korda on his remarkable career in British films.

The film itself doesn't seem much more today than a historical bedroom farce with lavish and tasteful settings. But, in its context, Korda's choice of subject was characteristically shrewd. He decided to make a film about a king who had done the un-British thing of having six wives and sending two of them to the block (a far cry from the usual tributes to respectable monarchy, notably Queen Victoria, which have occupied the British cinema on and off for forty years). He perpetuated the popular myth that the reason for Henry's actions was constitutional infidelity or voracious appetite rather than political strategy. Lubitsch, by whom the film was certainly influenced, had already pioneered this kind of thing in *The Dubarry,* but Korda's comedy, though it was inclined to lumber where Lubitsch trod like a cat on hot bricks, made up for lack of subtlety in production values. He chose a field in which British film makers have rarely excelled—the spectacular costume picture—and brought a cosmopolitan taste and flair to it. It set the style of his future thirties productions—*Catherine the Great* (another scandalous royal figure), *Private Life of Don Juan* (philandering again), and *Rembrandt,* the most sumptuous and attractively designed of the whole series, though in other respects rather dull.

Korda built up, in the thirties, an international unit. He brought over Lazare Meerson, designer for Clair and Feyder; he used the English painter John Armstrong as costume designer; his brother Vincent was, and still is, a very capable art director. He developed such actors as Laughton, Olivier, Vivien Leigh, Ralph Richardson, Robert Donat. He also, of course, brought over foreign directors and stars—Clair, who made *The Ghost Goes West* for him, Feyder, who was landed with an unfortunate

Dietrich vehicle, *Knight Without Armour,* and finally von Sternberg, who began the ill-fated *I Claudius.* This last was beset with disaster from the beginning; the designer died, and the leading lady was injured in an automobile accident. The enormous losses, coupled with the commercial failure of *Rembrandt,* drove Korda into his first bankruptcy.

He was to come back, after working in America during World War II, and to gather round him several leading directors, to whom he gave considerable independence—too much, perhaps, from an economic point of view. Attenuated schedules became the order of the day. He was rewarded by a number of highly praised films, including *The Fallen Idol* and *The Third Man* from Reed, *Breaking the Sound Barrier* from David Lean, *Tales of Hoffman* from Powell and Pressburger, and *Richard III* from Laurence Olivier.

The films in which he took the greatest personal interest—*An Ideal Husband* (which he also directed), *Gilbert and Sullivan, Bonnie Prince Charlie*—were, however, flops. Remaining faithful to his earlier tastes, Korda remained also their prisoner. His whole background was cosmopolitan, sophisticated, well bred; he liked—and bought—good paintings, good wine, first editions, and there was a trace of snobbery in all this. He was always more concerned with the fashionably successful talent than with the untried, unknown one. When he first arrived on the scene, he was right to think on his own scale; but later, in spite of all warnings, he was like the impoverished aristocrat who went on living in his enormous country house while, one by one, the rooms were closed up. If he made a "small" film—*The Heart of the Matter* or *The Captain's Paradise*—the result was somehow dingy and disinterested.

When he died, his company was over two million pounds in debt. Twice, in fact, he built up an empire, and then lost it. Perhaps what really defeated Korda in the end, for all his fine qualities, was a lack of contact with the reality of life around him. Always, he went back to the past. He liked an age of elegance and

splendid leisure, and would ruin himself to maintain the illusion of it. Without him, the whole tradition of elegance and historical imagination in the best British costume pictures—in Thorold Dickinson's *Gaslight* and *Queen of Spades,* in Olivier's films from Shakespeare and Lean's from Dickens—would probably never have been formed. He set the standards; he also became overwhelmed by them.

The case of Pascal was different. This was a man who arrived in England with a single obsession: to film the works of George Bernard Shaw. His knowledge of the English language was reputedly slight at the time, but he convinced the playwright—notably hostile to the cinema after seeing a film of *How He Lied to Her Husband*—to sell him the rights to several of his plays.

In his first production, *Pygmalion* (1938), Pascal achieved—perhaps without fully realizing it—several extraordinary things. In employing Anthony Asquith to direct it, he helped this talented film maker, whose work in the thirties had amounted to a series of interesting failures, to find himself. (Established by the success of *Pygmalion,* Asquith went on to several more light, polished comedies of manners—*Quiet Wedding, The Demi-Paradise, The Importance of Being Earnest.*) Pascal also virtually established the comedy of manners on the British screen. His next Shaw adaptation, *Major Barbara,* was equally good; and from these two films stems an admirable tradition. Robert Hamer's *Kind Hearts and Coronets,* the Launder-Gilliat *The Rake's Progress,* and a little known but very amusing version of a Frederick Lonsdale play, *On Approval,* under the direction of Clive Brook, have allied qualities. Their dialogue is unusually witty and sets an epigrammatic tone, their attitude toward social conventions is irreverent. They form an unusually civilized little pocket of the British cinema, quite distinct from films like *Tight Little Island* or *Genevieve,* closer in spirit to one of the persisting themes of the English comic novel, which, from Jane Austen to Evelyn Waugh, has found rich satire in the rituals of snobbery and of relations between different social classes.

Pascal's films, unfortunately, got bigger. *Major Barbara* lost money not because it was brilliant but because it was expensive—unnecessarily so. It was "produced and directed" by Gabriel Pascal, though David Lean's contribution, as assistant and editor, was important. It was the last time, however, that Pascal worked with anyone of the caliber of Asquith or Lean. For *Caesar and Cleopatra,* he relied almost entirely on himself, and the result was not brilliant, merely expensive. The extravagance was unjustified because it worked against the play. He gave an antiromantic historical comedy all the trappings of romanticism, under which it collapsed.

These, then, were the foundations. Everyday realism from Hitchcock and Balcon, elegance and sophistication from the Hungarians; by extension, modesty and extravagance, the present and the past. Most British films over the last ten years have followed one or other of these lines, sometimes combined them. The combinations can be interesting.

Compare, for instance, *Odd Man Out,* which Carol Reed made for the Rank Organization, and his two productions for Korda, *The Third Man* and *The Fallen Idol.* The Korda films are smoother and glossier and their casts are international. The photography of Belfast is less elegant and flamboyant than the photography of Vienna, and *Odd Man Out,* though it specifically disclaims political intentions, is seriously concerned with the human plight of its political fugitive, the meaning of whose predicament is gradually lost in other considerations. *The Third Man* is a clever piece of entertainment, dazzlingly tricked up—zither accompaniment, exotic locales with Orson Welles on the top of a great ferris wheel, a chase through the sewers, low-angle night shots of ruined masonry and staircases. In the background, impeccably composed, Vienna starves, is occupied, gives its sick children penicillin diluted in strength by a racketeer. It is perhaps typical, too, that for *The Fallen Idol,* the setting of Graham Greene's original story, an ordinary London suburb, rather seedy

as he likes it, was transferred to the more palatial quarters of a foreign embassy.

In David Lean's *Breaking the Sound Barrier* there is a curious upper middle-class neutrality of background, coldly well-to-do, as opposed to the vivid drabness of the country town in the same director's *Brief Encounter*. In the film Lean made for Korda, airplanes are studied with rapt fascination, and there are passages like a beautiful mechanical ballet. Unfortunately, nobody asks what it is all about—what, in terms of everyone's life today, the great supersonic jag may involve. Instead we are fobbed off with the usual British tight little proposal-and-renunciation scenes, characters drawn from that polite, appalling vacuum of the successful West End play.

It is not, of course, a question of holding Korda responsible for this. The final responsibility must lie with the directors; but the climate in which they work undoubtedly has its effect. One remains with the suspicion that Reed's interest in postwar Europe and Lean's in the problem of a mechanized society cannot, under the circumstances, be very profound or creative.

The popular Ealing comedies have had much more simple, less de luxe backgrounds. After the success of *Hue and Cry,* which combined the talents of T. E. B. Clarke (writer), Henry Cornelius (producer), and Charles Crichton (director)—talents later to be associated with many films of the cycle—it was discovered that, by accident, a formula had been invented and a new type of native comedy born. This formula amounted to a fantastication of the English scene. A community—of East End Londoners, Hebridean islanders, Bank of England employees—is placed in a fantastic situation. East End kids get on the track of a gang of thieves, islanders are deprived of the whisky that is their lifeblood, a mild bank clerk conceives the idea of robbery, villagers are threatened with the loss of a local railway, inhabitants of Pimlico are informed they are really citizens of Burgundy. The formula is ideally suited to one national trait; the barriers of reserve and

normalcy come down most noticeably in England at a time of extreme crisis, when wildly unexpected ingenuity may be brought into play.

In each of these situations exists an undercurrent of rebellion—against the law, bureaucracy, even the police. In this sense, the comedy is gently anarchistic, though in another it is deeply conservative. Balcon's Ealing comedies are not, like the Shaw films, comedies of ideas, but of situations. In the best of them, the situations are appealing and the invention is vivacious, but the issues are basically trivial. Despite the mockery of bureaucrats and cabinet ministers, a tone of inner respectability persists. This also is typically British. It has been remarked that in Britain rebellion traditionally stops short at eccentricity. The definition of eccentricity in this case is nonconformism in small matters; in big matters, it is bad form. These little victories over authority achieve nothing fundamental. Hebridean islanders get their whisky after all, the country gentry manage to retain a useless old railway line. If this makes a dent in the *status quo,* it is too small to be even worth repairing.

A comedy about a more serious act of rebellion, if made in Britain, would probably be regarded as not cricket. One has a hint of this in *A Private's Progress* (directed by John Boulting), an affable farce about an undergraduate drafted into the army during World War II; he has an uncle who is a Brigadier, and the inefficient young man is quickly promoted to the corrupt, class-conscious officer world. Here, material for genuine satire is wholly neglected; the tone remains indulgent and casual, the film commits no more than a mildly rueful shrug. But even this was enough for the military authorities to refuse all coöperation.

Equally, the same temper persists in dramatic films. A policeman may be a gentle figure of fun in an Ealing comedy, but in an Ealing drama (*The Blue Lamp*) he symbolizes a flawlessly efficient force. While the average American, to judge from the films he sees, is quite capable of believing a number of things that are not cricket—that prison conditions are often bad, that officials may

be corrupt, racial minorities penalized and adolescents inclined to violence—the British cinema does not acknowledge that such things exist in its own country. It reflects a closed society, unfriendly to change and regarding self-criticism as rather bad form. While to an English audience the plain speaking of American social films may come as a shock and a relief, the quaint conservatism, the lack of real protest, in British films may strike American audiences as deeply reassuring. If one only has to worry about old railway trains and contraband whisky, and not about prison conditions and neurotic adolescents, the world may seem a happier place.

One can pursue the policy of evasion, conscious and unconscious, in British films. It is interesting that the lovers in *Brief Encounter,* for instance, not only never consummate their love but return at the end of the story to legal husband and legal wife. It is interesting that for the adaptation of *1984,* made in England by an American company, a special ending was shot for the British version. In Orwell's novel, Winston Smith ends up, after brainwashing, dutifully loving Big Brother. In the British version, he is shot by the Thought Police and—as Julia dies loyally by his side, stretching out her hand—he cries "Down with Big Brother!" The idea behind this seems to be that, for a British film, a rebel against tyranny must remain a rebel against tyranny; the notion of his renouncing his beliefs under pressure—however monstrous and terrible—is as deeply shocking as the notion of a policeman taking a bribe.

The Young Lovers (directed by Anthony Asquith) is politically even more immature. A young American, working in the embassy in London, and the daughter of an Iron Curtain ambassador fall in love. (The situation is cunningly designed for the British to remain neutral.) Disapproval from both embassies drives the pair to decide the only thing to do is, like the owl and the pussycat, to set to sea in a boat. Their dinghy drifts into a beautiful sunset, and a farewell message explains they hope to reach a better land. At no point is the question raised of what these two people really

believe. They display an almost incredible lack of curiosity about everything except *Swan Lake* and making love. When they are prevented from enjoying either, the film suggests that opposing ideologies are pretty mean things. This is a plaintive but not very penetrating observation.

Again, just as the changing face of postwar Britain has been ignored, so at a time of retrenchment and unease in the Empire, the only films on this subject remain loyal to the idea of heroic whites *vs.* the fuzzy-wuzzies. *Simba,* a melodrama purporting to deal with the Mau Mau, shows motiveless fanatics eviscerating dear old British colonists, who simply cannot understand what is happening and have never known the natives so restless before. *Storm Over the Nile* is a remake of the seventeen-year old *The Four Feathers,* a rumbustious jingoistic adventure story, in which retired generals still relate the triumphs of battle over a glass of port, and their daughters hold hands with young officers on the terrace outside . . .

From birth, our cinema has suffered intermittently from two weaknesses: lack of concern with contemporary life and its issues, and a tendency to confuse half-art with art. The second is the outcome of the first. However brilliant the trappings, the stylistic effects, the incidental touches, the result will be—if the world itself is too isolated, too enclosed—thin and impermanent. *The Third Man* is a case in point, and the same director's *A Kid for Two Farthings* shows a wistful avoidance of any real aspects of life in London's East End that can only be described as shattering. Again, where is Dickens' social indignation in *Great Expectations* and *Oliver Twist,* as adapted by David Lean, These are beautifully made films, of impeccable taste and surface; some of the characters come vividly to life; but nothing is related to Victorian society. The ultimate failure is one of vision. The films are inorganic.

Oddly enough, the director who had the most far-reaching vision in British films is sadly unknown. Humphrey Jennings, who died in an accident a few years ago while still in his mid-

forties, made some films during the war that anticipated the neo-realist style and extracted a rich, marvellous poetry from everyday life and conditions. The best was *Fires Were Started,* a study of a Fire Service unit, in which an account of daily duties and a fire-fighting episode also caught the whole "feel" of Britain in war-time. And *A Diary for Timothy,* begun just as the war was ending, is a meditation on the uncertainties and hopes of immediately postwar Britain; following the first six months in the life of Timothy, a baby born in 1945, the film alternates reminiscence of the past with observation of the present. Jennings had a very special and perhaps limited talent, difficult for the commercial cinema to accommodate; but he had a genius for discovering what was momentous in the personal drama, what lay underneath the surface of everyday life. There was a passion for discovery, for illumination, in everything he did. It is just this passion that, as a whole, our film makers have lacked.

Only in a few independently made documentary and short-story films has there been a real awareness: in *David,* by Paul Dickson, a fine, tender study of a Welsh miner; in *Thursday's Children,* by Lindsay Anderson and Guy Brenton, which shows the education of deaf children with a beautiful, intense directness; in *Together,* by a young Italian girl, Lorenza Mazzetti, a strange poetic tragedy vividly set in the East End of London. In these films there is a modest but unmistakable revelation of the world.

Significantly, the industry has not encouraged any of these directors. It seems to be interested in a different kind. They can record with often brilliant skill. They can entertain. They can surprise by malice and elegant satire. But how mysteriously and maddeningly they dislike to commit themselves.

Children's Taste in Films

MARY FIELD

MARY FIELD is well known as one of the British pioneers in educational and documentary motion pictures. Her many contributions include the development of the use of the diagram and instructional film and the inauguration in 1944 of the Children's Entertainment Films Division of G.B. Instructional Ltd. for the J. Arthur Rank organization. *Secrets of Nature,* written with Percy Smith, and more recently, *Good Company,* a history of the Children's Entertainment film movement in Great Britain 1944–50, are among Miss Field's book publications. The following article is a shortened version of her lecture before the National Froebel Foundation at its annual general meeting in University College, London, on January 5, 1956.

PROBABLY THE MOST DEFORMED representation of the taste of a cinema audience has been the presumed taste of the child audience. It has been assessed at two extremes, that of the innocent imaginative infant living in a sheltered world of dream fantasy and that of the youthful sadist enjoying an adult world whose fantasy deals with death and violence. The Europeans in particular have thought of children's film taste in terms of fairy stories, puppets, and cartoons—the sort of film they have felt children ought to enjoy. The other school, typified by the American film industry, has declared children enjoy only Westerns and space fantasies coupled with violently colored cartoons.

These two warped ideas of juvenile taste in films dominated children's film shows until the immediate prewar years. Then the Russians, though clinging mainly to the fairy-tale approach, experimented with a real life story for children in the film *Lone White Sail.* A few years later, in 1943, the Rank organization, in Great Britain, inaugurated its Children's Entertainment Film section, which soon came to be known as CEF, with the purpose of providing worth-while entertainment films for children.

CEF was in many ways fortunate. Unlike earlier theorists who considered making films for children more or less *in vacuo,* it had an audience ready-made and waiting in the four hundred thousand children who attended children's cinema clubs under the auspices of the Rank organization every Saturday morning.

It was fortunate, too, that this audience shopped for its entertainment. With sixpence in hand for its Saturday show, this audience could and did cross to the opposition theater if it did not like the films offered in its accustomed cinema. Thus, the British children's films had to be films children liked enough to pay to see and not films they ought to have liked. Thirdly, the age limit for a "child" was fixed between seven and fourteen, the age during which boys and girls attended a cinema club. The majority of the audience, however, was, and is still, aged between seven and eleven plus. Even now, when school-leaving age in Britain has raised the upper limit to fifteen and the new Cinematograph Act has lowered the bottom level to five, the average age of the children's cinema clubs remains between seven and eleven, the extrovert period of action and adventure when "from six years onward the criterion of reality is increasingly applied," according to Dr. Gardner of the University of London.

After having been provided with an audience with selective powers and a fairly firm age ratio, CEF received a final stroke of fortune. It was called into being during the war when there was a readiness to experiment with all art forms and particularly with the motion picture that, both in the forces and in public cinemas, had recently established its powers for formal and informal instruction.

In addition to all these advantages, the entire staff of CEF were film technicians. It was natural that Mr. Rank, himself a film man, should turn to his own industry for help in his project of making films that, while entertaining children would, in his own simple phraseology, "do them good." Thus, members of CEF approached the assignment of making this new type of film in the same way as they would have approached the job of making films for any new kind of audience. Throughout the war years, they had been preparing films for the services, for neutral propaganda, for home propaganda, for housewives, for civil defence. Why not for children? They were ready to experiment, to observe, to deduce, to act on deduction. The production of educational and

propaganda films had shown the value of starting from the known. It seemed reasonable, therefore, to make films about British children who represented the known and then observe the reception of such films in the Cinema Clubs. But how were the observations to be made?

In 1944 and 1945, there was great reliance on questionnaires as a means of estimating the reaction of audiences to films. J. P. Mayer in his studies *The Sociology of the Film* and *British Cinemas and Their Audiences* relied largely on answers to questions. A number of inquiries were carried out for various education authorities, including the London County Council, and all used the same methods. The questions were most carefully framed, and the answers collated and analyzed. No one, at the time, allowed for the difficulty of securing from adults, and even more so from children, truthful answers to questions about emotions already past and even at the moment subject to change. The answer to "Who is your favorite film star?" may alter tonight, and may have already changed several times since the question was originally posed.

The unreliability of children when faced with questionnaires about films soon became apparent to the staff of CEF. Children seemed most willing to coöperate and replied with any names they could remember—often ones they had seen on the billboards on their way to the Cinema Club. Often, the only film they could recall was the one seen last week. Indeed, without skilled leadership, young children obviously find it difficult to recall even the program they have just viewed let alone say if they "enjoyed" it. Besides, what is "enjoyed" to an eight-year-old? Frequently, it seems to be the satisfaction of the familiar, and children will say they "enjoyed" a Western that obviously had bored them rather than another less usual type of picture that had held them spellbound. At a public inquiry into children and films held in London in 1947, a young club member was called to the platform for questioning. He was well known in his West London Club as the leader of its jazz band and an enthusiastic supporter of serials.

Therefore, with some surprise, the officials of CEF and Children's Cinema Clubs heard him declare he preferred films showing how other people worked and lived—"the documentary," he asserted, using the term put into his mouth by the chairman. He was not deliberately misleading his questioners; at the moment, he probably believed what he said. But his replies were sufficient to send CEF back to personal observation of audiences as a whole.

It is, indeed, with audiences as a whole that film makers are rightly interested. The individual may well be the anxiety of the educationist or the psychiatrist, but few individuals have an opportunity of seeing a film alone. By standing in front of child audiences and looking back over their uplifted faces, the staff of CEF learned to foretell a loss of interest before it actually occurred. Differences of posture denoting interest could be detected: the identification of the audience with the characters on the screen even to imitation of position, the anxious searching to find a point of familiarity in a long shot, the almost instantaneous break with the screen and relaxation into play when the story and its telling failed to grip. All these manifestations were noted and discussed and, above all, accepted; for CEF had no previous conceptions as to what children ought to enjoy on the screen.

