# THE QUARTERLY of Film Radio and Television

*Volume VII* · WINTER · *Number 2*

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA PRESS
BERKELEY AND LOS ANGELES

# *Contents*

# Westerns, First and Lasting

ELIZA FRANKLIN

ELIZA FRANKLIN (Mrs. Dwight) was born in San Francisco and raised in the movie belt. She attended Hollywood High School and was graduated from Stanford University after having spent a year at Mills College and another at the University of Wisconsin. She worked on *Collier's* magazine, in New York, for about ten years. This article is a by-product of a history of Westerns Mrs. Franklin is writing.

WESTERNS were first in the motion picture field in point of time, first in the hearts of a picture-going public of all ages for about twenty years, and first in the hearts of children for almost fifty years. They still have a hold on the young and are now recapturing an adult audience. This is a record of achievement and durability that has seldom been equaled by any other specific type of entertainment.

In view of such remarkable success, perhaps the Western should be excused for losing the interest of the adult portion of the population midway in its career—but I think not. It was the Western's fault. The public had not changed; it still liked western films. This was proved by the enthusiastic reception accorded such pictures as *The Covered Wagon* (1923),[1] *Cimarron* (1931), and *Stagecoach* (1939), all of which appeared after it had become fashionable to think slightingly of the Western and to regard it as a substandard type of film of interest only to the young and the lowbrow. It was the Western that had changed. Rather, it had stopped changing and had become stereotyped and repetitious.

When the Western first appeared, it was a pioneer, and it remained a leader, by innovations and a steady improvement of quality, up to the 'twenties—then it lamely settled for a pattern that was of no further interest to the more intelligent members of the motion picture audience. After that, it energetically entertained children for many years, making only an occasional bow,

[1] *The Covered Wagon* appeared only a year or two after the Western's decline in popularity and revived interest in the western theme for a short time.

in the form of a fine film, to the adult world. Finally, after about a quarter of a century had passed, the Western bowed more frequently to the public in general and the public bowed back.

The Western's start was not merely auspicious, but sensational, for its pioneering effort not only launched its own incredibly prolific and lasting film form but simultaneously established the motion picture as a medium of mass entertainment. The first Western, *The Great Train Robbery* (generally conceded to be the first motion picture to tell a story) pulled the movie-goers who had become bored by plotless scraps of pictured action back to the show shops[2] and lured thousands who had never before seen a picture move to new show shops that suddenly opened their doors to picture audiences instead of shoppers.

After the advent of *The Great Train Robbery* (1903), the rapidly increasing picture-going public daily formed eager queues in front of the shops, now called nickelodeons, and at first it was hard to distinguish between the popularity of the Western and the popularity of motion pictures in general, for audiences were completely uncritical—they loved all the flickers. As time went on, however, they began to develop a preference in film fare and became articulate in their choice. They wanted Westerns. The public liked its pictures to move a lot, and Westerns moved faster and to more exciting purpose than other films. Also, Westerns were good, clean fare for children (an estimated third of the spectators), and this was important when there were no restraints of censorship. Moreover, Westerns seemed more real than other pictures.

In those early days, screen drawing-room drama was a poor imitation of stage drama. Plots were necessarily simple (there were no subtitles), and there was no time for characterization (the whole story had to be told on one reel that would run for twelve minutes). There were no close-ups (the entire figure was shown,

[2] When projection machines became available, films emerged from peep shows and were frequently shown in small neighborhood stores after business hours.

for "who ever heard of men talking when they are cut off at the knees?"), make-up had yet to become an art, lighting was harsh, sets were small, and scenery was cheap, flimsy, and palpably false. Westerns, by contrast, brought a semblance of realism to the screen. The characters—leaving out the imitation Indians—seemed to be real people going about their active business, unrestricted in space and unadorned by make-up. Horses contributed quick, clear-cut movement and furthered the illusion of reality. Some of the stories may have been ridiculous and some of the people—leaving *in* the "Indians"—may have looked silly, but the horses always looked like real horses and behaved like real horses. And the scenery was Nature's own. It was sturdy and expansive and frequently beautiful.

Small wonder that the public wanted Westerns! The want became a demand, but the demand was way ahead of the supply. In 1908, when two good Westerns, *The James Boys in Missouri* (Essanay) and *The Cowboy and the Schoolmarm* (Edison), appeared in two weeks' time, a critic wrote in *The Motion Picture World*, ". . . for a long time there has been a scarcity of (Westerns), notwithstanding an active demand for them on the part of exhibitors." He went on to say that the pictures mentioned were so popular they would bear repeating, then added: "Other pretentious pictures of a different order are receiving less attention than they deserve." Since all signs pointed to potential prosperity in the manufacture of Westerns, almost all of the movie makers rushed to their cameras to try to give the public what it wanted. They made Westerns in uncounted numbers, but even so several years were to pass before demand and supply struck a balance.

In the meantime, of course, no Western could fail. Producers could have been lulled by this comfortable state of affairs into making imitative, slipshod pictures, and some naturally did, but the trend was upward. The motion picture business was progressing and the Western was still its pioneer. Many of the young men who were to make their mark on the industry as a whole worked

first with Westerns and their experiments paid off in a continual and consistent improvement of the western form.

D. W. Griffith made dozens of Westerns while he developed the techniques that were to make his later pictures famous. He gave the Western a new flow, an accelerated pace, improved photography, and unusually convincing performances by good actors. He worked out methods of handling the movement of large groups in panoramic shots and, in 1911, produced *The Massacre,* a Western that is usually regarded as America's first spectacle film. The picture was unprecedentedly lavish in scale (advance publicity said it employed "hundreds of cavalrymen and twice as many Indians") and it was made in two reels.

At first, films of two-reel length were shown as serials because exhibitors did not want to put too great a strain on the staying powers of their customers, but soon two and even three-reel pictures were presented as undivided units. The Western came up with the first American five-reel feature-length film in 1913, when three men who had never before made a picture, Jesse Lasky, Cecil B. DeMille, and Samuel Goldwyn, presented *The Squaw Man.*[3] That historic film competently quashed the prevailing theory that the public would not be able to sit through five reels of sustained entertainment on one subject. The public proved to be an admirable sitter.

In the new film length, Westerns galloped into a golden age. They were among the finest productions of the day and they were popular with young and old and all classes of the movie-going public. Hollywood's most idolized stars appeared in these films. Wallace Reid made several and Douglas Fairbanks, at the beginning of his spectacular career, played leading roles in a number of Westerns,[4] some of which still rank among his best pictures.

[3] H. Stuart Blackton made *The Life of Moses* in five reels for Vitagraph in 1909. The reels were released separately but may occasionally have been shown as a unit. *The Count of Monte Cristo,* directed by Edwin S. Porter for Famous Players, was made in five-reel length in 1912, but was released after *The Squaw Man* appeared.

[4] *The Good Bad Man* (1916), *The Half Breed* (1916), *Wild and Woolly* (1917), *The Man From Painted Post* (1917), *Headin' South* (1918), and *Arizona* (1918).

Two of the greatest stars of all time (this is undebatable from the point of view of popularity), Tom Mix and William S. Hart, made nothing but Westerns.

The Mix and Hart pictures were very different. There was great rivalry between the two men (both were outstandingly virile and equally expert with guns and horses), but the Mix screen hero was always a straightforward man of action whose appeal was primarily to the American Boy, and Hart's more varied screen characters were usually psychologically complicated men of action involved in plots aimed at an adult audience.

It was Hart's first feature-length film, *The Disciple* (1915), that played successfully in New York at two-dollar prices, and his *The Silent Man* (1918) that was given a gala *première,* that jammed the sidewalks for blocks, at Sid Grauman's brand new, elaborate Million Dollar Theater in Los Angeles, but it was Mix's pictures that established the pattern for the great bulk of Westerns that were to be produced during the next thirty years. Perhaps Tom Mix, more than any other one person, was responsible for the first turning point in the Western's history, where it became imitative rather than inventive. Certainly, pictures veered toward the path he (and Broncho Billy) blazed and the cowboy hero began to dominate the screen in already time-tested plot material.

Producers of Westerns quite evidently set their sights for an uncritical audience, one that would prefer character types to characters of even semisubtle delineation, that would choose exciting action poorly motivated to action less exciting but well motivated, and that would have no interest at all in the facts of history. Such an audience would be predominantly juvenile or juvenile of mind. Several movie makers went even further and frankly aimed at an audience of children. The producers hit their marks—they got what they wanted. It was on their imposed levels, in pictures manufactured for the young and the younger, that the Western survived for almost three decades. It was a vigorous survival in spite of adult indifference, for the youthful audiences were con-

stantly replenished by new spectators who viewed the repetitious material with delighted amazement.

Giant stars emerged in the regulation cowboy films who became idols to their beholders. Their larger-than-life figures influenced the play of their innumerable little fans and increased their consumption of patented breakfast foods. Their names became household words, usually as adjectives modifying articles of clothing—Buck Jones hats, Hopalong (two-gun) belts, Roy Rogers shirts. No home containing children was allowed to forget the Western for a moment. Finally, everybody became bored by the whole subject. Even children, as they grew slightly older, began to feel superior to the films of their misspent younger days. There was every reason to believe the Western would die a slow and lingering death, saving its last gasps for new crops of innocents, but that's not what happened. It staged a comeback and entered a bright, new golden age. And the age is now.

Once more the Western has assumed a position of importance in the film world and many of its pictures are among the finest productions of the day. *Red River* (1948), with John Wayne and Montgomery Clift, would be high on any list of films, and *Yellow Sky,* made in the same year, with Gregory Peck, Anne Baxter, and Richard Widmark, was another outstanding picture. James Stewart has starred in three good western films, *Broken Arrow* (1950), *Winchester 73* (1950), and *Bend of the River* (1952). *The Gunfighter,* with Gregory Peck, was one of the finest pictures of 1950, and *High Noon,* with Gary Cooper, is among the best of the current year. The Western successfully invaded the musical extravaganza field with Betty Hutton and Howard Keel in *Annie Get Your Gun* (1950), and also produced some sprightly satires—*The Paleface* (1948), *A Ticket to Tomahawk* (1950), *Curtain Call at Cactus Creek* (1950), and *Callaway Went Thataway* (1951). These pictures and several others have brought the Western a new popularity—which might more properly be called a revival of the old popularity.

The Western has had a well-rounded career—from success with audiences of all ages, to overwhelming success with children, back to success with all age groups. The present adult enthusiasm may not run so high, nor be expressed so extravagantly as it was in the 'teens of the century, but it is a satisfactory, solid enthusiasm that will respond to the films that merit it. The public always liked good Westerns, even when it spoke of the Western with scorn. Now it likes good Westerns and will admit its liking without apology or qualification.

# The Western: A Historical Genre

JEAN-LOUIS RIEUPEYROUT

JEAN-LOUIS RIEUPEYROUT, French film critic, wrote this article for *Cahiers du Cinéma,* in which it first appeared. It is reprinted here with full permission. The translation is by Françoise Gourier, teaching assistant in the French Department at the University of California, Los Angeles campus.

THE WESTERN was born one day under the skies of New Jersey at a time when robbers deprived of their picturesque prey, the stagecoach, launched themselves into train robbery in accordance with one of the most solid traditions of the trade. The audiences that Edwin S. Porter's *Great Train Robbery* attracted to the theaters were delighted. Thus a bond of sympathy was established which linked the Western and the audience inseparably. Their union was flawless and unclouded for a long time and it was recognized and praised by critics all over the world.

In the early days intellectuals were not scornful of the reckless adventures that captured the atmosphere of the wide open spaces. These films revealed the power of a type of motion picture which had been attempted in Europe only by a few bold innovators, chief among them Joe Hamman's group. Louis Delluc,[1] Albert Bonneau,[2] Leon Moussinac,[3] and Jean Cocteau[4] all welcomed the

[1] Delluc (in *Cinémagazine,* 1923) wrote: "I think that Rio Jim is the first real character depicted on the screen. He is a first type and his life is the first really cinematographic theme, now become classic: the life of an adventurer seeking a fortune in Nevada or in the Rocky Mountains, who attacks the stagecoach, robs the mail, wrecks the saloon, burns the minister's house, and marries the sheriff's daughter. This is now such an established theme that you might think it already banal. But a purer and more arresting one is yet to be found." In the same magazine, in 1924, Delluc wrote about *The Lure of Gold:* "One of the most surprising productions of cinematographic art . . . its vitality carries us away and makes our hearts beat faster. Mad but new chases on dazzling roads, in lyrical clouds of dust, through a savage and burning countryside of trees, wind, and sun, which make us exclaim in admiration. Thomas Ince is a master of the cinema."

[2] Bonneau, in *Cinémagazine,* 1926: "William Hart may rank among the greatest figures the screen has yet known."

[3] Moussinac in *L'Age Ingrat du Cinéma* (p. 35): "Thomas Ince revealed himself as the first poet of the screen. He brought to it an amazing spirit, an exalting power of detail and an inspiring lyricism . . ."

[4] Cocteau wrote about *Carmen of the Klondike* in 1919: "Mr. Ince should be proud, for his picture equals in our memory the best books in the world."

Western warmly. The enthusiastic lines they wrote in praise of Thomas Ince and *Rio Jim* proved to the eager audiences that their liking for such a dynamic genre was justified.

But times have changed. Louis Delluc and Albert Bonneau are gone. Still, if the praise has vanished, the Western has remained for its faithful public. It might be argued that both critics and audiences could once find in the Western good reasons for their enthusiasm, reasons which according to present-day standards no longer exist.

Nevertheless, the Western remains a favorite with producers because of the excellent profit it still brings. The Western still rides on because its public remains faithful even in 1951. It is the critic who no longer applauds.

Somehow or other, the spectators of this childish genre pay little attention to the repeated warnings of the critics, failing to grow weary of deeds of violence and trite scripts filled with worn-out adjectives. The reviews which point out superficial scenario, conventional characters, and so on, do not scare the audiences away. Of course, the reviews are most instructive. The shameful blunders which they describe might make up a colossal "book of boners." To compile them all would be a rather useless undertaking of questionable value. Let's forget about them—as for us, we don't think it is too late to do some constructive criticism in a field which the current fashion forbids us to take seriously. We hope, therefore, that we may be forgiven the audacity of opposing the usually accepted view of the subject.

The Western immediately evokes an image of violent action, of pursuits and brawls. We must realize how deep an impression the drama of the frontier days of the Far West made on the minds of the people. American movie makers soon recognized the use they could make of contemporary history so closely bound to the lives of many theatergoers. If we recall the enthusiasm of continental audiences for the chronicles of glamorized history, it is easy to understand the success of the Western with American audi-

ences. (Perhaps we should make clear that we are speaking only of the nonfiction Westerns which deal with actual historical events—thus establishing a link between past and present through the camera.)

It has been argued with much justification that the Western is essentially the modern epic, and as such it possesses a genealogy that prevents our labeling it merely artificial and overdone. Those who hold the latter view look only at the works of the Alexandre Dumases of Hollywood, and would be the first to attack historical inaccuracy if only they knew the history of the American West themselves. But most film scripts do not develop from history in its broader aspects as related in any textbook, but rather from lesser-known anecdotes which must first be known by critics who would judge their intrinsic values.

The first typically American literature arose from firsthand accounts of the frontier. James Fenimore Cooper and Washington Irving were among the first to write about this subject, thereby opening the way to a specifically western literature—the western story of the latter half of the nineteenth century. Since its documentation came from daily life (the second stage in the development of a growing folklore) the Western cannot be suspected of misrepresentation. Its substance, like that of articles for eastern papers and magazines, was derived from factual information. Fiction soon followed, but it took into account the original material and the human element. Little by little the epic of the West was written—an epic which the Western film continues to relate with the added force of the pictorial art. The saga is one which many writers who specialized in Westerns (Bret Harte, Mark Twain, in earlier days; Ernest Haycox, Zane Grey, Walter Van Tilburg, today) were able to re-create with considerable talent in their short stories and novels.

Today, Europe cannot ignore the problems of the expansion of the American West. Its conquest by the white man constitutes one of the great historical and social facts of the last century.

Willingly or not, Europe learns about it and is entertained by it. Paradoxically, the spectator earnestly denies believing the stories which are offered in skillfully constructed motion pictures. He smiles over them, for he has long known that Westerns are "good for the kids"—on a par, perhaps, with some fables of our good La Fontaine. The little story of the Saturday night movie, however, is no less than history—a history which today is not satisfied with merely relating events, but which aims at character studies of the men who made those events.

History comes to us in this attractive form because a motion picture enjoys a larger audience than a book. Books seemed too weak to communicate the full force of their contents, in spite of all the talent of their authors. It is quite true that the producers of the earliest films were not always guided by such high motives as these. Let us say in their defense, however, that they were unaware at the time of the significance to be acquired by the work in which they pioneered.

Edwin Porter (*The Great Train Robbery,* 1903) could not foresee that Paul Panzer, exploiting the glory of Buffalo Bill, would devote a film biography to him—the first of its kind (1907); that Griffith would immortalize the sacrifices of the Texans of San Antonio (*Martyrs of the Alamo,* 1915); and dramatize the sufferings of Custer's cavalry (*The Massacre,* 1912). Even that early we can distinguish the trends which determined the well-defined cycles in which Westerns may be classified. From the starting point of the news item (Porter) to the re-creation of a historical event (Griffith) the change was rapid, without necessarily indicating a discard of the earlier formula. The orientation of the Western was henceforth established. History would be dramatized on the screen as completely as possible (and there was no lack of subject matter). Fiction or private anecdotes would supply the unpretentious frontier cycle. This is a rather summary classification, to be sure, which might be broken up into numerous subdivisions: Indian wars, Civil War, the Gold Rush; biographies of

famous or infamous persons would be included under the heading of history; stagecoach attacks, claim jumping, cattle rustling, and holdups might fall in what we have designated as the frontier cycle. All the basic situations in these groups were unquestionably inspired by reality.

The cinematography of the West was the result of a complete evolution, essentially characterized by its rapidity, which crystallized on the screen all the diffuse elements which folklore first, then literature, drew from the life of a region strongly stamped by unusual physical and moral forces. The unusual aspects of these forces, the strange circumstances which evoked them, the display of violence which accompanied the development of the West shocked the public at first. Now that the public is more familiar with the genre, it would be rewarding to think that the Western has discovered the historical realities proper to the period and the region. Perhaps this should happen, after so many motion pictures stubbornly bent on repeating the same situations, thus achieving a purely superficial similarity born of the setting, the costumes, the stereotyped characters. Only a Gallup Poll could inform us on this matter. Still it seems that on the contrary the public, encouraged by critics who dwell on the fictional aspects of the films, continues to regard Westerns somewhat in the same light as fairy tales.

In analyzing two of John Ford's Westerns, *My Darling Clementine* (1946) and *Fort Apache* (1949), we must immediately admit that the critics have some justification for their views. The distributors (in this case, Fox) generally find it more profitable to prepare press releases full of touching pathos rather than give the French press any objective documentation which would place the Western in a literary and historical American culture. Thus the first motion picture might have been spared the poor welcome it received in France, a few samples of which are quoted.

. . . [as for] the weakness of *My Darling Clementine*'s scenario, it seems to be the product of the assembly-line Western technique. *My Darling*

*Clementine* would not be worth much if it had not been made by John Ford . . . a very tame characterization in the sheriff . . .[5]

Its significance is probably less than that of most other John Ford pictures . . . lack of substance, conventional story, almost second-rate acting . . . the plot is commonplace, the ending meaningless, the actors often mediocre; in a word, it is a second-rate work.[6]

By the banality of its theme, *My Darling Clementine* would rank among the Saturday night Westerns. The scenario was written by two men, from a book by a third, based on the life story of a fourth person. This never gives brilliant results. . . . In addition, the scenario writers have badly confused the story by insisting on picturing Doc, the villain, as a once respectable doctor brought to his downfall by unexplained circumstances. . . . rudimentary characters.[7]

The late J. G. Auriol alone appreciated all the qualities of content and form of *My Darling Clementine*. Is it possible, four years after the presentation of this film, to try to refute these criticisms?

