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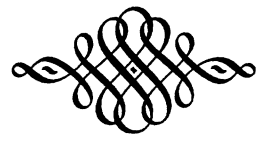

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Monopoly and the First Freedom

ROBERT A. BRADY

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I

IT IS doubtless driving a point too hard to say, as did Eduard Meyer in his monumental *Geschichte des Altertums*, that every hound that bays at midnight has a *Weltanschauung*. But the exaggeration dissolves the instant we delve into the consciousness of human beings. "Man is a political animal," wrote Aristotle, and the *polis* represents a summing up of the life style of the community which it embraces. Whether they know it or not, those who people it possess a "world view," a social philosophy which in some manner or other sums up and gives coherence both to group life and to individual values, beliefs, hopes, and aspirations. To recognize this is but the beginning of wisdom in the social sciences. Without it there is no understanding of the vital forces shaping the arts, the sciences, and the philosophies. In human affairs there is no escape from the fact that everywhere, however dimly or clearly understood, there always exists for each a cultural milieu which gives meaning and content to the parade of experiences and thoughts of all, and outside of which all appears strange, "unnatural," and foreign.

It is a truism, trite perhaps but not to be forgotten, that the arts are of a piece with, and reflect throughout, the changing content of this cultural milieu. "The art history of Bali," writes Covarrubias, "runs parallel to the history of the island itself." Music, painting, the plastic arts, the dance, religion, and folklore all have this in common, that they trace out, as with a highly sensitized *Fingerspitzgefühl*, the changing material and spiritual life of society as a whole. They reflect the forces and influences that unify, harmonize, and build, and those that divide, disrupt, and destroy. They etch in detail the moods and outlook that dominate war and peace, the impositions of an invading aristocracy, class structures, developments in technology, the material basis of existence, and the blending of rituals, behavior patterns, and institutions of past and present. They show the society's depths and its shallowness, its originality and its imitations, its hopes and its fears, its will to endure and its susceptibility to disintegration, its cruelties and its humaneness.

For whoever has once grasped the implications of this intimate and pervasive relationship—long familiar to historians, anthropologists, and philosophers—between the arts and other aspects of cultural life, the arts begin to take on a new and heavily enriched significance. The *Book of the Dead* is shaped by the sacerdotalism of a castelike society living in the presence of the ever-recurring and mysterious renewal of the lifegiving flood; the vast pyramid of Gizeh arises on the bones of the disinherited who would otherwise be idle, and also socially dangerous, over the long dry season. The *Orestaeia* is at grips with the problem of tyranny.

Euripides broods over escape "to the dear lone lands untroubled of men" in a world where the "social question" seems insoluble. The mass entertainments of "bread and the circus" are linked with the chains fastened on the Roman world by failure of the Social Wars. The *Inferno* is written at the great divide between the medieval and the modern world and reflects in every line its endless indecision. Rubens painted the fat, successful merchants of Amsterdam; Goya, the disasters of the Spanish campaign. The "lake poets" and the critics—Ruskin, Carlyle, and Morris—were reacting to the spreading human ruin of the rise of industrial capitalism.

There is no need to labor the point or to multiply examples. The connection is there. It always has been, and it is inconceivable that it might ever not be. It is intimate, close, and pervasive. It holds both for the defender of the status quo and for the critic who would remold it in keeping with some new heart's desire. It holds for those who accept the world of needs and aspirations as they see it before them, and for those who would escape from it. The stamp of the times, like Jehovah's on the brow of Cain, is upon those who talk of "art for art's sake," of media of "pure entertainment," of the neutrality of the artist to life, just as clearly as upon those who accept freely some measure of responsibility to the society without which human life can have no possible meaning at all. All escapism is escape from something, whether the escape of the anchorite to the desert, a Seneca to his Stoa, the frustrated to their psychoanalysts, or the philosophers of malaise into the Existential beatitudes (or, rather, dolorotudes!). Throughout all history, he who turns his back on society takes it with him and dwells with its shadow even as he denies its substance. He will eat of its substance whether he weep dry tears with Marcus Aurelius at the bivouac fires or gorge at the table with Petronius of the *Satyricon*. Twist and turn as he will, he can never succeed in severing the spiritual umbilicus which links him to society. Without society, life perishes and the arts shrivel and die.

The arts have always been engaged in portraying, explaining, defending, denying, and criticizing that which exists in the world of men. So viewed, creative power is an expression of acuteness of insight and of the skill and originality with which experience is portrayed for others to see and grasp. Who criticizes the arts must then criticize the way of seeing as well as the skill with which the thing seen is expressed. Not only the artist's use of his medium is at stake, but also his "world view" and its bearing on the culture of the times in which he lives. An analysis of one is an analysis of the other; a change in one is a change in the other. Only degrees of awareness, sophistication, emotional sensitivity, and intellectual power separate those who understand this truism of history from those who do not.

If one asks, then, what is the matter with the schools, the theater, the newspapers, the radio, the movies, the painting, the sculpture, the music of the times, one cannot escape the need of diagnosing the contents and the currents of change in the life style of the culture as a whole. It is this which most of the recent critics of mass media have failed to do, with the result that, at the outset of the process of coming to grips

with the most significant relationships between the arts and the culture of a democratic society, they tend to become sidetracked, and are soon bogged down with trivia and irrelevancies. They are apt to become, willy-nilly, victims of what Whitehead once termed the "fallacy of misplaced concreteness." Thus diagnosis, even while seeing much that is relevant, soon comes to find mysterious "humors" where actually bacteria are in harvest. Therapy is apt to consist of bleeding where major operations are required. A "complex" may be shrived on a brocaded couch where a social insecurity is at work. Unknowingly a search has begun with blinders in place; a course is pursued, but a will-o-the-wisp has come into view; a solution is found, but it is elaborately irrelevant or childishly disillusioned. As always happens, a panacea is sought when the power of analysis and the subtlety of feeling fail. And they must always fail when understanding begins with false or inadequate major premises. In human society premises which are not consistent with the dominant forces shaping up the spirit and structure of society as a whole must always lead to failure.

II

In all human affairs, but especially in the arts, there is no worse assumption than that fundamental changes can be brought about by tinkering with the machinery of organization. Even when changes in machinery may well be in order, they will be advocated fruitlessly until they are in keeping with the changing moods and values of the times. Hence the tinkerer's fallacy is worse confounded when advanced in terms based on an inadequate understanding of the very past and present out of which the future is to be formed. Such seems to me the weakness of a widely publicized recent book by Morris Ernst, called *The First Freedom*. Here a careful examination will show, I think, that very nearly all he examines should be taken for granted, and that little of what he takes for granted is any longer valid at all. The result is that the book, though very persuasive, adds nothing in point of fact, and provides but little in its conclusions and recommendations to shore up the democracy which the author fears is being undermined by current trends in the mass-consumption media of the arts. On the contrary, admirable though the intention be, whatever following his analysis may secure will result only in pouring more water down a bottomless well.

The book is a forceful and readable presentation of the widely held thesis that the growth of monopolistic forms and practices are the root of all evil in contemporary American democracy. Therefore the book takes on an importance that transcends by far its individual merits or demerits. Ernst applies to the newspapers, the radio, and the movies the argument which has dominated the activities of the Anti-Trust Division of the Department of Justice over the past half century. The argument is based upon the same premises as those underlying the "Big Stick" trust-busting of Theodore Roosevelt, the reforming zeal of Wilson's "New Freedom," and Franklin Roosevelt's New Deal. Behind it lie the kind of fears and buttressing faiths which launched the great official inquiries into concentration of control of American economic life from the time of the

Industrial Commission in 1898 to the Temporary National Economic Commission (TNEC) in 1938.