Such observation, however, can only be communicated by discussion, and it provided no evidence uncolored by personal observation. In order to provide definite material that could be used for discussion and deduction, CEF introduced, as early as 1946, the technique of photographing a section of the audience by means of infrared photography. This enables pictures to be taken without the subjects being in any way aware that they are being photographed. This technique has been widely followed by the press and by research workers including Ella Sierstedt in Denmark, and American experimenters at the Universities of Pennsylvania and California at Los Angeles. Though most of these later projects have been similar in shape, they have differed widely from the original experiments in purpose. The object of most infrared photography of child audiences nowadays is to find the

immediate reaction of children to a picture thrown on the screen, the actual picture not always being reproduced. The resultant findings are mere statements of fact not in any way linked with future film productions.

The CEF infrared photography was carried out in order to give information as to how an audience would react to one special kind of technique of production, and the findings influenced future film making. Moreover, in each case, one group of children was photographed, at intervals, all through a film so as to get a steady record of the response of its members. Set against pictures made from the frames that were actually on the screen at the time, these infrared pictures revealed the most unexpected responses of children to films and their methods of getting pleasure at the pictures. The reactions of more than one audience to the same film were recorded.

Eventually in 1951, thanks to the generosity of the Carnegie United Kingdom Trust trustees, a more thorough investigation of random groups of film audiences in different parts of Britain and from different social and economic backgrounds was carried out. Each audience saw the same two programs during the course of which each group was photographed no less than forty times. Ancillary material gave information about the child's background and scholastic records, the whole providing material for thorough and detailed study. In fact, the production of most British children's films currently being made by the Children's Film Foundation, which followed CEF in 1951, are based on the findings of the Carnegie Report supplemented, of course, by the results of further inquiries. Some of the infrared pictures are so graphically clear that no film producer can ignore them. For instance, if you explain your plot by means of adult dialogue and find most of the children in the audiences are playing on the floor with their backs to the screen, your method of storytelling is obviously wrong.

In 1954, by the greatest good fortune, one of the films used in the Carnegie Inquiry was showing in Melbourne when the executive officer of the Children's Film Foundation was in that city.

With the help of the Visual Aids Department of the University of Melbourne, infrared photographs of the Melbourne children were obtained at exactly the same points in the film that had been selected in Great Britain. The resulting pictures suggested that the response of Melbourne children is very similar to that of boys and girls from the heavy industrial sections of the British Midlands.

Although it is possible to become skilled at interpreting infrared pictures, it would hardly be wise to rely on them alone. Skilled personal observation must be the key pin of all inquiries into children's tastes at the films, and a further source of information is the sounds they make. A children's audience is seldom quiet since there is so much in the program to incite comment and anticipation. The sounds it makes can soon be distinguished: the happy buzz of participation, the "coo" of pleasure at what the audience considers beautiful, the happy laugh of relief, the cries of anticipation, the dead silence of tension, broken—if held too long—by self-conscious laughter, the undisciplined noise of children bored. All these sounds can be recorded by a tape recorder, which also records the sounds from the loud-speakers. By playing over the tape with the film, it is possible to reproduce the sensation of being among and hearing the audience. It is also possible to compare a short extract of the response of one audience with that of another.

Though no one can hope to please all of the children all of the time, there is a surprising degree of conformity in the taste of children at the cinema. The stories that give them most pleasure, the child and adult characters that win their sympathy (there is no need to mention animals; they win sympathy anyway), the high points of interest and excitement, the places where the audience loses contact with the screen, the successful and unsuccessful jokes—on the whole, these vary very little from district to district. And this seems equally true of those audiences outside Britain that the Children's Film Foundation has been able to observe.

British children's films are popular in Scandinavia, Germany, Holland, France, Italy, Czechoslovakia, Yugoslavia, some parts of the Near and Far East, Indonesia, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and, in all, thirty-six different territories, although the cost of importing these films makes them few and far between in some countries. Although children who do not go to the cinema frequently are more easily amused, grieved, or excited than sophisticated child audiences, their taste appears to be very much the same; and a Bombay and a Berlin audience have the same sympathies, hopes, and fears while a film is being projected. British children view films from foreign countries with enthusiasm, if some adjustments are made to fit British filmgoing habits. For instance, Scandinavian, Russian, Czech, and Yugoslavian films are much longer and slower than British films and are improved for audiences in English-speaking countries if they are shortened. Allowing, however, for certain national traits in filmgoing there is, no doubt, a highest common factor for children's cinema taste.

A reasonable approach to children's taste in the cinema seems to be that, since they are so conservative in their conception of entertainment, they can easily be accustomed to accept and enjoy well-made films. This belief appears to be justified in the reactions of child audiences in Great Britain, some of whom have now been subjected to the influence of well-made children's films over a period of twelve years. They have a marked taste in the content of the plot, in the presentation of the story, in the use of camera and sound, in casting, and also in the moral content of the film. None of this taste really runs contrary to the basic needs of a well-made adult film, and this may account for the fact that so many adults get real pleasure from watching children's films. It is beyond dispute that a film enjoyed by children all over the world must be made with enthusiasm and vitality. "When it comes to writing for children," says Eleanor Farjeon, "there is no such thing as a child group . . . the manner of the matter must dance on its own and, if the writer hasn't had some delight in it, how can the reader have, no matter what his age?" This statement applies

equally to films, and the fact that it is the habit of outstanding British actors and technicians to take part in the production of children's films and derive much pleasure from conforming to their different technique may well make "the manner of the matter" in these pictures dance to a rhythm highly acceptable to children and help to account for their almost universal appeal.

The research that has been done first by the Children's Entertainment Film Department of the Rank organization and now by the Children's Film Foundation is entirely empirical. It is conducted by film makers into the reaction of film audiences with the object of finding out how to make films that will engage and hold the attention of a large group of children. Month by month, new films are made, accepted techniques are varied and adapted, new technicians bring new ideas. Week by week, managers and observers report on the reception of children's films by audiences all over Great Britain and other parts of the world. The assessment of children's taste in films can never be final. When we say with authority "we know," at that moment we shall have lost our power of judgment.

What are these children's films that have such an international appeal for young cinemagoers? Australia was the first country to define them for customs purposes as a special category of film. They have to be certified as produced primarily for children and designed to be shown to children. Thus, films aimed at family audiences with their direct appeal to adults as well as children are ruled out. But "children's films" can be a problem for the film industry since they do not fit into the accepted pattern of commercial production, distribution, or exhibition; neither are they a part of the specialized film world, like documentaries or educational films.

Only in Russia and her satellites and in Great Britain are children's entertainment films successfully dovetailed into the over-all scheme for the cinema, though various countries are working out their own ways of exhibiting them. In Russia, the resources and finance of a great national industry are lavished on children's

films; and the same is true in Czechoslovakia and, to a lesser degree, in Poland, China, and East Germany. In Britain, the work is undertaken by the film industry. From the British Film Production Fund, a voluntary levy raised by the exhibitors and administered by the four film-trade assocations, up to one-tenth every year may be spent on some noncommercial purpose; and this purpose for the last four years has been the production of children's films. This production is truly noncommercial, for a children's film costs no less to make than an adult picture except that such expensive stars are not necessary. The return on films shown once a week at reduced entrance fees at a special children's show must be meager; yet the British film industry—like the Russian government—considers the work worth-while.

The reasons are not hard to seek. From the point of view of the film industry, such work is excellent public relations and is steadily helping to remove attacks by educationists and welfare workers on filmgoing by children. Secondly, it helps to build up audiences, an important consideration in this period of television expansion. There has never been any need to attract boys and girls to the cinema, but it is important to make certain that they enjoy themselves when they go. Children who are frightened, bored, or unable to see the picture because of the undisciplined behavior of the rest of the audience, do not come to regard the cinema as the home of certain pleasure. They are easily attracted to other amusements. This applies especially to the little girls who find few characters with whom they can identify themselves in the adult films currently considered suitable for children. For many boys and girls, these films are too childish without being childlike. So, at adolescence, they drift away from filmgoing.

But children's films specially made for children—as children's books and television are tailored to the requirements of a special audience—do give great pleasure, emotional and intellectual, to boys and girls of all types. They evoke a sense of well-being that is associated in their minds with the cinema. What is more, their taste in films is given a chance to develop naturally, through

seeing films that they can understand, well told and well made. In this way, there is produced an audience that enjoys filmgoing for its own sake and that can appreciate the finer points of film making, so rejoicing the hearts of technicians.

The visible financial returns on children's films are infinitesimal, but their intangible results are highly valuable. Nor can we say authoritatively that children's films are not an economic proposition, since their life appears to be indefinite. Every four years, a new audience grows up to whom the films are new and delightful, so such pictures appear to be a long-term investment. It is a worth-while risk? Two such diverse bodies as "Goliath," the Russian government, and "David," the British film industry, answer emphatically "Yes."

What Is Film Humor?

HARRY SCHEIN

HARRY SCHEIN is a regular contributor as a film critic to Sweden's leading literary monthly, *Bonniers Litterära Magasin*. Translations of two of his articles have already been printed in the two previous numbers of the *Quarterly*. The following essay appeared originally in BLM, and was translated with Mr. Schein's approval by Ida M. Alcock.

JONES LAUGHS at Brown's joke—at Smith's expense. Jones has a good time, and Brown has a sense of humor—one of the more acceptable variants of sadism—but what does Smith have? Does nobody give a thought to Smith?

The public behaves towards the victim of humor as, to use a cherished expression, the ego does toward the id. The neurotic private lives of humorists or the classical genuine tears of the clown is the natural consequence of the necessity to murder with a roar of laughter. Humor's greatest enemy is not stupidity but pity. There is humor for every class of society and for every level of intelligence. The polished aesthete laughs at drivel and pie throwing; virile pillars of society suck at dirty words as though they were nipples; Östermalm* and would-be Östermalm moo in a cultivated manner at sophisticated comedy. But Jesus never laughed—his compassion was endless.

I am speaking, of course, not of the humor typified by physiological reflexes such as smiling or the gleam in the eye. This article deals only with the kind of humor that releases laughter. And the diaphragm is the abode of laughter—next to anguish. The hysterical laugh is their bastard. When the young heroine on the half-dark staircase comes closer to the pathological murderer, when his wildly panting breath is registered affectingly on the sound track, when the effect has reached the most concentrated pitch, then Mrs. Jones in the audience laughs. This hysterical laughter is literally liberating; it dissolves the tension and frees Mrs. Jones from the murderer.

* A section of Stockholm probably equivalent to Park Avenue in New York (translator's note).

To say dirty words is funny because it is a crime that is not punished. It is funny when the clown is beaten up because we are not being struck. Custard pies do not land on our faces; we do not slip on the banana peel; and someone else has rhymed "the heart" with "to smart." The diaphragm that has been contracted with anguish is convulsively released at the same moment it discovers that the threatening danger is going to strike not us but somebody else.

Laughter is, according to Kant, the sudden dissolving of tense expectancy into nothing. Plato saw it as an expression of both pain and enjoyment. Pain is the threatening danger. Enjoyment is not only release from this danger but also—if we are to believe Thomas Hobbes, or John M. Bullitt in *Jonathan Swift and the Anatomy of Satire*—the sudden discovery that we who are laughing are superior to those at whom we are laughing.

General Ludendorff, during World War I, was so impressed by the fighting morale of the English soldiers that he set his spies to investigate the cause. The collected reports indicated that a sense of humor enabled the English to endure the rigors of war. Ludendorff's famous question, "Was ist humor?" resulted in a handbook on humor, published by the German General Staff and distributed among the German troops. The book turns out to be quite useless, however, when it comes to understanding such phenomena as Jacques Tati, Danny Kaye, or Povel Ramel. Nor is John Montgomery's book *Comedy Films* (George Allen & Unwin, London, 1954) a greater help than the handbook by General Ludendorff who, as is well-known, lost the war he intended to win with the assistance of humor.

Comedy Films manages to review countless film comedies without a word about either humor in general or film comedies in particular. On the other hand, the book does give a good many historical facts that I am permitting myself to steal since they fit my purposes here quite well.

The first film comedy, *Sneeze,* was made in 1894, and shows a man sneezing. It is very short and demonstrates how funny a

cold is when someone else has it. More famous is the film by the Lumière brothers about the gardener, made in 1896. A child steps on the hose; the gardener looks, astonished, into the empty nozzle; the child steps off the hose; the gardener gets wet. Perhaps it was he who caught cold in 1894.

According to John Montgomery, as far back as 1903, people's mishaps were already a well-established source of joy to the film public. People fell in the water; they got banged on the head by cobblestones or heavy pieces of furniture; they were chased by bees, by policemen, and by dogs. Especially popular were elderly gentlemen with ear trumpets that, as a rule, were usually confused with funnels into which were poured water, oil, beer, syrup, etc.

Of course, there is more to our amusement than our sadistic tendencies, even if we are permitted to discover at the last moment that someone else is the victim of the action or that the action really has not the pernicious meaning we first suspected. Laughter follows certain definite, formal rules. These are so strong that humor ceases to be an attribute of character, and should be defined instead as an art *form* with a sadistic substratum.

We laugh only at quite special forms of malevolence. It is not permissible for the malevolence to be true. For example, both superstition and an old lady showing horror at a young girl's walking unchaperoned with a young man, were once ideal victims for humorists; but today, these topics have only antiquarian value. This applies as well to the fussy major, the only weak character, in the Jacques Tati film *Monsieur Hulot's Holiday*. He constitutes a much lesser danger, however, than does the film's beach Tarzan, for in a too obviously realistic milieu we cannot identify with a complete idiot and, thus, have nothing from which to be liberated.

In other words, in order to be funny, the maliciousness must be original. We must attack someone who is not usually attacked. The fun must be audacious in order to be amusing—a condition that gave the court jester a justification for his existence. His privilege was to shoot at the king—so long as he did not hurt

the vital organs. Indeed, the more audacious the humorist is, the greater is the probability that his victim is a person with whom we can identify ourselves—but from whom we can free ourselves.

The aesthetic and ethical dilemma of the humorist becomes apparent with the choice of a victim. If he has the moral courage needed to fire at the king, then naturally he prefers to hit him in the heart. If he does this, however, then he is no longer funny, but a reformer. If he does not do this, he can easily, and usually justly, be accused of being cowardly or unreflecting. There is an ethical boundary between the humorist and the court jester, whereas the boundary between the humorist and the reformer is aesthetic.

In contrast to the court jester, the reformer sees laughter as the principal aid to moral reform. But the victims of the laughter and the grins are seldom the sinners on the grand scale—those who arouse indignation—but the petty sinners—those whom the reformer can afford to fool with.

Horace Walpole said that the world is a comedy for those who think and a tragedy for those who feel. I believe that it is often the reverse. Tragedy shares comedy's consciousness of mankind's limitations, but it is distinguished from comedy by the universal conclusions it draws from that situation. The humorous reformer can keep laughter alive partly by paring from the victim all the features that may inspire sympathy and partly by shielding himself from any suspicion of emotional involvement—or, to use Henri Bergson's formula, by a momentary paralysis of the heart. This can be accepted in satire, which lives on the tension between the subject as he is and the subject as he pretends to be. But, somewhere, there is a boundary delimiting matters that do not permit of laughter. A satire on Hitler is tolerable, but not one on Buchenwald.

Humor's first rule is that the humorist may lose neither his tempo nor his temper. Nor may he fall victim to the delusion that talking reason with someone can effect an understanding that has not been arrived at by reason. Persuasions, involvement, pity—

all these are stylistic lapses, aesthetic catastrophes that are typical of reforming "humorists" who are not funny.

The aesthetic quality determines the leitmotiv of the laughter, the degree of release. The aesthetic problem has two sides—to approach identification as closely as possible and, at the final point, suddenly to retreat as far away as possible. The humorist, therefore, usually works with a proxy victim. This does not apply to the reformer. Since, in addition, the latter usually works with intellectual media—satire and parody, in which the brain serves as a buffer for the diaphragm—aesthetic perfection is an unavoidable prerequisite for the experience of sudden freedom that is the only excuse for laughter.

Naturally, difficulties arise when an attempt is made to isolate typical specimens of the three categories: humorist, court jester, and reformer. If there is no fear of farfetched labeling—and judging by my worthy predecessors, there is no need of such fear in writing about humor—fitting illustrations of the three types might well be, respectively, Danny Kaye, Povel Ramel, and Jacques Tati.

If it were possible to talk about pure comedy—and why should comedy lack its purists—Danny Kaye would be a more fruitful topic for discussion than either Ramel or Tati. He is neither a reformer nor a court jester; his art dwells in himself, and its scope is bounded by the individual-psychological plane. His humor has elements of both satire and parody that are quite palatable intellectually, but his greatness lies on the emotional plane. He illustrates Henri Bergson's line of thought about the mechanical element of comedy—the belly laugh at the victory of technique over life, the victory of the means over the end.

There have always been schizoid traits in Danny Kaye's films. In *Knock on Wood,* they constitute a part of the external events: Kaye plays a schizophrenic ventriloquist in search of a psychoanalyst. The schizoid tension is relieved by two explosions that establish Kaye anew as more than a brilliant vaudeville artist.

In the automobile episode, Kaye is the victim of the glossy

magazines' glossy advertisements of glossy cars. The sequence is a nightmare of the same nature as Chaplin's more timeless short film *One A.M.* Kaye becomes helplessly involved in the car's innumerable technical gadgets. The meeting between the human being and the technical monstrosity leads to the breakdown of both. But the breakdown is handled with such refined artistry, is so spaced and split, that it is not apparent whether the human being or his technical ability is inadequate.

This artistically calculated splitting dominates still more strongly in the film's fantastic climax. Kaye is chased by some spies, and takes refuge in a theater, right in the middle of the stage, during a ballet performance. It is an expensive, beautiful, and serious ballet, with an extraordinarily talented ballerina. During the entire long sequence, the ballet maintains its polished form—the dancers continue as if nothing had happened. In such a situation, every movement on the part of Kaye becomes blasphemous and self-destructive—as much an expression of his own painful situation as a sabotage of the ballet. Even here, the two realities crash together in a collision that destroys them both.

The schizophrenic theme is naturally a part an actor can make something of, but with Kaye this serves another purpose as well. Kaye is, in an innocent and unpretentious way, a mechanized Kafka figure. He himself is the victim of laughter. But his humor is not sentimental—the self-destructive element is counterbalanced by his schizophrenic antithesis. In his best film *The Secret Life of Walter Mitty,* he is not only mom's henpecked boy but also a synthesis of all the heroes of the adventure stories in the pulp magazines. In *Knock on Wood,* the audience identifies itself not only with the hunted Kaye but with the ballet as well.

This schizoid theme gives Kaye's humor a rounded depth, a strong emotional charge, a doubly intensified release. Kaye is far from the most important of the comedians of the present time, but he is one of the most skillful and most genuine.

Danny Kaye is a genius in his field. Povel Ramel is also brilliantly gifted—in an entirely different domain. Kaye places him-

self in a distorted "frog's eye view," in a position where he is seen obliquely from underneath. But Ramel seldom participates in the joke himself; he exhibits himself regretfully and prefers the special "bird's eye view" in which the whole country is transformed into a single large Grönköping,** the day after an atom bomb has resulted not in a bang but a whimper.

Ramel's sadism is sublime and pleasant, on the border of degeneracy. He has inverted the role of the court jester, and is the aristocrat who survives the establishment of the Welfare State by becoming the bourgeois court jester. His art, at its best, is that of the brilliantly executed miniature, seen in a distorting mirror.

Ramel is probably one of Sweden's outstanding plagiarists. But that is of little consequence, since very often his plagiarism is completely conscious and most often takes the form of parody. His style is extremely uneven, in songs brilliantly compressed, in other aspects often nagging and pointless.

The "crazy style" presupposes a blasting of form, the triumph of absurdity, the chaos of convention. But chaos in art may never be present chaotically. Scarcely any theme is subjected to rules of greater formality than chaos. In any case, the aim of its being is not to make the artist comfortable; the film is more than a garbage can for humorous pigs in the field of entertainment.

The last portion of *I rök och dans* ("In Smoke and Dance") is a completely incoherent fabrication of diverse ideas seemingly seeking a common denominator. Since the film does not belong to the intimate chamber arts, a common parenthood for ideas is not enough as a denominator. Besides, Ramel does not seem to have sufficient patience to gather material for a complete feature film; and patience is, as is well-known, a virtue for every artist.

In the introductory trailer, however, the form is perfect, self-integrated, with not one superfluous image, not one incoherent idea. This section is a mordant parody on the idiotic trailers that advertise coming attractions. Equally perfect is the succeeding parody on short films, from grain to loaf, brief and supremely

** Imaginary home town of a weekly that pretends to be an ordinary small-town paper but satirizes the ultraconventional, provincial Swedish way of life.

rounded off into a guffaw. In the accompanying long film, the lack of material soon makes itself recognizable. Certainly this parody on the provincial Swedish film is the funniest and most effective contribution that, so far as I know, has been presented up to now on the subject of poor films; but the theme is, as every film critic would have been able to tell Ramel, by no means so inexhaustible as he seems to think.