In order to appreciate the honesty of John Ford's work, it was necessary to return to the original text. *Frontier Marshall* was the biography of Wyatt Earp, written by Stuart N. Lake; from this book S. G. Engel and W. Miller fashioned the final script for the film. Shortly before Earp died, the former sheriff had authorized the detailed biography by Lake. Through numerous conversations with his biographer Wyatt Earp himself supplied the documentation that was instrumental in evoking a picture of the reckless life of the old West. Thus Earp succeeded in assuring the reader that the account would be as informative as it was interesting. The record of his life remains rich in meaning. "He made himself famous in a place and at a time when there was said to be no law west of Kansas and no God west of Fort Scott." We well know the reasons for these lacks. And at least as far as the law was concerned, Earp attempted to remedy the situation during his wandering life as a knight-errant of order.

[5] J. P. Barrot, *Ecran Français*, No. 97.

[6] Peter Ericson, *La Revue du Cinéma*, No. 10. He nevertheless admits that this picture is aesthetically the greatest of John Ford's.

[7] Louis Chauvel, *Le Porte-Plume la Caméra*, pp. 70–71

The film (*My Darling Clementine*) finds him around 1880 in Tombstone, Arizona, a booming city of boards and canvas, overcrowded with silver miners. The region is under the thumb of a gang led by Old Man Clanton, proud of having raised his sons to follow in his footsteps. They pursue the course of their father (who had actually been killed before Earp's arrival). Clanton was killed to avenge the deaths of several Mexican vaqueros who lost their lives in a cattle-rustling expedition led by the old man. The resurrection of Old Man Clanton by the scenario writers does not in the least detract from the authenticity of the final gun battle, known locally as the "battle of the O. K. Ranch." The sons were said to be worthy of their father, and their stubborn resistance proves how much people in the West valued their reputations, whether good or bad. On Earp's side were his brothers, Virgil and Morgan, supported by Doc Holliday. The character of this disreputable dentist whose real name was John H. Holliday has a fame equal to that of his brilliant companion. Holliday was said to have turned killer because he was too intent on defending his winnings at the poker table to concentrate on his profession. It has never been understood why an outlaw like this would join forces with the "fearless Earps," as they were called, in this final settling of accounts. (By the way, he was in reality only wounded in this battle, whereas Ford has his doubtful past redeemed by an heroic death.) Even Chihuahua really existed. "Big-Nosed Kate," the dancing girl (in reality much less beautiful than the actress Linda Darnell), helped Holliday forget his disgrace. Clementine Carter alone never came to Tombstone in search of her rascal of a fiancé. We cannot really hold her introduction into the plot against John Ford, for without her we could not have had the delightful sequence of the dance on the floor of the future church. Can he be blamed for composing within the framework of the plot sequences in which some of the most famous characters of the Old West live again?

The essentials of reality are here, and there is no need to look for a meaning in anecdotal events common to the time and place pictured. It is enough that Earp lived again on the screen, faithful to his colorful and exceptional character. And since pitched gun battles between opponents known and feared were far less numerous than gun fights between two individuals, the choice of subject can easily be justified. John Ford gave us the true picture of the man "whose skill, loyalty, and courage were long praised in the Western sagas." He caught him at the peak of his courage, and stamped his character unforgettably on our memories. Out of respect for the romantic demands of the paying public it was necessary to show Earp at the end—the brave, kind, and loyal knight, receiving the promise of a lovely smile. Why should it be improper for a sheriff to show a streak of sentimentality hidden under his badge? The epic of the famous Earp may well accommodate this one slight addition, the only one it needed. John Ford may be commended for telling his story with such soundness and power; these are the qualities that J. G. Auriol admired in him.

Fidelity of characterization and attention to accuracy unite to establish the value of the Western as an epic. But it is well to avoid generalizing quite so broadly. Such a claim is valid only for individual motion pictures, not for lengthy serials. It is obvious that Hopalong Cassidy's Westerns have but a remote link with reality—indeed, it is difficult to find even an anecdote as the basis for their plots.

*Fort Apache* is one of the more serious types of Western of the Indian wars cycle. At first it was hard to relate the theme of this film to history. The heroes' names had been systematically changed, and the identity of the colonel was particularly evasive. Fortunately the character of the colonel was distinctive, and the tactical circumstances of the final battle eventually led to an understanding of this fantasy on fact.

The plot is easily remembered. The Indians exterminate a cavalry regiment, whose colonel, although responsible for the

disaster in which he died, posthumously becomes a hero solely through the efforts of journalists. This motion picture, which is less an apology than a severe criticism of a reprehensible will for power, is an admirable character study which openly questions the judgment of the leader.

It was courageous of Ford to attack in this way one of the most famous military heroes of America in the last half of the nineteenth century. Far from being fictitious, the scenario, taken from James Warner Bellah's book, is based on one of the United States Army's most tragic episodes. On June 25, 1876, the troops of General George Armstrong Custer were cut to pieces by Sitting Bull's Sioux Indians on the banks of the Big Horn, a river in the Black Hills of Wyoming. Custer alone was responsible for this defeat, which had tremendous repercussions throughout the United States. In order to judge objectively the documentary value of John Ford's film, we must review briefly the situation in national politics brought about by the crucial question of the Indian wars.

In the Western, the Indian wars are shown in an exceptionally favorable light, which leads French spectators to consider this interpretation as reflecting a unanimous demand on the part of the American public. It is only too true that Indians are the villains of the Western films. They must be wiped out in the last reel in order to allow Civilization (the ideological concept which directed the westward march) to conquer lands closed to them by the savage and nonproductive Indians.

The real facts, however, as well as contemporary opinion, force us to revise a hasty judgment and take into account certain other tendencies. These tendencies were reported by the Boston *Post,* which expressed opposition to the official Indian policy in no uncertain terms.

> The history of the relations between the white man and the red man is the immutable one of rapacity, cruelty, complete lack of feeling on the part of the white man . . . we have no reason to be proud of our way

of acting towards the unorganized and savage people. We have no right to call ourselves a civilized and cultured nation with this evidence against us.

A violent polemic arose over the respective rights of whites and Indians in the disputed territories. The St. Louis *Globe,* less scrupulous than some of the eastern papers, expressed the prevailing opinion.

This controversy cannot hide the fact that the white man is a wave that conquers, colonizes, and brings progress. Let us not shed tears over the miseries and the sad fate of the poor Indian . . .

After having remarked on the hopelessness of the controversy, the newspaper, busy as it was riding and killing, concluded:

This opinion must be apposed to the foolish sentimentality current in the East. It is high time to put an end to the endless marches and counter-marches of a few scattered columns, led by officers completely ignorant of Indian war tactics. The time has now come to send a large and decisive expedition, in order to annihilate the resistance of these savages, and to confine the red man to his reservations, so that the white race may fulfill its destiny, which is to develop the continent and build across it the concrete proofs of Civilization.

Was not General Custer the very man to direct this "large and decisive expedition?" The New York *Herald* brought his name to the attention of headquarters.

Custer is as qualified as any man to speak on the subject of Indians. We must consider seriously his statement that one cavalry regiment—and, he adds with just pride, his own 7th regiment—could seize the Sioux in a single campaign as surely as ten treaties signed, then broken off. In such a campaign, whose authority could equal his experience and unsurpassed bravery?

We know the fatal results of this campaign, faithfully reconstructed by John Ford. For us, the value of *Fort Apache* lies in the excellent character study of the personality of Colonel Thursday, in whom Custer lives again. The reason for his transfer to the lost

outpost of Fort Apache (an imaginary name—one should read Fort Lincoln, North Dakota) remains rather obscure and unconvincing. And when we are presented with Thursday merely as a demoted officer trying to regain his lost rank, the inner struggles of the real Custer seem by contrast much more complex.

In reality Custer had been saluted by his troops and the press at the age of twenty-five with the affectionate and glorious title of the "Boy General" because of victories won in the Civil War. At thirty-five he suffered the ignominy of finding himself outshone by younger leaders whose public fame was beginning to surpass Custer's waning reputation. He was filled with a burning desire to compensate for blunders he had made in Washington, where a premature skirmish had resulted in a War Department scandal. He wanted always to be the first to receive praise and achieve triumphs. He had an overpowering love of ostentation and military splendor. In the hope of calling attention to himself in the nation's capital, Custer insisted on acting against the strict orders of his superior, General Terry, who had formulated a foolproof plan of attack. The seven hundred men of the 7th Cavalry Regiment were massacred by two thousand hysterical warriors under Sitting Bull. Ten years later, the old Indian chief was compelled to defend himself against the stubborn fury of public opinion which accused him of Custer's murder.

I did not kill Custer. He and his men came to destroy us. We defended ourselves, but nobody knows the murderer of your chief. He was a brave man, much admired by our warriors. We fought for our land and for our lives. But now that is past history. We are just waiting for death.

These are the facts from which grew the epic of General Custer, the American Roland of the last century. Do we have here an example of a Western where the heroic deeds come only from the pen of a well-meaning script writer, faithful to the traditions of his craft? A review of the actual facts of the encounter depicted by John Ford prevents us from thinking so. The script writer,

Frank Nugent, was responsible only for the screen adaptation, and we may therefore consider *Fort Apache* an example of the Western epic in its purest form. The facts alone were enough for the story.

Let us mention, however, a few slight changes required by the adaptation. The main change was to condense within a very short time the results of a complex situation in which action and psychological study were inseparable. We have already mentioned that this situation came at the close of a period of American history dominated by the problems of the relations between Americans and Indians. This aspect has been skillfully emphasized in the screen play, adding to the impression the film gives of an eyewitness account. Before the battle begins, the Indian chief explains to Colonel Thursday and his staff the grievances of his people against the white man—using the very arguments we quoted from the Boston *Post*. It might be true that they represented but a small section of public opinion. Nevertheless, their publication in a leading paper confirms the notion that the opposition was quite real. What is fiction, then? We must recognize the historical accuracy of the events; plain common sense urges us to discount the sentimental plot through which the facts were conveyed dramatically.

In films that are part of the frontier cycle (personal anecdotes or Indian war), or of the Civil War cycle, the Western has patiently reconstructed, like a gigantic jigsaw puzzle, the history of the New World. Americans learn about their national heroes through the Western in the same way that Frenchmen look for theirs in accounts of official and "off-the-record" history. The writer must of necessity place his heroes in the past; no matter how accurate his picture of former days, the imagination of his reader is still the indispensable ingredient that brings the story to life.

From the social to the military background, from private anecdote to widely publicized incident, from the deeds of a famous

robber to those of a captain, the past of the American West is re-created on the screen. Each section of the United States has had its unique problems, but all have been characterized by violence. Too many people were after the same riches and too few were able to keep a cool head in moments of crisis. Men came to leave their imprint on the country, but instead the country fashioned them in its own patterns and forced upon them certain ways of life. Here we find the most probable explanation for the bad men whom the Western is inclined to consider so indulgently. These men, whether obscure or famous, do not find forgiveness on the screen alone. If they are pardoned anew by the films, this is more a public confirmation of the opinions of millions of movie-goers than a posthumous acquittal. Jesse James, Wild Bill Hickok, and Sam Bass enjoyed in their time the most flattering fame, while Wyatt Earp and General Custer are only other personifications of the same ideal—an ideal preserved in the confident and magnanimous American saga.

We could add weight to this argument merely by dwelling on this notion of the saga, explaining its genesis, and demonstrating its force in western folklore and literature. Except for the purely fictional films where only the background is true to life, we can rely on the historical accuracy of the events pictured by the masters of this genre. To those who feel that Texas and Arizona as we see them in Westerns never existed, we recommend a reconsideration of the facts and an intensive reading of the authors of western stories. Far from being glamorized fiction, the Western is rather a faithful representation of a too-often unrecognized reality. It is the expression of a typically American mythology. Its heroes and its gods offer us a thousand epic pictures and unfold on the screens of the universe a new, gigantic, and vivid Bayeux tapestry.

# Tito and Celluloid

JOHN P. DRISCOLL

JOHN DRISCOLL received degrees in political science and motion pictures at the University of California, Los Angeles campus, and is currently employed by a New Orleans firm as cameraman-director on documentary films. He collected the material for the following article while shooting an educational film in Yugoslavia.

A COOL MIST fell on Zagreb one evening last October, as a shining new government bus pulled up before the Hotel Esplanade to pick up a handful of skeptical foreigners. As willing representatives from the world outside, we had been invited to a special showing of Yugoslavia's new motion picture industry. Of all the people on the bus, it occurred to me, I was the sole person from the industry with film-making experience and the only American. A few minutes later the bus unloaded us before what had previously been a public meeting house of some type, and we were very politely ushered into an improvised but, by current Yugoslav standards, a luxurious theater. The remainder of the evening was a carefully and effectively planned demonstration of communism's embrace of the cinema.

On the trip back to the hotel a few hours later, I endeavored to sample the reactions of my fellow passengers. I learned quite a bit by remaining silent and listening to the most vehement talkers, two Frenchmen comparing the finesse of their own long-established cinema with the cruder but proudly presented efforts of their hosts. A man with a cold stare and dark, cropped mustache sat silently beside me, glancing occasionally out the window at the rain. Assuming that "still water often runs deep," I could not resist the temptation to try to discover his attitude. Instead of replying in French, he snapped back his summary with a loud, "nur Propaganda." The man quickly revealed himself as a disappointed Nazi and a former enthusiast and target of film propaganda of the Dr. Goebbels' variety. Changing approach and

language, I continued the observation over several cups of coffee after the bus ride. The ramifications of the man's philosophy epitomized an old theory of mine, namely that the acceptance of film impressions as fact or as fiction is directly connected with the factor of nationalism. Thus the film propagandist must employ such factors in measuring the credulity of any audience. It is exactly there that the regime of Mr. Tito is alert and enterprising.

No reader of this publication needs to be sold on the potential of the screen as a force for persuasive education. Nor should he assume that the Yugoslav government is not aware of this marvelous tool at its command. It is completely at its command. No independent theater or film producer is allowed to operate today in Yugoslavia.

The gross attendance has risen almost 100 per cent in the last four years. Whereas prior to World War II there was practically no film production native to the people, the Yugoslav government, through its half-dozen agencies, last year alone had some 28 feature films in production. Further, it has even outdone the prolific work of John Grierson and his associates by making more than 200 documentaries since 1946. (Please note that these are quantitative measurements.) People in remote parts of Bosnia-Herzogovina and Macedonia, who had never seen even a silent motion picture, suddenly found themselves looking in awed wonder at people talking and singing on a silver screen or on an old white piece of cloth put up in one corner of the village meeting house. Should they complain or raise an eyebrow because the characters on the screen were fighting for or coöperating with the national government? The growing number of theaters, the vast increase in mobile cinemas, and the introduction of 16 mm. on a wide scale throughout the land provide local Marxian theorists with opportunities to show glowing examples of expanding productivity under a planned system.

To mention "planning" in Yugoslav film circles is to provoke the bringing out of blueprints of studios that will ultimately out-

sprawl the acreage, both soundproofed and exterior, of any lot in Hollywood. One cannot imagine more striking and modern studios than appear on the desk tops of enthusiastic Yugoslav film makers. To maintain that they are only dreams is unfair, for a limited amount of building has already been undertaken, and the nation has films to prove it. One cannot help but admire the keenness with which these people go about their business, their eagerness to have their work approved by the republic, and their willingness to compare it with that of their contemporaries outside those borders they are not allowed to penetrate.

In Yugoslavia today all film making has to have a purpose in line with the socialist and/or nationalist aims of the state. Of the films offered at the aforementioned showing, the least subtle and the strongest in propaganda content was the one which caused the greatest stir among the audience. The picture, *The Red Flower (Crveni Cvijet)*, concerned itself with the lives of Yugoslav prisoners of war in a German camp. The nationalism involved was only part of the intended service to the state of this particular film. Indeed, the chief aim of the piece was to prove in dramatic terms exactly what were the problems of the Yugoslav partisans—that is, the Communists—in gaining freedom from the Nazis, yet at the same time doing so independently of their own cellmates who represented conservative, royalist thinking. The former, the heroes of the drama, were intimately associated with fidelity to country and obviously dissociated from Nazi ideals and practices. Their royalist counterparts, though admittedly Yugoslav patriots, soon proved unequal to the pressure on their patriotism, and the plot enmeshed them with the Nazi characters. In the brutal ending of the film, these men received their just deserts for such sentiments. The audience had little opportunity to divide its sympathies.

The second film, entitled *The Banner,* was likewise concerned with the heroism of the partisans. Nationalism was again associated with the Communist guerillas, whereas the nonpartisan

characters of the drama were not only made to appear chauvinistic, but even fascist. Although dramatically equal to the former film, it was inferior cinematically and proved an exception to the general tendency in Yugoslav script writing to avoid speechmaking.

By and large, the Yugoslavs have surpassed recent Russian film endeavors by giving cinematic sense its proper importance as against the political motives in film production. This can best be illustrated by comparing two examples of their respective efforts: a Yugoslav film, the title of which translates roughly as *These People Live* and a Russian film of similar subject matter, *Miners of the Don.* The first picture tells in dramatic sequence the adjustment of the factory worker to the state-owned manufacturing enterprise, whereas the second, with a similar task as a propaganda piece in an even more colorful setting, by-passes the cinematic in favor of rhetoric. Where the Yugoslavs employ the drama of the people's lives as the main content of the film and succeed in capturing the emotional reaction of the audience, the Russians have used the people's lives as a series of disconnected backdrops for fiery conversations about the necessity of fulfilling the government production quota. One might say that the Russians turned out a technically superior "talkathon," whereas the Yugoslavs can brag of a cruder yet much more interesting "workathon."

In comparing two Communist approaches to the cinema, it might be well to consider two show pieces of Yugoslavia and Russia. The latter nation is considered to have reached its peak in the art of the motion picture about the time of Serge Eisenstein's *Alexander Nevsky.* Though at present Yugoslavia can boast no Eisensteins, it has certainly made strides toward developing directors with style and imagination. One such man is Vojislav Nanovic, whose master work to date is a presentable answer to the challenge of the early start enjoyed by the Russians. His film is *The Magic Sword* (*Cudovorni Mac*) and it is based on an old national fairy tale, *Bas-Celik,* in which a young shepherd named Nebojsa unknowingly rescues the tyrant Bas-Celik, who afterwards takes away

Nebojsa's fiancée on their wedding day and enslaves the countryside. Bas-Celik (Celik means "steel") and his men cannot be killed by ordinary weapons but only by the Magic Sword which is being guarded in a distant empire by an empress willing to give it only to the cleverest and bravest man.

Nebojsa (which means "unafraid") gets the sword and conquers the army of Bas-Celik, thus rescuing his compatriots and, of course, his sweetheart. The director of this film was unable to get completely away from the "staged" epoch, but he was able to make a showing that compared favorably with the new Russian legend film *The Stone Flower,* even though the latter had all the technical advantages of color and studio excellence. Message per se in this film was kept to a minimum, and the picture demonstrated that the Yugoslav film producers are lacking in neither imagination nor subtlety.

In summation, it might be said that the production of first-rate films—that is, first-rate in a truly comparative sense—within the borders of Yugoslavia is bound to come about if the writers and directors have the freedom and opportunity advanced in theory by the state motion picture agencies. But it is becoming increasingly evident that a happy medium must be struck, if such is possible, between the national economic goals and the aesthetic goals of the artists and technicians involved. If not, the rigid national control will eventually lead to such suffocation of the film art as occurred both in Germany and in postwar Russia.

Although on an admittedly smaller scale than the programs of the latter countries, Yugoslavia's Film Propaganda Ministry is going about its business in a way that reveals its own awareness of its potential. Its actions show a deep desire to gain the support of the public in governmental programs through the power of the screen in controlling the will and reactions of the Yugoslav people. In a land where radios are even today quite a luxury, the common ground of the motion picture—whether in the theater or in a public square or meeting house—remains the most effective me-

dium for sugar-coating the messages to the people deemed necessary by Belgrade. Through the dramatic feature film, the newsreel *Journalfilm,* and the many documentary films shown throughout the country, the city dweller and peasant of Yugoslavia are becoming more and more oriented to the government's programs and their own part in them. No visitor to Yugoslavia today can come away saying that Tito's regime is neglecting the film medium: on the contrary, one must admit that the regime is alert and ready to employ it to the fullest extent—as propaganda.