For the legal profession the tenets underlying the American anti-trust tradition have come in recent years to be known as those of the Holmes-Brandeis school. More than any other two persons, first Holmes and then Brandeis have shaped the arguments, formulated the philosophy, and forged the tools for prosecuting and dissolving combinations and for exorcising monopoly controls. One after another, the formulae evolved have been applied to the railroads, power companies, oil, steel, optical glass, and a host of other industries. Judicial decisions, reinforced from time to time by new legislation, have extended the scope of application of their formulae over almost the entire range of monopoly devices and tactics: over pools, trusts, combinations, interlocking directorates, holding companies, and a vast and complicated medley of supplementary cartel-like devices which have mushroomed throughout the length and breadth of the United States since the First World War.

There is a vast literature on the subject. Investigations, fact-finding commissions, judicial decisions, legal commentaries, books, pamphlets, and periodical articles have poured from the press in mounting volume. Yet if there is any one generalization which may summarize the whole of this history in retrospect, it is that the anti-trust program has been an almost total failure. It has not effectively broken up or even seriously retarded combinations or collusions of any major type. The most persistent and belligerent "trust-buster" in American history, former Assistant Attorney General Thurman Arnold, has repeatedly stated a similar conclusion. Though himself strongly in favor of greatly expanded anti-trust activity, he is fully aware of the almost total failure of legislation and legal procedures to keep up with the methods of streamlining monopoly controls and circumventing restrictions. In fact, the governmental hostility itself has considerably stimulated the devising of such methods. It is hard to avoid the conclusion that the Anti-Trust Division is a failing champion of a lost cause.

As the TNEC has shown at such great and wearisome length, monopoly devices are everywhere on the flow and nowhere on the ebb. There is no field of any importance—international, national, or local—where monopoly practices are on the decline. The Anti-Trust Division found in a series of revealing grand jury indictments in the building industry that the industry was honeycombed with monoply and cartel controls from one end of the country to another. As one official expressed it "off the record," to break up these monopoly controls it would be necessary to indict most of the building-supply companies and building contractors, many of the real-estate companies, some of the trade unions which have been infiltrated by racketeers, and most of the state, municipal, and local building authorities of the entire United States. The same holds for milk processing and delivery, for beer, wines, and hard liquor, for processing and distribution of standardized and widely distributed fruits and vegetables and their by-products, for hides and leather, for meat and fish, for optical glass, rayon, nylon, plastics, furniture, books, periodicals,

and so ad infinitum. It holds for consumers' goods as well as for producers' goods, for services as well as manufactures, for retail as well as wholesale, for luxuries as well as necessities.

In the face of this impressive record of failure Ernst with serene confidence advocates a restoration of "competition" in the media of newspaper, radio, and movies. Appropriate anti-trust legislation and court action is to be the cure for what ails these caterers to the public taste. It is difficult, if not wholly impossible, to avoid the conclusion that this is no less than a counsel of despair. It would seem on the record that if the first freedom—"Freedom from Fear"—is to be the care of the media for influencing mass thinking, and if this freedom is to be secured only by restoration of competition "in the market place of thought," the future of democracy is then dark indeed. On this same record Ernst must take the role of Cnut at the restless flow, and we must watch him wield his frayed broom to sweep back the mounting tide without hope. Without hope in democracy because without hope in ourselves. For Ernst fears, above all, government control even if it be government in a wholly democratic society. As Carlyle once remarked, "who works without hope draws nectar in a sieve." But here the cast of fortune is not even so good as this. For if the history of the past fifteen years means anything at all and if we are to lose democracy because of the failure of competition alone, then the die is already cast and we need not be limited merely to the futile drawing of nectar in a pallid despair. On the contrary, in our carelessness we will have reared in our midst a monster who, if hunger is upon him, may soon devour us all.

III

The conclusion is well-nigh inescapable that the recipe of "competition" is worn out, that for all practical purposes it has been abandoned by business, government, and economists alike, and that as a therapy for those contemporary ills that threaten democracy it is essentially worthless. Then why should its formulae be advanced once more as the universal solvent for monopoly in the newspaper, radio, and movie industries? There seem to be four reasons. Of these the first is in part legitimate, but the others are quite inadmissible. The first reason centers in the fully justified and overweening fear of the threat to democracy that arises from concentration of control over economic affairs in the hands of small, compact, private cliques of democratically irresponsible businessmen. The second lies in the mistaken belief that the essence of democracy is to be found in entrepreneurial competition amongst a flock of small-scale business enterprises. The third lies in the fruitless hope that there is any possibility at all of affecting a return to small-scale competition in these fields. And the last reason is found in failure to recognize any other possible alternatives.

Good intentions to the contrary, the result of combining these four is hopelessly to muddle the picture, and to come out with a set of conclusions and recommendations that, admirable as some of them may be in detail, are collectively worse than no solution at all. This result can, I think, be shown to flow from an inadequate understanding of the forces shaping up American culture as a whole, and from the effort to apply to a radically altered historical

milieu some formulae derived from a social philosophy which—particularly in the construction given by Ernst—has long since been outmoded both in spirit and in truth.

It will be worth while to consider each of the points in order.

IV

The fear that private monopoly threatens democratic institutions is no idle one. The external evidence to this effect is too strong for much argument. Given concentration, there is lodged in the hands of the few *power to determine policy* which affects the lives and fortunes of the many. And when this power reaches into the field of ideas and ideologies, as it does in the fields with which Ernst has dealt, it becomes doubly dangerous, for it may attack the lifeblood and the nervous system of democracy as a whole. So much is obvious. But that is not all. More significant is the fact that there is no reason for believing that this heaping up of economic power can be kept separate from political power which could exercise dominant control over the social life and the culture as a whole. All past history—from our most ancient records in Egypt, Babylonia, Rome, medieval times, and on down to the present—speaks to a like effect. From time immemorial to the rise of the Fascist and proto-Fascist states of the last twenty years the story is the same. Always and everywhere the dominant power in the one sphere soon becomes effective in the other spheres. If that power is antidemocratic—if its moods, its outlook, its structures, its controls, its "life style" are undemocratic—it will result in moves, alliances, and policies of an antidemocratic character in all the related fields of civilized existence. At no level, nor at any time, can the political and economic life of any type of society for long remain insulated against each other, or either of these from other phases of culture. And where the structure, the philosophy, and the objectives of one sphere are in conflict with that of another, the whole pattern of one must eventually give way. The "house" of no society can long remain divided in this way.

And so it follows that political democracy cannot long live at peace with economic autocracy, nor political despotism with economic democracy. The medieval lord could not tolerate policy determination from below any more than could the Junker, the Tory, the Grandee, or the lord of the counting house and the baron of steel, shipping, and other giant enterprises. Nor, contrariwise, can democracy long permit these burgeoning "states within states" to exist in its midst without imperiling itself at every vital point. One or the other must go. This is the lesson of Fascist Italy, of Nazi Germany, and of the authoritarian industrial feudalism of prewar Japan. It is the lesson of the Argentine, of Spain, and of internally torn China. It is the lesson of our own Bourbon South, the "company town," the war against the liberal features of the New Deal.

It is equally the lesson of the growth of concentration in the newspaper, radio, and movie fields. Here Ernst has adequately summarized the indicia of concentration, but he has by-passed the political, social, and cultural implications. Interest in "content," in fact, he specifically adjures. Yet these implications are of such a character as to require a complete recasting of the

analysis, and such a recasting makes the solutions offered seem inadequate indeed.