The film's artistic weakness is, to a certain extent, identical with the inherent inadequacy of the parody. In the long run, every parody becomes aesthetically a self-sabotage. I know, for example, no parody on a novel, in novel form; in two or three pages, the possibilities are exhausted. To parody a film in a film presents enormous possibilities. But during the two hours a film must run in order not to destroy the movie theater's sacred time schedule, the audience reaches, sooner or later—in the case of Ramel, after about thirty minutes—a blind alley.

In a pure parody, the sadistic elements occupy a proportionately big space. The liberation from these elements as a rule is of an aesthetic and intellectual character and is, therefore, reserved for an eternal minority. Ramel tries to compensate for this by a certain adaptation to the object criticized—there is a democratic kindness in his face—but this adaptation interferes with the intellectual liberation aimed at. Still, this little ethical problem fades before the object lesson on how desolate aesthetic nihilism can be for a humorist if he chooses the wrong medium. Ramel's songs have an exquisite style, but his films lack the formal rigorousness that gives a parody a reason for existence.

Povel Ramel is an aristocrat in exile in Grönköping. Jacques Tati is the grandson of Count Dimitri Tatitjeff, in exile in Paris. There is the same distinction between a very funny Swedish film and one of last year's most brilliant film comedies.

Monsieur Hulot's Holiday deals, strictly speaking, with nothing. It is no orthodox parody; it does not even answer Chesterton's requirement that satire be a game governed by pure logic. It is absolutely not "crazy" and, at its best, fills Bergson's mechan-

ical requirement since one of its basic themes is to show how convention dominates in the environment.

The film deals, as already stated, with nothing, even if the beginning and the end of the film do coincide with the arrival at and the departure from a little French middle-class seaside resort of Monsieur Hulot (played by Jacques Tati who has both written and directed the film as well). The film shows selected scenes from this vacation spot. Its style is unpretentious and realistic; its devilish attitude lies in the selection of the scenes.

Tati neither explains nor comments. His attitude is scientific, purely phenomenological, and, on top of everything else, friendly and good-natured. The microscopically detailed studies of people and the presentation of one grotesque situation after another, are executed with all the love and thoughtful care of which only a lustful murderer is capable.

The film has a minimum of dialogue. Its humor works with predominantly visual material. Still more striking is the fact that it is at the same time purely intellectual. Each sequence is loaded with formal associations, as in Eisenstein's later productions. Each picture compresses a richness of intellectual experiences with a casual nonchalance that is master proof of a humorist.

As a comedian, Tati is different from the Marx brothers whose intellectuality is a detriment of the visual effects—images in their pictures are chiefly a function of narrative. He is also different from Chaplin, whose humor up to *Modern Times* was far more emotional than intellectual. Tati's film is really most reminiscent of *Monsieur Verdoux* and shares with it its frightfully pessimistic view of humanity. But it is, apparently, considerably less "engaged." In spite of this, I wish to count Tati among the reforming humorists. For he, like Lars Gyllensten in *Carnivora* for example, lets the guffaw echo in hell, as if it was quite as at home there as the wretched figure in Bosch's triptych "The Last Judgment," who lies with open mouth under a wine cask which serves at the same time as a urinal for his fellow creatures.

Monsieur Hulot's Holiday is unique. It represents a concentrated artistic maturity that is, for film comedies, unprecedented.

Films from Overseas

ANDREW C. MAYER

ANDREW C. MAYER is a government attorney and an ardent filmgoer. While he was taking his LL.B. from Yale, he did research in the antitrust aspects of the motion-picture industry and in the results of the Paramount decree.

KORDA'S PRODUCTION OF *The Deep Blue Sea* has much to recommend it. Vivien Leigh has never been so unhealthily beautiful; Kenneth More, so engagingly yet maddeningly irresponsible; Eric Portman, so charmingly sinister. The entire cast performs admirably. But there is something missing, or, more accurately, there is a good bit that is superfluous. In its translation from stage to screen, Terence Rattigan's serious but limited problem drama has been given the full treatment—Technicolor, background music, a theme song, and authentic scenery. It has been expanded in every possible way, and in every dimension, from the grim little tragedy in the sordid little flat that Peggy Ashcroft occupied in the original London production.

In short, the film has opulence, where the play has a pervasive down-at-the-heels colorlessness that verges on squalor. The change has a point, to be sure, but the point may be a different one from Mr. Rattigan's original thesis. We now get flash backs of Sir William Collyer's fashionable residence, which boasts at least one Venetian painting; we see the holiday in the Alps, which presumably was the sort of vacation Lady Collyer was accustomed to taking with her husband. After she leaves him, there are, of course, no such holidays, no art collection, and none of the amenities that Sir William took for granted as one of the normal perquisites of comfortable living. The contrast is so obvious that it is probably not worth making, and in the original script Mr. Rattigan seemed to do his best not to make it. Of course, Sir William's chauffeur does drive him to his wife's unfashionable address, and the limousine is quite naturally left waiting where it will be noticed; but all this is done without ostentation. As Hester grate-

fully tells him, Sir William never says "I told you so." For there is nothing vulgar or even demonstrative about his wealth: he just happens to be well off, and is willing to let it go at that. He does not try to bring Hester back by referring to any of the material advantages that are the natural concomitants of marriage to him, for she clearly did not marry him for his money, and does not regret losing it. This continuing emphasis on the grandeur that is Collyer's, although probably a virtual necessity in a Technicolor picture, nevertheless detracts from the story. And since it depends, for the most part, on the use of flash backs that do little to aid the development of the plot, it seems especially out of place. Like too many of the recent American color films, this one appears to proceed on the assumption that the proper study of mankind is scenery.

* * *

Another picture that seems to include too much is the recent adaptation of Bridget Boland's *The Prisoner*. Without having seen the original, I imagine that it was a little more pointed, a little less discursive. The film starts with a Catholic mass, which is being conducted by Alec Guiness (the Cardinal); and the pictorial aspects of the liturgy are, for a moment or two, dramatically exploited. But this is suddenly cut short, as a surreptitiously scribbled note is handed to the Cardinal to warn of his impending arrest. This seems slightly incongruous with the serious purpose of the film, and the mood shifts quickly to one of foreign intrigue. This, too, is soon over; for the police rapidly complete the preliminaries of fingerprinting the Cardinal and taking his valuables, and he is then free to engage in dialectical arguments with the Interrogator, played by Jack Hawkins. The arguments on both sides are inconclusive, presenting nothing new either to the antagonists or to the audience; and it quickly becomes evident that, on the ideological level at least, the Interrogator has met his match. Guiness' quick repartee and fluent knowledge of political realities do, in fact, suggest that his transition from the Card to the Cardinal has been something less than a complete transfor-

mation. Having failed to convince him by logic of his bourgeois errors, the Interrogator uses other methods to obtain a confession, and proceeds to look in the Cardinal's personality for a weakness that can be exploited for its destruction. And so the emphasis shifts from the conflict of ideas to the Cardinal's struggle to retain his identity, and eventually he loses. He becomes convinced that the only way he can do penance for the sins, which caused him to enter the church for personal glorification, is to confess in open court. None of the stages in Alec Guiness' disintegration seems to follow naturally from its predecessor, and the spectator can only be nonplussed when Jack Hawkins suddenly decides that the time is ripe to obtain a confession and schedules an immediate trial. The interrogation is supposed to have taken several months, and the various gaps in continuity are filled in with sequences depicting the Cardinal in his cell, where he undergoes the usual sorts of deprivations. There is also an irrelevant subplot involving one of the guards and his romantic attachment for the wife of a refugee. Although this gives a feeble excuse for some excellent shots of street terrorism, it otherwise serves no useful purpose.

Having finally obtained a confession, the Interrogator, who naturally is expected to consider this a major forensic triumph, apparently suffers the pangs of a conscience that had sporadically and bewilderingly manifested itself earlier. The Cardinal gets a last-minute reprieve from his death sentence and is free to face the world. He understandably finds this a bit difficult, but when he prefers it to a quick bullet in the head from a suddenly compassionate interrogator, the film suggests that the Cardinal has won the final victory. The meaning of this is unclear, and despite some fine acting by Messrs. Guiness and Hawkins, the picture's dominant impression is one of confusion. Comparisons are, by definition, invidious, but the remarkably vivid and coherent story told by Koestler's *Darkness at Noon* will undoubtedly make it difficult to treat the same general theme in any very different manner.

* * *

An interesting problem drama of the type England does so well is the recent production of *Court-Martial.* The protagonist, who only occasionally assumes the proportions of a hero, is Major Carrington, V.C., one of those gallant officers who obviously have had brilliant war records. He has fallen on evil days, though, and the meager pay of the army cannot meet the demands of two sons at public school and a neurotic wife; so he eventually takes a little cash from the battalion strongbox of which he has charge.

From the very first, there is no question that Carrington has taken the money, but he does deny that it was taken fraudulently. His defense to the charge of fraud is that he took the money openly, as a protest against the army's long delay in paying certain claims, and that he had announced in advance his intention to do so. Neither of the people whom he relies on to support this statement bears him out: his colonel, a petty tyrant who never saw combat, is jealous of Carrington's popularity and indignant at his casual breaches of discipline; and his wife is jealous of the Other Woman.

These personal relationships are important as background, for it is the colonel who brings the charge, and it is the wife whose testimony is supposedly crucial to the defense. But they do not touch on the basic issue, which is that of Carrington's guilt or innocence, moral as well as legal. The issue is never really obscured by his brief extramarital affair, which amounts to very little, nor by his continuing feud with the colonel, who is always technically, but not too unreasonably, in the right. Carrington has no more serious grievances than any other man who makes the army his career, as one member of the court comments, and he himself comes to realize this quite soon in the story.

This narrowing of the issues is extremely well handled, and shows a restraint not often found in American films, where attention is generally focused on the personalities of the defendant and the principal witnesses. The same tendency is evident in the theater, beginning with such old chestnuts as *The Trial of Mary Dugan* and Elmer Rice's *On Trial* all the way down to last year's

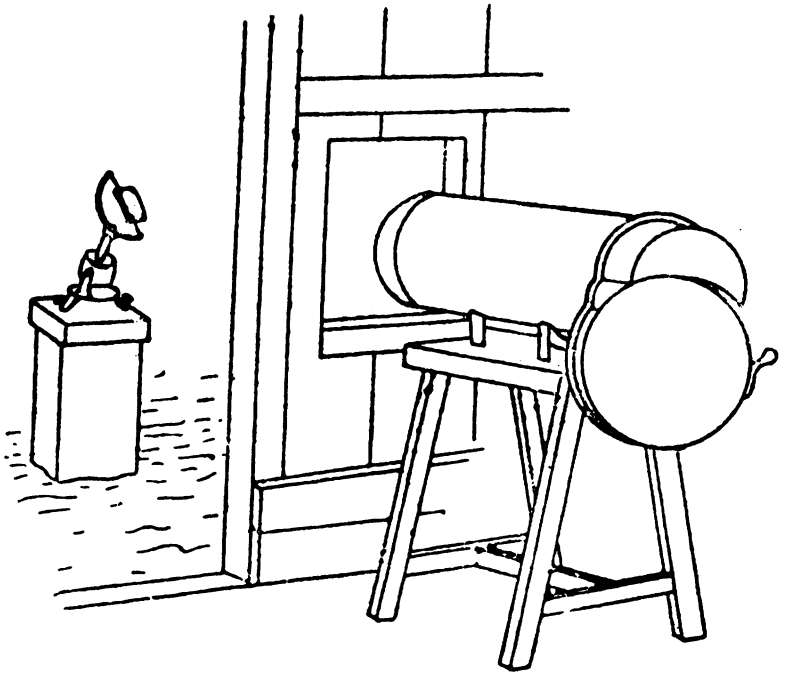
brilliant *Caine Mutiny Court-Martial.* In the Wouk play, Greenwald, the attorney, defends Lieutenant Marek on a charge of mutiny, and in doing so is compelled to make Marek into a hero, a man who ignores regulations when they become useless or dangerous. And to make a hero out of Marek it is necessary to make a villain out of Queeg, the despotic commanding officer, who is not unlike the colonel in *Court-Martial.* Consequently, Mr. Wouk shows us the disintegration of Queeg, rather than the orderly trial of Marek.

In Carrington's trial, on the other hand, the procedure is quite the reverse. Carrington had intended to use his wife's testimony to appeal to the court's sympathies; but when she backtracks from her original story he does not attempt to refute her by offering in evidence an extremely intimate letter she has written him, because he realizes that the courtroom is no place for such displays of histrionics. He really wants to be tried on the issue of his guilt or innocence. He has understood that his theft, although partly conceived as an attempt to dramatize his grievances, was a flagrant example of bad taste and bad soldiering. He refuses to carry the gesture any further, although urged to do so by his friends. And, as a result, he is found guilty.

Marek, of course, is acquitted, because Greenwald did not balk at using histrionics instead of reason in his defense. He pities the defendant, but believes him guilty, and in the end repudiates his whole connection with the case. Although he, like Carrington, recognizes the need for discipline, the trial itself is not conducted along these lines. And the main impact and meaning of the play lie in the trial, not in Greenwald's recantation.

Although *The Caine Mutiny,* as a book, play, and telecast (and even, in isolated sequences, as a movie) was dramatic and convincing, it displayed an attitude toward law that is typically American. For in order to acquit the numerous defendants that Hollywood tries every year *in camera,* it is necessary to criticize, if not actually condemn, the judicial process itself. Rules of conduct are intended to cover—and probably do so, more or less—99 out of

100 cases. But Marek's case must be shown to be the hundredth case, the case in which an exception must be made. As a distinguished justice of the United States Supreme Court once said, "hard cases make bad law." The American film has with great assiduity invented a whole slew of hard cases, while the British have been equally determined to make good law.



THE FIRST MOTION PICTURE CAMERA—In 1874 Pierre Jules César Janssen, the astronomer, set this up in Tokyo to photograph the transit of Venus across the sun. Since dry plates were not yet available, he used a disk of daguerreotype material. Clockwork mechanism revolved and stopped the disk and a circular shutter. The lens caught the image of the sun in a mirror outdoors. For an example of the pictures his camera took see page 102. *Living Pictures, by Henry V. Hopwood, 1899.*

Teaching Film Drama as Literature

MARTIN KALLICH and
MALCOLM M. MARSDEN

MARTIN KALLICH, a professor of English at South Dakota State College, has published in the learned journals and the literary reviews. His latest work, a biographical analysis of John Dos Passos' fellow-traveler period, appeared in the January, 1956, issue of *Twentieth Century Literature*. MALCOLM M. MARSDEN, formerly of South Dakota State College, is now an assistant professor of English at Elmira College, New York. His article on the compromise between Charles Eliot Norton's transcendentalism and John Dewey's pragmatism appeared a few years ago in the *Journal of General Education*.

"SHOULD THE COLLEGE TEACHER of English try to raise student taste in movies, radio, and television?" Such is the usual question asked concerning the pedagogical potentiality of the mass media. Of course, the answer is yes, but we prefer to substitute for this unexciting question a query that is relatively unusual and advanced: "Should the drama of the mass media be taught as *literature?*" Our reason for the change is that the aim of raising student taste has a faint trace of the moral or good-citizen approach to literature. Naturally, the political or social-studies strategy that this approach implies is undeniably of great importance to the world today, but in classroom practice it never permits justice to be done to the *art* of the new dramatic forms. When used as a classroom technique to stimulate discussion, it invariably results in the commonplace review of controversial social and political themes. Teacher and students mull over again the old, if vexing, problems of censorship, artistic freedom and authority in an open or closed society, racial discrimination and the stereotypes, the Motion Picture Code. This amounts to no more than the airing of opinion based chiefly on a little knowledge culled from newspapers—all useful, perhaps, to inspire students in unspecialized low-level freshman work, but certainly not very useful to more mature students in advanced and possibly professionally concerned literature classes.

Ever since the late twenties, when screen stories could at last

be told by means of dialogue as well as pantomime, the film drama has been a legitimate object of study as a literary art that can match the traditional mode of stage drama in aesthetic potential and cultural value. This observation is equally true of radio drama, which almost exclusively depends upon the word for its most profound imaginative effects. Of course, this is also true of television drama, which in the live shows of today seems to rely more heavily upon dialogue than does the film. All of these new dramatic forms have in common with the stage the art of telling a story, in Sean O'Casey's words, through conversation.

That the drama of the mass media may be literature cannot, therefore, be denied. Certainly, this drama embodies two of the fundamental qualities of literature—the word, which is basic to every literary medium, and the imaginative re-creation of reality, however primitive, commonplace, tawdry, or tasteless.

Motion picture, radio, and television drama is a historic fact even though its history has been comparatively short. It is less than sixty years ago that the silent film began to tell its first crude stories. The dramatic forms of the talkie and of radio go back only thirty years, and that of television—deriving somewhat out of both—is taking shape before our eyes. The story of the birth of the film is particularly exciting because, as many have pointed out, it is the only new art form to be discovered by man within recorded history. This achievement alone ought to compel sincere admiration and more than mild encouragement. We could mold this art form to our desires, if we knew but how.

Yes, but how? The problem is no longer the theoretical one of whether we ought to be concerned with such a flourishing drama in our classrooms. We are faced with the real and practical problem of coming to terms with it because it is a part of our lives. How can the materials of this dynamic new literature be properly and effectively presented to our college students?

The course that would deal with this content has not, so far as we know, been given the academic status of the traditional courses in past or present literature. In many schools, there are

film showings thinly disguised as "appreciation" courses. In some, the emphasis is placed on practical production techniques within a theater arts or a speech department. Nowhere is the emphasis on the values that are taken for granted in literary courses—on, for instance, the quality and intrinsic worth of the thought, the style of dialogue, the development of characters, the problems of structure. The discussion that follows is in some measure theoretical, but many of the remarks are based on empirical data, the practical classroom experience with a mimeographed textbook *Varieties of Modern Drama* prepared by the authors of this article for an experimental sophomore course Introduction to Literature.

The ideal introductory course that comprehends all the significant dramatic forms of the past as well as the present might be entitled Varieties of Drama—Film, Radio, Television, and Stage. The general objectives in teaching the first three of these dramatic media can be the same as those traditionally emphasized when we consider only the stage drama. First, the teacher can pass on a fund of factual knowledge about the history of the dramatic art forms, old and new, so that through careful documentation, knowledge of the past can permit us to place the present in perspective and to determine future direction. Second, the teacher can emphasize traditional literary values, so that through the creation of a discriminating audience cultural standards will eventually be raised. Finally, he can make the students aware that the different dramatic forms in literature offer effective methods of communicating from one man to another those elements of human experience that man cares to remember.

The more specific objectives of such a course of study are different from those aimed at in the usual literature courses, but only because of the differing content. (Note that production objectives as such are omitted.) The teacher may introduce students to the variety and diversity of the drama of their day. He may introduce students to the critical problems involved in the relationship of this dramatic literature to life, problems of form and social content. He may make the students aware of the aesthetic fact that

different literary forms demand different degrees of distortion and selection of the materials taken from life. For example, the problems inherent in fiction differ from those inherent in drama. More particularly, the problems inherent in any of the four forms of drama necessarily differ from those in another because of the medium employed. These differences may be illuminated in a discussion of problems involving the adaptation of narrative fiction or stage plays into film plays. The teacher of our course must encourage the students to consider aesthetic values as of some importance in their lives. He must inspire them to form standards for intelligent and sensitive evaluation of the dramatic arts.

Taken all together, these objectives seem overly ambitious. But they are stated only as the goals of an ideal study program, a program which, in actuality, may not be entirely feasible. Yet despite the restrictions in time and hence in the amount of material covered, many of these critical and social objectives, both general and specific, will be attained if the teaching is skillfully and sympathetically done, if the textual materials not only are accepted as literature of superior excellence but are also sufficient for routine classroom study.

At the present time, what is most needed to implement these theoretical remarks is a textbook that will embody the principles we have discussed. It must realistically accept as literature what the students consciously or unconsciously accept as meaningful writing in their day-to-day experiences with the contemporary drama. Unfortunately, publishers have not dared to market such a book, despite the crying demand for it.

True, some anthologies for the college freshman and sophomore years have occasionally included radio plays—notably those by Norman Corwin (the inferior *Good Heavens* in the fifth edition of *Modern English Readings,* eds. Loomis and Clark), and Archibald MacLeish (*Air Raid, Fall of the City*), and Louis MacNeice (*The Dark Tower* in *This Generation,* eds. Walton and Anderson). That is all for radio drama.