# Films from Abroad: Fact and Fiction

RICHARD ROWLAND

RICHARD ROWLAND, a frequent contributor to the *Quarterly,* is a member of the English Department faculty at Columbia University. He is an alert and interested critic of the cinematic output of Europe.

A KEEN awareness of setting is evident in three recent European films which have been exhibited in this country. Two of them, *No Resting Place* and *The River,* aim specifically at communicating a sense of the places in which they were filmed, while the third, *Outcast of the Islands,* uses the setting as a backdrop for dramatic action.

Few Americans will have an opportunity to see *No Resting Place.* A dismal failure in its native England, it was little more successful in its brief New York showing. Yet it is the work of a distinguished cinema artist and a film of far more than average power and persuasion.

Paul Rotha is known as a director of documentaries and a writer about the film. But here he is producing a fiction film. His story is of the life of an Irish tinker's family. The father accidentally kills a gamekeeper; a suspicious and aging policeman vows to bring him to justice and ultimately does so. This simple tale has been photographed against the Irish countryside with a cast of players most of whom are from Dublin's Abbey Theatre.

There is much that is memorable in the film. It is first to be commended for its avoidance of sentimentality. A tinker's life is hard; that is, indeed, the primary point the film has to make and there is no softness in its presentation of this point. Its tinker family is a tough crew with tight mouths and unblinking eyes, passionately clannish, brawling, unrelenting in their contempt for the rest of the world. Perhaps the most moving thing in the film is the tinkers' silent little boy upon whose ageless poise the film makes no spoken comment. We have a powerful sense of the

endurance with which this family lives its thin life—harvesting the crops for others, squatting in decayed sod houses, sipping their porridge, spending their pennies in the pub too quickly. They are not pretty; the mother is thin and tired, the men sullen, silent, impudent to the police. We respect them for their tenacity; we scarcely love them. The acting is so good that we never notice it; this is the highest praise one could give such a film.

Our love goes out instead to the countryside, gentle, rounded, uncontrolled, which like the actors has been photographed with serene detachment. No pure documentary could have given a more perfect sense of the moist greenness of the Irish wayside. The idyllic background is discreetly and tactfully reinforced by William Alwyn's score which is folkish without banality, never obtrusive, always charming.

But in the end the film does not quite come off. Probably the trouble is that Mr. Rotha's interest in the documentary aspect of the film has kept him from developing the dramatic side of things. The story is a conventional enough chase story, but there is not quite enough of it to sustain a full-length film. Mr. Rotha is interested in showing us what it is like to be an Irish tinker, not what it is like to be *this* Irish tinker. The malevolent constable is thinly conceived, scarcely justified in his actions; it would be easy to motivate him but the script has not troubled to. The script is full of finely conceived detail: the defiant women screaming abuse at the farmer who drives them off his farm; the belligerent husband making arrangements for his wife's pathetic funeral with the begrudging undertaker; the hasty, mumbled ceremony over her grave; the boy's innocent call, "Da, why did you kill the man?" which brings the film to a chilling close. But even these seem intended to document a way of life rather than to create conflict and dramatic meaning. The film is generalized to the point where what is specific seems thin and arbitrary. Flaherty, in *Tabu* and *Louisiana Story,* knew how to block out large symbolic actions which were general, so that the actors were

not called upon to establish themselves as personalities; here the power with which the nonfiction has been handled renders the fiction trivial and impertinent.

A film which has been much more widely exhibited in the United States similiarly fell between two stools. This was Jean Renoir's *The River.* Rumer Godden's novel from which it was adapted was a delicate tale of adolescence, a little soft and overcolored, but on the whole charming and sensitive. But Renoir has given it a full Technicolor treatment which tends to drown the slight but moving fable in pageantry. Apparently what happened—and understandable it is—was that the impact of India upon the director was too great; he kept seeing pictures everywhere he went. Certainly pictorially the film is almost unflaggingly splendid, but too few of the pictures are integrally related to the story he is telling. And the rather gauche narration, which attempts to make the link, sounds precious and arty when spoken as it did not on the printed page. Miss Godden's novel was not about growing up in India; it was about growing up anywhere. The exotic setting impinged scarcely at all on the book. One had a sense of the cool island, which was the home of the story, existing almost in isolation, as anyone's happy childhood home is likely to do. But here the story is constantly interrupted by sumptuous excursions to the bazaars, by native dancing, by crowded river scenes—all of them lovely in themselves but tending to obscure the engaging homeliness of the central story. Renoir is a director of real sensitivity, as such varied films as *Grande Illusion, Partie de Campagne,* and the generally unappreciated *The Southerner* have amply shown, but here his touch seems uncertain and the total effect is a little flat.

But such is the danger run by any film shot on location in a corner of the world strange to the director. The problem has been solved much more satisfactorily by Carol Reed in his *Outcast of the Islands,* filmed mostly in Ceylon. In Conrad's novel Reed had the advantage over Rotha and Renoir of a story of

much greater solidity and strength. But what is exemplary about the film is that each shot of the native village where the story takes place is related to the narrative directly and significantly. It is a fascinating place Reed shows us, but we do not look at it for fascination. We look at it because these particular aspects of native life act in a specific way upon the demoralized central figure of the story. I have never been wholly convinced that Carol Reed was a director of the first rank; each of his earlier films seemed to be so derivative—of Welles or Hitchcock or Ford—that it was hard to believe that he was more than a slick eclectic, admirable though the result generally was. This film would not serve to define a Carol Reed style, but it does have an integrity that I have not felt before in his work.

Conrad's novel offers drawbacks as well as strength. Captain Lingard proves to be as long-winded an old duffer as most of Conrad's elderly sea captains were, but even he begins to come to life toward the end when we sense the role he plays—the anti-Mephistopheles who always wills good and works evil. But on the whole, the film has the slow but steady progression of a Conrad novel, a power which is not economical but is relentlessly compelling. The actors have served Reed well: Trevor Howard's outcast is despicable but absorbing; Robert Morley's Almayer is as clever a piece of nastiness as the screen has seen; Wendy Hiller's suppressed hysteria as Mrs. Almayer is infinitely touching. The language is perhaps a little high-flown and novelistic, but the sense of place almost atones for this. For here is the fiction film whose documentary elements further the plot; the film gives us a sense of knowing what this unidentified island is like better than Mr. Rotha's told us of Ireland. Reed is interested in detail, in the smells and patterns and rhythms of a place, but only so far as they relate to a significant story of how the white man's morality withers when uprooted. We remember this crazy village with its network of catwalks, the silent eyes of its naked brown children, its heat and confusion and violence, because we remember it in

relation to people and parable. Too much of *The River* and *No Resting Place* flowed over us like a Fitzpatrick Travel Talk.

Joseph Wood Krutch in his *The Desert Year* tells us what is wrong with being a tourist and why you must live in a place to know it. Few American tourists can really have a sense of Oxford or Chartres as they see them today. One sometimes finds himself disbelieving in the Grand Canyon or Venice even though he has seen them with his own eyes. I suppose no one can quite understand Versailles or the Acropolis today because one cannot live in them. These three films prove the same point, for only *Outcast of the Islands,* which aims at telling a story rather than at depicting a place, succeeds in conveying to us any sort of final sense of its setting. Conrad's island may have no geographical existence, but we know the island; we have been there. Without any of Flaherty's deliberately anthropological approach, Mr. Reed has achieved a film with the similar effect of authenticity, and he has told a rattling good yarn at the same time.

# The Challenge of the 242 Channels—II

BURTON PAULU

BURTON PAULU is currently serving both as a consultant to WOI-TV, the educational television station at Iowa State College, and as manager of KUOM, the University of Minnesota's educational radio station. As an alternate representative for the National Association of Educational Broadcasters on the Joint Committee on Educational Television, Dr. Paulu testified before the Federal Communications Commission during the hearings on the reservation of television channels for educational use. These hearings and the events which led to them were described by Dr. Paulu in the first part of this article, which appeared in the Fall issue of the *Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television.* Here, in Part II, Dr. Paulu analyzes the functions, costs, and possibilities of educational television stations.

TELEVISION'S great potentialities for education are the result of the same factors which have made it such an extraordinarily effective mass communicator. People who work with or study television soon come to realize that it cannot be appraised or understood in terms of radio or films. Alone among the mass media it offers the audience the attractions of sight, sound, immediacy, and home viewing; it therefore possesses some of the most attractive features of stage, film, and radio. Yet television is much more than the sum total of its constituent parts: it not only combines their problems and potentialities, it compounds them into something which none of them by itself has been able to attain. Television brings a new dimension to mass communications.

The rate and extent of the public's acceptance of television is nothing short of astonishing. Educators may not fully appreciate this since their viewing habits are usually atypical, although they easily can make observations or review research which will indicate television's audience appeal. Consider the extent of set ownership, for example, as shown by the forests of aerials on the roofs of private homes and apartment houses. Although most television receivers cost from $200 to $300, set owners living in fringe reception areas where station signals are weak often add even more to their investments by installing tall aerials and booster amplifiers. Once purchased, television sets are extensively used: the living

schedules of many families appear to be television oriented and evenings of friendly conversation too often have given way to viewing sessions. It is also notable that concert impresarios, sporting events promotors, and motion picture producers all blame their attendance problems on television.

Here are some estimates on the extent of set ownership. In 1946 there were only 8,000 television sets in use in the United States. By 1947 this number had grown to 250,000. Approximate figures for subsequent years are: 1948—1,000,000; 1949—4,000,000; 1950—10,500,000; 1951—15,750,000; and in mid-1952—17,500,000. It should be noted that this expansion took place when the United States had only 108 stations in 64 areas serving less than half the population of the country. The lifting of the freeze will of course lead to a further increase in the number of sets.

There are many—and often varying—data as to the amount of set use, but whatever the exact figures may be, they all indicate a great deal of viewing. For example, the 1952 *Telecasting Yearbook* reports that on an average evening between 8 and 10 P.M. 60 per cent of all television sets are in use. (The corresponding figure for radio is 30 per cent or less.) A central Iowa survey made in the fall of 1951 by WOI-TV (the only television station in that area) showed as high as 80 per cent and never less than 60 per cent of all television sets turned on between 7 and 10 P.M. There also is much statistical evidence to indicate the drastic effect of television on radio listening. Thus the 1951 *Broadcasting-Telecasting Yearbook* reported an average of two hours of evening radio listening before television ownership, as compared with three and a half hours of combined radio-television use after television ownership; but all except twenty minutes of the latter amount was devoted to television! The WOI-TV survey indicated that whereas 35 per cent of the radios in nontelevision houses were in use between 6 and 10 P.M., only 3 per cent of them were turned on in television houses. Television is often charged with reducing attendance at motion picture theaters and sporting events; there is much differ-

ence of opinion here, and not a great deal of research data. However, a recent study made by the National Opinion Research Center at the request of the National Collegiate Athletic Association reported that telecasts of major athletic events tend to reduce attendance at those and other athletic contests.

There is a growing body of empirical evidence on the audience impact of television. The Kefauver crime hearings are a dramatic example. Furthermore, their build-up of Kefauver probably contributed a great deal to making him presidential timber. The telecasting of the narcotic hearings illustrated the same thing on a smaller scale. "The Whole Town's Talking" series of WOI-TV in Ames, Iowa, showed television's impact in another way: a series of television discussions by local people of their own problems was astonishingly successful in arousing state-wide interest in the problems taken up.

Television's great impact as an advertising medium is conclusively shown by some recent financial data. Until 1951 television stations in the aggregate operated at a loss. But that year the television broadcasters made a profit (before taxes) of $43,600,000, compared to losses of $9,200,000 in 1950 and $25,300,000 in 1949. These figures were based on reports from 15 network-owned and operated and 93 independently operated stations. Five stations reported profits of more than $1,500,000 each, and average profits for the 93 independent stations were $250,000. Only 9 stations reported losses. On the other hand, radio broadcasting's total profits declined from $18,700,000 in 1950 to $10,400,000 in 1951, with the result that in 1951—even though the country had only 108 television stations serving about half the country's total population—television had become the main source of revenue for the broadcasting industry. This earning potential is reflected in the market value of television stations. To date amounts ranging from $1,000,000 to $6,000,000 have been offered for television stations in which the actual dollar investments had been at most a quarter or a third of those amounts. No wonder the television industry

opposed the reservation of channels for education! For the same reason it may be expected to do what it can to convert some of these channels to commercial use, especially in communities where the demand for commercial facilities exceeds the supply.

*Functions of Educational Television*

What kinds of programs will the educational stations offer? And what can they do that the commercial stations cannot do as well or better? First it should be noted that the Federal Communications Commission has stated that commercial stations are not discharged from their public service responsibilities by the presence of the educational stations, and furthermore that the programs of the latter are to be regarded as supplementing rather than replacing those of the commercial stations. The communities best served by television will be those with both types of stations.

The strength of the educational stations in terms of program services will follow from their economic base: because they will not be dependent upon advertising revenue for their support, long-range educational objectives rather than financial balance sheets will determine their program policies. Therefore they will have more time for education—and at hours more convenient for the interested audience. Furthermore they will be free to program without thinking of the number of viewers being reached.

For these reasons they can broadcast to important special interest groups which commercial stations may be unable or unwilling to serve. Broadcasts to schools are a good example. To be sure, effective in-school telecasting over commercial stations is now being done by the Philadelphia public schools—incidentally with more telling results than have been achieved with most in-school radio programs. In a number of communities commercial television stations may provide time for such programs; at least it is to be hoped they will do so. Nevertheless it is reasonable to predict that this usually will not be the case, especially as television's morning and afternoon hours become more saleable. There has

been a continuous trend away from in-school programs by commercial radio stations, even though the audiences for such broadcasts often have been quite large. At the same time college and university radio stations have developed extensive schools of the air, while public school stations have offered daylong in-school program services—something obviously impossible for commercial radio or television stations. The educational stations also can broadcast programs for vocational groups with specialized needs and interests, such as market reports and interpretations for farmers, and illustrations of surgical techniques for physicians. Although commercial stations should and undoubtedly will do some programming of that type too, the educational stations can often do it better, and with their freedom from commercial commitments they can more easily schedule, and often repeat, such programs at times convenient for the audience.

Comprehensive informational and instructional programs for adults are another field which the educational stations will have largely to themselves. Again, there are current examples of excellent adult instruction programs broadcast by educational institutions over commercial facilities; the work of Western Reserve University and the University of Michigan come to mind. Both have found television to be a far more effective medium than radio for formally organized courses. But here again, if commercial radio's example is to be repeated, most commercial television stations will leave it up to the educational stations to provide regular extended periods for serious programming. They alone will be willing to forego chances at the larger audience within reach of entertainment shows in order to work for long-range educational objectives with programs of more limited appeal. Commercial stations occasionally may put on big spectacles and probably will offer regular programs of capsuled knowledge; but if there are to be many organized educational programs the educational stations surely will provide most of them.[1]

[1] The New York, Los Angeles, and Chicago monitoring studies conducted by the NAEB document these observations.

Finally, there is the area of special emergency services. In the past some educational radio stations have distinguished themselves by remaking their schedules on a single day's notice to meet the needs of a community undergoing a polio epidemic, for example, or to carry an important network sustaining program which the local affiliate rejected because of commercial commitments. Here television will probably repeat radio's record. If an emergency assumes the magnitude of a disaster many stations will step into the breach; but in less dramatic situations noncommercial educational stations—by reason of their flexible schedules and freedom from sponsor pressures—have certain advantages over those which are advertising supported.

*Costs of Educational Television*

How much will it cost to construct and operate a noncommercial television station? This question cannot be answered categorically. Such variables as a station's power and antenna height, the number and size of its studios, the extent to which already existing buildings may be converted to television use, and the number of hours it expects to be on the air will affect the size of outlay required. However, within broad limits, some figures may be cited.

An educational television station—studios, transmitter and accompanying equipment—will cost from $185,000 to $400,000 to construct, and may be operated at a cost ranging between $175,000 and $250,000 per year.[2] As absolute sums these at first may seem large, but against the background of educational budgets today, and in view of the potentialities of television, they are not at all formidable. A few comparisons will bring them into perspective.

First let us compare the television construction cost estimate of $185,000 to $400,000 with some conservative educational building costs. A combination public school gymnasium-auditorium with a seating capacity of only 1,000 people now costs between

[2] These figures were obtained from a talk given by Richard B. Hull, director of WOI-TV, at the NAEB convention in Biloxi, Mississippi, in November, 1951, and from a report by E. Arthur Hungerford, Jr., of General Precision Laboratories, to the Educational Television Program Institute at Pennsylvania State College, April 21–24, 1952.

$125,000 and $300,000. An elementary school building with capacity for 200 pupils ranges in price from $100,000 to $240,000, and a high school building of the same size from $300,000 to $400,000. A college classroom building with accommodations for 1,500 pupils and accompanying office space for instructors now costs from $1,500,000 to $2,000,000. A science building with more equipment but less student capacity comes to the same amount. Yet an educational television station with a potential audience of tens—in many cases hundreds—of thousands of people can be constructed for less than $400,000!

Now let us make comparisons between school operating budgets and an educational television station's annual operating cost of $175,000 to $250,000. The New York City public school system from kindergarten through college costs the taxpayers of that city half a billion dollars a year to maintain. Corresponding costs for Los Angeles and Detroit exceed $100,000,000 yearly. Most public school systems in communities of 30,000 to 40,000 people spend well in excess of $500,000 per year. College and university budgets, like those for public schools, vary tremendously, but it is safe to say that a liberal arts college of 1,000 students has an annual operating budget of at least $700,000, and that the corresponding figure for a university with an enrollment of 15,000 would be well over $35,000,000. A comparison of any of these figures with an educational television station's annual operating cost of less than $250,000 again indicates television's far greater investment return in view of a station's great audience potential.

It should be realized, of course, that in many communities educational television costs will be divided among several educational organizations; in fact this assumption underlay much of the JCET's presentation to the Federal Communications Commission. Since a broadcasting station by its very nature is able to serve an entire area, it would be logical for it to have joint sponsorship. Plans are currently under way for such coöperative projects in Boston, Chicago, and San Francisco. There also are several other

ways to lighten the programming load and thus reduce operating costs. At the outset educational films may supply some program material; one or more projects are underway to index and evaluate films for educational television. A plan is also being developed with foundation support to set up an educational television kinescope production and distribution project somewhat similar to the National Association of Educational Broadcasters' tape network which now is doing so much for educational radio stations.

It would appear, therefore, that budget-wise a noncommercial educational television station would be a reasonable addition to a community's educational establishment. But will educational administrators—who already complain about inadequate funds—allocate any money for television? The answer is that money will be appropriated when people are convinced that television stations will yield educational results commensurate with their cost. But first television's enormous potential must be made known. How can this be done?

*Community Action*

Because of the one-year rule the future of noncommercial educational television in many communities will have to be decided before June 2, 1953. Although the first step—the reservation of channels—was taken in Washington by the Federal Communications Commission, the second step—the decision to apply for these channels—will have to be taken locally. Here are some suggestions for expediting that procedure.

First there must be a campaign to present information and develop enthusiasm for educational television among educational administrators, teachers, public officials, councilmen and legislators, community leaders, and the general public. People need to acquire an understanding of the role of television in modern society. This means that important concepts—new to many of them—must be expounded. A surprising number of serious-minded men and women think of television only as an entertain-

ment medium; to many of them its educational role is confined to sporadic educationally labeled broadcasts. These people must hear about television's potentialities for education. They also must be told about the 242 channels and the need for applying for them within the year. Successful educational television programs should be studied, from kinescope recordings if possible, otherwise from written or oral descriptions. Facts and figures need to be presented about construction and operating costs. The possibility of coöperative financing and programming also must be explained. The presentation of educational television programs on a closed circuit basis or over local commercial stations may help to develop interest, increase know-how, and bring about a better understanding of television.

Finally, an appraisal of the local situation must be made and positive action initiated. Some person or group should investigate the potentialities of noncommercial educational television for the community. Perhaps outside experts should be invited to provide information and counsel. At any rate local program needs and resources must be inventoried and fund sources determined. It must be decided whether the focal point for educational television should be an already existing educational organization or a new entity set up especially for that purpose. Competent legal and engineering experts should be retained to provide advice and assistance in the preparation of an application for a construction permit.