Consider briefly the picture. The newspapers, the majority of the widely sold "popular" magazines, and the radio have come directly under the control of great chain enterprises which are largely, if not at points wholly, under the influence of large-scale advertisers. The more important among these advertisers, being themselves national concerns purveying their wares or services on a national scale, speak primarily for monopoly-minded interests.

For their part, the movies have become big business in their own right. Closely related with other fields of giant enterprise (banking, manufacture of materials and equipment, etc.), they have come to take on the character, the views, the outlook, the interests of that portion of the business community with which they are most closely associated. The "voice of business"—advertising and public relations—comes to speak for motion pictures too. And that is to say that they speak for those groups who favor "self-government in business," meaning by this disarming phrase such things as the NRA, the Miller-Tydings bill, and the vast and widening corpus of national and local "fair trade practice" laws which appear to be shoring up "competition" while they underwrite monoply. They favor, in short, the policies and practices which are resulting in swift cartelization of American economic life. These policies are implemented through lobbies in the state and national capitals, and the lobbies are increasingly correlated so that they come to run the gamut of economic, political, and social issues of legislative concern. The policy becomes less business against government than government for business.

Slowly and bit by bit, just as the late Roman Empire succumbed to the holders of the great landed estates, government is bent to become an instrument for the will of business, to serve its purposes and to endorse its ends. Throughout the American scene, organized business is frankly "going political." From one end of the country to the other its officers are running for legislatures, and its lawyers, economists, and other paid servants are coming to dominate most of the legislative assemblies. They are infiltrating into most of the leading administrative agencies, and have even found ways to man the majority of its investigative committees and control commissions. By these means government is transmuted from within.

So far as the process has gone, the very substance of government is in process of being altered, just as internal chemical changes turn living wood into immobile stone.

Through this encroachment of vested interests upon the processes of democratic government there arises a vast, and at times extraordinarily subtle, manipulation of policies of an antipopular and antidemocratic character. Complementary thereto, and of a piece with it, goes the censorship over the media for mass communication. Even censorship, however, becomes less important than the process of inner transformation of the information and the entertainment itself. The whole view of nature and society is subtly transformed. "Left to himself," a leading American advertising executive said recently, "the average American is wholly without resources." Therefore

keep his ears filled with singing commercials and advertising slogans, fill his vision with outdoor billboards, newspaper and journal copy, absorb his leisure-time energies and attention with the catchphrases, the ideas, the ideologies which make of him at once the "good prospect" for a sale and a believer in the "American free enterprise" system.

Since NRA, and particularly since the outbreak of the war, all advertising has taken on an increasingly "institutional" character. That is to say, it has become increasingly interest-conscious, policy-conscious, idea-conscious, social-philosophy-conscious. The public-relations man comes gradually to dominate advertising policy. Since the dominating propaganda of advertising is the propaganda of monoply, or a monopoly-organized and monoply-conscious business world, it is, hence, the propaganda which is in keeping with this structure of interests and the social outlook appropriate to it.

It is needless here to inquire into the causal background for this cumulative change in emphasis. But it should be pointed out that the whole of this propaganda is designed to create the impression in the public mind that this retreat from "free competition," for which it speaks, not only is not occurring, but that monopoly-minded business has, on the contrary, precisely the opposite interests and intentions. Thus it comes that monopoly learns to talk the lingua franca of classical democracy. Monopoly speaks in the symbols of "competition"; business regimentation, in the symbols of "free enterprise"; price rigging against the consumer, in the symbols of "protection of the public interest"; monopoly profits, in the symbols of "service"; concentration of control, in the symbols of "democratic ownership" and "trusteeship." Throughout, the public hears the voice of Jacob while it is fast losing its capacity to understand that "the hands are the hands of Esau."

And who are the people? Are they the "tens of millions of morons, perverts, culls, outcasts, criminals, and lesser breeds of low-grade humans," as Pitkin, one of the most widely read authors in the world of big business, has characterized the American public? To their equivalents in the Roman world were given "bread and the circus" and the debaucheries of the Saturnalia and the Lupercalia. To ours the radio and the movie offer the "soap operas," the humorless "funnies," and the culturally worthless "pure entertainment" feature films which a confused public, pressured by every means at the disposal of the most dextrous and versatile staff any amount of money can buy, comes to accept so that they may be named "popular." If something must be presented seriously in these media, what then? In our times at least this, that it cannot be society or the external world of social relations that is at fault, but the inner man. Instead, however, of an Epictetus, an Epicurus, or even a lone anchorite dedicated to self-perfection in the limpid eyes of God, we offer the "problem movies," in which catharsis follows the tortuous and ill-lighted paths on the lee side of reason and knowledge.

All this is passed up as irrelevant by Ernst. Or, if it be relevant at all, then the solution is to return to "free competition." For failure to do so can only mean growth in "size" of business, and growth in "size" means government

"regimentation," and government control spells the end of a democratic society. The real enemies are "size" and "government." A return of "competition" in "the idea businesses" means smaller-sized business units, greater variety in the "idea market," and lower costs. All problems of content of the offering, with which Ernst is not directly concerned, would be solved, he holds, if the return to competition could be effected. What we need, he says, is "free enterprise in thought," and, given this, we may then be enabled to "sell freedom to the world." And, further, the key to free enterprise in thought "is solely the need of competition in these most significant industries—which manufacture, distribute and retail food for the mind."

V

This is a lawyer's view, and may, perhaps, be pardoned as such. If the world is a courtroom, and every person in it is free to say his say, then a legalistic case might be made that from this medley of views must rise some measure of the truth acceptable to all. Quite apart from the fact that scientific truth usually rises via methods that are almost wholly foreign to the legal mind, it is necessary to point out that the causal connection between the institutions and sanctions of private business competition on the one hand and popular democracy on the other have always been loose at best. More than that, if competition is the life of trade in a society dominated by the middle class, it is also true that this society was conceived at the outset as one which did not include the fourth estate of labor, the colonial peoples, and women. When the Abbé Sieyès asked on the eve of the French Revolution "what the middle class wants to be," he summarized the entire philosophy of the bourgeois revolutions of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries by replying, "everything." But it must be remembered that in speaking for "all the people" he is no more advocating the participation of all adults than were the ecclesiastical and lay nobility of the Middle Ages. Like their predecessors, the middle class wished to speak for all while not being or representing all. The latent idea was that of "trusteeship," which Andrew Carnegie was later so eloquently to uphold. Even when these middle-class spokesmen used the term democracy, they meant the right of the third estate to speak for all, not the right of all to speak for themselves.

Those who argued for the contrary were regarded as dangerous enemies of the new society. The fierce struggles of the labor unions in England against the Anti-Combination Laws, the succession of popular upheavals in France throughout the nineteenth century, and the determined efforts of the Hamiltonians—arch-proponents of the rising third estate in America—to keep government clean of the hands of the despised multitude, leave no doubt on that score. What measures of political, social, and economic democracy have since been won have been wrested from the third estate only after long and bitter struggle. And in making these gains, labor, farmers, the racial and national minority groups, and the colonial peoples have all been compelled to turn their backs on the theory and practice of competition. Competition in business, in short, is not the product of democracy, nor democracy of it. The extension of popular sovereignty and

the concessions made to the fourth estate have come as the price paid by the third estate of avoiding revolutionary upheavals from below. And these concessions—alternative to revolution—have been granted against an economic system in which competition was simply an integral part of the sanctions on which was based that peculiar structure of domination which we now call "capitalism." The best that could be said for competition in this type of economic order, from the point of view of popular sovereignty and production of good, was—as Professor J. M. Clark once remarked somewhat whimsically—that it is the system that does not the most good but the least harm.