Film plays have scarcely fared much better. Harlan Hatcher's edition of *Modern Dramas* once included the film script of Liam O'Flaherty's novel *The Informer* (1935), and John Gassner and Dudley Nichols have edited three very valuable collections of film plays (Crown, 1943, 1945, 1946), now unfortunately out of print. Penguin has made available inexpensive "screen" versions of Shaw's *Pygmalion* and *Major Barbara;* but because they are not really in script form they do not give a true impression of film art. Lastly, the film scripts of Maugham's *Trio* have been in print for a brief time in an Avon paperback; while his *Quartet* is still available in a fairly expensive hard-cover edition (Doubleday, 1949). These well-known Maugham collections are not texts, but they can be used in the classroom. And that is all for film drama.[1]

As for television drama, to date no plays are included in college-literature texts. But Paddy Chayefsky's *Television Plays* (1955), including the script of *Marty,* Horton Foote's *Harrison, Texas: Eight Television Plays* (1956), or the collections edited by William I. Kaufman (1950, 1952, 1954) and Irving Settel (1955) may be used temporarily for script study. Reginald Rose's *Six Television Plays* (1956) is also another recent publication.

Obviously, then, because of this dearth of published materials from the drama of the three new mass media, we need a textbook to fill the aesthetic void, one that will make the teaching of this drama as literature possible and practical. The ideal table of contents of such a text should include an adequate number of scripts of the four types of drama accompanied by prose essays on the various aspects of each of the types—general, critical, or aesthetic essays on definitions of key terms and genre problems, analytical essays on the plays themselves, applied criticism or reviews, and the like.

In the remainder of this article let us describe, as an illustration of the method and materials outlined above, what we have done

[1] Since this article has been written, another new college textbook *A College Treasury,* eds. Jorgenson and Shroyer (Scribner's, 1956) has included a film play among the types of drama—R. C. Sherriff's adaptation of Maugham's *The Colonel's Lady* from the film *Quartet.* Is this departure in college texts a harbinger of things to come?

with one form of drama—the film—in our own Introduction to Literature classes.

We secured permission from MGM to duplicate the film scenario of John Huston's adaptation of *The Red Badge of Courage,* a picture of superior literary quality. This script was discussed in class together with Stephen Crane's novel, the similar and dissimilar aesthetic values of each form of telling a story being made abundantly clear by this correlation. We have found the scenario of *The Red Badge* to be ideal for teaching. The film version has enough changes to permit a variety of topics to be aired for those who wish to deal with the question of adaptation and its attendant problems of censorship and mass taste. The analysis of the text will undoubtedly give the general student a profound insight into the art of the film play, not only as a visual medium but also as a literary medium. A commentary accompanies the film scenario—readings especially selected for the light they shed on the art of the film drama.

Lillian Ross's *Picture,* her account of the making of the film *The Red Badge of Courage,* may be destructively satirical, but it makes for amusing and enlightening reading. She writes with sophisticated irony of the Hollywood world at the same time that she explains many problems of adaptation.

Dore Schary's account of the filming of the movie *The Next Voice You Hear,* reprinted from his *Case History of a Movie,* counterbalances the destructive criticism of Mrs. Ross. Schary, formerly a script writer and now an executive in charge of production for MGM, knows the film industry from the inside and succeeds in painting an unbiased and clearer picture of the whole motion picture process.

Selections from Joseph and Harry Feldman's *Dynamics of the Film* offer an admirable and incisive, if somewhat pedantic, analysis of film aesthetics. Their work can also serve to introduce students to the terminology employed in the analysis of film strategy.

Lastly, we include the usual applied criticism in the form of

cogently written reviews of the *Red Badge* film by some astute and sensitive professionals—Arthur Knight, Bosley Crowther, John McCarten, Robert Hatch. These reviews provide models in evaluation for the writing that the students may be asked to do. And in drama commentary we include selections from Aristotle's *Poetics,* those portions providing the classic definitions pertinent for all drama—tragedy, comedy, tragic hero, catharsis.

After the discussion of the screen drama and also the reading of Crane's short novel—within a limited period of ten to twelve hours—we can be reasonably certain that the student will have learned a good deal more about the art of the film, as well as the art of the novel, than he might have thought possible because of his apparent familiarity with the subject.

As clues to the methods used in the discussion of the film drama, we have listed below some of the general questions that we asked. (We omitted the usual detailed and factual questions on characterization, logic, development and intrinsic worth of the theme, setting, plotting, dialogue, pace, tone, irony, and the contents of the essays.) These questions are especially designed to provoke discussion, to contribute to the development of a critical vocabulary and to fulfill the course objectives. Although they are based on the *Red Badge* scenario, many of them can be adapted to works in the other media.

1. (a) Why is it generally easier to translate a novel into a film play than a stage play into a film play? Use as illustrations a novel and stage play that have been adapted. (b) What does the film do that may be considered more aesthetically effective than narrative fiction (or the stage play)? Give examples to demonstrate the truth of your generalizations. (c) Would you consider a film transcript of an actual stage play good film art, Why or why not? (d) What can be done in fiction that cannot be done so effectively, if at all, by the screen medium?

2. (a) How would Louis B. Mayer (MGM executive) have treated the subject of war, had he directed this film? (b) Compare this film with any other war film that you have seen. How do they differ in tone, in treatment of the subject of war? Which has more "integrity"?

3. (a) Point out the sequences of the film. Compare one or two out-

standing sequences with their equivalent episodes in the novel. (b) Have you any idea of the number of shots in this film? Do shots compare with scenes on the stage? (c) What is editing (or montage)? Show how editing is basic to film structure. (d) Explain what is meant by the *form* of the film play, the stage play, the novel. (e) Show how editing permits the flexible use of symbols. Are there any symbolic shots in the film? What are their equivalents in the novel, if any? Are these symbolic shots in the film permissible additions to the fiction?

4. (a) Analyze the time scheme of the film play. (b) Account for the difference in the treatment of time between film and novel. (c) Why does the screen plot generally produce the effect of moving more speedily, dynamically, and with greater intensity and concentration than the plot of a stage play or novel?

5. (a) Show how more or less effectively the setting is treated in the film. (b) Compare with the way in which setting problems are solved for a live TV play and stage play. (c) Show how effectively the film medium has adapted the setting as described in the novel. What scenic effects described in the fiction are realized by the photography? (d) Is the film limited like the stage by the problem of exits and entrances? Show how this setting problem affects the form of a stage and film play.

6. (a) Is the Youth in the film endowed with a sufficient number of complicating character traits and motives so that he appears to be human? Compare in this respect with the treatment of the Youth in the novel. (b) Does the film succeed in dramatizing the struggle within the Youth's mind? Is the film better or worse than the novel in this respect? (c) Is such an internal conflict, which is basic to the structure of the story, usual Hollywood fare? Would you say that such inner conflict, such representation of character tension, can be offered to an audience of immature and inexperienced people? Estimate the effect of this psychological representation upon a typical movie audience today.

7. (a) Explain the difference in quality and quantity between stage and film dialogue. (b) Does film drama dialogue resemble radio and TV drama dialogue in any way? (c) Is the screen play "literature," in the sense that the novel and stage play are presumably classified as literature? Is it more or less literary than other forms? (d) Is the dialogue of the film version an improvement of the dialogue of the novel?

8. (a) Is the theme of the novel and that of the film the same? Account for differences in interpretation of the story material. Is Huston's film *really* Crane's book? (b) Despite differences in detail, does

the film substantially maintain the spirit of the fiction? Is the impact of the film more or less aesthetically effective than that of the novel? (c) Is the calm ending of the film play effective (the men marching from battle and the bird singing as the sun sets) or is it a dead cliché? Does this ending serve to round out the meaning of the movie, of clarifying to the audience the significance of the Youth's battle experience? Does the movie ending suggest the possibility of an Aristotelian catharsis—"calm of mind, all passion spent"? (d) What is your final appraisal of this film? Does it provide you with any new insights into the hidden meaning of events? Does it enlarge your sympathies? Do the battle sequences move from shallow realism to a deeper symbolism, as in the novel, suggesting an interpretation of life? (e) Evaluate this film with regard to the usual propaganda found in war films.

9. (a) Can you give a meaningful definition to the term "pure literature," or "pure film drama"? (b) Enumerate the limitations of the various dramatic mediums of expression. Which medium has the fewest? Is that medium with the fewest limitations and hence greatest freedom necessarily the superior medium? (c) Define the phrase "art of the film." What constitutes the artistry? Is the *Red Badge* film an artistic success?

Admittedly, some of the questions on formal differences appear to be abstract, perhaps too difficult and dry for the nonliterary student untrained in critical reading. But we insist that accurate knowledge of techniques ought to be one of the chief specific objectives of the course of study. Such technical knowledge is fundamental to an appreciation of art. Without it, all discussion becomes good-naturedly vapid, amateurish, or merely opinionative, as it largely turns on details of superficial changes in content between the original medium of expression and the adaptation. The logic of such discussion follows the habitual pattern to the inevitable deduction that, because the film "distorts" the novel, it lacks integrity and is intrinsically inferior as a work of art. These clichés may be avoided, we hope, if a more sympathetic, understanding approach is taken—one based on sound critical principles.

But no discussion can be complete, nor can difficult points be ever clarified, without a real analyzed experience. Hence audio-

visual aids. These aids can be strategically employed to excellent purpose, not as relaxation for teacher and student, but as an absolute aesthetic requirement. The nature of the course lends itself readily to the effective and disciplined use of these aids—16-mm. films, including strips, shorts, features, and the forty-minute TFC cuts for classroom projection, still photographs, tapes and records of radio plays. The enterprising teacher can find numerous sources of such audio-visual materials in the usual catalogues of records and 16-mm. films, or in coöperative radio stations that will tape shows at reasonable rates. The bibliography of the ideal text that we are proposing can be a very helpful tool for the teacher and student interested in probing deeper and more extensively into the problems that are only briefly surveyed.

Experience has demonstrated that the method outlined here is not so sterile or academic as it may seem. To even the average, nonintellectual "low-brow," the avid film fan or TV viewer, the careful comparative study of the varieties of drama with which he is in daily contact has often been a pleasant and exciting revelation. To join with such a student in lively discussion of art values is a rewarding experience. It reminds us that our society is not so neglectful of the arts and our literature is not so esoteric as we may sometimes think. Although we are not always perched on the intoxicating summits of great literature, we can be thankful that on our modest level there is at least some rapport between the average student and the literature teacher.

Thus, as it deepens his interest in art values, perhaps the approach to dramatic literature that is advocated here may make the average student a better man and cultivated citizen. Perhaps, as it also rescues him from the pathetic poverty of aesthetic ideas, it may even make him a sensitive, intellectual, and perceptive esthete. This can be the salvation of literature and its teachers in the colleges of this country.

The Television Coördinator System at Michigan State University

FRED DOWLING and A. W. BLUEM

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SINCE 1952, when the Federal Communications Commission set aside 242 channels capable of housing 2,053 stations for educational purposes, both teachers and administrators have thought not only of the opportunities of the medium but also of the possibility that here was the answer to the tremendous growth in school enrollments. The immediate value, and the eventual necessity, of getting our best teachers before the television camera is universally recognized. Until one attempts to do this seemingly easy job, however, he remains unaware of the many difficulties involved.

The first and perhaps the greatest shock is the discovery that reflecting the excitement of great literature, the thrill of reliving history, or the satisfaction of understanding the world of science is more than a matter of bringing together professor, notes, and camera. Mere systematized instruction, where viewers watch the equivalent of the daily classroom lecture for college credit, is neither successful programing nor a challenging objective. Although television courses for credit serve an important function, they are limited in the sense that they serve only those who actively seek them, perhaps more for credit than for knowledge. But the television obligations of the university extend beyond the issuing of course credits. Our experience at Michigan State University in noncredit courses as an educational service to the viewer may prove useful to schools thinking of entering the field.

One of the early steps in television development at Michigan

State was the appointment of faculty members as television coördinators to represent the different academic areas of the university. The administration charged each television coördinator with dovetailing the television activities of his academic area with the campus educational station, WKAR-TV, to plan general policy, establish necessary lines of communication, and, finally, to see that the willing talent in his area was brought before the television camera. Each coördinator was given a lighter teaching load. Such a pattern of operation would seem especially helpful to educational TV stations, since they are almost always short of staff and find it difficult to devote as much time as they would like to the preparation and supervision of all their programs.

The real function of these coördinators was to promote mutual understanding between two distinct talents, the station producers and directors who are specialists skilled in presentational techniques, and the academics. This coördination was essential because the professionals could conceivably sacrifice content value for a "good show" while the academic could restrict his effectiveness by failing to put his subject matter into the framework of a "good show." The television coördinator was to bring these people together and make their efforts pay off. He was chosen from the regular academic faculty because his interest and experience in radio and television qualified him for the job of expediter and counselor; a professor with "show-business" experience, he could speak on equal terms with professor and director, understanding the intimate problems of both. He is roughly comparable to the representative of the advertising agency who stands between the commercial station and the sponsor.

The television-coördinator system, operative at Michigan State University since early 1953, can best be described by reviewing two programs, "Literature Unbound" and "Workshop Theatre." These two programs, similar in conception but entirely different in purpose, development, and appeal, represented the Basic College and the College of Communication Arts, respectively.

"Literature Unbound" was conceived by Dr. Maurice Crane

who became the coördinator because he had the academic background needed to produce the program. In describing the rationale of "Literature Unbound" he says, "If groups gathered in living rooms to watch major celebrities discuss nothing at all, why wouldn't they gather to watch minor celebrities talk entertainingly and profitably about the insides of the better paper-backed books on the druggists' racks?"

This was WKAR-TV's first noncurricular educational program that did not have its roots in the classroom. Other programs had been offered, but all had been based on a course outline that existed beforehand. Dr. Crane succinctly describes the format of "Literature Unbound" this way,

> . . . each week's three-program series features a moderator and experts who discuss paper-back books. Material is chosen so that the two books attack the same problem, era, or story from different angles, perhaps one scientific, another literary, or one fictional, another historical. Every participant in the series is both a talker and a listener, an expert and an intelligent nonexpert. On Monday, he starts off with shop talk telling the audience the background of one of the books; but before he can settle in a comfortable groove, he finds himself—on Wednesday—exchanging ideas with an expert in a field other than his own. On Friday, he answers questions put to him by readers in the TV audience. For example, the "what will people think" attitude runs and ruins lives both in primitive and present-day cultures. To illustrate this point, we chose Ruth Benedict's *Patterns of Culture* and John O'Hara's *Appointment in Samarra* to be discussed one week.

In the busy campus world, Dr. Crane found twenty teachers, each willing to prepare himself to discuss significant literature with a learned colleague, to answer audience questions, and hypothesize about the book's value. Finding twenty capable people was not a hard task; and, strangely enough, they were not only found where they were "supposed" to be, but also teaching subjects unrelated to their reading interests.

Dr. Crane, before inviting Professor X to appear on TV for an hour and a half, reacquainted himself with the two books to be discussed. Then he simply made an office appointment, explained

his purpose, and discussed the wisdom of the topic choice. Once the potential guest felt that Dr. Crane was a man to be trusted as moderator, he quickly agreed to participate.

Dr. Crane's job as coördinator had just begun. The anticipated problem of making his guest comfortable while the camera peered at him was never very great. However, the problem that did materialize was that of maintaining a fresh approach to the subject matter despite the necessary rehearsals. The timing rehearsal tended to sap the program's vitality because the producer felt that a strict outline had to be adhered to. Since he was not well acquainted with the competency of the talent or the subject matter, his attitude is understandable. When his criticisms and comments were founded on a sound appreciation of the talent's general intelligence and specific background, there was no problem. But when the stereotypes of the unrealistic "ivory tower" professor on the one hand and the boorish, unlearned manipulator of visual aids on the other interfered with sympathetic understanding, the coördinator's task became Herculean. It then became the coördinator's task to "protect" his guests from all influences that might have dulled their usual anticipation of an intellectually stimulating discussion.

"Workshop Theatre," our second example, was conceived as an outlet for the university theater. Low budget and lack of time, the greatest deterrents to any workable plan for regular theatrical presentation on television, were imposed early. A three-fold challenge was faced: to present well-executed drama, to provide genuine experience in television for talented students, and to accomplish both within an academic framework that would interest a large audience.

Viewed realistically, the difficulties of the entire project seemed insurmountable. Presenting student actors in hastily prepared scenes would be risky business, and lectures on dramatic method seemed to belong to an entirely different province. Well-staged dramas on a regular basis were a financial impossibility. Accepting with some misgivings the need for a "workshop," the follow-

ing plan was put into effect. A weekly fifteen-minute period was contracted for. A course in advanced acting techniques, offered regularly by the Department of Speech, was chosen for presentation; and an additional laboratory period was assigned to registrants. This period covered necessary rehearsal and air time for the program each week. Unorthodox in its approach, it was eagerly accepted by students anxious to gain live acting experience in the medium.

Although there was sufficient material regarding television-acting techniques to be of interest to the audience, a weekly discussion of these would eventually lead to a rigid systematization of the materials. In our favor was the human-interest element that was provided by attractive young men and women in an informal laboratory situation. But the basic purpose of presenting drama of significance in an interesting fashion, without resorting to full-scale production, was not yet in view. Coördinator-led discussion and conferences with the program's instructor and director led to a workable solution. A three-week cycle of programs was suggested, each cycle to deal with a significant drama. The first two programs would deal with discussions of the literary value and achievements of the dramatist and with the specialized problems for actor and director. The third would be the presentation of a key fifteen-minute scene from the play with full costume and make-up but no involved setting. Instructor and director, by working together creatively, could adequately prepare the scene in a fraction of the time preparation of a full play would require. The teacher and the director thus designed a vehicle which would allow presentation of good drama with real human-interest and entertainment appeals.

But the teacher and the director were not the only ones who saw the possibilities. The students, their interest sharpened by the prospect of live appearance before an audience of thousands, cheerfully put in more hours than any course could normally demand. Early in its second quarter of production, "Workshop Theatre" became an almost ideal program for its educational

purpose. The problems discussed on the air may not have been of vital interest to a broader audience; but shifts in interests, variations of approach, and the strong human-interest value in watching students work hard toward a definite objective built audience response. The learning potentialities of the program have extended far beyond the original situation.

In "Literature Unbound" as well as in "Workshop Theatre," the television coördinators played a vital role in scheduling, arranging for production facilities, leading planning conferences, and assuming general production responsibilities. It cannot be said that these programs or similar ones would not have existed without a key person acting as a coördinator, but we have found that this person has meaningful responsibilities. His primary charge is to select content and insure skillful presentation.

The television coördinator has not, as might be feared, merely confounded lines of communication. Indeed, his role has been one of establishing and promoting harmonious relationships between two different agencies in education by television. The first and foremost result of this relationship has been the creation of better educational programs.

Britain's Independent Television Authority (Part II)

BURTON PAULU

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THE SELECTION OF PROGRAM CONTRACTORS

THE TELEVISION ACT requires the ITA to turn over most of its programing to program contractors, to choose these contractors competitively, and to carefully supervise their entire output. The Authority might have built a network centralized in London, with only a minimum of local originations, but it decided instead to set up a plural system of local program companies, although all stations are connected with network lines for two-way exchanges. This decision was explained by Sir Robert Fraser, ITA Director-General, as resulting from the belief that competition rather than monopoly was the desired objective.[1]

The Authority advertised in August, 1954, for program contractors for the London, Midlands, and northern stations, and twenty-five applications were received. It was decided to choose only two program companies per station, in view of the high cost of producing television programs and the necessity of each company's building and equipping its own studios and maintaining technical and program staffs. Even then the outlook was for

[1] Facts relative to the selection of program contractors are reported in the London *Times* as follows: September 17, 1954, p. 8; October 27, 1954, p. 6; November 3, 1954, p. 2; November 4, 1954, p. 4; November 23, 1954, p. 8; March 11, 1955, p. 3; April 21, 1955, p. 4. See also *Commercial Television Yearbook*, pp. 14, 31–36; Independent Television Authority, Annual Report and Accounts for the period 4 August 1954–31 March 1955, pp. 4–6.

months or even years of deficit operation, so it was announced that only groups with at least $5,500,000 in capital should apply.[2] After protracted negotiations, in the course of which several of the applicants merged and a contract offered to another was withdrawn, four companies were chosen to program the first three stations.