Who is to assume leadership? Foresighted educators and public-spirited citizens working in their own communities! The Joint Committee on Educational Television will continue to provide national leadership as it did during the first stage when channel reservations were the big problem, and it has set up a field consultation service to supply educators with general information about legal problems, construction and operating costs, and program types. But what counts most now is the work done locally! Educational administrators in many cases may initiate movements for

station applications. Often the incentive will come from those whose positions carry direct responsibility for broadcasting—radio station managers and audiovisual directors, for example. Elected public officials, councilmen, and legislators may assume leadership roles, too. But there is also an important place for the leader "without portfolio." Sometimes pathbreaking may be done more easily by a person without formal responsibilities, who, for that very reason, can see things in truer perspective and can work out problems with more freedom than can the professional worker.

The reservation of the 242 channels is the most important event in the history of educational broadcasting. These reservations were made only after a concerted effort by educators and public-spirited citizens convinced the Federal Communications Commission, over the vigorous objections of the broadcasting industry, that education should have its place in the television spectrum. The question now is: will the country's educational organizations use these channels? When the commission's decision was announced, 523 commercial applications were pending, many of them for stations in large communities where the supply of channels is insufficient to meet the demand. After June 2, 1953, the unsuccessful commercial applicants will begin their assault on the reserved channels. Will they be successful? Or will education mobilize as successfully to use these channels as it did to have them reserved?

Herein lies the challenge of the 242 channels.

# Educational Broadcasters as Social Scientists

HAROLD LASSWELL

HAROLD LASSWELL, professor at Yale Law School, has long been considered an authority on the psychological aspects of political science. The present article is based on a speech delivered by Professor Lasswell to the National Association of Educational Broadcasters Convention at Biloxi, Mississippi, in 1952.

ANYBODY WHO has been in the educational broadcasting business or has had any responsibility for any kind of adult education program, or any sort of public service activities in connection with any institution, educational or noneducational, in the United States or elsewhere, has faced this problem: How to capture the gadgets of modern society for the service of our basic moral and political ideas.

By this time, it is no news when people talk about modern civilization as inhabited by chauffeurs, people whose mentality is that of steersmen of machines that they do not know how to construct, did not design, did not participate in making. In a sense, this is a world of chauffeurs living among an abundance of gadgets, learning how to push buttons and how to handle wheels and other control instruments. The famous communications revolution has given to millions of people another set of gadgets on an unparalleled scale, gadgets that permit them to listen to and look at other people. Under these circumstances, the problem becomes more obvious and more pressing than ever. What are we going to do about these gadgets? How can we effectively master them so that they can contribute to some result worth getting?

We are more serious about that, I suppose, in the United States now, than we have been at any time since toward the end of the eighteenth century when we were busy seceding from the British Empire and undertaking to set up a more perfect Union of our own. The correspondence of the Fathers reveals that the

problems which we are now talking about were matters which they were discussing with one another.

I think that today we are in a position to ask ourselves the same kinds of earnest questions that were asked at the end of the eighteenth century. Today we have the problem of a more perfect Union. There is nothing left to secede from except the globe as a whole, and nobody yet knows just how to get away from it. Consequently, the problem now is not one of secession to be followed by the putting of the seceded parts together. Our problem in the twentieth century is how to bind men together for the achievement of positive moral and social values. The communications problem with which we are particularly concerned is but part of the bigger issue of how we handle the gadgets for all important values. Are we satisfied with our achievements up to date? Certainly no one, I am sure, would feel complacent about the way we have handled these extraordinary new instruments of communication. None of us would feel that the results which we have so far obtained are sufficiently impressive to let any of us congratulate ourselves.

What is the major discrepancy between where we would like to go and where we are now? I suppose the major discrepancy is not quantitative. It is no longer a problem of building up a basic network for the dissemination of ideas. Today, we have a Niagara of communications coursing through the existing network of the radio, the printed press, and the rest of the channels. With this Niagara of symbols the problems are qualitative. The qualitative problem is this: how can we get into the stream of communication the materials that contribute to the basic purposes that we have in view?

I am not going to spend time expanding what I mean by these basic purposes, because all of us share American culture. We would differ, I suppose, in the words that we would employ to describe what we mean by human dignity. But I think we would find, when we matched our labels, that the words would turn

out to be equivalent. I will take it for granted that we share the basic conception that we want the sort of society in America, and as widely as possible throughout the globe, which realizes human dignity in theory and in practice. And human dignity means that we realize a state of affairs in which there is very wide sharing of the basic values. For instance, a very wide sharing of the decision-making process: that is democracy in the political sense. A very wide sharing of the benefits of the enormous production potentials of modern society: that is economic democracy in the material sense.

We also believe, I think, in wide sharing of respect in the sense of abolishing discriminations. I think, too, that we believe in the wide sharing of well-being in the sense of physical and mental health. I believe, too, that we are in favor of wide sharing of enlightment, which includes access to the stream of fact and interpretation on the basis of which it is possible to arrive at intelligent judgments on public policy. I think, too, that we are in substantial agreement that we are for the sharing of moral values (rectitude). That is, we believe that everyone should have a sense of responsibility for so adjusting his conduct that it implements human dignity.

I think, too, that we would want shared opportunities for congenial and productive interpersonal relationships with people at home and at the work place (and so on through the everyday associations of living). When we spell out our conception of human dignity we are talking about a set of human relationships that fits these conceptions. The contrast, obviously, is a community in which values are concentrated in a few hands primarily on the basis of birth.

I am not going to spend more time outlining our concrete conceptions of human dignity, because most of us will come out at about the same place. Where the problem arises is when we confront our ideal conceptions of human dignity with the existing state of facts. Consider the value closest to many of us: enlighten-

ment. Our great communication system has not contributed nearly as much as it can or as it needs to contribute to public enlightment.

Many disciplined inquiries have pointed out the discrepancy between what we want and what we have. You cannot interview, by any of the existing methods, an upper, middle, or lower class audience without being struck by the absence of elementary knowledge about the issues confronting us in public life. This means that a great many people do not know why SHAPE is in Europe. It means that a great many people do not know what inflation is. It means that a great many people cannot connect the word "inflation" with what they themselves are doing when they spend or do not spend their pay checks. It means, too, that people do not understand and cannot give a reasonable description of what productivity is. And unless you have a common conception of such a fundamental notion as productivity in talking about our economic process, you are scarcely in any position to think or talk intelligently about the difference between modern American industrial capitalism and what it was fifty years ago, or to make clear the vast contrasts between American industrial life and the older industrial patterns now found in the British Isles or in France, for example.

Turn in almost any direction and you will find that a sample audience will not be equipped with the thought tools and the talk tools necessary to comprehend the fundamentals of our modern system of production, or any of our social processes.

How can we possibly be complacent in a situation in which these vast networks labor and bring forth mice? Our problem is how to bring the whole of communication into closer harmony with the purposes which we have in view. If this is the broad diagnosis of the problem, where do we go from here?

I am not among those who believe that the problem is hopeless of solution. On the contrary, it strikes me that we are in a remarkably favorable position to make positive advances in the next few

months and years in the direction indicated. There is a terrific gap between existing intentions and performances, a gap which I suggest can be overcome to a great extent. Let me now begin to be more specific about indicating what is involved.

First of all, what do I need in my business as a citizen of this country? I need a concise, reliable presentation of what public officials are up to, and at the present time it is very difficult to get a concise, vivid, reliable presentation of what is going on in Washington, or of what is going on in several other major capitals of the globe even when they are accessible to us. Think of what the situation is like when the Senate and the House are sitting. If you asked yourself: "Now what's been going on here this last week in these hearings and the floor debates; what's the significance of these hearings before the Federal Communications Commission or the ICC?"—you could go on through the list of the major federal agencies in Washington and find that there was no easy place to turn to for the sort of guidance that you would like to have. To some extent you could turn to the national interpreters, the commentators on the news. To some extent you could rely on straight news reports and to the reprocessed reports in *Time, Newsweek,* and the rest. But if you ask yourself what you would like most to know about Washington, I think that you would decide that there was a big discrepancy between what was easily at hand and what you want. How can broadcasters contribute to the source materials available?

Concretely, I would like to see, regularly available, a summary of the debate in the Senate and in the House edited from actual recordings. And I would like the editing to be done by someone in whose integrity and competence I had some trust. I should like also to have this semidocumentary supplemented by material selected from the most dependable sources which clarify the major issues which are being talked about.

This is indeed a very modest request. The pattern is often followed on a local level, with selective reporting of state legislative

debates or municipal councils or similar organized groups. But at the national level somehow everybody seems to be doing this reporting—semidocumentary and analytic in character—and nobody seems to be doing it. It is one of those obvious things that has slipped by largely because everybody is so busy working at routine tasks that no one builds up this semidocumentary report on the Supreme Court, on the Senate, on the House, or on the major administrative agencies in the national capital. This problem, I suspect, still requires a more satisfactory solution.

And this is not all. Anybody who is at all alive to the realities of American life knows that many of the most important decisions in America are not made in Washington. But Washington very often *registers* decisions which are made elsewhere. Where are the other places where decisions are made which might be reported in some regular way?

Think of all the great national pressure group organizations. Your estimate of how many there are depends, as usual, on your definitions, but most studies of national pressure organizations say that there are about a thousand pressure groups of national scope with executive secretaries in Washington or New York. Most of these thousand pressure groups have a formal organization of some sort. They speak in the name of memberships, and in some cases the memberships have something to do with what the pressure group representative says. In many instances, the executive in Washington or New York has a continuing board of trustees—two or three of whom may really be interested in what is going on—and also has an annual meeting of some sort in which he tries to get an organization-wide endorsement of the policies he wants the organization to adopt.

This sounds as though "the pressure group guys" dictate to the membership and there is a great deal of truth in that. However, in many of these organizations, the word "dictation" does not apply. The process is far more subtle. What often happens is that the executives figure out what policy makes sense within the artic-

ulate purposes of the organization, what line of proposed legislative or administrative, formal or informal action should be endorsed at the convention, and the conveners consider these matters. They often upset the "plan."

It seems to me that we need a reporting system in this country which covers all the major pressure group conventions with the same care and intelligence that is needed to cover the Washington agencies. We need this for the major union organizations, for the major professional organizations—educational, legal, medical. We need it for the principal agricultural outfits, and so on through the list of organizations which are part of the enormously complex consent-developing process in American political life.

We need to know that there is a source we can turn to that concisely selects material of documentary importance and adds the kinds of clarification which I have briefly referred to.

The pressure groups are by no means the only organizations that need to be gathered into this perfected network of citizen's intelligence. We need to bring into the public eye organizations which often meet and usually make significant decisions out of sight of the community at large. I am referring to the stockholders' meetings of the major corporations. It is the custom, nowadays, to pooh-pooh stockholders' meetings. The reason is that experience shows how often stockholders' meetings are rubber stamp operations for a tightly held family ownership or a small managerial group. So the stockholders' meeting is criticized for being a ritualistic hocus-pocus by which minority groups go through the proper ceremonials to protect their decision-making power.

We do know that important decisions affecting employment, levels of investment and saving, for example, are made by giant corporations. As clarifiers of the public we have been singularly slow in working out procedures by which these organizations are brought into the common democratic process. The first step in democratic process is publicity. We need to focus the spotlight of interest on what these groups are doing.

This means that it would be appropriate to arrange for the selective broadcasting, for instance, of the stockholders' meeting of U. S. Steel, of the major automobile companies—in short, of the large employers of labor and other facilities. Such selective broadcasting will cause the specialized public relations men in each of these organizations to figure out the most congenial way to rig the stockholders' proceedings so that the selective broadcasts will put the management in the most favorable light. And there is nothing new about that. It is precisely what happens now. What is new is the process of reminding people who is responsible for policy, or at least who are some of the leading stooges of the big names. We need to induce Americans to ask more questions, and to create a sense of familiarity with the names of organizations and persons. Eventually you construct a sentimental umbrella under which more relevant stuff can come.

This is the process by which democracy developed (in England, for example). It is a process in which centralized decision making has first been looked at and talked about. Then the rulers become more self-conscious about their decision-making role, and aware that more people need to be taken into account. In this way you develop an effective sharing of power. The man who controls the reporting processes is the man who takes the first fundamental step in a democratizing process.

Now this may not be successful because leaders may get afraid of democracy and proceed to establish a dictatorial setup in which they can keep themselves from scrutiny. But in this country we have a great deal of experience in the discouraging of dictatorial tendencies on the part of various self-selected Messiahs—industrial or otherwise. And I suspect that the processes we are talking about will stimulate a more vigorous and sensible understanding of what the rich and varied decision-making process is in a vast, modern, industrialized society, so that even our conceptions of democracy will have a closer connection with the facts of our own day, rather than with the verbalisms of a century back.

One important problem then is to select the pressure groups, corporations, or trade unions. We ought to include many gatherings of the ecclesiastical sort. In the name of religion, many people make recommendations on moral and political questions. This brings them within the area of public comment and reporting.

There is a second important function which can be perfected: the reporting of the results of scientific and scholarly investigation. These results are not necessarily dated in the same sense that January's debates in the Senate are dated. As things stand today we have an astonishing amount of relevant information developed by the several social-psychological sciences—information which is not intelligibly and vividly made clear to the community. Many of these results bear directly on great questions of public policy. Let me cite a few instances of technical material available.

First, take inflation. There have been some extremely important investigations of the factors affecting inflation. For instance, Woodleaf Thomas, in a recent number of the *American Economic Review* has a long review of a book on the history of financial policy in World War II. The book was written by Morgan, a key man in the Treasury in the last war. Thomas, writing from the standpoint of the Federal Reserve Board, looks at the record from a non-Treasury point of view. The most important thing in this review is that it makes very clear the principal questions that need to be settled in financing a major war effort with a minimum of immediate or eventual disruption of living standards. It is quite possible to translate this material so that almost anyone can understand it. Communications experts are specialists in this sort of translating, serving as intermediaries between the subject-matter expert and the public.

We need to set up a reporting and analyzing process by which the vast amount of big time research being done on important relationships is made comprehensible. Part of the problem is to locate the subject-matter expert. Two sources of advice are the editors of the principal economic journals and the committees of

the American Economic Association. They can point out the experts, and they actually do want to reach the people at large.

Besides the vast amount of material made available by economists, there is the specialized output of political scientists. That is the academic label that I originally bore, and which I still bear in some circles; and as a political scientist, I am able to say that there are some things that some political scientists know which are of some use to somebody else. For example, a team of political scientists and historians can present important case reports on past situations in which the world was bipolarized. There have been bipolar systems in the past in which two great powers were dominant—in Egypt, in China, and in some other places. One task of the kind of reporting I advocate is to find cases from the past experience of mankind that are useful in clarifying our present perplexities. This is the principle: Select the nearest parallels, not with the idea that one slavishly reads into the future what has been reported of the past, but rather that one alerts oneself to recognize novelties. After all, one function of science is to sensitize us to what is new. Broadcasters can turn to members of the American Political Science Association and to the American Historical Association for help in choosing useful parallels.

Again, there are a good many things the sociologists and social psychologists know that should not be kept secret from the general public. I refer to facts about social class, for instance, about which there has recently been a growing amount of comment. What is the significance of the class structure of society? What are the important questions, definitions, and tentative findings? What is the significance of class for educational and political policy in a country that aspires toward democracy? How do you keep the classes from becoming castes? And how do you break up castes with a minimum of social cost?

These are the kinds of questions that the better scholars are able to throw some light on. The political scientists and sociologists are also very much concerned with analyzing the conditions

under which you achieve a larger unity, or in which an established unity breaks down. Since nowadays we are interested in developing a wider unity to include the free world and hopefully, at some future date, the entire globe, it is important to understand unity.

The organizations belonging to the Social Science Research Council and the American Council of Learned Societies have national headquarters staffed by scholars very interested in problems of the kind we are talking about.

This applies not only on the national level but in local and regional areas. It is my impression that there are many places over this country where what I describe is realized, in large measure at least. In some areas some broadcasting programs do take as their major responsibility the reporting of advances in the scholarly world that bear on the public issues. These examples on a local scale have not yet been developed into a vast national process.

What might be done along this line? I would like to suggest this: I believe that we have had enough experimenting in the last few decades in America to be able to say that *there are specialists in the media of communication whose main concern is to serve the public interest.*

Now notice the significant features of this definition. First, specialists in the instruments of communication. We know what these instruments are, and we can identify who handles which one.

The second part of the definition, a concern for public service, is more crucial than the first. What I have been defining is an incipient profession. Let me remind you what the word "profession" can mean. I am using this word in a responsible fashion and not as one of those beautiful passwords which you pin like a rose to your lapel with the expectation that it will enhance your prestige, income, or your chances of getting foundation grants! I am thinking of the word "profession" defined in the same way that we speak of the lawyers as constituting a profession, or the physicians, and so on.

What are the distinctive marks of a skill group that deserves to

be called a profession? The essential mark is not only the acquisition of skill, not only the development of literate theories of these skills, but the demand to serve the public interest.

The mark of a profession from this point of view is whether its members will turn down jobs. A rough-and-ready way to decide whether you have a profession is to find out if people will turn down jobs in the field because the jobs would be against the public interest.

How do you develop a profession? A profession is always developed slowly, as people who perform specialized operations begin to develop elaborate theories about what they do. Also, many of them become alert to the aggregate impact on society of what they do and begin to feel they should themselves take responsibility for deciding the extent to which the skill benefits society in concrete situations. Hence they evolve standards of professional conduct.

All of the apparatus that comes afterward, such as the use of community coercion in the form of license powers, and the examination requirement—all this comes later and is relatively superficial.

The essential point is to have a group with a set of skills, with an intellectual attitude toward these skills, and with a sense of responsibility for their use in the public interest. The associations gradually develop self-disciplinary procedures. They hammer out the professional code by translating their self-congratulatory rhetoric into operational systems of discipline; and this is always a slow process. The American publishers are an example.

How far have American broadcasters developed their profession? Modern America has a vast new technical system of mass communication. But the results are far from satisfactory, when we think in terms of an enlightened citizenship. However, we do have the rudiments of a specialized group of experts in the media who are engaged in the task of clarifying for one another and for the nation how the instruments of communication can be used

to serve the public interest. In a word we have the beginnings of a profession, and I hope that progress in this direction will be speeded up to fit the needs of the hour.

For one thing the profession needs a name by which it can know itself and introduce itself to the public. I do not believe that the symbol "education" is sufficiently comprehensive to serve the purpose. All of us recognize that "education" is too limited a concept in the public mind to cover all that is at stake. We are not only concerned with transmitting community tradition and basic skills to the young or to strangers. Our task is to perfect the *intelligence function,* the supplying of news and comment on the basis of which rational choices can be made on questions of public policy. In a society whose ideal goal is the dignity of man, this calls for the clarification of objectives, the considering of trends, conditions, projections, and alternatives affecting the commonwealth.

Yes, more than "education" is involved. Very likely the symbol best adapted to name the profession is "public service." We are developing Public Service Communicators. In turn the public service function is specialized to broadcasting, television, and all other media. And there is a further specialization into educational activity, whether aimed at the young or the older, an activity whose essential mark is the transmitting of *basic tools.*

The public service profession does not, of course, limit itself to noncommercial clients, any more than lawyers or doctors remain "self-employed" or teach or work only in nonprofit hospitals, or civic organizations. It is not the source of the pay check that determines the identity of a profession, but the standards of conduct, of self-determination, of discretion, which are imposed upon any employer-client.

Perhaps the time is here for the associations in the field of communication to join together in organizations, using "public service" as the essential symbol, and unite their efforts on behalf of the mastery of our brave new world of mass communication.

# The Theory of Listener-Sponsored Radio

LEWIS HILL

LEWIS HILL is chairman of the Pacifica Foundation, which directs the activities of Radio Station KPFA in Berkeley, and executive director of the station as well. The following article is based on an informal radio discussion with KPFA's listeners.

LISTENER SPONSORSHIP is an answer to the practical problem of getting better radio programs and keeping them. But it involves, as a theory of radio, an analysis of the problem as well as an answer to it. The theory advances not only an economic innovation for broadcasting but an interpretation of the facts of life in American radio. And actually, it begins in a concern with some of the facts of life in general.