Clark seems to have stated the Ernst position, since the latter identifies competition with small business and the absence of too big economic units. But it is difficult to make out the meaning of *Too Big*. Is it "too big" for efficiency? In an earlier book bearing this title, Ernst put on paper the contention of Justice Brandeis that many large firms in the United States were "too big" for "optimum efficiency" or for "the capacity of man's managerial powers." Yet this may be dismissed, since the thesis was advanced without benefit of authority beyond prejudice favoring existence of either as a limiting factor to size.[1] The "calm of bigness" to which Ernst makes reference is a figment of the imagination. There are no data adequate to the task of weighing this thesis, and no known way of establishing any such correlation between size per se and technical stagnation. In effect, what Ernst advances on this score is the equivalent of the argument of Rousseau against the large-sized political unit. The history of growth in the size of economic units will bear out this contention no better than the history of growth in the size of political units. The government of the United States is not any more nor any less efficient by virtue of its size, nor is the United States Steel Corporation or Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. It is not size that limits efficiency, but the way in which activity is organized and the way in which it is managed. The belief in the superior efficiency of small business is sheer economic romanticism.

Is competition, then, to be preferred because it means a greater number of policy-making units? Are the evils of monopoly those of being "to big" in that policies will be mediated through too few units? This would seem to be consistent with the plea, for example, that in towns with one or few newspapers free popular discussion cannot take place because the number of media is so limited. "There are only 117 cities in this vast land," Ernst writes, "where there is more than one newspaper ownership—where in democratic fashion is the capacity for daily debate." Like conclusions are drawn for concentration in the radio and movie fields.

But this involves a double confusion. The first is that which identifies number of available media—newspapers to the town, radio companies to the air,

[1] Optimum size is either (*a*) a problem of technology and accounting, or (*b*) of management. If the former, then considerations of efficiency would, more commonly than not, mean enlarging the typical productive unit in the United States today. There are very few productive units in America which are "too big" from this point of view. If the latter is meant, it is misconceived. There is no such thing as a limit to "man's managerial power," so far as we know. But there is a problem of good organization versus bad; of adequate decentralization and delegation of authority as against undue centralization, etc.

and movie companies producing, distributing, and exhibiting—with the location of policy-forming power. Yet it is not the former which is at stake in a democratic society, but the latter. It is not the fact that we have one United States of America instead of forty-eight independent sovereign powers which defines the degree of democracy in America, but the power of widely varying interests and groups to participate equally in the election of officers and the formulation of basic policies. It is not the existence of a General Motors Corporation or a Twentieth Century–Fox company which threatens democracy, but the fact that a small inside owner-manager clique may be empowered to act as it chooses without regard to the interests, views, or fortunes of the general public.

Furthermore, identifying fewness or numbers with narrowing or widening democratic expression puts all organizations of similar size on an equal footing. A giant national insurance company in which fewer than one per cent of the stockholders are enabled effectively to vote is in the same position as a national coöperative, a trade union, a farmers' federation, or even such an organization as the League of Women Voters. One might as well argue that since there is only one League of Women Voters, there is only one national forum for voting women, and hence that all women voters must be subject to antidemocratic regimentation. Or that the TVA was as undemocratic as Electric Bond & Share or the House of Morgan. Such a position would, of course, be nonsensical. Yet it follows from the identification of number of management units amongst the media with the policies pursued and the rights to participate in the formulation of those policies. Clearly the relative number of media is no more a determinant of degree of democracy than the mere size of any given management unit is.

Is it, then, the nature of the policies pursued by the large as against the small? This interpretation seems justified by numerous remarks scattered throughout *The First Freedom*. But this involves another confusion. It assumes that the nature of policy is a function of *size* whereas always and necessarily it is a function of the quality and effectiveness of the policy-forming groups, irrespective of size. TVA may be, and actually is, far more democratically responsible and responsive than the typical corner grocery store. Conversely, it would be very difficult to make a case for the position that little business is more *liberal* than big business. Even in business circles it is proverbial that small businesses are typically more conservative, more reactionary, more technically backward, more antilabor than the large. In the movie industry, for example, there is small warrant for the conclusion that the *independents* as such are more liberal, progressive, or democratically minded than the big five. On the contrary, they ape the policies of the large and commonly hope for their patronage. Not a few of them, as recent disclosures of the Bureau of Internal Revenue have made clear, are actually set up as tax-dodging devices by the highly paid insiders.

True, monopoly typically means higher prices. But height of prices again is a by-product of location, intent, and interest of the policy-making group. If that group is a small owner-

manager clique, concerned primarily with making profits at the expense of the general public, high monopoly prices will be the result. But if the policies be those, for example, of a democratically run coöperative, the contrary price policy will be pursued.

The same holds for other policies relating to the content of the newspaper columns, radio broadcasts, and movie films. The content is not determined by the size of the corporations nor by the fewness of their number, but by the persons who run them and by the degree to which they act as the servants of a democratic electorate. To argue the contrary is to put the schools on the same basis as radio broadcasting. This Ernst actually does in one place, arguing that "the market place of education is not very free and open, for it is not competitive." The reason given is that one school board governs the schools of a great city like New York, and not different school boards each school. It would be hard to imagine a worse example of the failure of "competition" than this. While many school boards may be preferable to one, the analogy involves a different and wholly noncomparable use of the concept "competitive," and ignores the fact that the school board is responsible directly to the citizenry as a whole. Furthermore, it entirely ignores content. Can this be, unintentionally or not, anything more than a grotesque and cruel slander on the schools? It is seemingly traceable to inadequate grasp of the implications of both the wholesale commercialization of the art media by private interests, on the one hand, and the noncomparable reasons for the weaknesses which have become well-nigh chronic in the public school systems of the country, on the other. Obviously the former exhibits power directed, simply and candidly, to serve a vested interest; the latter shows lack of power directed to a general cultural interest which is so organized as to be excessively sensitive to popular will.

There is a final, but much more subtle and far-reaching, objection to the crude identification between competition and democracy. It lies in the well-recognized fact that, while business appears to be organized for the purpose of performing a social function, its object is clearly and necessarily the pursuit of private acquisition. It was once assumed, as a parable in paradox, that the private acquisition was not only consistent with the rendering of social service, but could, in truth, have no other possible result. "Private vices," thought De Mandeville, must become "public benefits," and freedom for the "knaves" of the former made "thieves honest," whatever their intentions. Yet, while holding to a like view in general, not even the great classical writers—least of all, Adam Smith—held that the pursuit of private acquisition necessarily leads to the promotion of the public good. He would have been the first to agree with Jesse Rainsford Sprague's sardonic businessman in *High Pressure* who reproves a sycophant with the reminder that all business is of necessity a sort of "polite piracy," and he was one of the first to state explicity that from competition does not necessarily flow more competition, but typically less.

The real evil, Smith and all his orthodox successors have argued, lies in the retreat from competition, for competition was somehow capable of restraining the antisocial individualistic drives

found in all men, per assumption, as an integral part of the generic human physico-psychic make-up. If the first assumption—a sort of urbane and tolerant recasting of the notion of original sin and the medieval concept of the evil nature of men—is naïve and psychologically unsound, the latter will not stand more rigorous examination. If anything is clear from the general literature of the decline of competition, it is that monopoly groupings have not so much eliminated competition as transformed it. It is now better organized, more carefully arrayed, larger in scale, more rational and clear-sighted. Some of the "new competition" operates within corporate walls, behind the *kulissen* of trade-association maneuvers, in the jockeying for position within cartel circles, etc. Thus it exists, but transformed and better screened from the public gaze. But that which is visible surely involves a larger expenditure of man power and financial resources per volume of business than ever before in the history of the country.