For the London station, Monday through Friday, a contract was signed with Associated-Rediffusion, Ltd., a company formed by Broadcast Relay Services, operators of the service which supplies half the country's relay subscribers with radio and television programs, and Associated Newspapers, which owns the London *Daily Mail* and one of Britain's largest provincial newspaper chains. Saturday and Sunday London programs are assigned to Associated TeleVision, Ltd., a formidable combination of organizations. Its original leaders included Hugh Beaumont, managing director of H. M. Tennent, Ltd., and Prince Littler, perhaps the czars of the London theater world; Val Parnell, director of Britain's most famous music hall (vaudeville theater), the Palladium; Norman Collins, former B.B.C. television controller; Andrew Gishford, director of one of the country's largest music-publishing firms and head of a major concert agency; the Grade Brothers, who had the biggest artists' agency; and Harry Alan Towers, radio and television film producer. Later the *Daily Mirror* newspaper group joined the company. Associated TeleVision, Ltd., also had the contract for the Midlands station Monday through Friday. Week-end time on both the Midland and northern stations is filled by ABC Television, an organization set up by Associated British Cinemas and some provincial newspapers. The northern station's programs, Monday through Friday, are provided by the Granada Television Network, Ltd., backed by the Granada Theatre chain. News programs for all stations are prepared by Independent Television News, Ltd., a

[2] The 3 contractors first chosen had total assets in excess of $25,000,000, as follows: Broadcast Relay Service, $8,960,000; Associated Newspapers, $11,480,000; and Granada Theaters, $5,880,000 (*Variety*, November 3, 1954, pp. 31, 36; ITA, *Annual Report 1954–55*, pp. 5–6).

special creation of the four other companies, which share its costs and direction.

The announcement that Conservative newspaper interests were involved in two of the original four program companies—Associated-Rediffusion, Ltd., and a combination of Lord Kemsley, of the nationwide Kemsley chain, and radio producer Maurice Winnick (which later lost its contract)—set off vigorous criticism from the Labour party and other commercial television critics. Although the Authority pointed out that no applications had been received from any national newspapers except the two chosen, the parliamentary Opposition nevertheless condemned bitterly the selection of two program companies associated with Conservative newspapers. The government denied collusion, and pointed out that the ITA and its program contractors, like the B.B.C., were denied the right to editorialize. The Opposition even introduced a formal vote of censure, which the House of Commons rejected, 300 to 268. In the course of the discussion, the Postmaster General assumed a position similar to that taken on questions about the detailed operations of the B.B.C., and refused to interfere with the decisions of the Authority in selecting contractors.[3]

ADVERTISING STANDARDS

THE TELEVISION ACT made it clear that there was to be a complete separation between program content and advertisements and that advertisers were not to control program material. But the working details were left to the Authority, which, together with the Advertising Advisory Committee and the Postmaster General, was to draw up a set of standards. The resulting *Principles for Television Advertising,* published in June, 1955, left

[3] London *Times,* November 3, 1954, p. 2; November 4, 1954, p. 4; November 5, 1954, pp. 2, 4; November 24, 1954, p. 8; House of Commons Debates, 533:1125, 1174–1182 (November 23, 1954).

The participation of newspapers in broadcasting operations is so common in the United States that no one should have been surprised at newspaper interest in British commercial television. A list of American "Broadcast Stations Identified with Newspaper Ownership" is given in *Broadcasting-Telecasting 1956 Broadcasting Yearbook-Marketbook Issue,* pp. 443–450.

no doubt that the "word from the sponsor" as seen and heard over the ITA would be quite different from what it is in the United States.

The document begins with the proposition that all television advertising "should be legal, clean, honest and truthful. . . . The detailed principles set out below are intended to be applied in the spirit as well as the letter and should be taken as laying down the minimum standards to be observed." It goes on to say: "Advertisements must comply in every respect with the law, common or statute. In the case of some Acts, notably the Merchandise Marks Acts, rules applicable to other forms of advertising may not, on a strict interpretation of the Acts, cover television advertising. Advertisements must, however, comply in all respects with the spirit of those Acts." Specifically forbidden are "false or misleading advertisements" and "disparaging references"; "no advertisement shall contain any statement intended to promote sales by unfair comparison with or reference to competitive products or services." A point is made of accuracy in listing prices, and it is particularly required that installment-plan price quotations ("hire purchase" in British terms) indicate any additional charges resulting from time payment.

The *Principles* lists some products and services that may not be advertised at all, including moneylenders (as distinguished from legitimate banking enterprises), matrimonial agencies, fortunetellers, undertakers or others associated with death and burial, betting tip services, unlicensed employment agencies, contraceptives, smoking cures, and alcoholism cures.

Several clauses in the British rules are obviously copied from the American *Code*. Thus, after listing products or services which may not be advertised, the *Principles* states: "An advertiser who markets more than one product may not use advertising copy devoted to an acceptable product for purposes of publicising the brand name or other identification of an unacceptable product." Relative to instructional courses the *Principles* say: "Advertising offering courses of instruction in trades or subjects leading up to

professional or technical examinations should not imply the promise of employment or exaggerate the opportunities of employment or remuneration alleged to be open to those taking such courses; neither should it offer unrecognised 'degrees' or qualifications."

Although betting and football pools under certain conditions are legal in the United Kingdom, and are advertised in many newspapers, the *Principles* states that such advertisements shall not be allowed on television for the first six months of its operation, after which time "the question will then be reviewed." But there is no prohibition against advertising all types and strengths of alcoholic beverages.

The effect of television on children has been a subject of concern in every country with a television service, and during the great debate over commercial television the possibly bad influence of sponsor-controlled children's programs was often brought up. The very strict rules for advertising on such programs are a direct result of this concern as well as of the reports received about the excesses of children's programs in the United States. The section of the *Principles* devoted to advertising in children's programs begins with a general proposition: "No product or service may be advertised and no method of advertising may be used, in association with a programme intended for children or which large numbers of children are likely to see, which might result in harm to them physically, mentally or morally, and no method of advertising may be employed which takes advantage of the natural credulity and sense of loyalty of children." This is then detailed: "No advertisement which encourages children to enter strange places or to converse with strangers in an effort to collect coupons, wrappers, labels, etc., is allowed." This requirement resulted from a practice common in Britain before World War II, when British tobacco companies gave away pictures of trains, movie stars, and athletic heroes in cigarette packages. To build complete collections of these cards, British boys often accosted strangers in public places.

The regulations continue to lay down a code of conduct which many critics of American broadcasting would heartily endorse because of their pertinence to advertising practices prevalent in the United States:

> No advertisement for a commercial product or service is allowed if it contains any appeal to children which suggests in any way that unless the children themselves buy or encourage other people to buy the product or service they will be failing in some duty or lacking in loyalty towards some person or organisation whether that person or organisation is the one making the appeal or not.
>
> No advertisement is allowed which leads children to believe that if they do not own the product advertised, they will be inferior in some way to other children or that they are liable to be held in contempt or ridicule for not owning it.
>
> No advertisement dealing with the activities of a club is allowed without the specific permission of the programme contractor who must satisfy himself that the club is carefully supervised in the matter of the behaviour of the children and the company they keep and that there is no suggestion of the club being a secret society.
>
> While it is recognised that children are not the direct purchasers of many products over which they are naturally allowed to exercise preference, care should be taken that they are not encouraged to make themselves a nuisance to other people in the interests of any particular product or service.

Medical advertising is another critical area. The Television Act requires the Advertising Advisory Committee to include among its members experts on medical advertising (that being the only field specifically mentioned), and the *Principles for Television Advertising* gives more space to this subject than to anything else. The British regulations, therefore, are much stricter and far more specific than their American counterparts, in addition to being legally binding. Thus it is provided: "In the advertising of medicines and treatments, statements, gestures or representations that give the impression of professional advice or recommendation should not be allowed." One of the general rules laid down elsewhere has an obvious application here: "Sta-

tistics, scientific terms, quotations from technical literature and the like must be used with a proper sense of responsibility to the ordinary viewer. The irrelevant use of data and jargon must never be resorted to to make claims appear more scientific than they really are. Statistics of limited validity should not be presented in such a way as to make it appear that they are universally true."

The *British Code of Standards in relation to the Advertising of Medicines and Treatments,* previously drawn up for the guidance of advertisers using other media, is included as a supplement to the *Principles.* This deals with the advertising of more than seventy-five illnesses and ailments. Among other things, it provides that no advertisement is to "contain a claim to cure any ailment or symptoms of ill-health," offer either treatment or advice for any serious diseases "which should rightly receive the attention of a registered medical practitioner," or "contain any matter which departs from the truth." "Appeals to fear" are interdicted, along with competitions relative to medical advertising, diagnoses by mail, or money-back guarantees. Over fifty ailments are listed for which medicines or treatments may not be listed at all. Mail order advertisers of nonmedical products, however, are required to make refunds for any goods returned within seven days.

Finally, there is the matter of how much advertising may be broadcast. Implementing Schedule 2 of the Television Act which requires him to determine the frequency and duration of advertisements, the Postmaster General announced that, aside from what the British call "advertising magazines"—shopping guides or advertising programs of a documentary nature—the amount of time given to advertising was not to exceed six minutes per hour and the number of advertisement periods not to exceed six per hour, averaged in both cases over the total hours of broadcasting each day. This approximates the American *Code*'s recommendations. It also has been decided that there shall be no adver-

tising during broadcasts of religious services or royal appearances, and that there must be an interval of at least two minutes between such broadcasts and any advertising.[4]

RATES AND INCOME

Britain's new commercial television system also must become self-supporting, and as quickly as possible. Several independent though interrelated organizations are involved here: the ITA itself; the several program contractors; the various subcontractors; the film companies and other production units in one way or another involved in programing; and the television departments of the agencies soliciting the advertising that eventually pays for the whole operation. The Authority itself is the only organization in the group that may receive any outright grants, since the Television Act authorizes the government to give the ITA up to £750,000 per year. But this authorization is permissive, not mandatory; for the year 1956–1957, for example, the government flatly turned down the Authority's request for such funds to cover its sustaining program costs. The £2,000,000 of government loans authorized as working capital must be repaid with interest as soon as possible. Most of the ITA's income therefore must come from the program companies. The firms which are programing the first three stations agreed to pay the ITA a total of £1,500,000 for their first year's contracts. They in turn have to meet their costs for time, talent, and overhead from advertising revenue.

But can the United Kingdom defray all the costs of an alternate television service from advertising? Initially the answers were both "no" and "yes."[5] The total annual advertising expenditure in the United Kingdom is variously estimated at from £230,000,000 to £300,000,000. The ITA hopes eventually to get about 10 per cent of this, or from £23,000,000 to £30,000,000. (In 1955–

[4] *Commercial Television Yearbook,* pp. 24–25.

[5] The matter is discussed in Cyrus Drucker, "Television Advertising: Vital Questions Yet to be Answered," London *Times Radio and Television Supplement,* August 19, 1955, p. xxii; *Broadcasting-Telecasting,* March 21, 1955, p. 116; London *Times,* August 8, 1955, p. 4; "Will Television Pay?" *Economist,* September 24, 1955, pp. 1047–1049.

1956, the B.B.C.'s total expenditures on domestic broadcasting were £23,358,788; it spent £12,676,486 on radio and £10,682,302 on television.) But whether or not it earns this much eventually, a few lean years are likely to come first; surely the initial advertising rates will have to be increased a great deal before big profits can be realized.

It may be that £1,500,000 will meet the costs of the ITA's first three stations, and provide enough margin to build new transmitters. But how soon can the program contractors cover their costs? In London at the outset the rates varied from a top of £975 for a one-minute spot announcement on weekday evenings, up to £1,000 per minute on week-ends. At other times of the day, the rate was as low as £325 per minute. Since an average of only six commercials per hour is allowed, the highest initial income rate was £6,000 ($16,800) per hour. Rates for spot announcements at the Midlands station originally ranged from £175 to £500 per minute.[6] Even with the income from advertising magazines and time spots added, these are very small sums of money with which to produce an hour's television program, maintain staff and studios besides, and pay the ITA for time on the air. American network production costs—for routine evening shows, not "spectaculars"—often run five to ten times that amount, or more; and even allowing for higher prices in the United States, the difference is still tremendous.

The London program companies estimate that they need from £2,000,000 to £3,000,000 a year to break even, but broadcast advertising is such a new field in Britain that it will take several years for commercial television finances to be straightened out. When the ITA's audience increases as a result of the purchase of new television sets and the conversion of old ones to receive ITA stations, the building of more stations, and normal growth, the companies will raise their rates. But they probably will have to broadcast for several years—as did many American stations—before coming "out of the red."

[6] *Commercial Television Yearbook*, pp. 32–35.

Will British firms do enough television advertising to support the ITA? The end of rationing and the general rise in the British standard of living, together with the return of brand names to the market, indicate an increase in advertising budgets. But government concern over inflation and foreign trade balances led in 1956 to pressures and controls on spending and installment buying, which have indirectly affected the amount of television advertising. Competition between the older media and television for the advertiser's money may also hold down television's income.

International trading in recorded television programs is one way of making money and cutting costs. When either the ITA or the B.B.C. turns out programs salable in America, the dollars earned may be used to purchase American programs for use in Britain, applied toward needed equipment, or turned into pounds sterling to meet expenses at home. Whenever a British producing firm can sell its filmed programs in the United States for enough to cover production costs, it then can afford to run them in London at less than cost. At the same time, programs made for and used on American television might be had at "dumping" rates in Great Britain. Since the demand for television programs is great, everything possible to cut costs and increase returns is being tried.

THE ITA AND THE B.B.C. IN COMPETITION

What effect will the ITA have on the British public? How will its programs affect viewers? What changes will it bring about in the B.B.C.? In view of the bitter debates that preceded the passage of the Television Act and the long-time opposition of the B.B.C. to both competitive and commercial broadcasting, intense rivalry between the two was inevitable. Within a few years, therefore, at last it will be possible to find out whether monopoly or competition is best for Britain!

In the matter of hours on the air, however, the government was prepared to equalize the contest. Under the terms of the B.B.C.'s

Licence and the Television Act, the Postmaster General has the authority to prescribe the hours for broadcasting of both organizations. Accordingly, the Postmaster General announced in Parliament on March 22, 1955, that for the Monday through Friday period there should be a maximum of 35 hours of broadcasting, with a maximum of 8 hours in any one day. Broadcasting was not to begin before 9:00 a.m., nor to extend beyond 11:00 p.m., and there were to be no more than 2 hours of broadcasting between 9:00 a.m. and 1:00 p.m. There were to be no programs at all between 6:00 and 7:00 p.m.; this was to avoid interference with children's bedtimes, although the Postmaster General did not so state.

On Saturday and Sunday, there was to be a maximum of 15 hours' broadcasting for the two days together, with no more than 8 hours on Saturday or 7¾ hours on Sunday. Saturday hours were to be the same as those for weekdays, but broadcasting on Sunday would be permitted only between 2:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m., with a closed period from 6:15 to 7:30 p.m. and a change of program at 7:45 p.m. These closed periods and the change of program, the Postmaster General explained, were arranged at the request of the churches to avoid conflicts with their evening services. All programs broadcast between 2:00 and 4:00 o'clock on Sunday afternoon—the normal Sunday school period in Britain—were to be for adults. Since religious services could be broadcast outside these hours and in addition to the daily maximum, there might be some Sunday morning programs. The daily maximum also might be exceeded in order to broadcast special events. This curtailment of hours resulted from concern that if not controlled, television might outstrip its program resources, and also from a desire to forestall excessive viewing.

Although the ITA began its London service with approximately the same hours on the air as the B.B.C., it had an initial disadvantage in that most of the television receivers and aerials then in use had to be altered at a cost of from $25 to $30 before they could receive its programs. This pattern was repeated as suc-

cessive ITA stations were opened. All thirteen of the B.B.C.'s television transmitters on the air in September, 1955, operated in Band I, whose five channels approximate North America's channels 2 through 5. Since the B.B.C. almost always had the same program on all its stations, the average set sold before 1954, in addition to operating only in that band, was permanently tuned to the one B.B.C. station giving best reception at its location. The conversion of these older sets for operation on one or more of the eight channels of Band III (comparable to America's channels 6 through 13) to which all ITA (and perhaps also some future B.B.C.) stations are being assigned, is difficult.

Ever since the ITA became a likelihood, however, all manufacturers have offered sets covering both bands. But in almost all cases, unless a receiver is located within a mile or two of an ITA station, a new or altered aerial and, in any event, some service adjustments are necessary. Of the 1,500,000 sets in the London area on September 22, 1955, only about 170,000 were equipped to receive channel 9, and most of these were new sets purchased during the previous two years, rather than converted old ones. Since conversion costs of $25 to $30 represent more money to the average Britisher than to his American counterpart, the ITA had a big promotional assignment.

American broadcasters generally have been unsuccessful in getting their audiences to convert to FM radio or UHF television. But there is one important element in the British situation usually absent from the American one: when FM and UHF conversion have proved impossible, it usually has been because the program services offered by the new stations have been in addition to two or more already available; but the ITA offers the British their first domestic broadcasting service additional to that of the B.B.C., and furthermore it features different types of programs. Therefore, the odds on extensive set conversion favor the ITA. By March 1956, there were over 700,000 London conversions, with 360,000 more in the English Midlands.

But the B.B.C. is prepared to fight the ITA every step of the

way. Early in 1955, the head of B.B.C. television announced: "We in the B.B.C. have the ability to fight, we have the will to fight, and we have the intention of competing. When I look at the assets on our side they are overwhelming. We already have the network—we have television available to 97 per cent of the population. We have a technical staff which has never been more self-confident, and we have what I consider to be the best television staff in the world."[7]

On the eve of the ITA's debut, the controller of B.B.C. television reiterated this determination: the corporation had set aside an additional budget of £2,800,000 to see it through the first six months of competition; it had increased its air time; and it had added some new and attractive sports and entertainment programs.[8] And on the front cover of the *Radio Times* for the week of September 18 to 24, 1955—the week of the ITA's debut—there was a prophetic line: "BBC Television: the New Pattern." Yet the B.B.C. maintained that competition would not affect its "aims or obligations under the Charter. There will be no departure from the BBC's purposes nor from the standards which it has set itself." However, the corporation did admit that the "effects of competition . . . are bound to be considerable."[9]

Since September 22, 1955, the two organizations have been in competition for channels, staff, programs, and viewers. If the ITA succeeds in increasing the number of receivers (and hence the B.B.C.'s license revenue) at the same time that it cuts substantially into the corporation's audience, possibly it may try to get some of the B.B.C.'s license money. This is a long-range threat, however, rather than an immediate one. Of more immediate concern is the supply of engineers and program people. There are nowhere near enough to meet the demands of the B.B.C., the ITA, the program companies, and the various subsidiary agencies involved. The corporation is the natural source of personnel, and the result in 1955 was "a severe struggle for staff." The B.B.C. reported outside

[7] London *Times*, January 13, 1955, p. 8.
[8] *Variety*, August 7, 1955, p. 25; *New York Times*, August 30, 1955, p. 43.
[9] B.B.C. *Annual Report 1954–55*, pp. 14–15.

offers in the spring of that year to be "on such a scale that the effective continuance of the B.B.C.'s operations seemed to be jeopardized."[10] It was torn between raising the salaries of television workers to levels disproportionate with those paid elsewhere in the corporation and losing the employees concerned. Since it had lost 350 trained program and technical personnel to the ITA by the time the latter went on the air, the decision forced upon it was to raise pay scales and offer other inducements such as long-term contracts, to its staff. The contest for program talent is also keen; now stars get competitive bids from two broadcasting organizations, instead of having to choose between the B.B.C. and not broadcasting at all. The B.B.C.'s own audience data showed that in the middle of 1956 those people with sets which could receive both B.B.C. and the ITA preferred the ITA by a 3 to 2 ratio.

The outcome of the contest is difficult to predict. It cannot be determined for at least several years, since B.B.C. television is operating a national service, whereas the ITA will be well into its second year on the air before it reaches beyond the borders of England to offer programs to Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland. The B.B.C. is unique among the world's noncommercial monopoly broadcasting organizations, so that one cannot forecast what will happen to it on the basis of the experience of other countries that have both public and private systems, such as Canada and Australia. It has already lost part of its audience to the ITA and its influence has been diminished. No matter how successful the ITA may be, however, that B.B.C. television will cease to exist is unlikely; and even if it did, there would still be B.B.C. radio. What is far more likely is that the ITA may encounter hard going and that a movement may develop to amend the Television Act to permit sponsorship or other measures that might bring in more revenue. Another possibility—remote to be sure—is that the ITA may fail financially. Another is that some combination of blunders may provide the latent opposition to

[10] B.B.C. *Annual Report 1954–55*, pp. 14–15.

commercial broadcasting with a springboard from which to launch a successful counterattack to eliminate it. In either case, the result would probably be the taking over by the B.B.C. of the ITA's stations. Finally, there is always the chance that the two may merge in less dramatic circumstances: the British boast of their skill in compromise, and they are particularly adept at working out agreements which preserve the best features of several presumably incompatible choices.