I imagine we can agree that if a sound is worth passing through the magnificent apparatus of a microphone, a transmitter, and your receiving set, it ought to convey some meaningful intelligence. There are innumerable ways of wasting time and generating nonsense, and there are also uncounted ways of making money, many of which may be pursued in broad daylight. But the elaborate machinery and the peculiar intimacy of the radio medium have better and more basic uses. The theory I want to discuss rests on two particular assumptions: first, that radio can and should be used for significant communication and art; and second, that since broadcasting is an act of communication, it ought to be subject to the same aesthetic and ethical principles as we apply to any communicative act, including the most personal. Of course we know that in American radio many obstacles stand in the way of these principles. When I have examined some of the obstacles, I shall try to indicate briefly how listener sponsorship offers a means of surmounting them.

What does stand in the way?

When we ask this question we usually think at once of the advertiser, or of the mass audience. We feel that one or both of these demonological figures must account for the mediocrity and exploitation which on the whole signify radio in the United States. And since, as we know, no one can reform the advertiser, or confer with the inscrutable mass, we are more or less accustomed to thinking of improvement as utopian.

We seem generally to ignore, when we criticize radio, the moment and situation in which someone actually broadcasts. I refer to the person who actually opens his mouth or plays his fiddle. I mean to include also the individual who holds the stop watch, the one who writes the script, and perhaps the man who controls the switch. And I am definitely referring to these individuals as individuals—for after all, willing or not, they have that dimension. Now these are the people who actually start the production that comes out at the other end. Even if someone else has decided why there should be a broadcast and what should be in it, these are the people who make it. Yet we never hear these people mentioned in any serious social or moral criticism of American radio. They do not appear in the demonologies of the advertiser and the mass. They constitute most of the radio industry, but are perhaps the last people we would think of in trying to place the fundamental responsibility for what radio does.

This curious fact reveals more about the problem than any number of surveys of public taste and advertising venality. And this is the point at which our theory has to begin. We start with the forgotten man of broadcasting—the man who broadcasts.

Let me instance the announcer, not only to seize the simplest case, but because he will serve as the gross symbol for the writer, musician, and all who try to make a living in the program end of radio. You will recall without difficulty, I hope, this fellow's nightly solicitude toward your internal organs. In his baritone way he makes a claim on your attention and faith which few of your closest friends would venture. I know of no better explana-

tion of this man's relation to you, to his utterances, his job, and his industry, than one of the time-honored audition tests given to applicants for announcing jobs at certain of the networks. The test consists of three or four paragraphs minutely constructed to avoid conveying any meaning. The words are familiar, and every sentence is grammatically sound but the text is gibberish. The applicant is required to read this text in different voices, as though it meant different things: with solemnity and heavy sincerity, with lighthearted humor, and of course with "punch." If his judges award him the job and turn him loose on you, he has succeeded on account of an extraordinary skill in simulating emotions, intentions, and beliefs which he does not possess. In fact the test was especially designed to assure that nothing in the announcer's mind except the sound of his voice—no comprehension, no value, no choice, and above all no sense of responsibility—could possibly enter into what he said or what he sounded like. This is the criterion of his job.

The significance of this situation is strangely neglected, as I have said, although the commonplaces of industrial life that best explain it are much discussed. We all know, for example, that the purpose of commercial radio is to induce mass sales. For mass sales there must be a mass norm, and the activity must be conducted as nearly as possible without risk of departure from the norm. But art and the communication of ideas—as most of us also appreciate—are risky affairs, for it can never be predicted in those activities just when the purely individual and abnormal may assert itself. Indeed to get any real art or any significant communication, one must rely entirely on individuals, and must resign himself to accept not only their uniqueness but the possibility that the individual may at any time fail. By suppressing the individual, the unique, the industry reduces the risk of failure (abnormality) and assures itself a standard product for mass consumption.

We know these commonplaces, but it is truly staggering to contemplate what they imply and cause in American radio. Should

you inquire why there is no affinity between the serious arts and radio, you will find that this is the reason.

America is well supplied with remarkably talented writers, musicians, philosophers, and scientists whose work will survive for some centuries. Such people have no relation whatever to our greatest communication medium. I have been describing a fact at the level of the industry's staff; it is actually so notorious in the whole tradition and atmosphere of our radio that it precludes anyone of serious talent and reasonable sanity from offering material for broadcast, much less joining a staff. The country's best minds, like one mind, shun the medium unless the possessor of one happens to be running for office. Yet if we want an improvement in radio worth the trouble, it is these people whose talent the medium must attract. The basic situation of broadcasting must be such that artists and thinkers have a place to work—with freedom. Short of this, the suffering listener has no out.

It may be clearer why I indicated at the outset that listener sponsorship involves some basic concerns. This is the first problem it sets out to solve—to give the genuine artist and thinker a possible, even a desirable, place to work in radio.

Unfortunately it will not do to go halfway in the effort. Many have tried. The story of American radio is sprinkled with episodes in which some ambitious producer, momentarily out of touch with reality, has tried. These episodes remind me of someone's recent comment about purchasing a house under FHA. This, he explains, is a system which makes it possible to convert an imaginary equity into a vested illusion. There are still in the industry many a frustrated idealist, many an embittered artist, whose last efforts foundered in the sales department, but who hopes someday to own a program. Since our first object is to avoid that chronic industrial frustration, we have to give a somewhat elementary interpretation to the idea of freedom in radio.

The answer of the KPFA project on this point is not necessarily the only good answer, but it is explicit. It requires that the people

who actually do the broadcasting should also be responsible for what and why they broadcast. In short, they must control the policy which determines their actions. If I may, I will emphasize that neither a "Public be Damned" nor a "Down with Commerce" attitude enters into this formulation. The problem was, you remember, not whether you as a listener should choose what you like or agree with—as obviously you should and do—but how to get some genuinely significant choices before you. Radio which aims to do that must express what its practitioners believe to be real, good, beautiful, and so forth, and what they believe is truly at stake in the assertion of such values. For better or worse these are matters like the nature of the deity which cannot be determined by majority vote or a sales curve. Either some particular person makes up his mind about these things and learns to express them for himself, or we have no values or no significant expression of them. Since values and expressions as fundamental as this are what we must have to improve radio noticeably, there is no choice but to begin by extending to someone the privilege of thinking and acting in ways important to him. Whatever else may happen, we thus assign to the participating individual the responsibility, artistic integrity, freedom of expression, and the like, which in conventional radio are normally denied him. KPFA is operated literally on this principle. Its working staff and only the staff comprise the officers, directors, and controlling members of the nonprofit corporation that owns it. As the staff changes, so does the control. But there it remains.

Well, then, who in present-day America might be expected to permit such a broadcasting group to earn a living at it, and on what terms?

You already know the answer that KPFA proposes, and you may have wondered why I choose to present it as a theory, as though there were alternatives to listener sponsorship. Certainly when we develop the idea of broadcasting to this point, the listener is the only one discernible who has a real stake in the outcome. But

while that may be an adequate reason for a subscription plan, I think there is a better and more rewarding one.

I have already examined the problem of getting the creative product on radio before we worry about how it is to be evaluated. It must have occurred to you that such a principle could easily revert to the fabled ivory tower. Some self-determining group of broadcasters might find that no one, not the least minority of the minority audiences, gave a hang for their product, morally responsible or not. What then? Then, you will say, there would be no radio station—or not for long—and the various individualists involved could go scratch for a living. But it is the reverse possibility that explains what is most important about listener sponsorship. When we imagine the opposite situation, we are compelled to account for some conscious flow of influences, some creative tension between broadcaster and audience that constantly reaffirms their mutual relevance. Listener sponsorship will require this mutual stimulus if it is to exist at all.

KPFA's present air schedule is a modest example. It embraces four main categories—music, drama and literature, public affairs, and children's programs. The schedule has two sources in almost equal balance as to their importance and influence. On the one hand, these happen to be subjects of primary interest to people working at KPFA. On the other hand, they happen also to represent the articulate interests of well-defined minorities in the audience of San Francisco Bay. The correspondence is not accidental. A constant exchange between the staff and the audience enriches the schedule with fresh judgment and new ideas, materials, and issues. Thus, members of the staff work out their own ideas and, if you like, categorical imperatives, with some of the undistracted certitude one feels in deciding what he will have for dinner, subject to the menu. Listener sponsorship makes possible this extremely productive balance of interests and initiatives.

The fact that the subscription is voluntary merely enlarges the same point. We make a considerable step forward, it seems to me,

when we use a system of broadcasting which promises that the mediocre will not survive. But the significance of what does survive increases in ways of the profoundest import to our times when it proceeds from voluntary action. Anyone can listen to a listener-sponsored station. Anyone can understand the rationale of listener sponsorship—that unless the station is supported by those who value it, no one can listen to it including those who value it. This is common sense. But beyond this, actually sending in the subscription, which one does not have to send in unless one particularly wants to, implies the kind of cultural engagement, as some French philosophers call it, that is surely indispensable for the sake of the whole culture. When we have a radio station fully supported by subscribers who have not responded to a special gift offer, who are not participating in a lottery, who have not ventured an investment at 3 per cent, but who use this means of supporting values that seem to them of basic and lasting importance—then we will have more than a subscription roster. It will amount, I think, to a new focus of action or a new shaping influence that can hardly fail to strengthen all of us.

We are concerned, of course, with a supplemental form of radio. Listener sponsorship is not a substitute for the commercial industry. But in every major metropolitan area of the country there is room for such an undertaking. I believe we may expect that if these theories and high hopes can be confirmed soundly in a pilot experiment, the idea will not be long in spreading.

KPFA happens to be the pilot experiment. No one there imagines he is the artist or thinker whose talent ultimately must be attracted to radio. KPFA is the beginning of a tradition to make that possible. The survival of this station is based upon the necessity of voluntary subscriptions from 2 per cent of the total FM audience in the area in which it operates. We are hoping to succeed for several reasons, not the least among which is the realization that our success may inspire others to experiment for the eventual betterment of the broadcast product.

# Some Uses of Television in Science and Industry

ANTHONY R. MICHAELIS

DR. ANTHONY R. MICHAELIS is on the staff of the University of Sydney, in Australia. He has made intensive studies of the interpretation and reporting of various aspects of science on film. A recent article in the *Quarterly* (Spring, 1952) dealt with film studies of armament.

THE RECENT USE of television for purposes other than entertainment has brought it into conflict with cinematography, the established instrument for visual recording and analysis. Their use is, however, complementary and not antagonistic. The unique advantages of both provide instruments which in their respective spheres can be of the greatest use in scientific research and industrial development. Their historical development has followed closely similar lines, and it might well be possible for the one to learn from the experience of the other.

*History*

The entertainment industry did not set up a research institute for the invention of a cinecamera or of a television tube, but adapted these research instruments for their own purposes after they had been developed in the laboratory by scientists and had there been brought to a state of relative perfection. Although later on the industry developed perhaps better cameras and more sensitive tubes, which in turn helped the research worker, it must never be forgotten that they were originally invented, designed, and constructed as pure research tools for scientific work. J. F. Marey, the French physiologist, had been working for many years on a graphical method for the analysis of movement in animals and human beings, before he published in 1882 the first description of his photographic revolver which was similar to Janssen's astronomical revolver of 1874. In 1888 Marey gave a description

of the first cinecamera using a film made by Eastman. All his equipment was for the recording of animals in motion and he even used high-speed cinematography (120 f.p.s.) and cinemicrography for this purpose. The successor to Marey in the chair of physiology at the Collège de France was François-Franck who with a team of assistants developed the technique of cinemicrography to a very high level by 1910. Bull, Marey's pupil in the field of high-speed cinematography, in the same year published his researches on insect flight for which he had developed his high-speed cameras.

By 1910 the cinema had become a popular entertainment and although audiences did not number millions, they could certainly be counted by the tens of thousands. The rapid development of the cinema as a means of entertainment was not equaled by scientific cinematography. Although by 1920 about two hundred known applications could be described by Liesegang in his book on the subject, it was the advent of cheap 16-mm. reversal film in 1923 and the sale of relatively cheap high-speed cameras from about 1930 on that really increased the use of motion picture film in the scientific laboratories and research institutes. Today the unique quality of the cinecamera, the change of the time scale at the will of the experimenter, has established the camera firmly as the sole instrument for a number of researches—for example, time-lapse cinemicrography for biological cell divisions and high-speed cinematography for research on explosives. The ability to produce a permanent record from which direct measurements of time and length can be made of any moving event, however big or small, of bacterial movements, or solar prominences, is another feature which has recommended the camera to the scientist who can avail himself of these qualities at relatively small expense.

Television goes back in origin to Braun's tube, the simplest oscillograph, which was first demonstrated by him in 1897 at Strasbourg. From it sprang the triumphant progress of the cathode-ray tube as an electrical instrument for the measurement of high fre-

quencies and many other electrical phenomena. The development of radar during World War II brought with it the mass production of cathode-ray tubes and there are few laboratories in the world today where this instrument is not in constant use and demand for the measurement and demonstration of electrical phenomena.

As the principles of the cathode-ray tubes for television developed, it became possible by 1936 in London and by 1939 in New York to offer television to the public as a means of entertainment. It took about ten years to make the iconoscope from the cathode-ray tube. This was the first type of television camera and used the short waves of the radio transmitters to broadcast television to the public. During the years of the war its improvement was naturally slow, but it has now reached proportions where it has become a major competitor to the motion picture industry. By the end of 1951 television was brought back to a more serious use, both in industry and research. But there it has been used mostly on a closed circuit rather than by broadcasting.

*Television equipment*

Television has one great advantage over cinematography. It can instantaneously transmit a picture of almost anything over a certain not inconsiderable distance. Even color is now available for this purpose in America. One of its greatest potentials for future scientific research work will be its ability to translate a picture of any spectral wave length on the camera tube to one within the visual range on the receiver tube. German wartime use of night-vision equipment with infra-red searchlights has so far been the main application of this great advantage. The enhancement of the X-ray image in medical work, by means of television, to date has only been attempted experimentally.

The merits of television and cinematography are now seen to lie in entirely different dimensions. The scale of time can be changed by the cinecamera while the television unit can manipu-

late the wave length of the picture. However, it is in the combination of these two instruments that the most valuable tool for research has already been found. By recording the image of the monitor cinematographically both advantages are available at the same time. In addition to obtaining a permanent record of the transient image on the screen, the result can be magnified on the time scale by high-speed cinematography. This combination was most useful for certain wartime projects. There are now four American companies marketing industrial television equipment (RCA, Remington Rand, Du Mont, and the Diamond Power Specialty Corporation), as well as one English company (Marconi). However, the great cost of a television unit comprising camera monitor and power installation is the most serious handicap to its widespread use in industry and in scientific work. An outlay of about $6,000 to $8,000 is still required, in addition to the cost of the lighting installation which will have to be in constant use as long as the television unit is working. Nevertheless it was reported that by the end of 1951 about 100 installations had been sold in America to various industrial users. That brings television now to the stage of cinematography in about 1910.

*Industrial applications*

The most widespread use of industrial television, now called ITV in America, has been in power stations. The continuous observation of the combustion flames in the furnaces, the checking of the water level in the boiler drum, and the direct viewing of the smoke emission from the chimneys have given the operators a far more complete and continuous control than had hitherto been possible. Special additional equipment for the television camera in the furnace, water cooling, and automatic exposure control through photoelectric circuits have made such installations somewhat expensive.

The Geneva Steel Company, a subsidiary of U. S. Steel, found it profitable to use television cameras for the simultaneous view-

ing of three reheating furnaces by one workman. His duties were the transfer of steel slabs from a conveyor belt into these furnaces. Before the introduction of these cameras he could work only one furnace at a time.

The Fisher Body Division of the General Motors Company considered a television unit most helpful in showing to one of its workmen the exact position of a truck into which he had to load scrap from a distant crane. It seems probable that television might prove a most useful tool for crane operations in general, whether for loading of ships or in industrial plants.

In the work of the Ohio Steel Foundry a television camera could watch the pouring of large steel castings more conveniently than the use of a mirror had allowed in the past.

Another experimental use which might well be called industrial is the employment of a television unit on the floor of the motion picture studio. The director of the film can at once view an action which will be recorded from a given cinecamera position instead of having to wait for rushes the next day. A similar use was the experiment of the U. S. Navy in producing a complete training film from a number of television screens directly, and such a combination of television and cinematography has also been tried experimentally in one of the English film studios.

*Military applications*

A special stereotelevision model was developed by the DuMont Company for the American Atomic Energy Commission; it enabled chemists to handle radioactive materials in safety from behind heavy screens.

It was recently reported that the atomic bomb explosions in Australia would be watched through special television units, placed nearer to the site than had previously been thought possible. A similar use in American research has undoubtedly been of great advantage in the evaluation of results.

Television cameras had already been installed in German

gliders during World War II in order to guide them to their targets from a distant aircraft, but this method was not used in combat. In America similar experiments were carried out, and the Vericon camera was developed by RCA for inclusion in a bomb guided to its target by remote control. Another camera of this type is now in use at the rocket test station of the North American Aviation and Aerojet Engineering Company, and successfully overcomes the dangers associated with experimental rocket work.

At the Wright Patterson Base of the American Air Force, a Vericon television unit provided a close-up check of the alignment of rotating helicopter blades. Another unit was installed inside the wing structure of a plane undergoing static-load tests. It was thus possible for the designers to watch the sequence of failure of particular struts. When exceptionally dangerous flight tests of the P80 fighter were carried out without a pilot, all the instrumentation was relayed by television to the ground. The plane could be maneuvered from the monitor screen and the readings recorded cinematographically at the same time.

The U. S. Navy is now experimenting with a television installation at the Library of Congress in order to get scientific literature searched and submitted to the research worker more quickly without requiring him to attend to this task in person. As a future extension of this service it has been suggested that photocopies of the required literature might be made directly from the monitor screen.

The possible use of television for guiding missiles is likely to be highly developed in any future war, as well as its use for surveying hostile territories. Should artificial satellites be established, then permanent television contact with a chain of relay stations on the Earth will undoubtedly be another application.

In some of these applications it will be an obvious advantage to record permanently the results which were only temporarily seen on the television unit. The memorizing of the resulting pic-

tures has proved in the past an unreliable method for the critical evaluation of experimental work.

*Medical teaching*

The demonstration of a surgical operation to a large body of students by television has been widely used in many teaching hospitals in America and Europe. Undoubtedly this has been of great advantage in showing emergency procedures, and has aroused great interest as a novelty. It might also be of benefit to record an unusual operation cinematographically from a monitor screen at the same time. Future generations of students, having missed the original demonstration, could then still see it on a film. Such recordings might also be used for recapitulation, since it has been generally admitted that the maximum of learning from a film will only result after two screenings.

The latest development of the use of television in this particular field appears to be the transmission of information to the surgeon during an operation of the results of pathological tests, X-ray pictures, and possibly pertinent textbook information.

*Underwater television*

Perhaps the most spectacular use of television so far has been the finding of the sunken English submarine *Affray* by an underwater application of this technique. Jointly constructed by the firms of Marconi and Siebe (German), a complete unit containing lights, camera, and automatic focusing gear was used to sweep wide areas of the English Channel until the sunken vessel was finally located on the screen at a depth of 260 feet. The underwater camera was connected to the salvage vessel by a 1,000-foot cable through which the image was transmitted and energy for the powerful lights supplied.

That this type of work has more than salvage applications was shown in a paper in 1952 by Barnes who described his work on underwater television at the Scottish Marine Biological Associa-

tion. His first experiments were carried out with a CPS Emitron camera at the London Zoological Society, and studies on various types of fish were later continued in Scotland.

Television should prove particularly valuable for deep-sea explorations as the natural limits of depth for a human diver do not apply. The work of Beebe and Harvey (the latter using automatic cinematography), has proved relatively unsuccessful at great depth because vision was confined to the narrow limits of their portholes. A self-navigating underwater television camera could freely survey great areas selectively, as only the most important findings would be recorded on film.