No clear line separates the mood or outlook on this score of the small from the large. The amount, or the degree, or the volume of expenditure on competitive tactics, that is to say, is not the issue. Monopoly competition is as real as any close approximation to "pure competition." It is difficult, if not wholly impossible upon the basis of available data, to show that the quality of service or product is better under the latter than under the former. The real difficulties are these: The permeation of the information and art media by the moods, values, and interests of commercialization have created vast and widening expanses of intellectual, emotional, and entertainment blight; this burgeoning domination of economic life is organized in such a way that it can and does permit disastrous economic breakdowns which spread endlessly through the reaches of an immense and meticulously interlaced economic system upon which the fortunes and the livelihood of all depend; it provides the type of outlook and the lines of cleavage which fail to unit the population in such a way as to put an end to the mounting catastrophe of war; under this aegis, social group is set against social group, vast blighted areas are scattered through country and city like cancer cells in the lymphatic glands; our natural resources are being swiftly depleted by the well-nigh universal presence of the psychology and practices of *Raubbau,* and we have, compared with the resources that are available to us, a very low level of production indeed.

The trouble, in short, is not with competition, nor with the quality or even the relative degree of it. There is no balm in this particular Gilead. The problem is to find a way of so organizing society, whose continuous functioning throughout the range of its vital parts is of paramount interest to all, that it may be consistent throughout with democratic institutions in the best received American tradition. This means not to dream up some new version of the time-honored Saturn legend. The past in the United States was not "golden" in contrast with the present. But it is rich in the tradition that the people may find their own solutions to the problems of poverty and tyranny alike, and that, in the face of crisis, they need not cast aside the potentialities that the advance of science and democratic institutions have provided merely

to pursue the quest of a Never-Never Land through the swamps of group disillusion.

VI

But it is worth pointing out in passing that, even if it were possible to return to an imaginary past, it is no longer desirable to do so. And that for two reasons.

The first reason lies in the obvious fact that a large and growing proportion of economic life is being organized on a large scale because it is better, more economical, and more efficient to do so. By every important criterion of technology, accounting, and management, railroads should be organized on a regional basis, integrated on a national basis, and uniformly interlinked internationally. So also with other modes of transportation and with all branches of telecommunications. Power should be organized as a giant, spongelike, interconnected web to soak up on a regional grid basis all forms of power and to make it universally available throughout its network of trunk and distribution lines. Agriculture is best organized on a large-scale, mechanized, scientific basis, with specialized crops sold on a regional or national market. Distribution is best organized when it operates via unified terminals, specialized warehouses, unified delivery, and interconnected retail outlets. In the patterns now being evolved there is plenty of room for decentralization of distributing and reducing operations, but even this problem is best handled within a framework which envisions the national economy as a closely articulated whole. On this score there is practically nothing to divert expert opinion in any significant field here or in any other country.

To the extent that business organization recognizes these economic developments, and comes to shape up its activities in keeping with them, it is on the right track. Only those who are completely ignorant of the vast and cumulative advantages of organization along these lines can question the economic validity of the trend. National distribution of movies, for example, and production for a national market are technically advantageous. National broadcasting and station interlinkage are technically an unquestionable good. Unified national news services can result in economies in newsgathering and higher standards of coverage.

Technically, that is to say, this is a mass-production, mass-distribution, mass-consumption age. "Assimilation of the machine" speaks in these terms. But this does not mean lack of diversity or lack of individual or local initiative, nor does it necessarily lead to slum areas and business depressions. Indeed, it is not difficult to show that the evolution of machinery for production and for coördinating human activity may have exactly the opposite effect. The problem is not one of "competition" per se, nor of "size," but of the policies being pursued, the interests that control, and the objectives in view.

The second reason why we may not return to the fractionalized economy which instrumented the Jeffersonian "idolum" is that, a few romantics aside, nobody really wants this particular Icaria back. Business obviously does not. Labor obviously does not. Nor, judging by the forms of organization and their functions, do farmers, professional people, or any other organized group. As De Tocqueville long ago pointed out, Americans are people

who live by organizing. Over the century since he observed the genus, organizing activities have grown by leaps and bounds. The idyls of Rousseau and Thoreau have disappeared along with squatter sovereignty and cracker-barrel philosophy of the corner grocery store. Not even the escapists want all this back. For escape is now, as it always has been, a state of mind of those who are too confused to grasp the meaning of the times and too nerveless or irresponsible to act. If not from inner disintegration in the face of problems under which they crack up, from what, then, would they escape, and whence?

VII

What are the alternatives? Some people, wrote Machiavelli, act "furiously and with an impetus, others with more slowness and caution," but none may "succeed" who do not "accommodate to the times." Today, relevant to the important problems which Ernst and others have raised about newspapers, the movies, and the radio, and from which any plans for improving these media and rendering them more sensitive to the popular interest cannot be divorced, "accommodation" means formulating a reconstructive program based on some blending of at least the following propositions:

1. There is observable a steady, cumulative, and irreversible permeation throughout modern civilization of a mass-production industrial technology, supplemented by parallel mass-distribution methods catering to national and world markets, which is either inherently large-scale or in which the elements of production and the lines of distribution must be correlated and integrated on a large-scale and mass basis.

2. There exist modes of organizing, correlating, and synchronizing large-scale activities involving hundreds, or thousands, or hundreds of thousands of people, which are efficient, flexible, and capable of reconciling in a smooth and orderly relationship (*a*) forces promoting centralization and those favoring decentralization and local autonomy, (*b*) small-sized, local, and highly individualistic activities with those which are inherently large-scale and national, (*c*) individual interests, creative expression, and personal responsibility with group values and habits of coöperation, and (*d*) democratic participation in policy formation with expert guidance and control of the means of instrumentation.

3. There must be evolved a general, and ever more widely integrated, organization by interest groups (on a regional and national basis) accompanied by a growing belief that control over the economic life of all is the direct concern of all, and that decisions to this end must be vested in the hands of all interests affected. Not "size" must be broken down or "competition" restored, but policy must be, piecemeal and at large, shifted back to the people, where it may be democratically determined at the source, irrespective of size or scale.

4. There is to be found throughout all circles the widespread and keenly felt need for economic stability and for assuring ourselves against any future and hopelessly disastrous wars of the "atomic age."

5. Rising material productivity makes possible a cumulative widening out of mass enjoyment of leisure time through the advance of shorter hours, vacations with pay, social security, etc., a conse-

quent growing interest in the arts and the art media, a desire to take advantage of opportunities to participate in varying forms of recreational and creative activities.

6. There is slowly becoming evident, as a natural growth out of native American soil, a "coöperative ethos" to counterbalance the excessive and predatory forms of the "individualism" of the past, which is capable of conserving natural and human resources while releasing an immense energy for creating a new and vastly richer civilization out of the endlessly ramifying cultural blendings of a swiftly evolving "one world."

How may these propositions be blended as the basis of a realistic program for the promotion of the "First Freedom" through the instrumentality of the media of the arts? In each separate field this is a subject for the experts to work out. A few suggestions, however, might be in order as illustrative of the leading possibilities.

In newspapers the stockholders might be the subscribers, with newsstand sales held down to a minimum, with advertising lineage to be held to 15 or 20 per cent of the total, with all advertising to be held by screening to the factually adequate, and with the charter, gained from the state, carrying with it the provision that space must be provided for statement of minority opinions and dissents.