Whatever else happens, at least one question should be answered: the world should find out in a few years just how Gresham's Law *does* work in broadcasting! Will competition raise or lower standards? Will it result in better or poorer programs? And will the ultimate effect on the British public of two competing broadcasting organizations be any different from that of the B.B.C. alone? A strong aggressive commercial television network might cause a near-revolution in British consumer habits, with far-reaching effects on the nation's industrial life. It also might introduce new entertainment standards to Britain, accelerating the Americanization already begun by the movies. Through its own programs, and by its competitive effect on the B.B.C., it might even influence public knowledge and opinion in some very basic areas. For all these reasons, therefore, people interested in mass communications will watch the outcome of the British experiment with great interest.

Television in the Art Museums

ALLON T. SCHOENER and THEKLA WURLITZER

ALLON T. SCHOENER, during his assistant curatorship of the San Francisco Museum of Art, produced the museum's television series "Discovery." In addition to lecturing, he has also published in *Art Digest, American Artist Magazine,* and *Museum.* Mr. Schoener is now curator of The Contemporary Arts Center of the Cincinnati Art Museum. THEKLA WURLITZER was assistant producer of "Discovery," and is currently producer of a children's television program in San Francisco.

STIMULATING AN INTEREST in visual experience and an understanding of it is the main function of an art museum. Visual communication is the business of television. Therefore, a marriage between the museum and television should be a natural consequence. Despite television's importance as a universal force in daily American life, museums have treated it like a stepchild. A great number of museum people reluctantly admit that television does exist, but they are often loathe to do anything about it.

When public art museums began in the nineteenth century, they were totally different from today's institution. Changing conditions and demands of community life have altered the function of the museum. Now the museum is faced with the problem of accepting a new and vital force by amalgamating it into its pattern of activities. This follows the pattern of development for American art museums, which were originally only depositories for relics of the past; now they have become vital institutions which present stimulating exhibition and educational programs that meet the needs of the community.

In order to evaluate the art museum's approach to the question of television, it would be advantageous to analyze the function of an art museum. Most consider the main function to include collecting, preserving, exhibiting, and cataloging important works of art. For example, an art museum may possess an outstanding collection of sixteenth-century Venetian paintings. The curator in charge of this collection will be responsible for the care and preservation of these paintings. He will also be responsible for

correct documentation concerning the authorship and origins of the paintings. In addition to exhibiting permanent collections, art museums present temporary showings representing a wide range of subjects. Whether the collection is permanent or one presenting temporary loan items, the museum's educational department assumes the responsibility for communicating information to the general public concerning the works of art on exhibition. American art museums have been particularly advanced in developing information techniques within the gallery. Although most museum personnel consider that contact with original works of art in the gallery by the public is the most important aspect of art museum activity, excellent methods of bringing reproduced works of art to the public outside the museum have been developed.

There is, however, no substitute for seeing the original work of art. Today, we have extremely fine color reproductions of paintings and accurate three-dimensional reproductions of sculpture. These reproductions are not substitutes for the original work of art; they are merely successful imitations. However, these reproductions are generally accepted by curators and educators as important tools in art education. Therefore, in proposing that art museums give more serious consideration to television, no one would suggest that television be considered as a substitute for seeing the original work of art. Television is a communication medium. It cannot substitute for the actual experience of seeing the original. When we say that art and television are a natural combination, we do not mean to suggest that anyone can fully appreciate a work of art through the medium of television. However, we must accept television as a new and important device to increase and enrich the knowledge and appreciation of original works of art.

If we accept the "extra-gallery" potentialities of television, we can begin to assess its potentialities for the art museum. With television, André Malraux' theoretical "museum without walls" becomes a reality. First and foremost, we must say that television

creates a new audience for the art museum. This, of course, creates a demand for new information techniques because the existing ones assume either preliminary interest or background information. In dealing with the television audience, no such assumption can be made. New methods must be found to present art information to this new audience; established museum educational techniques do not apply to television.

The nature of television dictates its own conditions. Since it is primarily visual, there should be concentration on pure visual effect. First of all, it is important to present the work of art itself. In the case of a painting, it may be valuable to show the complete painting and then examine it in detail. In the case of sculpture, the same holds true. Since sculpture is three dimensional, it may be more interesting visually to move the camera around the piece of sculpture or to have the object move before the camera. An object is considered to be a work of art because of its outstanding visual organization. Therefore, proper presentation should take this into consideration. In addition, motion and sound can be effectively used as supplementary factors. But, most important of all, the total of all techniques used must stimulate and hold the interest of the viewer. Exhibition of the work of art alone is not sufficient. It must be done in an entertaining manner, utilizing some form of dramatization to stimulate and maintain interest in the subject. With contemporary art, it may be necessary to introduce the living artist by way of interview or demonstration. The program should never be a pedestrian exhibition of the work itself or a supplementary didactic explanation.

Despite the necessity to dramatize works of art for television, there is absolutely no necessity to make a concession in the intellectual content of the information conveyed. The intellectual content of any television program should be equivalent to that of an exhibition. For example, if an art museum presented an exhibition of Renaissance portraits, it could devote a television program to the same subject. In terms of gallery presentation, it is necessary that all objects be arranged with discrimination around

the walls of the gallery. In each case, the question of attribution should be clearly defined. If, for instance, there were a painting of doubtful authorship in the exhibition by Titian, this information would certainly be included. In presenting this exhibition on television, the viewers must see the paintings, and be given some interesting facts about the artists, sitters, place, and time. In dealing with the questionable Titian, it might be very interesting to listen to two or more experts debate the authorship of this painting. Documentary proof such as historical records, quotations, as well as X-ray photographs would be presented. The analysis of the questionable Titian could be made to be as interesting as a "Dragnet" mystery. It would not lower the museum standard nor would it be unfair treatment of the Titian. It would be, however, the presentation of a work of art in terms of television. Each work of art presents its own potentialities and terms of manner of presentation.

Every art museum thus stands as a great potential source of television material. The best way that this material can be converted to television is simply to attempt to translate the personality of the museum into television. If the museum's collections are its most important characteristic, then attention should be devoted to them. Week by week, they can be explored and brought to the attention of the television viewer. On the other hand, if a museum's activities are equally as important as its exhibitions, then the activities should be represented. This is particularly true of the museum of contemporary art. Here, the museum is not dealing with objects out of the past. Instead, it is dealing with things that have just been made and the people who make them. Therefore, the museum of contemporary art has a ready reservoir of live talent in its population of artists.

In terms of total impact, television offers amazing potentialities to art museums. More people can be reached with less effort through television. In this regard, television is the least costly per-capita activity in which an art museum can participate. Most museums consider their cost to average approximately one dollar

per gallery-goer, whereas the cost of reaching one person via television can average between two and five cents depending on the degree of complexity of presentation. In addition to all of these advantages, television provides art museums with the best public-relations vehicle that they can possibly utilize. Whether they are publicly or privately supported, museums need good public relations. With television, the museum can always present its best side. In a sense, the very use of television by the museum becomes a full-time advertisement for the museum, although it may be completely educational in nature. This is equally true of an art museum that broadcasts via a commercial or educational channel.

When we speak of the public-relations value of television for art museums, we must also recall that television is an advertising medium. Perhaps we might say that television offers the art museum an opportunity to advertise its wares, which are works of art. Advertising may be a crass way to describe the process; it would be more appropriate to say "familiarize." However, whether we like it or not, television is a medium that, by its very nature, lends itself to advertising. But in terms of developing familiarity, television is an ideal tool for the art museum. People can see and hear about works of art and exhibitions that they might otherwise not know about. The hope is that this initial contact will serve as a stimulus to come to the museum and see the original works of art. Contact with the museum should be beneficial and lead to the possibility of benefiting from a new kind of patronage.

Many of the most notable advantages offered to art museums by television have already been enumerated. Now, it would be proper to consider some of the disadvantages and see how they balance the ledger. Although television is the most inexpensive per-capita activity in which an art museum can indulge, it is also the most expensive in terms of total expenditure of capital. Most art museums operate with a regular staff and develop their activities through the expenditure of staff time rather than expenditure of funds. Many of the necessities of television cannot be supplied

by the museum. Therefore, the additional costs are a considerable factor. As a result of the museum's necessity to utilize its own staff, most of the art museum's television programs have been conceived by people who were museum staff members, not television specialists. This lack of television training has been a handicap; but, in most cases, the museum personnel have learned the trade from experience (as have most television personnel).

Since television is an extremely complicated medium, any type of presentation requires a good deal of time in preparation. As a new type of museum activity, the necessary work has become an additional duty in many cases. In fact, it has been, many times, a purely voluntary activity on the part of the museum staff members preparing these programs. Despite their enthusiasm, television work has become a burden because it competes with other regular duties. There have been few cases where a museum has assigned a regular staff member ample time for television activities.

One of the great problems for an art museum's participation in television involves the movement and handling of valuable works of art. As the custodian of art treasures, the museum is obliged to see that they are properly handled under all circumstances; extremely fragile objects should seldom be moved, and some paintings must be kept in air-conditioned rooms in order to be preserved. Valuable objects are often placed in a permanent location and never moved. Therefore, serious problems in terms of both insurance and handling result when museums allow their treasures to be taken outside the building. For this reason, some art museums have considered it more practical to have a television studio constructed inside the museum in order to minimize the handling problems and guarantee that valuable objects are touched only by trained personnel.

As everyone knows, American black-and-white television transmission does not provide the ultimate in picture definition. This results from electronic considerations that allow a larger number of television channels within a specified area. Various types of

distortion result from lens conditions as well as electronic transmission. Therefore, a television image is not necessarily true or the most satisfactory picture of a work of art. Although black-and-white transmission is not completely satisfactory, color television offers untold potentialities for art museums. When color television is perfected, it will make museum treasures more exciting to the television audience. However, color television must be perfected before it will be useful for art museums. The recent color telecast from the Metropolitan Museum was far from satisfactory. The colors of all paintings photographed were not true. The present system is based upon mixing color at points of transmission and reception. This is completely impractical because it is not up to the technician at the television transmitter or the viewer at his receiving set to determine the colors in a Van Gogh. The colors of the painting should be transmitted with controlled quality, not with undetermined variability.

Since the first days of experimentation, art museums have been closely associated with the progress of television developments. As early as 1932, the Metropolitan Museum granted permission for the use of its pictures on television. The first scheduled television program under the auspices of an art museum took place in 1939. At this time, the Museum of Modern Art presented a television program that featured a discussion of Brancusi's "Bird in Flight." In July, 1941, the Metropolitan Museum of Art initiated a regular series of half-hour telecasts. Two programs were presented: an afternoon series for younger people and an evening series for adults. These experimental programs were continued until December, 1941, when they were discontinued because of the war emergency. In 1944, telecasts were resumed at the Metropolitan Museum. These programs were more ambitious in nature and attempted to make use of original material. In 1947, the National Gallery of Art presented an experimental television performance that featured a dramatization of Raphael's "St. George and the Dragon." This program included both the history of the painting and an aesthetic analysis of the painting.

It was about this time that television began to spread from a few East Coast centers throughout the rest of the country. Many art museums, including the Art Institute of Chicago, Brooklyn Museum, Cleveland Museum of Art, Philadelphia Museum, City Art Museum in St. Louis, Albright Art Gallery in Buffalo, and the Walter Arts Gallery in Baltimore began to participate in interview and other types of nonseries programs. In January, 1948, the Baltimore Museum of Art initiated a series of programs that continued for over a year. In the same year, the Detroit Institute of Art presented a series of thirteen quarter-hour programs sponsored by the Chrysler Corporation. These programs combined discussion with dramatic presentation. The Minneapolis Institute of Art also began its series of weekly fifteen-minute programs in the same year. These programs were ambitious and imaginative in terms of scope and presentation and continued to be presented for nearly three years.

This period witnessed one of the most ambitious eras of museum television activity. Museums like the Detroit Institute of Art and City Art Museum, St. Louis, which began to work with television at this time have continued to remain actively interested in this medium, and are still presenting television programs on both educational- and commercial-television stations. In 1951, the San Francisco Museum of Art inaugurated its first regular series of half-hour television programs. These programs illustrated the application of art to daily living, and were planned to demonstrate the scope of the Museum's activities and exhibitions. In the summer of that year, the National Gallery of Art presented a series of programs that combined music and lectures. Shortly thereafter (although its subject matter is more archaeology than fine arts), the University Museum of Philadelphia began its "What in the World."

"What in the World" has since grown in both popularity and influence; today, it is seen as network broadcasts. The year 1953 witnessed the emergence of another important educational program "Adventure." This outstanding television series, produced

by C.B.S. for the American Museum of Natural History, is one of the consistently finest examples of intelligent and imaginative use of the television medium dealing with intellectual material. In the same year, the San Francisco Museum of Art presented its second and more ambitious television series "Discovery." This program was planned to present a panorama of contemporary-art expression by introducing some of the major-art personalities and their work. In 1954, the Walters Art Gallery in Baltimore revived its interest in television by presenting a new series of programs, which still continue. Also during this period of time, the Museum of Modern Art conducted a pilot project in making films for use on television. This experiment has been terminated with no further plans for continued work in this field.

From this sketchy survey, it is obvious that art museums have been enthusiastic about television; and they have produced some extraordinarily fine programs. "What in the World" is probably the best television program to have been created by a museum in this country. First of all, the program is conceived with a sense of drama and showmanship that makes it attractive to the public. The manner in which the object is introduced on each program builds up initial interest. Next, the audience follows the battle of wits of the experts. As they identify the object, the audience learns a great deal about the specific object under discussion as well as the culture or period from which it comes. Finally, the program is extremely practical from the museum standpoint. It is inexpensive to produce. The costs of shipping and insuring objects is nominal. In addition, the cost of obtaining the guest experts is small. Thus the total cost is minimal by contrast with other kinds of television programs. Also, this program concentrates on examination of the object itself for its interest. This is essential to any museum program; the object, not the drama that surrounds it, should be appreciated.

"Adventure," one of the most imaginative programs on television, is an extreme contrast to this program in terms of conception and production. It is ambitious in production, requiring

many sets, film inserts, dramatic interludes, and a wide range of special effects that are costly in time and money. The Columbia Broadcasting System has invested millions of dollars in the program. In dealing with any subject, "Adventure" concentrates on the object material and develops an authentic interpretation of that material in the manner that is most interesting to the television audience. This program could never have been produced by a museum. First of all, no art museum would ever be able to invest the money necessary for such a television production. Secondly, this program relies on professional television writers, directors, cameramen, producers, sound effects men, etc. It is a first-class professional production from start to finish. No art museum in the country has, at this time, such a reservoir of professional talent at its disposal. Therefore, although "Adventure" is an outstanding program, it is not a goal that museums can emulate. It is a network production, not a museum production.

When the San Francisco Museum of Art presented its "Discovery" series, it hoped to prove that an art museum, with limited facilities, could produce a program of professional merit. Although there was only one series of thirteen programs, the goal seems to have been reached. The museum taxed its resources and those of the coöperating television station to present the most ambitious television program to have been produced so far by an American art museum. All of the techniques employed were based on developing wider audience interest and understanding of the subjects under consideration. For example, in order to demonstrate differences in artistic style, two artists (one an abstractionist and the other a representational artist) worked from the same model while the television cameras watched the paintings progress. As they worked, the artists described what they were doing. Finally, when the paintings were completed, an art critic evaluated them. By such devices, dramatic interest was created in the subject. All of these devices originated in the nature of the subject and processes involved. Therefore, legitimate techniques of museum demonstration were applied to the television

medium. This general approach was followed through the entire series. Its popularity in the San Francisco Bay Region was considerable. According to television polls, "Discovery" attracted a larger audience than the Ford Foundation's "Omnibus" programs.

In contrast to these programs is the series entitled "Heritage," presented by the National Gallery of Art during the summers of 1951 and 1952. These programs were the perfect example of what an art museum's program should *not* be. First of all, they were a combination of art lectures and concerts in the gallery. Watching the musicians perform was the most interesting part of the program. Listening to a docent describe the paintings was the least interesting. The appeal of an art museum's program should be the art itself.

There is no reason to assume that art, if properly presented, cannot be popular and interesting. First of all, because of visual and formal organization, art objects that are properly displayed and photographed will be very interesting. In addition to the visual quality itself, there may be some sort of drama associated with the object. This may have something to do with the way in which the object is made, where it comes from, who makes it, how it got to the museum, or a thousand other facts that will be of general interest. This kind of information should be considered as the main part of the presentation; it should be used as an incentive to develop further and deeper understanding and interest in the subject under discussion or the object under observation. If these techniques are properly used, they will develop wider interest and enthusiasm in the objects themselves.

Although several art museums have continued their television activities, this has by no means been the general pattern. If we accept all of the problems concomitant with television production, we can realize that the future of art museum participation in television may be limited. At the present time, art museums do not have sufficient staff, time, or money to expand their television activities. However, this does not mean that an expansion will

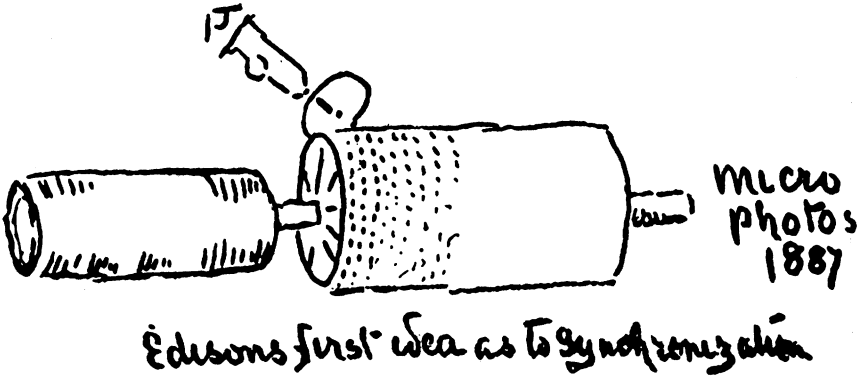
never take place. If museums accept television as an activity of importance equal to gallery work, there will be a solution. Similar problems have faced museums in other fields; for example, traveling exhibitions were a serious problem at one time. As a solution to this situation, museums have pooled their funds and resources. One museum will organize an exhibition in coöperation with several others. Exhibitions that have been organized by one museum can also be circulated by other organizations. Therefore, in the same way, it may be possible for several museums to join forces at some future date and produce television programs cooperatively. On the other hand, it may also be possible to establish one or more central production centers where films for television are created for art museum use. This latter proposal has great merit. It provides a reservoir of television material that can be used by a number of institutions. It will also be possible to produce programs of higher merit because a professional staff can be utilized. Under such ambitious conditions, it will be possible to bring important works of art and art personalities to one point. In order to maintain the highest educational standards, it would be best if the production centers were located within or in association with an art museum. In several cases, such plans are being considered, but as yet there has been no large-scale film production.

The greatest number of art-museum programs have been produced by the museums at their own expense with free time being donated by a commercial television station. In a few cases, commercial sponsorship has been obtained; however, this is not the general solution. If a program is geared to commercial sponsorship, there is always the possibility that the sponsor may withdraw. In addition, there are always pressures of a purely business nature. This, of course, can make it difficult for an art museum to remain objective in its role.

Another important field for art-museum programs lies with the educational-television stations. Most of these stations are still relatively new, and have been slow in developing their production

facilities; therefore, we have seen little evidence of their program production. However, there should be a great potential for new kinds of television activities. Educational stations will not be compelled to justify their existence in terms of different kinds of audience ratings. For this reason, it is hoped that they may be able to produce unusual and imaginative types of programs. This is something to expect with anticipation.

In conclusion, we can say that the first chapters of art-museum participation in television indicate that there is hope and promise for the future.



EDISON'S TALKING PICTURE MACHINE—When the inventor began to work on motion picture photography, he wanted to use it to illustrate his phonograph. Here, sketched by his English assistant W. K. L. Dickson, is the cylinder of the talking machine to the left, and to the right a larger cylinder covered with a spiral of photographs so small that the eye has to examine them with a small microscope. *Courtesy Earl Thiesen Collection.*

The Case History of a Live TV Drama

JAMES E. LYNCH

JAMES E. LYNCH became program supervisor of the Indiana University Radio and Television Service July 1, 1956. When he wrote this article, he was a member of the faculty of the Television Center at the State University of Iowa where he taught courses in television production and directed programs for the Television Center. Mr. Lynch received his Ph.D. degree in radio and television from the University of Michigan.

EVERY OTHER WEDNESDAY at 10:00 P.M. (EST), the familiar voice of announcer Jackson Beck introduces sixty minutes of distinguished television drama with the words "The United States Steel Hour . . . Live from New York." What goes on behind the scenes in preparation for this program is often as fascinating as the drama itself.