*Pure research*

No use of television in this field has as yet been reported in the scientific literature. Television will be applied here only if it can perform a function for which no other instrument exists, and even then it must operate at a reasonable cost. The introduction of cinematography as a research instrument has only been justifiable when it could provide records not obtainable in any other way, or for the purposes of speeding up or slowing down an event. Television will similarly justify itself only for changes of spectral wave lengths and for the immediate transmission of a picture needed for the control of an actual experiment. Although research is lavishly endowed in certain parts of the world, a complete television unit is still about twenty times as expensive as a cinecamera. That the cost of television equipment of this nature will be materially reduced in the forseeable future is unlikely. There is at present, therefore, little reason to believe that television will be extensively employed in this specialized field.

# Teaching Film on Half a Shoestring

ROBERT KATZ

ROBERT KATZ is at present director of a film workshop and film seminar at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco. The school's experimental program for teaching film techniques is described in his article.

AMONG ALL contemporary art forms the motion picture enjoys a unique position of prominence. But because of its extreme complexity and high cost, the teaching of film production has long lagged behind that of the other arts. With the advancement of 16-mm. facilities during the last decade, all signs point toward a greater expansion of film teaching programs,[1] particularly since television has opened a new field for 16-mm. productions. Ingrained prejudices against the cost of the medium are rapidly being overcome. A recent experiment with a self-supporting film curriculum at the California School of Fine Arts in San Francisco may interest those who feel that teaching film need no longer be a venture that few schools can afford.

The first question raised was how the California School of Fine Arts, a self-supporting institution, could possibly support a full-fledged motion picture curriculum. In view of our limitations, we decided to proceed in stages. In the spring semester, 1951, we opened a film seminar limited to one three-hour period a week on film appreciation. If this seminar proved to be self-supporting, a film production workshop would later be added.

A minimum of thirteen students was needed to break even. Film rentals were to be paid out of "studio fees" ($5.50 per student) added to the tuition. When twenty-six students enrolled, the financial problems of the film seminar were solved. Our resultant film rental budget of $143 had to be stretched over eighteen weeks, and we therefore used many sources of excellent free

[1] Jack C. Ellis' article "Work Print: A College English Department and Films" (*The Quarterly,* VI [1951], 37–47) provides an instructive illustration of this trend.

documentaries[2] to supplement it. Other sources included both local and near-by film libraries[3] to keep mailing costs down, the Museum of Modern Art collection of early classics, and many other libraries.[4]

The main purpose of the seminar was not the mere screening of important films but active student participation. In this way we hoped to provide students with a concrete insight into the creative aspects of film *production* as a step toward participation in the future workshop. Films were selected for variety in order to acquaint students with a wide range of techniques. Thus students saw that any technique may be valid as long as the director remains true to his subject matter, his own style, and the film medium itself. The seminar therefore examined the work of such directors as Griffith, Flaherty, Pudovkin, Ford, Huston, Bunuel, Wright, Lorentz, Van Dyke, and Meyers. Unfortunately, we committed one major mistake—during the first term we selected only films of the best quality. This error has since been corrected, and the seminar has learned to compare films of high achievement with poor films, often on the same subject matter.

No special emphasis was placed on presenting films in chronological order, as we were primarily interested in considering the film medium as a whole. This approach revealed the strange paradox that film, the youngest of all arts, has already become set in its ways, accepting certain approaches and techniques as the final word. The students concluded that the motion picture is not used to its fullest advantage when treated as a "dead language" with ironclad rules. The language of film is still in flux, ready to serve those who have important things to say and who do not hesitate

[2] Among them the U. S. Army, the California State Department of Public Health, and experimental film producers.

[3] The versatile library of the University of Washington and the representative collection of the Western Cinema Guild in San Francisco proved to be among the most valuable sources on the West Coast. In addition, the Extension Division of the University of California, Association Films, Ideal Pictures, Photo and Sound, and many other film libraries were of great assistance.

[4] Brandon Films, Film Classics Exchange, the British Information Services, Athena Films, Films Inc., and others.

to shape it to their needs. In this respect analysis of early films serves to inspire students to use the film as a living language. As he compares the advance of Griffith's *Intolerance* over Porter's *Great Train Robbery* and watches Flaherty's technique of exploration and revelation of the world around him, the student gains confidence in his own ability to discover fresh ways of communicating his contemporary world to an audience. Robert Flaherty said that the film has given mankind its first universal language. One of the aims of the film seminar was to explore the many ways in which this magic language could be used.

High on the list of categories examined was the documentary, that "conscience of the movies," as Basil Wright once called it. We also looked carefully at several feature films, and a substantial number of experimental films. In addition, the seminar learned important lessons in film structure and technique from the British "Film and Critic" series in which famous motion pictures are analyzed on film. The most fascinating of this series was Basil Wright's brilliant investigation of Reed's *Odd Man Out*. The class was also fortunate enough to be allowed to attend five sessions of the yearly "Art in Cinema" series at the San Francisco Museum of Art.

This large volume of filmic material offered graphic illustration of the paramount importance of the visual. There is no more valuable experience for the student of motion pictures than to view silent films in which the visual material, with the help of a few titles, has to stand on its own merit. The seminar made it a practice to investigate sound films from the same point of view. After screening them with sound, we would go over selected portions without sound, and finally play parts of the sound track alone, making it possible to evaluate the interplay of sound and sight.

Extensive experimentation with the misuse of sound and the overriding importance of the visual led quite logically to an analysis of the proper integration of image and sound. Of particular

interest in this study was the beautiful contrapuntal use of poetry, prose, sound effects, and cutting in the English classic, *Night Mail;* the correlation of text, music, and cutting in Pare Lorentz's *River;* and the perfect audiovisual integration—including the use of silence—in Sidney Meyers' *The Quiet One.*

We also considered carefully film structure and cutting, through active participation rather than abstract discussions. One of the devices used was to have students reconstruct from memory certain selected film sequences. The student was required to attempt a concrete visualization of each shot in its relation to all others, to discover for himself how certain effects were achieved. The results were often surprising, showing that technical devices such as increased speed of cutting and sound can step up the tempo of a scene quite as effectively as faster action.

We discussed at length the difference between stage play and film, aware that film must speak a language of its own rather than imitate other media. Comparisons of stage and screen versions of Ford's *Long Voyage Home* and Tennessee Williams' *Streetcar Named Desire* pointed up the problem.

In one instance, we attempted to work out a valid approach to a difficult subject before we saw a film based on it. The subject was the Library of Congress—a hard topic to treat in a visually interesting manner—which had been made the basis of an OWI documentary. In this manner, the students gained insight into the many problems that the makers of this film had solved.

Experiments like these were important in preparing students for a future workshop by developing a concrete understanding of motion picture techniques. We tried to avoid the pitfalls of a purely formalistic approach, and to remember that if film is a language for the communication of ideas and emotions, form and content must be one. While there was general agreement on this point, analysis of some experimental films was quite difficult, and provoked heated discussion of the nature of true experimentation as opposed to pretentious obscurantism.

The influence of the film director on his public is greater than that of any other artist, for through the use of close-ups, camera angles, cutting, and sound, he has gained unprecedented control over what his audience is allowed to see. In summing up the values of the first film seminar, participants agreed with James Agee's tribute to director John Huston, which emphasizes the quality of an outstanding artist in this field.

> Without thinking twice about it, he honors his audience. His pictures are not acts of seduction but of liberation, and they require, of anyone who enjoys them, the responsibility of liberty. They continually open the eye and require it to work vigorously; and through the eye they awaken curiosity and intelligence. That, by any virile standard, is essential to good entertainment. It is unquestionably essential to good art.

When it became evident that the seminar was fully self-supporting and that there was genuine interest in actual film production among the students, we began to plan for the second stage: the creation of a film workshop. This venture, too, was to be self-supporting, but an initial fund of $748 was raised to buy a minimum of equipment.

We used the rest of the 1951 spring term and summer session to prepare for the film workshop. When it got under way in the fall, we had at our disposal the following equipment:

1 16-mm. Ciné Special camera (secondhand) with 1-inch and wide-angle lenses, filters, and carrying case
1 borrowed telephoto lens
1 borrowed Weston meter
1 handle for hand-holding the camera
1 borrowed tripod (we have since acquired one of our own)
1 borrowed dolly
1 tape measure
2 viewers
2 pairs of rewinds
2 splicers
editing gloves
splicing cement, reels, cores, cans, grease pencils, etc.

2 story boards
use of the school's projector, screen and lights
2 cutting tables
3 storage cabinets
1 blackboard

In addition, the class began to build a number of essential items that we could not afford to buy, among them:

1 frame counter
2 large racks with clothes pins for editing
1 light box for film inspection
1 titling and animation stand
2 flanges, and a number of smaller items

Since the workshop was still an experimental venture, only two periods a week (6 hours) were scheduled. The film seminar (3 hours) ran concurrently. The raw stock for our shooting had to be paid out of special "studio fees" ($7 per period), totaling $168.

The question immediately arose whether there should be any minimum prerequisites for workshop students, such as a knowledge of photography, or motion picture experience. We decided we did not want to exclude potential talent because of a lack of technical background. Our only requirement was participation in the film seminar as well as in the workshop, since the seminar is conceived as a complementary course, providing students with concrete object lessons in motion picture techniques.

Our financial limitations proved to be a blessing in disguise. A cameraman who has to budget every foot of film will prepare his shooting more carefully. A director with a severely restricted budget must use ingenuity instead of lavishness. A student who has to plan and build some of his own equipment develops a better understanding of what his equipment can do.

The aim of the workshop was to furnish students with practical and creative experience in the production of 16-mm. films. The limited time available for instruction made it impossible to separate theory from practice; for this reason, we were determined to

give workshop students an opportunity to start on a film of their own during the first term. The only way such a project could possibly be carried out on our budget was to find a sponsor, a difficult undertaking for a brand-new workshop.

Since we could not hope for immediate sponsorship, the first weeks were spent in getting acquainted with some of the problems we would have to face. Under the guidance of my colleague, Frederick W. Quandt, Jr., who supervises the workshop's camera work, the theory of motion picture photography was combined with experiments to familiarize students—many of whom were competent still photographers—with the use of the Ciné Special. These experiments ranged from lessons in avoiding negative scratches by keeping the camera clean, to "dry runs" and film tests to determine the light-transmission speed of our lenses. Parallel with these experiments were a number of other preparatory activities: learning to handle our editing and projection equipment, building additional facilities, and fitting our basement cutting room, which the students dubbed "The Ivory Basement."

For motion picture theory, we luckily had Raymond Spottiswoode's *Film and Its Techniques* and Jackson Rose's *American Cinematographer's Handbook and Reference Guide* at our disposal.

Because of the students' eagerness to start shooting, the initial enthusiasm gave way to a note of pessimism. Instead of working on a film, they heard dry lectures on film budgeting, production costs, marketing, and distribution. The instructor seemed to talk a lot about the importance of providing a sound financial foundation before embarking on any project, but did not come up with a sponsor. Camera work had consisted of dry runs and lens tests—small wonder the class began to get restless.

To overcome this problem and enlist students' participation in getting financial support, everyone was asked to submit a film "treatment" that might arouse sponsorship interest. This exercise served a double purpose: it provided students with a first

experience in learning to write for motion pictures, and brought us one step closer to finding a sponsor. During our discussion of these "treatments," one of the students volunteered to investigate possible support for a picture on the 1951 San Francisco Art Festival. His efforts met with encouraging success. The festival's publicity director agreed to advance a small amount of film for sample footage.

This was the moment everyone had been waiting for. At last we would start shooting, if only in a small way. The San Francisco Art Festival proved a fascinating subject that grew visually more and more exciting. Realizing that the allocated film would be insufficient, we decided to invest some of our precious studio-fee money "on speculation." While the festival continued, we worked around the clock, beyond allotted class time, trying to give every student his turn at the camera, setting up shots, and directing. To evaluate our material as we went along, we made it a rule to inspect daily takes on the viewer as soon as they could be processed. This practice proved vitally important. The satisfactory number of good shots encouraged everybody, but equally useful was the analysis of our mistakes. As it turned out, we had committed two major sins: we had been too "pan-happy," and our fear of wasting film led to excessively short takes.

Throughout the shooting at the festival, we kept a detailed record of each shot, rotating the function of "script girl" at regular intervals. After the shooting was over, we started on the tedious job of making up detailed file cards for each single shot, noting camera angle, whether close-up, medium shot, or long shot, camera movement, lighting, focus, and an accurate description of what the shot contained. These cards were of great value when we started editing the film.

By this time, we were again in search of a sponsor. We had done all our shooting on Eastman Super X Reversal film and did not want to run the risk of scratching our masterprint by running it through a projector. Consequently, we had only seen our film

on the viewer. Before we could begin editing we needed money for a work print, and to finish the project we needed additional funds for a sound track and other laboratory costs.

Since our footage was promising, we started to get in touch with organizations which might sponsor the film. Our search was not in vain. The Northern California Chapter of Artists Equity Association reviewed part of our material and, together with their New York headquarters, decided to assume sponsorship.

The financial hurdle overcome, we proceeded with editing. First we eliminated all definitely unusable footage. We then had a work print made and were finally able to see how the footage looked on the screen. After projecting it several times, we eliminated more material, marking all "outs" on their corresponding file cards.

With these preliminaries out of the way, the real job of editing began. The nature of our subject and lack of time in preparing for shooting had made it impractical to work from a script. We had, however, kept in mind the main purpose of the film: to promote the idea of the Art Festival among San Francisco's citizens, and to acquaint other cities with the merits of civic art festivals. Our material fell into five main categories: preparation of the festival by volunteers; the main attractions; public response; the relation between exhibiting artist and the public; the festival's value to the city. These categories were much too broad to provide a basis for detailed editing. It was therefore necessary to break them down into subcategories, such as "artists registering," "paintings," "sculpture," "spectators' reactions," "dance," and "crafts." At this point, our file cards proved their value. Approximately forty envelopes, bearing designations of subcategories, were lined upon our story board, and each file card was entered in its proper "slot." On the basis of this organizational work we could proceed to the structural development of the film and its story line. We were now able to go to our story board and find out at a glance which shots were available to fill any given need in our continuity.

In the meantime, each shot was hung from a separate pin on our editing rack, and its number entered on the corresponding file card.

The editing and reëditing of our material took several weeks. We applied the standards we had evolved during our analyses of film techniques in the film seminar. While keeping a skeleton narration in mind, we organized our footage primarily from the visual point of view. When the time came to write the script, we held the narration to a minimum, concentrating instead on the visual aspects of the festival. In order to preserve the leisurely pace of the film, we wanted a suitable musical background to sustain the mood without intruding on either the visual material or the narration. We finally decided that guitar music would be best suited to the picture and our budget. We were fortunate in securing the imaginative accompaniment of Paul Mapes, whose sensitive guitar playing provided a charming and oblique commentary on the visual material and contributed greatly to the eventual success of the film.

As always in film making, the last week proved particularly hectic, since we had to meet our sponsor's deadline for a showing at the UNESCO conference of January 25, 1952, in New York, a date which coincided with the end of the school term. Our fine-cut replaced the rough-cut; the last kinks were ironed out of the script; we decided on the title *A City Looks At Art;* sponsor approval was secured; rehearsals for narration and music were completed—and two days before the deadline, the film was ready.

In drawing conclusions from the limited experience of our first workshop term, we had to balance successes against shortcomings.

*Assets*

Our determination to produce a sponsored film during the first term enabled students to work on a project of professional quality. We tried to give each student his turn at as many of the important

phases of movie production as possible, from the planning and budgeting stages through writing, directing, shooting, editing, recording, and distribution. In addition, it provided the workshop with a concrete lesson in the economics of movie production, an important experience for any student who wants eventually to produce movies of his own.

The following production data may be of interest:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Shooting time: | 10 days | |
| Footage shot: | 2,300 feet (269 shots) | |
| Length of finished film: | 773 feet (consisting of 183 shots) | |
| Production costs: | Raw stock | $135.00 |
| | Workprint for editing | 161.70 |
| | Workprint for recording | 48.47 |
| | Opticals | 26.25 |
| | Recording and soundtrack | 159.00 |
| | Composite print | 93.20 |
| | Tax | 14.57 |
| | Total (including answer print) | $638.19 |
| | Cost per foot | $ .83 |

In proceeding by stages and combining intensive analysis with actual production of a sponsored film, we were able to reduce production and teaching expenses to a bare minimum. In this way we could tackle a program that a school with the financial limitations of the California School of Fine Arts would normally not be able to afford.

The initial success of *A City Looks At Art*[5] encouraged many of the students to start independent projects of their own, which are now in progress. In addition, the workshop has been approached by various institutions with a view to sponsoring its future productions. The local YMCA has commissioned the pro-

[5] It has been shown successfully at the New York Museum of Modern Art, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, the San Francisco Museum of Art, and several high schools and colleges. A number of San Francisco city supervisors declared that *A City Looks At Art* convinced them of the soundness of the festival idea, and the city allowed a considerably higher budget for the coming 1952 Art Festival. Negotiations for the commercial distribution of the film are now in progress.

duction of two television shorts, and the California School of Fine Arts itself plans to sponsor the production of a film on trends and conflicts in modern art, tentatively entitled *Way To Art.*

Since the existence of the seminar and workshop, four of the participants have found responsible positions in motion picture work.

Most important of all, it was possible to combine our creative efforts with a sound financial approach that allowed us to make the seminar and workshop self-sustaining (with the exception of the outlay for equipment).

*Liabilities*

Our restricted budget dictated an equally stringent limitation of equipment. (A request for a modest amount of additional equipment is at present under consideration.) As a consequence, many of our efforts took a great deal longer than would normally be required. Although building some of our own equipment and economizing wherever possible gave valuable experience to the students, there is a point of diminishing returns.

In spite of our intention to give all students an equal chance at every aspect of production, our limited equipment and the pressing deadline made it difficult to carry out this principle as fully as could be desired. (As a result, I had to perform some of the work myself rather than let the students do it.) In addition, the nature of our first film made it impossible to shoot from a detailed script. This discipline is particularly important for those who have not yet learned to visualize their continuity in advance, and tend to waste film by excessive shooting and cutting. We have since made it a point to conduct film exercises in order to learn to work from a written continuity.

During our first term, the scope of the workshop was limited to the documentary approach. We are now in the process of widening the base of our activities by adding experimental work and painting on film.

In spite of all our restrictions, we feel that the film seminar and film workshop have done quite well during their first year. We still have a long way to go before they can grow into a well-balanced, full-time program, but the main hurdle has been cleared. It has been demonstrated that a motion picture curriculum, combining film appreciation with the theory and practice of 16-mm. film production, can be successfully started and expanded on half a shoestring.

# Ghoulies and Ghosties

CURTIS HARRINGTON

CURTIS HARRINGTON, a graduate of the Theater Arts Department of the University of California, Los Angeles campus, is the author of a number of articles on films. This past summer, Mr. Harrington served as the *Quarterly*'s correspondent at the Cannes Film Festival and at the International Film Festival in Venice, where two of his own experimental films were shown. The following article was written for *Sight and Sound,* a British film magazine, and is reprinted here with their permission.

THE ABILITY of the camera to present hallucinatory or supernatural phenomena was one of the first discoveries made by the earliest creators of cinema; indeed, the most outstanding of the early innovators, Méliès, presented a great variety of supernatural visions in his "magically arranged scenes." His films abounded in fairies and ghosts and powerful magicians. But because of the camera's more obvious talent for objective recording, the cinema, as it subsequently grew and as it still is made use of today, has largely served to reconstruct a very earth-bound reality. In the United States the financial failure of a "fantasy" is considered almost certain, and so fantasies are rarely attempted. The few successes (the *Topper* series, *Here Comes Mr. Jordan*) have mostly been whimsical, using the tricks made possible by the varied mechanical resources of the camera for laughter rather than mystery or awe, while films that started out seriously, like *The Uninvited,* usually lost their supernatural convictions halfway through and dwindled away into obvious comedy. In Europe, ghosts have been the subject of more genuine wit, as in René Clair's *The Ghost Goes West* and, more notably, Max Ophuls' *La Tendre Ennemie,* in which three ghosts—of a woman's husband and her two lovers—sit on a chandelier during a dinner party given to celebrate the engagement of the woman's daughter to an old man she does not love. They finally alter the course of her life by persuading her to elope with someone else.