In radio, something on the order of the arrangement of the British Broadcasting System, with all advertising excluded, every private radio instrument paying something toward programs, and with programs in the hands of a committee or series of committees constituted of experts in the arts who would hold office for limited periods of time but who would be subject to criticism, sensitive to changing public interests and demands, and who would be obligated to make provision for expression of minority opinions and dissents.

In the movies there are seemingly endless possibilities. Some of the following have been suggested: (1) All studios to be owned by the talent groups and other employees, with an upper limit on individual participation, and with all directors and producers responsible to a board of directors elected by the stockholders so constituted. (2) Central warehouses for equal access to all properties by any studio on an equal basis, and a pool of stages of different sizes and locations available to all studios on the same basis as properties. (3) Financing of production, distribution, or exhibition by coöperatively owned banks, supported and in some degree guaranteed against insolvency by the government. (4) Especially interested groups, such as trade unions, trade associations, churches, schools, colleges, etc., either to be admitted to all these privileges in setting up their own studios, or to be able freely to contract for production for exhibition to their own membership with any studio, or both. (5) All distribution to be handled on a basis which permits individual contract for any feature picture, newsreel, or other product freely and for any run. (6) Movie houses to be owned either by the city or by a group of coöperating citizens, with a limitation on the percentage held by any one individual, and with policy in movie selection to be vested in a responsible director—as are most museum directors—who may be appointed or removed only by bona

fide vote of a minimum percentage of eligible voters.

It is unnecessary to proceed further. The detailed steps by way of which this, or any comparable, set of proposals might be implemented through appropriate action requires a complete reconsideration of the forms, spirit, and moods of our native democratic processes. Two things are required above all. First, clarity as to the problems to be faced and the objective to be reached. And then, organized democratic action which fuses a deeper sense of individual responsibility and self-discipline with a "coöperative ethos."

And to this end, only this need be said in conclusion. It is useless to rely on minor—or even major—changes in mere machinery alone in a matter so vital as this. Either one believes, rationally or emotionally, in democracy, or one does not. And if one does, then the beginning of wisdom is surely to ask at least this: What would democratic organization and control look like, and what would be the quality and mood of its wellsprings of action? And then one must proceed, whether "furiously and with an impetus," or with "slowness and caution," to cut the pattern so that it may "accommodate to the times."

The Strange Music of Martha Ivers

FREDERICK W. STERNFELD

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MUSICAL works for the stage during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were usually commissioned for a specific occasion or written in the assured knowledge that there would be a demand for the work once the composer had completed it. The starry-eyed dreamer who follows his inner calling but does not pass the judgment of the producer and the test of the box office, and who therefore remains unknown to his contemporaries, has been bequeathed to us by the nineteenth century. The social and aesthetic shortcomings of condoning this concept of "genius against his time" are too many to be enumerated, but it is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the most unfortunate consequence of this attitude has been the shift of stress from the production to the reproduction of music. Only too many of our concert halls and opera houses have become conservatories of the past rather than interpreters of the present and heralds of the future. As a result there has been a serious decline in the number of those who have decided to create new music within the framework of Western civilization. Prior to the advent of Romanticism, art did not exist in a social vacuum but in a context in which it served a need and in which the community (through the patronage of the church, the aristocracy, and the patricians) supported the men who answered that need. It is therefore of great significance that in our time the world has again been conquered by a type of dramatic entertainment that demands music as one of the factors contributing to its success. Film scores, the product of one of the largest industries in our technological age, are as functional as the innumerable works that Italian composers of the eighteenth century wrote for their opera houses. But, realizing that feature films are the product of an industry of staggering size, we must keep in mind the dual role of the cinematic score: at its best, it will always aim at artistic expression; at the same time, it cannot ignore its function as one of the tools of a production plant which for decades has successfully turned out the major part of the world's entertainment.

The musical background (and sometimes the foreground) serves to illustrate, reveal, and above all to suggest, the emotional climate of the screenplay; for it is the intensity of the feelings of the audience that determines the success of the Hollywood movie. To stimulate emotions with unfailing success the average score makes its appeal by an abundant use of time-tested, familiar melodic and harmonic formulae —an old but sure-fire device because our audiences think they know what they like, though actually they like only what they know.

Musical subject matter can be made to appear familiar through a variety of

means, of which I may single out two: the idiom in which the thematic material is couched, and the thematic material itself. The idiom is, by and large, that of the nineteenth century. No matter how many novel electrical instruments are employed, the music itself, its harmonic growth, its rhetorical pathos, its firmness or thinness of texture, rarely goes beyond Sibelius—if it goes that far. And Sibelius wrote his first symphonies about 1900. The thematic material proper is, of course, conditioned by this nineteenth-century idiom, particularly in its harmonic aspects. Even if they were not "plugged," the themes would sound vaguely familiar. But frequent and incessant plugging through the medium of the radio, the phonograph, and the juke box undoubtedly adds tremendously to their mass appeal and incidentally fortifies the popularity of producer, director, and composer. Hence, current cinematic plays tend more and more to include lyrics which frankly aim at a front-row place in the Hit Parade, for whether they are sung or crooned or played as background by a dance band their high rating in broadcast and magazine contests is a coveted honor—less glamorous than an Academy Award, but perhaps a more accurate indication of their audience appeal.

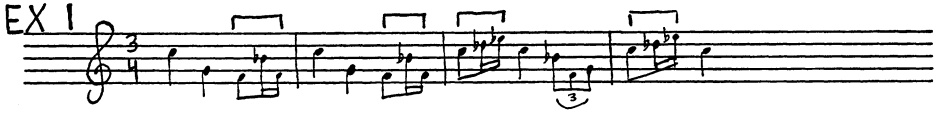
This, then, is the working setup for the screen musician: a large industrial producing machinery with standardized methods and a reluctance to face the inconvenience and expense of changing these methods, and a well-established musical idiom frequently aided and abetted by familiarization (plugging) through connecting channels of mass communication.

Who is this Hollywood composer that has at his beck and call unlimited financial resources though the scope of his work may be narrowly circumscribed? Is he one of the big names from New York or Paris, imported as a free lance to add luster to the credits of the main title, a musician whose reputation rests on, and whose main occupation consists in, the creation of works for the concert hall and the opera house? Or is he the resident Hollywood composer, who devotes the major part of his labors to the creation of cinematic music, the regular man on the spot who knows how it should be done and does it? Indeed, famous outsiders have written scores that have stimulated the genre as a whole and thereby lifted its general level, and such works by a Vaughan Williams or a Copland (to mention only two composers a generation apart) possess all the individual finish and charm that make them the perfect answer to whatever problem of the script and staging they complement. But it is a truism that to redeem—or to ruin—a medium of expression one must live with it. Hence, an evaluation of the music for feature films that is concerned with its future rather than its present or past must focus on those men who make it their business and their lifework to create music for the movies. In scrutinizing their work we should attempt to differentiate carefully between the credits and debits of the framework within which they compose and the pros and cons of their individual initiative.

Certainly, the score that Miklos Rosza has written for *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers* seems to deserve such careful examination. For one thing, there is no doubt that Rosza proceeds with assured craftsmanship. Whether one

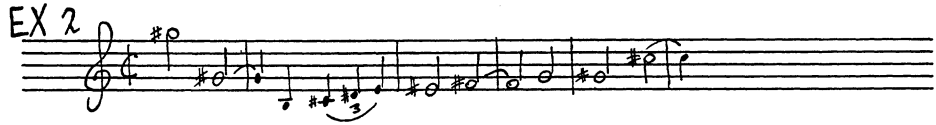
agrees or disagrees, likes or dislikes, there can be no complaint of a lack of professional competence. In its two hours of running time (twelve reels) the film contains scenes that show Hollywood at its best. The hard-boiled, cynical qualities of the title character are brought out by splendid teamwork between director, camera, and cast. Interestingly (or significantly), these parts of the play have evoked from the composer some excellent music that is impressive by its avoidance of clichés and its clever appraisal of the dramatic situation. At the same time, the film is typical in that clichés are by no means completely absent. The theme song, "Strange Love," is representative of one strand of the action, which stresses the conventional boy-meets-girl happiness and culminates in a happy ending. Similarly, the music is not free from an occasional overconfident reliance on the familiar and the all too familiar, as we shall see.