In the late summer of 1955, the State University of Iowa Television Center, Norman Felton (codirector with Daniel Petrie, and alternating with Sidney Lumet during the current season of "The United States Steel Hour"), and the Theatre Guild (producer of the program) made it possible for me to go to New York and observe one of these productions from the first reading up to and including the air performance. The experience was one that I felt should be shared by all those interested in producing drama for television. Although the preparation of the program was on a network level, it could easily serve as a prime example of the planning and coördination needed for any size operation.

The rehearsal period covered nine days. An initial meeting with the cast was held on the morning of August 23, and the final air performance was seen in the homes of some 20,000,000 people on August 31 from 10:00 to 11:00 P.M. More than 75 persons were directly connected with the program, and approximately $42,000 (not including network time charges) was spent for production expenses, actors, musicians, writer, set construction, commercial announcements, royalties, etc.

Although it is important to concentrate on the nine-day re-

hearsal period, it is also necessary to realize that a great deal of preparation took place before that time. For example, several weeks earlier, the Theatre Guild had selected J. B. Priestley's play *Laburnum Grove* and had secured television performance rights to it. Writer Ellen Violett had been engaged, and the script had already gone through two drafts before the first rehearsal. The play's title had become *Counterfeit,* and the original story had been considerably altered to allow for a love interest, additional humor, and a different ending.

While the script was being put into final form, director Norman Felton worked with members of the Theatre Guild staff in selecting a cast. As one of the many instances in which a script is chosen as a vehicle for some particular actor, Boris Karloff was cast as the "respectable" English counterfeiter of Laburnum Grove. In closed auditions, the Theatre Guild staff and the program director selected nearly all the supporting players and walk-ons.

The design and construction of sets also had to be considered well in advance. As early as four weeks before the production date, the director and the scene designer had a short meeting to discuss the specific set problems of the show. At a second meeting, the scene designer brought in rough sketches of the sets and an estimate of set-construction costs. Felton and the associate producer carefully went over the sketches, added suggestions and comments, and approved the set-cost estimate. Also present at the second meeting was the set decorator with his preliminary list of properties. Following this last session, the scene designer drew his plans to scale and submitted the necessary set-construction requests.

A copy of the finished floor plan went to the director for his use in plotting prerehearsal blocking. Each camera angle, actor position, and mike boom location was accurately checked with a protracter or simple shot plotter. If set changes were necessary, the director notified the scene designer before a final plan was drawn.

The final plan, which included set elevations, reached the director several days before the nine-day rehearsal period. Prior to the final dry rehearsal, the director charted certain information (which will be discussed later) on the plan for the lighting director and audio director.

Every director has his own method of preplanning. One may plan every shot, every movement of the actor and camera, every piece of business before he meets his actors, and then rarely deviate from his original plan. Another may plot only the major shots and actor groupings and then add the details and refinement as he goes along. A third may do little or no preplanning and rely on inspiration as he blocks his actors in early rehearsals. The last method is a rather hazardous one, especially under the pressure of a nine-day rehearsal period. Norman Felton combined all of these methods into one. He carefully planned every shot, movement, and piece of business before the first rehearsal; but he was willing to change and improve his planning at suggestion or sudden inspiration—a "system with flexibility."

Two other jobs had to be done before rehearsals began. About two weeks before broadcast date or as soon as the cast had been selected, costume fittings were taken. Equally important was the task of taping out the floor of the dry-rehearsal room. With the aid of a roll of masking tape and a measuring device, the director's production assistant marked out the sets in exactly the same dimensions as they appeared on the scale floor plan. Whenever possible, she also located the sets in the same position, in relation to each other, that they would have in the broadcast studio. These arrangements, of course, helped the actors in rehearsing their moves within each set and from one set to another. Straight-backed chairs, tables, and makeshift furniture were added to the sets to simulate actual properties. The room was then ready for the first blocking rehearsal.

Now, on to the nine-day rehearsal period, which was scheduled as follows:

Tuesday, August 23	10:00 to 11:30	Dry Rehearsal—First Reading
	1:30 to 5:30	Dry Rehearsal—Initial Blocking
Wednesday, August 24	1:00 to 5:00	Dry Rehearsal
Thursday, August 25	DAY OFF	
Friday, August 26	1:00 to 5:00	Dry Rehearsal
Saturday, August 27	11:00 to 3:00	Dry Rehearsal
Sunday, August 28	11:00 to 3:00	Dry Rehearsal
Monday, August 29	10:00 to 12:30	Dry Rehearsal
	1:30 to 3:00	Dry Rehearsal
Tuesday, August 30	2:00 to 6:00	Camera Rehearsal (Camera Blocking)
	7:15 to 10:00	Camera Rehearsal
Wednesday, August 31	4:30 to 6:30	Camera Rehearsal
	8:00 to 9:15	Camera Rehearsal (Dress)
	10:00 to 11:00	Air Performance

Let's examine each rehearsal separately and follow the progress of the play.

Tuesday, August 23. Director Norman Felton met his cast[1] for the first time in a conference room at the Theatre Guild building on West 53rd Street. Also present at the meeting were the associate director, a production assistant, the writer, the associate producer, and representatives of the Theatre Guild.[2] Scripts were distributed, and the director listed several minor line changes. Next, came a straight read-through of the script in which the director cued the actors and explained movements, some business, and the major camera shots. A rough timing was taken by the production assistant. Rehearsal schedules were distributed, and a second meeting was set for that afternoon.

At 1:30, the action shifted to a rehearsal hall in the Central Plaza building at 111 Second Avenue where, a few days before, the sets had been taped out on the floor by the production assistant. Actors were oriented to their new surroundings and then the director immediately began the blocking of the show. This was a slow stop-and-go process during which each position and move-

[1] The cast of *Counterfeit* included Boris Karloff, Jesse Royce Landis, Sarah Marshall, Terence Kilburn, Lucy Lancaster, Murray Matheson, John McGiver, and Roland Long. Miss Landis was a last-minute replacement for ailing Edna Best and did not arrive until the Wednesday, August 24, rehearsal.

[2] The production of *Counterfeit* was supervised for the Theatre Guild by Armina Marshall.

ment was set and carefully noted by the actors. When the blocking for Act I was completed, the entire act was rerun without interruption in order to consolidate the work done in the stop-and-go period. This same procedure was repeated for Acts II and III. By 5:30, the hour-length script had been completely blocked. To finish three acts in so short a time naturally had taken an inordinate amount of preplanning by the director. As proof of this, his early blocking script for *Counterfeit* contained notes on movement and business, timings, rough diagrams showing actor positions and camera angles, as well as sound, music, and camera cues. In many instances, even the lens size for a camera shot was indicated. Yet, Felton's planning was not rigid, and changes were made right up to the air performance.

Wednesday, August 24. With the blocking completed, the director was ready to start at the top of the show and rehearse scene by scene. Again the stop-and-go process was used, but this time the stopping was for changes or refinement in movement, business, and interpretation. As soon as a scene was finished, it was immediately repeated to give the cast a chance to smooth out the action. Then, when each act was completed, it too was run through without interruption. Again, without giving the appearance of being rushed, but by working steadily and surely, the director covered the entire show. Furthermore, he subtly began to inject his own ideas on interpretation and characterization. Instead of gathering the actors around a table to discuss these points, he got them on their feet and kept them there. But, in the process, he also managed to suggest bits of business for each actor in his particular role. This, in turn, started the actor thinking about the character he was playing. Felton commented on the technique in this way:

> Actors, for the most part, are pretty intelligent people. Don't tie them down by setting characterizations and interpretation. Offer suggestions and bits of business, but generally let them figure things out for themselves. If they can't do that, then, of course, you have to move in. But, in general, when you set the plot and characterizations rigidly,

you find your actors following your every suggestion—and they automatically stop thinking.

Thursday, August 25. This was an off day in the schedule. The Theatre Guild originated the policy, and feels that the actors benefit by having a free day to work on lines early in the rehearsal period.

Friday, August 26. In Wednesday's rehearsal, there had been two scenes in Act I that gave the actors particular difficulty. Because of this, Felton led off Friday with a quick run-through of the trouble spots. Not only did this improve the scenes, but it also seemed to restore the confidence of the actors. After running the weak scenes, the show was started from the top and rehearsed by acts. There was no stopping unless something went radically wrong. Act I was run twice; Act II, twice; and then shortly before 4:00 P.M., Felton decided to do a complete run-through of the show. Hence, as early as the fourth rehearsal, the play was pulled together as a unit, with the cast performing without scripts for the first time. Although there was considerable line-dropping, Felton paid little or no attention to it. The important point was that things were beginning to jell. In addition, considerable polishing had already been accomplished. Any changes in lines, business, and movement were recorded by either the production assistant or the associate director, and were then incorporated into a revised script for the next day's rehearsal.

Saturday, August 27. The rehearsal started with Act II. Continual line difficulty disturbed the actors. However, Felton ran the act and then started from the top of the show. Each act was rehearsed separately, as had been done in Friday's rehearsal. After the entire play had been run, a table discussion of the weak scene in Act II revealed that most of the trouble lay in the exchange of short speeches where actors were not familiar with their preceding cues. To help the actors, Felton conducted another short-line rehearsal.

Several other things were done in the course of the day's work. First, time was taken between the run-throughs of the acts to

discuss notes dictated by the director to either the production assistant or the associate director. Secondly, musical director Harold Levey attended the rehearsal and played the theme, bridge, and background music on the piano during the run-throughs. Afterward, he and the director considered possible changes in the score. Finally, the director made it a point during this rehearsal to show the associate director each of his planned shots.

Sunday, August 28. The rehearsal once more began with the trouble spots of the day before. Next came the run-through by acts, with short periods in between for comments by the director and actors. After a break, another run-through followed, this time with music. Careful timings were taken, and the action was not stopped. The show was beginning to play, actors were starting to enjoy themselves in their parts, and line worries were practically over.

Monday, August 29. First, there was a run-through for the actors to consolidate changes made during the last few days. After each act, the director made comments. At 11:30, the cast did a preliminary dress for the benefit of the production staff of the Theatre Guild, the advertising agency representative, and the show's technical staff—the lighting director, technical director, two stage managers, costume designer, and scene designer. Although actors generally dislike this so-called "conference day," they do get their first "this is it" feeling by playing before a small but critical audience. Felton usually refers to the run-through as his first "out-of-town tryout." The actors seemed to enjoy this allusion to the theater, and they apparently relaxed and played better. For the first time, bit parts (actors with five lines or under) were incorporated into the cast.

The lighting director stayed close to the director during the run-through and carefully noted the shots that were being used in the show. Before the rehearsal, he had been provided with a scale floor plan indicating actor positions, camera angles, and probable microphone boom locations.

The two stage managers merely observed the action and

marked actors' cues and property changes on their scripts. If there were questions, they conferred either with the director or the associate director.

A conference was held between the morning and afternoon rehearsal periods to discuss changes suggested by the Theatre Guild staff. The show was run again at 1:30 with the changes included. This was the last dry rehearsal.

Tuesday, August 30. The production of *Counterfeit* now moved to C.B.S.-TV Studio 61 at 1456 First Avenue for the start of what would be approximately ten hours of camera rehearsal.

The sets for the show had been constructed and painted during the previous week in C.B.S.-TV's production center on East 57th Street and had been transported to Studio 61 on Sunday, the 28th. Sunday night and Monday were spent in putting the sets together and in place on the studio floor. From midnight, Monday, to 9:00 A.M., Tuesday, the lighting director and his five-man crew were busy hanging and positioning lights. Bewteen 9:00 A.M. and noon, Tuesday, the set decorator finished his dressing of the sets. At noon, the technical staff took over and spent two hours checking out equipment and aligning cameras. Shortly after 2:00 P.M., both cast and crew were ready for the first camera rehearsal.

All four hours in the afternoon were devoted to camera blocking or the "setting of shots"—a process similar to the blocking of action in the second dry rehearsal. Each shot was explained to the cameraman involved and set according to instructions from the director or the associate director (both of whom, under the C.B.S.-TV system, have direct communication with the cameramen and the stage managers). It was a slow and exacting procedure, but a necessary one for a smooth production. In the camera blocking, the director and associate director worked from identically marked scripts and, for the most part, used the shots planned before and during dry rehearsals. All three cameramen seemed very adept at visualizing what the director wanted. Felton moved fast without giving the impression that he was rushed. At 6:00

P.M., the entire script, with the exception of the last two scenes, was blocked. A dinner break was called until 7:15.

During the shot-setting period, all members of the technical staff were constantly busy making their necessary changes. The lighting director repositioned instruments; sound levels and microphone-boom problems were settled; and sound effects were introduced.

From 7:15 to 7:45, the director finished setting shots in the last two scenes. Then there was a quick rerun of the final three scenes to give Mr. Karloff a chance to rehearse some fast costume changes. Another short break followed. At 8:10, the first rough run-through on camera began. No pressure was put on the actors because this was mainly a rehearsal for the technical staff (especially the cameramen) to enable them to consolidate their work of the afternoon and early evening. The associate director was now giving all the readies and releases to the cameramen; the director was calling shots only; the production assistant was taking exact timings. The run-through used no announcer, commercials, or filmed credits. At 9:30, the cast was released; but the director, associate director, and production assistant remained to confer with members of the Theatre Guild staff. The only discordant note was a report that Jesse Royce Landis, a principal in the cast, had been ill all during the day's rehearsal. Evidently, the director had been aware of this, because he had given her every possible chance to rest.

Wednesday, August 31. The director met the cast at 3:30 to go over notes from the previous day's rehearsal. Several minor line changes were made, and the staging in the final scene was altered. Although air performance was getting close, the cast calmly accepted the changes because Felton conveyed to them the feeling that the revisions would improve the production.

While the cast conference was in progress, the associate director, technical director, and associate producer were checking out the title and credit slides with film projection. At the same

time, the musical director and his twelve-piece orchestra were rehearsing in a room off the studio.

From 4:30 until 5:00, all pertinent notes from the previous rehearsals were relayed to the technical staff. At 5:00, another run-through got under way. Music (piano only) was added, and the action was stopped on only a few occasions. However, this proved to be the worst run-through to date. Actors dropped lines left and right, and two big blowups stopped the show completely. Apparently the uneasiness was due to the many recent line changes. Although the director had ample reason to be upset, he was calm during the entire run-through. He ignored the actor mishaps, joked with the technical crew through the intercom system, and gave everyone the feeling that the worst was over. Whether it was psychology or mere bravado, it worked. Actors and crew gained confidence toward the end of the show, and the final three scenes picked up considerably. Running time, with periods taken out for commercials, ran 59:30. Actors were released for dinner; but the director, assistant director, and production assistant again consulted with the Theatre Guild staff.

After dinner, Felton met with the actors at 7:45 and made still more revisions. The ending of Act II was moved back, and several line changes were inserted.

Dress rehearsal began promptly at 8:15. All elements of the production were incorporated—full orchestra, commercials from Studio 58, telop slides from film projection, a remote from Washington, D.C., with George Hicks and Val Peterson (United States Civil Defense Chief), announcer Jackson Beck, sound effects, make-up, costumes, properties, and cast. During this run-through, the associate director did all the setting of the shots for the cameraman, gave readies and releases, and called telops and film. Commercials and the remote from Washington were handled at other locations. There were no stops in the dress, and the actors got their first real pressure feeling before the air performance. Although the timing was 59:30, the Washington remote was 35 seconds long; and the final credits had to be rushed. A quick tele-

phone call to the Washington studio by the advertising agency's representative corrected the time problem. It was then 9:30. Cast and crew were given a 20-minute break.

At 9:50, actors were in their places, cameramen adjusted their headsets, musicians tuned their instruments, and the two stage managers were making a last-minute check of properties. In the control room, the technical director gave instructions to "open" cameras, the audio man checked the intercom, the associate director gave a "stand by" to film projection, and the director sorted through his script to see if all the pages were in the right order. Up on the line monitor, Garry Moore was going into his windup on "I've Got a Secret." The associate producer, John Haggott, paced back and forth. Ira Avery, an account executive of the advertising agency Batten, Barton, Durstine, and Osborn, took another bite on his cigar. Back in a glass-enclosed booth, Jackson Beck cleared his throat for the opening announcement. It was 9:59, and credits for the preceding show were rolling by. You could feel the tension everywhere. Felton suddenly asked for a line to the studio and gave a last message to the cast. Borrowing a tag line from the show he said calmly, "In television as in crime —it's all a matter of time!" A roar of laughter followed, and the tension was released. There was silence again, and then the assistant director's voice called out "Stand by!" The second hand on the control room clock read 9:59:50. The assistant director counted "ten-nine-eight-seven-six-five-four-three-two, roll film, track up, announcer."

"The United States Steel Hour . . . Live from New York."

Another Look at the Emmy Awards

STUART W. HYDE

STUART W. HYDE formerly taught radio-television at Stanford, and is now an assistant professor of telecommunications at the University of Southern California. He is the author of numerous articles on radio and television as well as several monographs on nineteenth-century American drama. Mr. Hyde is also a member of Harcourt, Brace and Company's nominating board for prize television plays.

AT THE OUTSET, television was monopolized by roller derbies, wrestling matches, and very old motion pictures. But in the beginning there was, too, a small group of men who felt that television could be something much better. These men—and it is significant that their names are as yet generally unknown—were undismayed by the minute image, the dancing, wavering picture, and the poor definition of the iconoscope tube. These visionaries were likewise undiscouraged by the seemingly insurmountable difficulties occasioned by high production costs, low budgets, and initially small audiences. Against all opposition, they fought: against those who thought that television was simply a small motion-picture screen and who wanted to use the new medium as a means of bringing Hollywood into everyone's living room; and against those who thought of television as nothing more than an electronic device, whose sole value lay in its ability to transmit to the home what was prepared to be seen elsewhere—athletic events, stage plays, and all manner of audience shows. And who were these dreamers, these visionaries, who fought against this opposition? They were that small band of men who realized that television, as a new medium, had new possibilities, new challenges, and new problems, and that these, in turn needed continuous experimentation, radical new concepts, and unique solutions.

Originally, these pioneers had little to go on aside from their own faith in the new medium and their conviction that television had a right to self-determination. Their first few halting efforts were not towering achievements, and anyone who had the price

of a drink in the neighborhood bar could see that even a B movie was superior—technically, at least—to the earliest live television dramas; that even a slightly made-over radio show was more polished than the first television variety shows; and that even roller derbies and wrestling matches were more popular than the majority of early special events, documentaries, and commentaries.

These were dangerous years for television, for to the lay audience, as well as to many professionals, progress in television was thought to take the form of better and newer motion pictures, better and more "visual" radio shows, and better and more varied athletic events. Indeed, had it not been for the perseverance of this nucleus of visionaries, television might have had its limits defined as early as the first year of its existence. Sufficient credit has never been given to those men who fought the good fight in the early days, and who continue to fight it today.

Among these early fighters were the producers of the Kraft Theater and the Philco Playhouse, who took television drama away from the emphasis on spectacle—which was singularly unimpressive on television's small screen—and moved it toward introspection and intimacy, creating as they did a new kind of drama, admirably suited to television's limitations. Another was Edward R. Murrow, who saw in television a marvelous opportunity to take the nation on unpretentious and unelaborated visits to the homes of the interesting and the great. Quite early, various network executives realized that television was the perfect medium for the belated development of the documentary—a marvelous vehicle for didactic presentations that the motion-picture industry has largely, and for obvious reasons, neglected. And the Radio and Television Workshop of the Ford Foundation, through *Omnibus,* has demonstrated that one genius (Agnes DeMille or Leonard Bernstein) with something to say is sufficient to hold an audience spellbound on this marvelous—when properly used—new medium. Also George Gobel who, though he has a studio audience, plays to the important audience in the living

rooms of the nation, and has demonstrated that a quiet, direct, and subtle technique is infinitely superior to a prancing, shouting style. Like Gobel, Perry Como has discovered that television is as intimate as actual presence in the home. These, and a good many others, were the pioneers, the men of intelligence, vision, and taste, who have shown the rest of us how magnificent this new medium of television can be if it is allowed to realize its potential.

This progress in the medium did not, of course, occur by accident. The lessons of intimacy, subtlety, and delicacy, which are now available for all who have the wisdom to recognize and apply them, did not spring full-blown, like Minerva from the brain of Jove. They were learned in the same way that similar lessons on the use of new media have been learned by pioneers of all ages—by experimentation, by trial and error. In the beginning, there were theories in abundance. To cite one of the more interesting examples, Samuel Goldwyn predicted that, since the television screen was so small, actors and others appearing on television would be obliged to exaggerate every movement and facial expression! There were many who felt that television, because of its technical limitations, would be forever incapable of achieving great art. Against these and similar ideas, the men of vision fought. That they achieved a partial victory is evidenced by the fact that most of them are still on television, still as popular as ever. That they have not completely succeeded in their mission must be obvious to anyone who sees the majority of television shows given over to entertainments that are inappropriate to the medium.