The fact of the matter is that camera "magic," despite its slickness and theoretically real and solid appearance, is a fairly obvious thing; a man double exposed so that he can be seen through looks not so much as we imagine a ghost might, but rather as a man double exposed. The latter effect used today is really only a formal device; we say, "there is a figure double exposed, which means he is supposed to be a ghost." But we are not convinced; there is not truly a "suspension of disbelief," so we can hardly be captured even momentarily by the illusion, as we may so often be by the dramatic pull of a situation, or the dramatic reality of a character. The mechanical fact stares us in the face, and that is all.

During the 'teens and 'twenties the supernatural was treated in many ways, perhaps most often by the Germans, whose love of mysticism is reflected strongly in their cinema. There were supernatural elements in all of the early German legend films, such as Galeen's *The Golem,* von Gerlach's *Chronicle of the Grieshuus,* and Lang's *Siegfried.* The first contained a remarkably well-handled sequence of the summoning of a demon according to the kabbala; the second—about the ghosts of two tormented lovers who rescue a child from scheming relatives in a Gothic castle—had Lil Dagover appearing in double exposure rather often as a warning spirit; and the third showed Siegfried's borrowed cloak of invisibility in all its practicality. The Germans also produced the first film version of Bram Stoker's classic vampire story, *Dracula,* although it was considerably rewritten by its scenarist, Henrik Galeen, made into a kind of old German legend, and retitled *Nosferatu.* In this the director, F. W. Murnau, used with, to contemporary eyes, rather crude but charming effect, the device of speeded action to show the supernatural strength of the master of the castle. A genuine sense of the macabre was conveyed by this, in combination with a general air of mystery and the frightening make-up of Max Schreck as the bloodthirsty count. Here double exposure, that obvious and so dangerous device for showing the supernatural, was used toward the end of the film to convey the

death of the latter; and as a commentary rather than sustained image (the figure dissolves into the air, disappearing altogether) its use was even effective.

About this same time in Hollywood the French director Maurice Tourneur, who had established a reputation for his pictorial style (not, one suspects, without considerable help from his art directors) during the late 'teens; produced Maeterlinck's *The Blue Bird* (1921) and a fantasy called *Prunella* (1922), about a strange little girl brought up in a strange house by three grim aunts and two prim maids, who kept her from the outside world, but could not prevent her falling in love with a pierrot. In these the fantastic effects were achieved as they are on the stage (both were originally plays), mechanically rather than by trickery of the camera. After *The Four Horsemen* and its misty apocalyptic visions, Rex Ingram included a fantastic and terrifying dream sequence in *The Conquering Power* (1921), and the morality tale within his *Trifling Women* (1923) was an elaborate and macabre vampiric love story in the tradition of Huysman's *A Rebours*. There were fantastic episodes also in Ingram's *Mare Nostrum* (1926), and in his version of Maugham's novel *The Magician* (1927), with its central figure drawn from the late Aleister Crowley, which contained an orgiastic dream sequence concerning Pan. Other American directors during the 'twenties dealt with the fantastic from time to time as their story material demanded, but Tourneur and Ingram were perhaps the two most consistently interested in using films to present fantasy rather than reality.

It is difficult to place where the fantastic "horror" film, as a genre, became established; but in America certainly the actor Lon Chaney, in a series of alarming make-ups, helped to establish the tradition. However, it was not until the coming of sound, and incidentally, the stock market crash, that the fantastic horror film became a staple Hollywood commodity. With *Dracula* (1930) directed by Tod Browning (he had earlier directed Lon Chaney in *The Unholy Three*), and James Whale's *Frankenstein* (1931),

the genre was definitely launched. These were followed by, to name a few of the most outstanding, *The Werewolf of London* (1933); *The White Zombie* (1933); *The Mark of the Vampire* (Browning, 1933), with Professor Zalen, an expert on vampire lore, solving the mystery of vampiric attacks on a young girl in a derelict castle; *The Mummy* (1934); and *The Black Cat* (1934), based on the Edgar Allan Poe story; *The Devil Doll* (Browning, 1934), about a French scientist who could reduce living creatures to a sixth of their normal size; and *The Bride of Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1935), with its splendid climax of a bride being created for the monster during a raging thunderstorm at night, the bride (Elsa Lanchester) being brought to life inside a bottle, but horrified, upon emerging, at her intended mate. James Whale, a British stage director imported to America, brought to his films a fine sense of Gothic terror in the English tradition, as well as an irrascible though perhaps less evident sense of humor. Tod Browning's work was less distinguished, though *The Mark of the Vampire* has its following. Its illusion, however, is quite destroyed when the ending of the film reveals the whole story to have been a carefully staged hoax.

Edmund Wilson has remarked how the popularity of the ghost and horror story in literature rises during times of outward stress in society, and certainly the vogue for this genre of film follows the same pattern. By 1939 the horror film had almost ceased to be produced, and it was only during the subsequent war that it was revived by the late Val Lewton, a producer then at RKO studios. During the time the popularity of the horror film had declined in inverse proportion to the gradual revival of economic strength and prosperity, it had not only been produced less often but became exclusively "B," or low budget, second-feature work. Thus, when Val Lewton produced his first film of this type, *The Cat People* (1943), it was at the customary low cost. To everyone's surprise, it had an amazing success as a first-class feature, and took in a great deal of money. It was, however, something slightly new.

The story of *The Cat People* is of Irena (Simone Simon), descendant of a race who, at times of emotional crisis, could turn into cats. Her psychiatrist is skeptical, but a few days later his body, bloody and clawed, is found in her apartment. Lewton had observed that the power of the camera as an instrument to generate suspense in an audience lies not in its power to reveal but its power to suggest; that what takes place just off screen in the audience's imagination, the terror of *waiting* for the final revelation, not the seeing of it, is the most powerful dramatic stimulus toward tension and fright. Moreover, where a fantastic subject is concerned, in order to obtain the modern audience's "suspension of disbelief," they must be kept in suspense as to the exact nature of whatever phenomenon they are to be frightened by—and this center of suggested terror must be surrounded by human, understandable people in realistic though possibly exotic surroundings. Thus the predicament of the girl in *The Cat People,* her growing realization of her impulses, was made direct and real. Upon this formula Lewton produced a number of horror fantasies, made by directors now well known: Jacques Tourneur (*The Cat People*), the son of Maurice Tourneur, Mark Robson, and Robert Wise. The films dealt with zombies in Haiti (*I Walked with a Zombie*), devil worship (*The Seventh Victim*), a child's imagination (*The Curse of the Cat People*), the living dead (*Isle of the Dead*), and an especially macabre murderer (*The Leopard Man*). Robert Louis Stevenson's *The Body Snatchers* was also imaginatively filmed with Lewton as producer and Wise as director, as was a story based on Hogarth's drawings of *Bedlam* (Mark Robson).

Though made independently on a very low budget, a film that deserves mention along with the Lewton product is Frank Wisbar's *The Strangler of the Swamp.* Wisbar, who directed *Anna und Elizabeth* and *Fahrmann Maria* during the early 'thirties in Germany, came to Hollywood as a refugee during the war, and made several rather curious low-budget films. *The Strangler of the Swamp,* the only fantasy among them, dealt with the malign

ghost of a man unjustly hung in a southern swampland. Although the treatment was on the whole realistic, it contained suggestions of German expressionism, and succeeded in evoking with considerable effect the mist-laden, spirit-haunted country in which the strange story takes place.

These have been the most interesting horror fantasies produced in Hollywood. One must record, for other reasons, the films made by Universal Studios during the war years. Whereas Val Lewton attempted within commercial restrictions to do something new and imaginative, all the films produced at Universal (a studio famous as the home of "horror" film, though in the early 'thirties both Paramount and MGM probably produced an equal share) were lifeless repetitions of ancient penny-dreadful formulas. A whole series of crudely ridiculous films were made, exploiting some famous originals—*House of Frankenstein, Son of Dracula, The Wolf Man, The Spider Woman, The Mummy's Ghost*—and the final death agony of James Whale's originally marvelous creation, *Abbott and Costello Meet Frankenstein.* Columbia Studio's product of this type was only very occasionally better; Edward Dmytryk's *The Devil Commands* (1942) built to a genuinely frightening climax, but it was weighted by a dully concocted story—a grief-stricken husband tries to contact the spirit of his dead wife through a brain machine, with the aid of a weird medium.

With the end of the war the popularity of horror films quickly diminished, so that since 1947 there have been few, if any, produced. Even Universal gave them up. Recently a new type of fantasy has come to the screen in the form of science-fiction films, which explain the supernatural in terms of science and in which mysterious happenings are generated by machines rather than human beings. At least one of these, however, proves to be simply a modern version of Mary Shelley's old morality thriller, *Frankenstein; or A Modern Prometheus.* In *The Thing,* horror and suspense are produced during the first part by only suggesting ver-

bally the nature of "The Thing," a monstrous vegetable man from another planet, but as soon as he is seen, fully clothed and looking altogether like Karloff's creation of "The Monster" in *Frankenstein,* the illusion of horror that has been built up is quickly dispelled. By now we have seen this creature too often; we produced him on this earth, and we expect another planet to be able to think up something different.

This brief outline of, primarily, the supernatural horror film may serve to indicate what has in the main been done with the genre; now this varied, sometimes remarkable, but relatively unimaginative output must be contrasted with one truly serious and brilliant creation, Carl-Theodor Dreyer's *Vampyr.* Dreyer's work, besides, is particularly interesting in this respect since he is the only outstanding film director to have used the supernatural more than once to express a personal outlook on life. Produced in France during 1930 and 1931, about the same time as *Dracula* and *Frankenstein,* Dreyer's *Vampyr* was released in 1932, at the time the vogue for horror films, at least in America, was mounting quickly. The film was premiered in Berlin, and although it was dubbed (easily and effectively, for there was very little dialogue) in both French and English it had little success outside of Germany, where its mystic quality seems to have been appreciated.

Inspiration for the story of *Vampyr* is credited to Sheridan le Fanu's "In a Glass Darkly." A reading of this collection shows that only one story bears any relationship to the film, and that only vaguely, the tale of a vampire, "Carmilla." Rather than from any particular literary basis, the film seems more to have developed from its settings (it was shot entirely on location in various deserted buildings), in which were placed a certain number of rather extraordinary characters living out their destiny in the shadow of a human vampire. Briefly, the continuity reveals the arrival of a young man at an inn beside a lake, where, during the night, a man enters his room and leaves with him a sealed package, with instructions that it is to be opened upon his death. The next morning

the young man investigates a strange building where shadows dance eternally, and visits an odd little doctor at his office where he meets also an old lady (who is the vampire). Presently he arrives at a chateau whose master is the man who had come to his room at the inn. The man has two daughters, Gisèle and Léone, and two servants. Léone is ill, having been attacked by the vampire. Suddenly and mysteriously the girls' father is shot, and the young man opens the package he had been given earlier. In it is "The Book of Vampires," which relates the vampire legend, and tells how the vampire can be destroyed. Léone leaves her bed and is discovered in the woods surrounding the chateau, attacked once again by the vampire. The doctor is called to administer a transfusion, and the young man gives his blood. Later the young man's *doppelganger,* in a dream, experiences his enclosure in a coffin by the doctor and the vampire, and he is carried toward the cemetery. Then, awakening, he goes to the cemetery, where the old servant opens the tomb of the vampire and drives a stake through her heart; she turns to a skeleton, and Léone sits up in bed, released. With the power of the vampire no longer sustaining him, the doctor runs away in panic, and is trapped by the old servant in a mill where the machines bury him slowly in a shower of white flour. The young man and Gisèle, meanwhile, ride in a boat through the misty lake and at last, arriving on the other side, walk into a forest illumined by the sun.

As with any film of style and value, a bare recounting of the plot (I prefer in this case the word "continuity," since it sounds more sequential, in a filmic sense, than constructed, in a literary sense) does not give one any idea of what the film is actually like; the structure of *Vampyr* is based more upon imagery than idea. Ebbe Neergaard, in his "Carl Dreyer," one of the British Film Institute Index Series, tells how the script called for the doctor to die by sinking into a bog of mud. Yet when Dreyer came by chance upon a plasterworks where everything was covered with a fine white dust, he realized the image requirement for the film was

that the doctor die in whiteness, and so an old flour mill, where the doctor could be trapped in the cage where the bags are filled, was chosen for the film. The earlier sequences, then, were carefully photographed by Maté to match, in style, the final image material. The first arrival of the young man at the inn is suffused in a late afternoon grayness. The sequence of his discovery of the building filled with mysterious shadows is in tones of white and gray. The succeeding exteriors—the young man's arrival at the chateau, his walk to the cemetery, and Léone's encounter with the vampire, are all extremely diffused so as to give a kind of preternatural mist effect. There is no sun in the film until the final moment.

What is especially striking about *Vampyr* is that light and shadow become more than just contributors to a consistent style; they serve as dynamic participants in the story unfolded. Dreyer recognised immediately the principle that Val Lewton applied to his series of films dealing with the supernatural twelve years later, that you must only suggest horror; you cannot show it, or at least, if you do, it must only be momentarily, for you cannot sustain it. It is the audience's own imagination, skillfully probed, that provides, out of its well of unconscious fear, all the horror necessary.

In what are perhaps the most uncanny and terrifying moments of *Vampyr,* only a wild inexplicable play of light and shadow is seen; but the terror of the malevolent supernatural force is brilliantly conveyed. One of the most effective of these moments is when the doctor, after having given the blood transfusion, leaves Léone's room and the young man runs after him, only to reach the head of the stairs and find them quite empty; then we hear an abrupt crash and see the shadows cast by the staircase railings jerking crazily around on the walls of the stairwell. Throughout the film all such moments, actions communicated by purely filmic means, are left an unexplained part of the general uncanny atmosphere. We are transported to the heart of a battle between ancient evil and the young, the pure in heart, taking place in a land con-

vincingly haunted, where anything may at any moment happen and does.

One cannot properly divorce *Vampyr* from Dreyer's other work, as it must be considered partly, along with these, as an expression of his personality. Certainly Dreyer is one of the very few directors of whom this may be fairly and safely said; no major studio chose the script of *Vampyr,* and there was no "front office" to interfere in any way with the execution. This seems to be fairly true also of *Jeanne d'Arc* and *Day of Wrath*—the former made immediately before *Vampyr,* the other twelve years after it. Seen in perspective the three films make up a kind of trilogy; they all bear definite affinities of theme, style, and content. Each presents a struggle between good and evil, age and youth, and in each there is an intense concern, almost amounting to obsession, with the *act* of death; in *Jeanne d'Arc* the progress toward death by fire; in *Vampyr* the death of the head of the manor, then the true death of the living dead and of the doctor and his assistant, and, during the whole of the film, the delicate suspension near death of Léone; and finally, in *Day of Wrath,* the death, again by fire, of the old lady declared a witch, the death of the parson, and Anne's acceptance, at the end of the film, of her identity as a witch, indicating surely the death to follow. In all three of the films the conquering of this miasma of death and old age is shown as only a temporary thing—a gesture of St. Joan's; the young lovers' idyll in *Day of Wrath;* and although in *Vampyr* the young man and Gisèle escape, at the end, they never really seem to emerge from the land of phantoms. Another recurrent figure that one notices in many of Dreyer's films is the powerful, often malevolent old lady. She was not, of course, seen in *Jeanne d'Arc* (where certain of the older priests might be said to have taken her place), but she was portrayed with humor very early in Dreyer's career as *The Parson's Widow* (1920) and she mastered the tyrant in *Thou Shalt Honour Thy Wife* (1925). In *Vampyr* she becomes the ancient, powerful living dead creature of the title, and in *Day of Wrath* she is two

forces—the narrow, suspicious old mother of the parson, and Marte, the old lady accused as a witch who goes to her death uttering dire curses against those who have condemned her.

As remarkable as the photographic treatment of *Vampyr* is the sound. Wolfgang Zeller composed a score that for suggestivity has seldom been equaled, perhaps because there have been no other films since then requiring quite such imaginative work. It is not, of course, music that could be divorced from the film. The dialogue is very sparse and effectively pointed, as when, after giving the blood transfusion to Léone, the young man complains (he is resting in an adjoining room) to the doctor, who peeks out at him from behind the door of Léone's room, that he is losing blood. *"Don't be silly,"* the doctor replies very slowly, *"your blood is in here."* Sound effects are also used with the utmost suggestivity. One remembers the inexplicable noises heard in the doctor's office, distant barkings and cryings, which make the young man ask the doctor if there are children or dogs on the premises. *"There are no children or dogs here,"* the doctor replies. When, from a subjective viewpoint, we experience with the young man our enclosure in a coffin, there is unique horror as we hear the close grinding of the screws into the coffin lid, and experience the splutter of a match struck to light a candle placed on the coffin lid by the vampire who, in doing so, peers at us intently.

The last sequence of the film is very formally constructed and gives us, I believe, insight into Dreyer's creative method, one which always tends toward formal control, especially when he is dealing with incident and outward movement rather than people. Here we have the escape of the young couple counterpointed with the death of the doctor in the flour mill. The sequence is crosscut, so that at one moment we see and hear the machinery rhythmically grinding out its white death, and the next we see the young couple gliding slowly on the mist-covered lake, the image being accompanied by a slow, sustained note of music. This combination of shots is repeated in alternation until the couple get out of

the boat and go into the sunlit forest. The very final shot is a close-up of the white, turning gears of the flour mill machinery; their movement slows, and at last stops. Fade out; we have reached the end of the adventure. The construction and the image material here employed are perfectly cinematographic; the meaning communicated is melodramatic incident abstracted into a patten of time, space, and sound. The sum of this design toward a conclusion becomes greater than the actions of its parts; it brings to an end not only the adventure we have had (for it has been *our* adventure as much as the protagonist's), but encloses the film perfectly in its own uniqueness as the sole cinematic work that shakes us with its revelations of the terrors that still haunt us in the deep and unknown places of the human psyche.

# The Police Revolver as *Deus ex Machina*

GERALD WEALES

GERALD WEALES is on the faculty of the Department of English at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Before he moved to Atlanta, in the fall of 1952, Mr. Weales was a resident of New York City.

THE SHOOTING OF Detective McLeod at the end of William Wyler's *Detective Story* might be called, at its grandest, a *deus ex machina.* More aptly, perhaps, it is a gimmick. Euripides used divine intervention as if, having said what he intended saying, he were eager to get the shambles of a silly plot off stage so that the Greeks might go home, wiser for his dramatic injection of new philosophy. The trick ending to Wyler's movie and to Sidney Kingsley's play has a slightly different function. It has a plot logic and even a psychological soundness if we accept Kingsley's facile explanation of Detective McLeod. It is used, however, not to solve or to explain or even to state a philosophical problem; it sidesteps one.

It is not unjust to expect some kind of philosophical statement because from time to time both the play and the movie make gestures in that direction. *Detective Story* seemed to be trying to be three things at once—a good melodrama, a psychological study, and a philosophical discussion. Both the movie and the play achieved the first; the play almost became the second; neither of them was successful as the third.

In general, it will be easier to discuss the movie and the play as one work. It will not be inconsiderate to do so since William Wyler has, for the most part, transcribed Kingsley's play directly to the screen. The writers of the screenplay, Philip Yordan and Robert Wyler, had little to do other than to change Dr. Schneider's business from abortions to black market babies—the latter is

apparently more genteel, hence more acceptable to the movie audiences—and to tone down some of the more colorful speeches to fit the conventions of the cinema.

*Detective Story,* the melodrama, recounts the fall of Detective McLeod. Mechanically, three things are necessary to the play, aside from McLeod himself. They are: a means to his fall, a means to his death, and a means to his repentance. The result is, then, three plots in simultaneous operation with McLeod figuring heavily in all three. Kingsley casually introduces these three lines of action early in the play—where they seem to vie for attention with a great many details which appear at the end to have been no more than precinct window dressing—but as the play progresses the function of these plots becomes evident and they take over the action of the play.

The first and most important of these, the means to McLeod's fall, concerns itself with an apparently cinched case that he has prepared against Kurt Schneider, the abortionist. The elaborate procedure which Schneider's attorney goes through before he surrenders his client to the police establishes carefully the hatred that McLeod feels for Schneider. It is difficult for the audience to accept McLeod's hate as moral indignation; it is easier to suspect with Lieutenant Monoghan that there is something to the hints that Schneider and his attorney keep throwing out, hints that McLeod has personal reasons for his attacks on Schneider. The unsubstantiated statements are good melodramatic devices; they keep the audience in suspense as to the actual character of the supposedly righteous McLeod.