EX 1



The main-title music reflects both these strands. It starts out with a theme that quite properly opens and highlights the "overture," because it contains the quintessence of the drama: the selfishness and cruelty of Martha, her frustrations, her indecisions. The theme has a rhythmic and melodic profile that is easily remembered: each of the four bars begins on the same pitch and has the rhythmical motive (the eighth note followed by two sixteenths) which comes on the weak upbeat in bars 1 and 2 and on the strong downbeat in bars 3 and 4 (indicated by square brackets in Example 1). This simple device of shifting a motive from an unaccented to an accented position has been a standby of composers for centuries and is well exemplified in any good performance of the Slow Movement of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. In Rosza's theme the second half (bars 3 and 4) is more exciting than the first, not only because the characteristic figure is stressed, but also because the first three notes of both bars rise in pitch, whereas in bars 1 and 2 they descend. Later in the play the composer often evokes the atmosphere that surrounds Martha by merely working on the intense phrase of bars 3 and 4.

EX 2

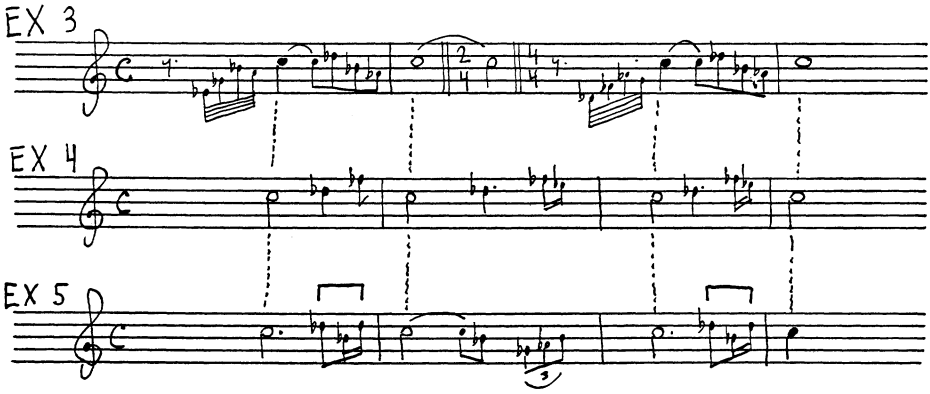


In the first few moments of the main title, then, the taut background of the drama, the dangerous and restless character of Martha (Barbara Stanwyck), are anticipated with a few strokes. The remaining (and larger part) of this prelude is given to a sentimental melody (see Ex. 2). It is an attractive tune, associated throughout the play with the happy love between Sam (Van Heflin) and Toni (Lizabeth Scott), as easy to listen to as Toni is to look at. That it should be called "Strange Love" is dramatically as inapposite as that it should

be so prominently displayed at this point. Moreover, it sets off the "sweet" Toni against the "hard" Martha so laboriously as to be almost offensive to any intelligent audience. Here, obviously, artistic considerations were made to yield to commercial expediency. Had this happy love theme not been mislabeled "strange," the juke-box public would not have associated it with the film. Similarly, since the sweet girl and the happy ending are tried-and-tested tools of a box-office success, there cannot be enough of Lizabeth Scott and tune, even if it does not make sense dramatically. But these are general faults of the Grade A movie, by no means more excessive here than in many others.

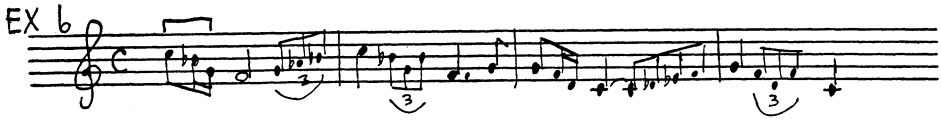
In the opening of the action proper, Martha and Sam, as kids running away from home, foreshadow with telling accuracy their adult personalities: Sam, tough and resourceful; Martha, looking to him for help (and love), frightened at the difficulties but too proud to admit her fear. These three minutes have continuous background music in which the composer uses his palette economically but ingeniously. In this harrowing tale of difficult situations and tense feelings Rosza illustrates the anxiety of the chief protagonists by a group of themes the musical similarity of which is a token of their emotional kinship.

That these themes in turn are related to Example 1 in their monotonous repetition of pitch on the accented notes is only another indication that Martha and her theme (Ex. 1) are dramatically and musically the hub of the play. In the first minute or two (Sam running in the rain, Martha letting him into the railroad car), Example 3 represents the fear and concern of the youngsters, but when a crash of thunder sends the frightened Martha into Sam's arms the violins play the second half of Example 1 (the more exciting part). When Sam, with boyish swagger, asks, "Scared of thunder?" she immediately regains her composure ("No, I like it") to a full and complete treatment of Example 1, which then accompanies their dialogue for half a minute. So far, all the music pertinent to Martha and her strange fate has been either tense or rather unpleasant, but when Sam boasts, "You always come running to me," the photographic close-up of a young girl's face, pathetically eager to be loved, is enhanced by a variation of Example 1 that goes as far in the direction of a straight



love (rather than a strange, pathological love) theme as Martha is capable of.

The changed harmonic and instrumental treatment do much to relieve the characteristic motive (square-bracketed in Ex. 6, as it was in Ex. 1) of its original flavor; at the same time, its mere presence prevents complete ease and



rest. One has only to compare Example 6 with the lyrical beginning of Example 2 to realize these different overtones.

It is at this point that the police catch up with the fugitives (whose fear is again reflected by Ex. 3). They take Martha home to her aunt, while Sam makes his getaway. Sam, the resourceful hero with the golden heart, the friend in need, at the same time a tough guy, the eternal idol of all audiences,

jumps off the car. While there is being played, in the strings, a fortissimo rendition of this theme of the "tough" Sam, Martha exclaims proudly, "You'll never catch him." With the dissolve to the Ivers home and Martha's aunt the music stops. In these four minutes (one minute for main title, three minutes for first scene), Rosza has managed to portray Martha, her fears and her love (Ex. 1, 3, 6), almost completely and to reveal a good deal of Sam as well (Ex. 7). He does so without crowding his material and without any conscious notice of the audience, though not without affecting it. It is not until Sam meets Toni that the composer increases his musical subject matter by one or two supplementary themes. But that is eighteen years later in the plot and about twenty minutes' running time after the first scene. The intervening period contains the first climax, accompanied by continuous music for almost six minutes: the complex of scenes from the murder of the aunt until Sam drives into Iverstown again. The treatment, though conventional, is convincing. Immediately preceding the murder, Martha is characterized by Example 1; the orchestra rises to a crashing climax when she hits the aunt, and thereupon recedes both in volume and in tempo. When old Mr. O'Neil appears, her fear of this involuntary confederate is expressed by Example 3, as it is again a minute and a half later when she is alone with young Walter O'Neil. The atmosphere is sickening and pathological, a fact well underlined (and, as far as the audience goes, established) by the monotonous repetition of the tonal pattern from which both Examples 1 and 3 are derived. One would like to criticize the score for the clocklike regularity with which the thematic material corresponds to persons and situations, but, again, the abuse of the Wagnerian *leitmotiv* technique as a Hollywood push-button method is a general rather

than a specific fault.[1] At the same time, the composer must be commended for the ingenuity with which he derives new themes from the same germinating pattern; the fear evoked in Martha by the repulsive combination of extortion and paternalism of Old O'Neil is well characterized by Example 4, obviously related to Examples 1 and 3.