With this background in mind, let us examine the Television Academy of Arts and Sciences and its annual Emmy awards. Let us see what part the Television Academy has played in the development of the medium. Here are the functions of that Academy, according to its own charter:

To hold forums for exchange of ideas on matters concerning the advancement of television. To provide a meeting place where educators and leaders in public life can discuss the *types of information the*

public should get; art forms which will come into existence through television, and other matters. . . . To *encourage research and accomplishment by presentation of awards.* To coöperate with organizations having similar aims. (Italics mine.)

Notice here, the emphasis on ideas, on advancement of the medium, on information, on art forms, and on research and accomplishment. Can any objective reader fail to be impressed by the clear statement, contained in the next-to-last line, that the yearly Emmy awards are designed to "encourage research and accomplishment"? Here, on paper at least, the Television Academy has linked itself with progress, with the men of vision, with experimentation and research, and with the development of television as a new medium. It is obvious that the person or persons who framed this list of functions understood quite clearly the responsibility of those in the field to lead the way, to provide the incentive and a sense of direction for the rest. We must applaud these high ideals and the men who conceived them.

If these are the principles of the Academy, we must now ask, how have they been applied in recent years, and to what extent have they been successful? The answers to these questions are anything but encouraging. By following the practice of the Motion Picture Academy of dividing all shows and personnel into categories, the Television Academy has created for itself an impossible situation. The idea of categories, which has been only moderately successful in the motion-picture field, is totally inappropriate to television. It is at least theoretically possible to divide motion pictures, virtually all of which are dramas, into black and white, color, musical, original, etc., but the wide range of television programs makes this division impossible. For television is not simply a dozen or so different kinds of shows. Television is virtually everything there is—politics, athletics, music, drama, comedy, interviews, documentary, and special events. It is, in short, everything and anything that one chooses to place before a camera.

The idea of categorizing television shows was the first step in

the destruction of the aims of the Academy. Through the use of the category, the Emmy awards have become a poor imitation of the Oscar awards. Through the use of the category, the entire television industry has been misrepresented to the nation; and the real achievements of the pioneers in the field have been neglected. Shows that have, in actuality, virtually nothing in common have been lumped together. Certain classes of shows in which hundreds of outstanding programs have been created—live dramatic shows—have been equated with other classes of shows in which nothing of any permanent worth has been achieved—panel and quiz shows. Through the use of the category, too, many shows that have appeared at the local level or on educational television, and that are deserving of encouragement, have been regrettably ignored.

Most serious of all, the awards are given to the "best" show of each category. Aside from the obvious fact that one category may have in it several excellent shows, whereas another may have no shows of an excellent nature, this system of awards cannot possibly carry out the intention of the Academy to "encourage research and accomplishment by presentation of awards." As long as mandatory awards are given to the "best" comedy show, the "best" comedian, the "best" quiz show, the "best" variety show, etc., the awards will be forever incapable of encouraging research and accomplishment. To say that one show or one person is better than several competing shows or persons is decidedly not the same thing as saying that the show or person has carried out significant research or that it has made an accomplishment worthy of note.

Because of this incongruity between stated intentions and actual practice, as well as a realization that the progress of television was a matter of vital importance to everyone interested in the sociological or artistic implications of the medium, I recently wrote an article criticizing the Emmy awards and making several suggestions for their improvement. This article, published in the May 28 issue of *Sponsor,* makes several recommendations including the abandonment of the current Emmy awards system and

the establishment of a National Television Festival Week. The latter, to be held early in the year, would feature the reshowing of the best example of each program on the air. During Festival Week, then, we would see again the best *Studio One,* the best *Robert Montgomery Presents,* the best *Goodyear-Alcoa* theater, the best *Kraft Theater,* the best of *Omnibus,* the best of *Meet the Press,* the best of *Person to Person,* etc. Variety and comedy shows could be made up of the best moments from the preceding year. Each of these "best" shows would appear on its own station and in its regular time slot. Although there would be little reason for reshowing the best examples of news shows, quiz shows, and shows of a similar nature, perhaps these programs could use their time during the Festival Week for a review of the preceding year. True, this Festival Week would raise a good many problems, but I feel that the impact of a solid week of excellent television would make worth-while any effort that might be necessary to iron out the details.

I also proposed the production, on all available stations, of a lengthy documentary, showing the nation the history of the preceding year as had been seen on television. This documentary, to be shown on the evening following the Festival Week, would include events of political, historical, athletic, scientific, and sociological importance. One of its important features would be the inclusion of brief scenes from all of the irregularly scheduled operas, stage plays, ninety-minute spectaculars, and other significant productions of the year.

What seems to me the proposal with greatest consequence is that the Television Academy give awards for one reason only: *for significant contribution to the advancement of the art or science of television.* Awards would be granted, then, not because a given television program was adjudged "better" than others in its category but, rather, because a particular person or program had pioneered in the discovery of some new fact or technique of television production; because someone, through experimentation or research, had helped expand the present limits of the

medium; because, through imagination and courage, someone had placed on television a program of importance to the public, of a nature which was previously thought to be unproducible; or because, through a right combination of circumstances, someone had produced a great work of art on television.

Few rules to govern the criteria for these awards could be drawn up in advance, since they would foolishly attempt to anticipate the nature of progress that, by very definitions, is an unknown quantity. Nevertheless, some examples might prove helpful. An award might be given to the Hallmark *Hall of Fame,* whose imaginative production staff demonstrated to the world, just one week following the *Richard III* fiasco on NBC, the manner in which Shakespeare ought to be produced for television in their version of *The Taming of the Shrew.* Awards might be given to the producers of the *Project XX* series for the development of the television documentary, to Frieda Hennock and Franklin Dunham for their important contributions to the cause of educational television, to the Kraft *Television Theater* for its imaginative and daring use of television in the production of *A Night to Remember,* to the Armstrong *Circle Theater* for the development of a new kind of television fact-drama, and to Ampex Corporation for its development of the new tape-recording system. These are but a few spur-of-the-moment suggestions, but perhaps they will serve to indicate the kind of awards which the Academy might give in order to encourage research and accomplishment in television.

How did the Academy receive these suggestions? In the same issue of *Sponsor* in which the above plan was outlined, Mark Goodson answered for the Academy. Mr. Goodson—coproducer with William Todman of *I've Got a Secret, What's My Line?,* and several other popular quiz shows for television—was recently asked to serve at the head of a committee to study the entire Emmy awards program. In this capacity, he was undoubtedly representing the opinion of the Academy in his answer. Mr. Goodson criticized some aspects of the proposed plan, found

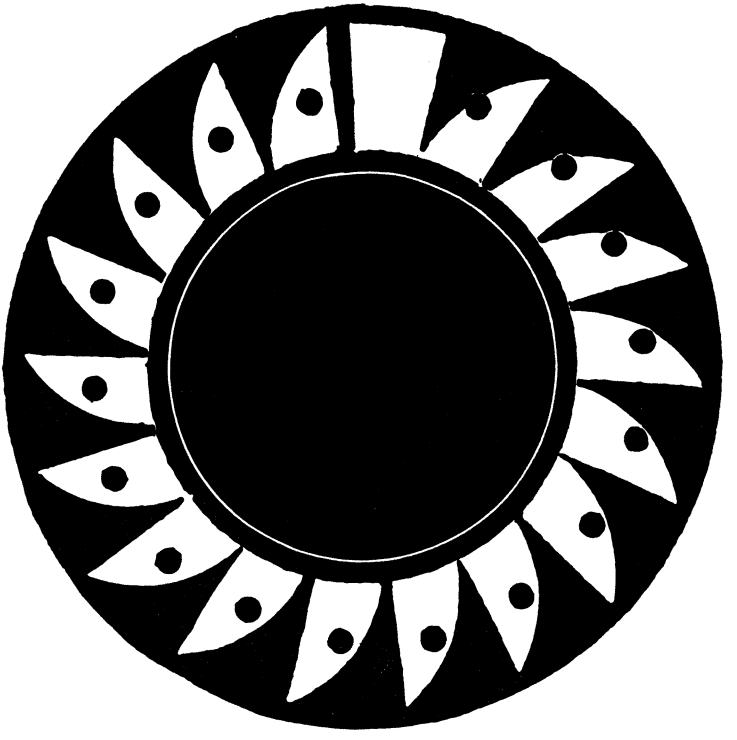
nothing good in any part of it, and wound up with the observation that the only thing wrong with the Emmy awards was the way in which the categories had been chosen. His committee, Mr. Goodson assured us, was then in the process of changing all of the categories. He was confident that all objections to the awards system will thus be met.

But will they be met? It is difficult to see how any real improvement can be made as long as awards are given on a category basis. So long as categories exist, someone in each category will win an award, many worth-while shows and many significant achievements will continue to be unrecognized, and the Emmy awards will be incapable of encouraging research and accomplishment.

And why is it important that the Television Academy live up to its original intentions? Perhaps an illustration will make clear the reasons. At a recent banquet, the guest speaker—a gentleman who had spent some twenty-five years in the motion-picture industry, and who now earns his living as an actor on a television-film series—told the assembled group of television students that he knows nothing about the medium and that he and his associates are engaged in the production of short, cheap movies for television. If this were a unique and isolated opinion, we could afford to laugh at or ignore it. Unfortunately, however, this attitude represents that of a good many producers, directors, and actors who are currently engaged in television production.

There remain in television large numbers of persons who are willing to allow the medium to become cheap, short movies; there are many in the field who fail to appreciate their obligation to perform in the public interest, convenience, and necessity; the majority of producers fail to recognize the magnificent potential of this new medium; and there is no general awareness of the great hunger of the public for better and better television shows. So long as these remain, there will be a great need for organizations dedicated to the encouragement of responsibility among broadcasters. The Television Academy, by virtue of its name and its expressed intentions, is in a unique position to become an

important influence on the course of television in this country. If it is to remain true to its initial purposes, and if it is to discharge the obligation assumed by any group that calls itself "The Television Academy of Arts and Sciences," this organization should now reconsider its position on the Emmy awards program. The Television Academy should bring to bear all of the moral force at its command to champion the cause of the pioneers, the visionaries, and the dreamers.



MOTION PICTURE IMAGES OF 1874—The Janssen camera pictured on page 38 photographed at 70-second intervals the passage of Venus across the face of the sun. Actually he made 48 photographs on the edge of each of a number of disks. Here in E. J. Marey's *Movement* (1895), the French scientist seems to have to have arranged 17 of the images to show the complete transit of the star. Though Janssen was the first to use intermittent movement—the key to the problem—he never employed his camera again or developed any other model.

A Bibliography for the Quarter

Book Editor, FRANKLIN FEARING

IN *Nonverbal Communication* (University of California Press, Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1956, $7.50), Jurgen Ruesch and Weldon Kees point out that contemporary man in his enormous preoccupation with purely verbal techniques has neglected the study of other means of communication. The authors believe that we have created a world of verbal unreality in which words are treated as absolutes. An even more disturbing result of this emphasis is the use of verbal language not scrupulously and with integrity but as a device for the manipulation of human relationships. This, they believe, has resulted in a depersonalization of human relations and a glorification of the slogan and the cliché. Countertrends are found not only in our growing self-consciousness about communications itself—reflected in the mushroom growth of the field of communications research—but in the rediscovery of the significance and pervasiveness of nonverbal forms of communication, of which, of course, the present book is an example.

As distinct from verbal language, the most essential feature of nonverbal language is its *analogic* character. Analogic symbols (Charles Morris calls them "iconic") resemble in some degree the thing, idea, or event for which they stand. The meanings of "digital" symbols on the other hand are arbitrarily assigned, and bear no resemblance to their referents. Examples are words and numerical systems.

Nonverbal symbols are classified into three broad groups: sign language (for example, the gesture of the hitchhiker), action language (for example, walking, drinking, and the bodily expression of emotion when these acts are statements for those who perceive them), and object language (for example, a display of items in a shop window). By the use of hundreds of candid-camera photographs and an exceptionally lucid text, the enormous complexity,

diversity, and subtlety of these nonverbal forms of communication are made clear.

The authors made the interesting point that under conditions of political or ideological stress—or, indeed, in any stress situation—there is a tendency to revert to nonverbal forms of communication. For one reason, these are more difficult to censor—books may be burned or banned—for another, by their very nature they possess an immediate and intimate relationship to that for which they stand and hence are less subject to misunderstanding and distortion.

This reviewer hesitates to introduce a theoretical quibble with a book as fascinating and insightful as this, but he finds it difficult to accept the view that the distinction between intentional communication and unintentional expression—adaptive movements of the body, for example—cannot be maintained scientifically. For him, *communication* is inescapably intentional. The criteria for the existence of intent are admittedly difficult to establish and apply, and there are probably many borderline cases; but it seems to him that the distinction is both valid and necessary. Otherwise, all perception, all situations in which the percipient derives information from the outside world, or the inside, for that matter, are communication situations. The term then becomes so general as to lose semantic usefulness.

Nonverbal Communication bears the imprint of a fruitful collaboration between the clinical and aesthetic fields. Dr. Ruesch is Director of Research at the Langley Porter Clinic and Associate Professor of Psychiatry at the University of California School of Medicine in San Francisco, and Mr. Kees is a poet and film producer. Anyone interested in human communication, whether as a professional or amateur, will find this book an exciting and significant contribution. It is a successful penetration into a field that has been almost untouched. There is an extensive bibliography.

* * *

The lack of free communication between the Soviet Union

and the West has meant that knowledge regarding the actual functioning and structure of Soviet society has been meager and limited to a comparatively small number of specialists. This has been especially true of the film industry. A few films, some of which have become classics, have been shown in the United States, but almost no studies of the actual organization and inner working of the Soviet film industry have been available. *The Soviet Film Industry* (Frederick A. Praeger, Inc., 150 East 52nd St., New York 22, no price given) is the result of the collaboration between a former Soviet citizen who worked in the industry and a young American student of Soviet affairs. For approximately fifteen years, Paul Babitsky was a screen writer in the Kiev and Moscow studios; John Rimberg is a young sociologist, specializing in the techniques of content analysis.

There are chapters on the central administration of the Soviet film industry, the organization of the Soviet studio, Soviet film production and the five-year plans, and a study of film export and import in the USSR. Especially interesting is a quantitative study of heroes and villains in Soviet films, 1923–1950, based on a content analysis. This is Mr. Rimberg's particular contribution.

It is a grim picture that Mr. Babitsky presents of the complete politicization of an industry. One can only wonder how the system that he describes was able to produce even the few pictures that many Western critics have regarded as outstanding contributions to the film maker's art. Of particular interest are the appendices that contain the texts of the most important decrees and directives defining the administrative structure of the Soviet film industry, the directives affecting studio operations and screen writing, and a biographical dictionary of Soviet directors. There is also a directory of Soviet films, giving dates and names of directors.

* * *

The scene of the eight TV plays in *Harrison, Texas* (Harcourt, Brace and Company, New York, 1955, $3.95) is an imaginary small town in Texas. In the Introduction, author Horton Foote

says that he was raised in such a town and that the themes of the plays are concerned with the acceptance of life and the preparation for death of the people who live there. The plays were written for the Philco-Goodyear Playhouse and the Gulf Playhouse. They were all produced between January, 1953, and March, 1954. These plays together with those of Paddy Chayefsky, who also wrote for the Philco Playhouse, document the latter's thesis that the TV medium is peculiarly adapted to the intimate dramas in the lives of everyday people. Mr. Foote also writes for the legitimate theater, has taught acting at Bard College, and is the author of *The Chase,* a novel published by Rinehart.

* * *

In *Varieties of Modern Drama* (South Dakota State College, Brookings, S.D., 1954, mimeographed, no price given), authors Martin Kallich and Malcolm M. Marsden have collected examples of writing for and about the three mass media films, radio, and TV. Their purpose is to present these technologies as sources of new and meaningful forms of literature. Films are represented by the script of *The Red Badge of Courage* with excerpts from Lillian Ross's somewhat acidulous analysis, which appeared in *The New Yorker,* and a sampling of the various critical reviews of the film. Radio is represented by scripts of Norman Corwin's *Untitled* and Arch Oboler's *Night Flight.* There are also reprints of essays on radio by Erik Barnouw, Arch Oboler, Norman Corwin, Davidson Taylor, and Albert N. Williams. Unfortunately, TV is represented only by an essay entitled "What Is Television Writing?" by Edward Stasheff and Rudy Bretz. This is an extremely interesting collection and deserves to be expanded into a book.

* * *

Everybody who listens to radio or watches TV has been annoyed by the various forms of interference that the uninitiated ascribe to something vaguely called "static," presumably related in some mysterious way to the operation of the neighbor's electric iron or power lawn mower. *Electrical Interference* (Philosophical

Library, New York, 1956, $4.75) by A. P. Hale is a book about these disturbances and the devices for their prevention. It appears that interference in radio and TV reception takes various forms, but it is only the man-made sources, especially the operation of electrical machinery, with which the book is concerned. It is a fairly technical discussion and should be useful to the specialist.

* * *

The Film Society Primer (American Federation of Film Societies, 110–42 69 Ave., Forest Hills, N.Y., 1956, $1.00) is a compilation of twenty-two articles about and for film societies. It is edited by Cecile Starr. A large variety of topics are covered, grouped under two headings: "Comparing Notes on What Film Societies Are Doing and Why" and "Background on Organizations of Interest to Film Societies." Under the first are informal reports from organizers of groups. Under the second are articles containing factual and background information about a number of existing societies both in this country and abroad. Cecile Starr is 16-mm. editor of the *Saturday Review*.

* * *

Film and Cinema Statistics (UNESCO, 19, Avenue Kleber, Paris, 1956, no price given) is a preliminary report on methodology with tables giving current statistics on various aspects of film production and exhibition during the years 1930 to 1953. The statistics cover production and importation of films (number of films produced, number of films imported, by country of origin), facilities for film exhibition (number of establishments, audience capacity), and cinema attendance and box-office receipts (cinema attendance, average price of tickets, per capita expenditure on cinema attendance). Data from 156 countries and territories are presented.

* * *

A Letter from Paul Rotha

To the editors:

In your Spring issue, Miss Irene Nicholson in her piece *Mexican Films* kindly makes two references to my visit to Mexico in 1952, both of which need amplification if my motives are to be fully understood.

First, I was not only just "impressed" by Salvador Toscano Barragán's film *Memorias de un Mexicano* when his daughter courteously screened it for me; I subsequently brought its existence to the attention of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library in New York, the National Film Library in London, and the Cinémathèque Française in Paris, in the hope that one or all of these archives would buy a print for preservation. I was also instrumental in having Miss Nicholson's article about this remarkable film published in the British Film Institute's journal *Sight and Sound* (Vol. 23, No. 1, July, 1953).

Second, my interest in Mexico for film production went a little deeper than being "interested in the possibility of foreign companies, English or American, shooting their films 'on location' in the generous spaces of Mexico," to quote Miss Nicholson. The project in which I tried to seek Mexican support was as follows:

As film history unrolls, various countries emerge at certain times and for certain reasons for their special contribution to the cinema of the decade. The Germans in the early twenties, the Russians in the middle twenties, the French in the late twenties and mid-thirties, the British during the last war, the Italians in the immediate postwar years, more recently the Japanese, and Hollywood on more than one occasion. Why not the Mexicans? They have a well-equipped industry, excellent technicians and actors, and a country so photogenic that it's hardly real! But, no outstanding directors—except Buñuel who is Spanish—and what writers there may be are given little encouragement. Production is prosperous with a foreign market in the United States, Latin America, and presumably Spain. But, there are no outstanding pictures to set the movie world afire! So, Mexico needs urgently to train young directors. Who shall train them?

The world picture of cinema just then (and indeed now) showed that several of the most gifted directors in Europe were either not working or were making films in which they had little real interest. Why not have the Mexicans invite two or three of these directors each to make a film in Mexico on an indigenous subject (in English, Spanish, and possibly French) with a stipulation that each of them undertakes to train personally a young Mexican assistant during production. In this way, over three or four years, a group of really internationally important films would be made carrying Mexican prestige round the world; and, at the same time, a group of young Mexicans would be trained in the technique of direction by world masters. On my return to Europe, I had occasion to explain this project to De Sica, Max Ophuls, and Jacques Becker. All three enthusiastically agreed to consider the scheme if it materialized.

Alas! I never heard any more from the Mexicans to whom I proposed the project! It is still, I suggest, a good idea.

14 July, 1956 PAUL ROTHA