When McLeod's case at last falls to pieces through the death of one witness and the purchase of another, the beating of Schneider is expected; there have been frequent gestures toward violence by McLeod, sufficient warnings that it is coming. Here Wyler has the advantage over Kingsley; he lets McLeod beat Schneider in the back of a moving patrol wagon which is stopped, by news of the death of the witness, on the way to the hospital and to the con-

frontation that might have convicted Schneider. In this one instance, the scene gains for the movie an ascendancy in emotional intensity over the play, an ascendancy which is seldom achieved otherwise.

Each surprise in a melodrama must be carefully grounded in probability. So when, in the wake of the beating of Schneider, Lieutenant Monoghan learns that McLeod's wife Mary had once been a patient of the bogus doctor, the audience is startled but not disbelieving. It should be apparent early—particularly in the movie in which McLeod and Mary play a conventional taxi love scene—that McLeod can be reached and humbled only through his wife. When he has rejected her, reaccepted her, and finally forced her to reject him—when, in short, the untouchable McLeod has been touched—the time has come for the other two plots, which have been working themselves out in fits and starts, to take over their functions in McLeod's fall.

Early in the play the seeds of McLeod's death were sown in plausibility. When Charley, the burglar, and his partner Lewis are introduced at first, they seem to be grotesque comic figures; to be, like the shoplifter, a relaxing interlude in the development of McLeod's story, although they, unlike the shoplifter, mix their laughter with disgust or revulsion rather than pathos. Kingsley, however, has spiked their genuinely funny lines with clues to Charley's final action. It is made plain that Charley has completely controlled and used Lewis. It is often repeated that he is a four-time loser and that he can expect no sentence milder than life imprisonment. The most important device in this process of revelation, at least so far as the movie is concerned, is the emphasis on the police revolvers. Kingsley points out in a stage direction that each time a detective questions Charley or Lewis he removes his pistol from his holster or his hip pocket and puts it into his inaccessible side pocket; Kingsley also indicates that Charley's eyes are to follow Detective Callahan's exposed gun. These directions are explicit in the reading, but they were so casual in stage presen-

tation that they did not become obvious to the spectator, particularly if he were not near the front of the theater. In the movie, Wyler could concentrate on the small group—Charley and his questioners—when the detectives removed their guns; he could manipulate the camera eye and let it, like Charley's, follow the exposed revolver as the detective moved to the filing cabinet near which Charley sat. The preparation is more obvious in the movie, but in both it and the play the audience is adequately prepared for Charley's violence, for his shooting of Detective McLeod.

The third of the melodramatic plots, the story of Arthur Kindred, first offender, and his loyal young lady, Susan, has also been carried through the whole play. This plot is present to provide McLeod with the stuff of a last-minute gesture, a kind of repentance. The play is a jumble of stock types, but in these two—Arthur and Susan—Kingsley has written his least successful characters. They are silly, pasteboard people and as played in the film (particularly by Cathy O'Donnell who acts Susan in the ridiculous Teresa-Wright-purity school of acting that has been the vogue since *The Best Years of Our Lives*) they are almost offensively unbelievable. The good boy gone wrong and the girl who stands bravely at his side are on hand only so that McLeod can release the boy at the end of the movie. They are too false to have a psychological reality, too insipid to have any philosophical force, so their last-minute reprieve from unhappiness is no more than a sop of sentimentality for the audience. Such sentimentality is, at least, a valid ingredient of melodrama.

All of the makings of melodrama are in *Detective Story,* then, and are handled skillfully by both Kingsley and Wyler. There is suspense generated over the hidden connection between McLeod and Schneider. There are heroics—McLeod's suicide attempt to disarm Charley. There is violence—the beating of Schneider, three shots in the stomach for McLeod, and a quick clubbing for the shooter. There is the soap-operatic problem of Arthur and Susan, made more sticky by the gruff, kindly interference of De-

tective Lou Brody. There are even relief comics—the shoplifter who so badly wants a husband, the man whose pocket has been picked, the lady who is being attacked by atom rays—and their comedy is tinged with a slight pathos. With all of these elements it would be difficult for *Detective Story* to miss on melodramatic terms. Well directed on both stage and screen and competently acted (well acted in the small parts, particularly by Lee Grant as the shoplifter), it hits.

As a psychological study, however, *Detective Story* is less successful. Such a study focuses attention directly on Detective McLeod, and if he is examined too closely, he tends to disintegrate. As the play opens, the audience is handed this character: Detective Jim McLeod, a man who is driven to seek justice or, more properly, vengeance; a man who imagines himself as the possessor of some divine ordination to seek out and stamp out evil.

Kingsley, as a realist, cannot just tender us a man with a single compulsion, a man who is going to break himself on the knowledge that the one person he loves embodies some of the evil that he has always tried to eradicate. Kingsley must try to explain the origin of this compulsion. Since he is writing a play and not a monograph, he does not really have room to give a case history of McLeod. He is not satisfied to let us off with hints and suggestions, however; he must try to be specific in the few lines that are allowed him. As a result, we are given a facile explanation of McLeod's character, another revolt of the son against the father, a son who, in revolting, becomes the father without quite realizing that he has.

We learn, too, that McLeod's mother has been driven mad. Kingsley returns to this madness in his stage directions for the actions of McLeod when he receives the news of Mary's onetime abortion. Later, after the unsuccessful reconciliation, when Mary realizes that they can never live together again, she suddenly remembers that McLeod has shown signs of madness for a long time now—a fact that she conveniently forgot early in the play. ("I

could never find it in my heart to acknowledge one tiny flaw in you because I love you so.")

All this information is forced on the audience, which is asked to swallow everything quickly, glibly, and without thinking. Unless the dose is taken the character cannot be believed.

The lack of success in the creation of McLeod is made more obvious by the presence of the hovering figure of Joe Feinson, the newspaper reporter. He acts apparently as a kind of Greek chorus—indicating the missteps as McLeod makes them, milking him for the tiresome family background that we are to accept as explanation, philosophizing with his wisdom hidden in a tough, "cute" manner of speaking which is blessedly not the native language of the New York newspaperman. Although it seems that he is trying to be Teiresias (McLeod even calls him "the Delphic oracle of CCNY), as played in the movie by Luis Van Rooten, with his native sweetness too omnipresent, he comes nearer to being Mary Worth.

As a philosophical piece *Detective Story* concerns itself with the nature of good and evil, but the statement that it makes is tentative. The problem that it poses is not solved; it is barely stated. Here, says Kingsley through McLeod, is the personification of absolute good or, at least, that aspect of absolute good which is implied by absolute justice. McLeod, like the Old Testament God, must in the name of justice banish mercy.

McLeod the good is pitted not against absolute evil but against little bits of evil that cling to all of humanity; since there is no antagonist worthy of justice's hero, one must be created specially for the occasion. McLeod sees Schneider in the image of the devil; he smells evil in the presence of the doctor. But the smell that attacks McLeod's nostrils comes not from Schneider but from himself. In the quest for justice McLeod has become the evil that he is fighting. Against a backdrop of humanity, a pastel gray blended from the black of evil and the white of good, the figure of McLeod stands out in relief. It is of little importance whether

he thinks that he is white or black, for his vividness in contrast will so overshadow the rest of the stage that to those in the backdrop he will seem black. McLeod's goodness, then, since it must operate in the world, becomes inevitably evil. Kingsley only records this metamorphosis, but he appears to have wanted to say something about it.

Perhaps he had hoped to plea for mercy, to ask the just to look to their justice. If such was in his mind, he has failed. McLeod makes a gesture toward mercy but it is not a philosophical grimace; it is a stage trick. After he has been shot, after the evil of McLeod has been obliterated by the almost evil of Charley, the cat-burglar, McLeod has the record of Arthur, the first offender, destroyed. This is a gratuitous act, however; the evil has been destroyed; the justice no longer needs to be tempered with mercy.

McLeod's gesture has no philosophic and little psychological validity; its sole truth is a melodramatic one. His shooting, then, has been no *deus ex machina;* it doesn't clean up after an attempt at truth. It allows Kingsley to avoid the issue that he has spent three acts setting up. The police revolver in the hands of Charley is, after all, just a gimmick.

# A Bibliography for the Quarter

*Book Editor,* FRANKLIN FEARING

## BOOKS

WHETHER we know it or not many of the images in our minds of people, institutions, organizations, and events are the result of the operations of a group of skilled but unobtrusive professionals called public relations counselors. Theirs is the job of bringing about a more sympathetic relationship between particular institutions, organizations, and people and the "public." For many people an aura of ambiguity inescapably surrounds these activities. On the one hand the very term "counselor" suggests the professional approach—a commitment to the use of skills and techniques in the public interest. On the other hand there is an uneasy feeling that these techniques and skills are more frequently than not associated with ballyhoo and deception, and that, in spite of the high-minded and ethical implications of the term counselor, public relations deliberately creates illusions about persons and organizations for the purpose of manipulating and controlling public attitudes.

In *Public Relations* (University of Oklahoma Press, Norman, Oklahoma, 1952, $5.00) Edward L. Bernays, one of the most eminent of the professionals in this field, presents the case for the defendant. As seen by him, maladjustments are inescapable in a highly competitive society such as ours with its many publics and many interests. These maladjustments exist between the goals of individuals and groups, and the goals of society as a whole or segments of it. They may be the result of distortions in the mind of the public due to misinformation, ignorance, or apathy, or to actions of organizations or individuals themselves. In any event it is the public relations counselor who seeks to mediate between the client (the individual or group whose interests or goals are threatened) and the public, for the purpose of bringing about a

more satisfactory relationship. As viewed by Mr. Bernays, public relations emerges not only as a necessary activity in a pluralistic society but as a form of social statesmanship.

Whatever case may be made for the professional and ethical immaculateness of the public relations counselor—and Mr. Bernays makes a very good case indeed—it is interesting to note that in the portion of the book dealing with the history of the field from the Dark Ages to the present, many of the instances cited would confirm the belief that public relations is primarily concerned with the interests of the client rather than the public. Mr. Bernays could of course, with logic, reply that these occurred in the old, bad days when public relations was concerned primarily with "publicity" and "selling" rather than with "integrating" (a key concept for the author) the client and the public. The disturbing question still remains, however, regarding the extent to which public relations as a field has committed itself unequivocally to the ideal goals which Mr. Bernays has stated. The ambiguities implicit in a situation in which clients with enormous financial and social resources may employ the services of personnel highly skilled in the manipulating of symbols for the purpose of controlling public opinion are not wholly resolved by Mr. Bernays' book.

In any event, Mr. Bernays has written an illuminating and scholarly book about activities which touch the lives of all of us and which, possibly for professional reasons, have been more or less veiled, not only from the public gaze, but from examination and evaluation by the social scientist. It is obvious that the author sees these activities in the context of social science, specifically in the context of communication, not only in the sense that the valid techniques utilized by the public relations practitioner come from social psychology, anthropology, and sociology (possibly even psychiatry!), but that the field itself is a legitimate object of social science study. The book has an ample bibliography and index.

The most recent of the books which purport to give a blow-by-

blow account of the making of a motion picture is *Making a Film* by Lindsay Anderson (Macmillan Company, New York, 1952, $4.00). The scene this time is Britain and the film *Secret People* made at the Ealing Studios, favorably known to American audiences for the production of such successes as *The Lavender Hill Mob* and *The Man in the White Suit.*

So far, about the only thing these books have in common is the avowed intent to let the reader behind the scenes when a movie is being made. Their differences in point of view and method are so great as to make any generalizations impossible. The first of the series was, apparently, Dore Schary's *Case History of a Movie* which was about a rather dubious bit of fantasy called *The Next Voice You Hear.* The treatment was folksy and the intent was to persuade the reader that he was getting an inside view of a fascinating business as carried on by fascinating people who loved it. Lillian Ross gave *The Red Badge of Courage* the dry, sophisticated *New Yorker* treatment in a series of five articles (presumably to appear later in book form) entitled "No. 1512" and run as part of "Onward and Upward with the Arts." Here through a series of conversations (how well remembered!) and merciless, mordant descriptions of the shooting of sequences on location, of the people involved, and of office conferences, the impression was conveyed that movie making is a heartbreaking business in which perpetually frustrated workers cynically or neurotically strive to satisfy both their artistic consciences and dividend-minded executives and stockholders in New York.

*Making a Film* is neither mordant nor folksy. The author lived with the film from its inception months before the actual shooting began to the end. The form of presentation is a day-by-day diary from which very little seems to be omitted. The following is a sample.

Monday, April 30, 1951. The first set-up today polishes off Louis's Lodgings (E.53): on the build-up of this shot, not too luminously described in the script, Thorold [Thorold Dickinson, the director]

comments: "Cliche No 66 in the book—detectives searching suspect's room—what on earth is one to do to make that interesting? Cliche No 66a is of course to have the telephone huge in the foreground, and use a wide-angle lens to cover the rest of the room. Well we don't want anything like that, so we do it quite straight and neo-realist: start on a detective examining the fireplace (where they've been burning papers), and pan around with him as he crosses to answer the telephone. Then the detective suggests 'Wouldn't I use a handkerchief when I pick up the phone, in case of fingerprints?' So we track in on him as he picks it up, to emphasize the handkerchief. Which brings us to a set-up which matches exactly the shot of Maria at the other end of the line—the next cut."

In addition to the day-to-day diary, there is included the shooting script of the film and several appendixes. These latter contain a detailed statement of all the sequences which were cut from the script and from the film after it was shot, notes on the film's music, full credit titles, and biographical sketches of the principal members of the directorial staff and cast.

While *Making a Film* still fails to give all the data which the social scientist might wish regarding the group processes which result in that extraordinary product of collective activity, a film, it does give a picture of how complex personalities interact in a creative process.

According to the dust cover, *Dynamics of the Film* by Joseph and Harry Feldman (Hermitage House, New York, 1952, $3.50) differs from other books on film theory in not being written for "coteries of cinema aesthetes, but for men and women who like great popular films." It is not too evident to this reviewer that this purpose has been achieved. In an apparent attempt to simplify cinematic concepts for the hypothetical novice, the authors frequently succeed in being merely ponderous. For example, the fourteen pages of "simplified" discussion of montage might have been reduced to three. In fact, the essence of the concept *is* given an adequate statement including a film example on pages 54, 55, and 56. A similar criticism applies to the somewhat labored dis-

cussion of the obvious differences between literary and film techniques. The ultimate significance for film theory of these distinctions has always escaped this reviewer. But in any event, in a presentation intended for the uninitiated, it would have been a better pedagogic tactic to have stressed the similarities between literary and cinematic communication. That the effects achieved by many of the great novelists, for example, are essentially cinematic although their writing predated the cinema, has been noted many times. Dickens and Proust are favorite examples. In the present case the authors quote Thackeray's famous description of the Battle of Waterloo in *Vanity Fair* as a basis for illustrating the differences between the film and the novel. To this reviewer, Thackeray demonstrates in this wonderful piece of prose that he saw the great battle in cinematic terms even though he had never heard of the film. The bibliography in *Dynamics of the Film* seems rather heavily weighted with items appearing before 1940. Omitted are such important recent references as Wolfenstein and Leites (*Movies, A Psychological Study*), Waldron (*The Information Film*), Lindgren (*The Art of the Film*), Mayer (*Sociology of Film*), Benoit-Levy (*The Art of the Motion Picture*), and Spottiswoode (*Grammar of Film,* 1950 edition, and *Film and its Techniques*).

Paul Rotha is the editor of a volume of letters entitled *Portrait of a Flying Yorkshireman* (Chapman & Hall, London, 1952, 18*s.*) written by Eric Knight to Rotha. Knight is, of course, the creator of Sam Small, the Flying Yorkshireman, and Lassie, as well as the best seller *This Above All.* The letters cover an eleven-year span, the period of Knight's creative activity, including the Hollywood interlude. They reflect a wide variety of interests, especially a deep concern with films and film making.

Plagiarism is the pilfering of an artistic, literary, or musical property. The definition is simple, but the act involves complex psychological, legal, ethical, and aesthetic considerations. Alexander Lindey has written an informative, interesting, and schol-

arly book on this labyrinthine subject which has such a deceptively simple definition. *Plagiarism and Originality* (Harpers, New York, 1952, $5.00) contains chapters on plagiarism in art, music, and plays, copyright problems, and analyses of court decisions in famous cases where plagiarism charges have been sustained or lost. Especially interesting are the discussions of plagiarism in the entertainment business, particularly in motion pictures. The mass media of communication, particularly in radio and TV with their insatiable demand for "new" material, seem to have created special problems. The radio and TV comics who must be relentlessly, endlessly, and "spontaneously" funny week in and week out have raised the fine art of gag stealing to new levels of proficiency. All of these problems are discussed not only from the point of view of the legal and ethical problems involved but in relation to the basic question of the nature of creative originality and "inspiration." There is a comprehensive bibliography and an adequate index.

In the preface of *How to Write a Book* (Philosophical Library, New York, 1952, $3.00) Cecil Hunt states the *raison d'être* for his book: "It is made painfully clear to me every day of my professional life, that thousands write books who, while they have the necessary literary ability, have not the slightest knowledge of the technique of book writing." His simple, unpretentious little book fulfills this purpose admirably. There are chapters on sources of information, novel writing, the writing of nonfiction books, preparation of the manuscript, securing illustrations, submission of manuscripts to publishers, legal aspects of authorship, and (note well!) tests for potential authors.

A recent addition to the Mentor Books is *Good Reading* (New American Library of World Literature, Inc., 501 Madison Avenue, New York 22, 35 cents). This is a revised edition of a book which has already reached over 500,000 readers. It is essentially a descriptive list of some 1,200 books offering a representative selection of the most important, interesting books from all historical

periods and types. This list is classified by historical periods, literary types, and humanities and sciences. There are essays by Irwin Edman, John Erskine, and Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Especially interesting are the personal lists of basic books compiled by such individuals as Carl Sandburg, Thomas Mann, Norman Corwin, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Aldous Huxley, and Lin Yutang.

## JOURNALS, RESEARCH, ETC.

The Ford Foundation's Fund for Adult Education has prepared a set of materials to be used in its current series of adult discussion programs on *Great Men and Great Issues in Our American Heritage*. There are nine programs centering around Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, John Marshall, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln. In addition to the films which are available on each of these subjects, there is a *Discussion Leaders Manual* for the series and a 221-page book containing essays on the contribution of each of these historical figures to the American heritage. The format of these discussion groups is carefully planned. Included in the packet of material are full instructions regarding the procurement of the films and an organizers' manual. The latter includes a discussion of the different ways of setting up a group, the kinds of persons interested in such discussions, the use of trained and untrained discussion leaders, and the problems of financing. The address of the fund is 914 East Green Street, Pasadena, California.

periods and types. This list is classified by historical periods, literary types, and humanities and sciences. There are essays by Irwin Edman, John Erskine, and Dorothy Canfield Fisher. Especially interesting are the personal lists of basic books compiled by such individuals as Carl Sandburg, Thomas Mann, Norman Corwin, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Aldous Huxley, and Lin Yutang.

## JOURNALS, RESEARCH, ETC.

The Ford Foundation's Fund for Adult Education has prepared a set of materials to be used in its current series of adult discussion programs on *Great Men and Great Issues in Our American Heritage*. There are nine programs centering around Benjamin Franklin, Thomas Jefferson, Alexander Hamilton, George Washington, John Marshall, John Quincy Adams, Andrew Jackson, John C. Calhoun, Daniel Webster, and Abraham Lincoln. In addition to the films which are available on each of these subjects, there is a *Discussion Leaders Manual* for the series and a 221-page book containing essays on the contribution of each of these historical figures to the American heritage. The format of these discussion groups is carefully planned. Included in the packet of material are full instructions regarding the procurement of the films and an organizers' manual. The latter includes a discussion of the different ways of setting up a group, the kinds of persons interested in such discussions, the use of trained and untrained discussion leaders, and the problems of financing. The address of the fund is 914 East Green Street, Pasadena, California.