The return of Sam to Iverstown eighteen years later demonstrates nicely that to a resourceful composer highlighting certain sections of the script is not the only function of the musical accompaniment. Properly chosen, it is also effective in deëmphasizing, as it were, other parts. There is, for instance, the scene in Dempsey's garage to which Sam repairs after his car has been damaged. Both during his conversation with Dempsey about the damage and during the crap game in which he participates, dance music comes from the radio. This music certainly does not serve to point up the scene; on the contrary, it underlines its humdrum unimportance. When, however, we suddenly hear from the loudspeaker, "We interrupt this program of dinner music to bring you a special broadcast in the interest of the reëlection of District Attorney Walter P. O'Neil," the sudden absence of any music underlines the importance of Sam's learning that the "scared little kid from Sycamore Street" is now a local big shot and Martha's husband.

A similar effect is again achieved when, soon afterward, Sam, the sunny, happy-go-lucky hero, walks through the streets to look up his old home. He recognizes the old cop on the beat and for half a minute the music plays sunny strains, refreshingly different from the dismal harmonies otherwise so preponderant and vaguely related to Example 6. As this part of the music comes to an end, Sam reaches the house; and out comes the beautiful blonde, as perfectly timed as these events happen in scripts. Here, there is an obvious temptation to write lush, slow, and soulful romantic music, the sort of boy-meets-girl tune that never fails to stir the emotional sensibilities of the audience. Happily, Rosza understands his problem too well to fall prey to such easy temptation. He slides, without a break in the continuity of the music, into a half minute of taut and worried tone patterns (Ex. 5, obviously related to Ex. 1, 3, and 4) that accurately reflect Toni's state of mind. The music comes to a stop with a close-up of Toni crossing her legs, and the main part of the meeting has no music track. This kind of negative emphasis is extremely effective, and one would wish that our feature films might exercise more courage in experimenting with it.

One the other hand, the happy love theme of Sam and Toni (Ex. 2), first heard in the main title, makes a perfectly normal and fitting background coming out of the juke box in the café where the two sit after Toni has missed her bus. In the two love scenes that follow, one at the O'Neil home between Martha and Walter and the second at the hotel between Sam and Toni, dialogue and music stress the different character of the two couples. Example 5 completely dominates the exposition of the unhappy relationship between Walter (Douglas Kirk) and his wife. But the four minutes of music in this scene (three minutes at the beginning, one minute at the end) are not monoto-

[1] Lawrence Morton, "Objective, Burma," *Hollywood Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. 4, pp. 378 ff.

nous in spite of their thematic sameness, because of the splendid acting. This counterpoint between script and score, variety in the one against unity in the other, will result occasionally through a felicitous combination of circumstances, but to be realized as frequently as it deserves the composer must be called in *before* the shooting, not afterward as is the rule at present.[2]

The love scene in the hotel and the later intrusion of the two plain-clothes men has a continuous score of about seven minutes. Thematically it is, naturally enough, dominated by the juke-box song and the theme of the sunny Sam (first heard when he met the cop). To this reviewer the scene seemed to suffer histrionically as well as musically from an abundance of static elements. Looking attractive, as Miss Scott does, is not a substitute for acting, and the music does little to supply the missing motion. The close-up of Toni in the shower seems as much gratuitous as the accompanying solo-violin statement of the love song seems saccharine. At the same time, the music for this scene offers a deft touch in the treatment of the Bible incident. When Toni holds up the Gideon Bible, which she does not know to be in every hotel room, the squarish cadences, rendered in a quasi-solemn manner, suggest the atmosphere of church without quoting it.[3]

In these scenes—Sam's reunion with Walter at his office, where they are joined by Martha; Sam's reunion with Martha at the O'Neil home; Sam's reunion with Toni at the Italian restaurant and the subsequent beating up he suffers from Walter's men—the respective presence and absence of music are cleverly manipulated. The long scene between Sam, Walter, and Martha emphasizes quite properly the dialogue to the exclusion of other sounds, as also does the beginning of the scene between Sam and Martha. The climax of their reminiscences, however, is underlined alternately by Martha's pathological and amorous themes (Ex. 1 and 6) as Martha vacillates between disappointment and tenderness. Here the common motive (square-bracketed in the music examples) enhances rather than obscures this contrast.

The scene between Toni and Sam begins unaccompanied and continues with a juke-box background dubbed in. However, as Toni's anxiety over Sam's coming fate at the hands of Walter's men gets the better of her, continuous music accompanies the restaurant dialogue, the beating up, and Sam's call on Walter. That Sam's resourcefulness should be characterized by Example 7 and Toni's fear by Examples 3 and 5 follows logically within the framework of the conventional Hollywood *leitmotiv* technique. What is more absorbing are the individual changes and variations that the themes undergo, for these modifications not only maintain musical interest, they are also the *sine qua non* of the dramatic manipulation of the tonal material.

Careful observation has shown that while the overwhelming majority of an audience pays little attention to the score accompanying a film, its boredom or stimulation depends directly on whether there is mere repetition or whether monotony is redeemed by the variety of the thematic work. This development of the thematic material is

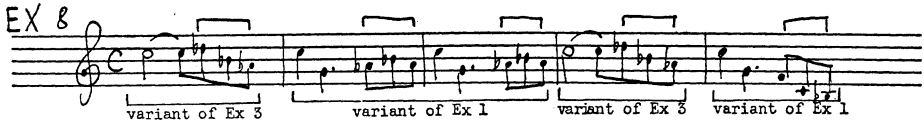
[2] Adolph Deutsch, "Three Strangers," *Hollywood Quarterly*, Vol. I, No. 2, pp. 214 ff.

[3] Frederick W. Sternfeld, "Specter of the Rose," *Film Music Notes*, Vol. VI, No. 1, pp. 7 ff.

also a necessary concomitant of the dramatic flux. Often the plot will demand sharply contrasting aspects of the same character, at the same time unfolding smoothly from one opposing pole to the other. Obviously, here the music must proceed by gradual modification, not by sudden transition; the thematic work provides the organic continuity that should mark any score which professes to be a distinguished counterpart to a moving film as opposed to a succession of stills. Of several such details in the Sam-Toni-Walter complex I single out one that has a bearing on the complex to come. When Sam, on his way to call on Walter after the assault, demands an explanation of Toni, her feeling of guilt and fear is characterized by Example 3. We have already remarked upon the common root that lies in this theme and the Martha theme (Ex. 1). The chief difference is, of course, the rhythmic configuration in the first bar of Example 1 against the first bar of Example 3 (minus the grace notes), particularly in the sharply characteristic figure of an eighth followed by two sixteenths against the equal note values of a triplet.

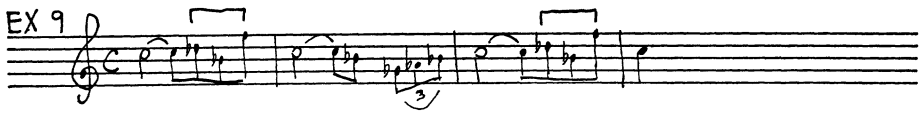
The effortless manner in which Example 3 glides imperceptibly into a variation of Example 1, in which the last three notes are in even rhythm (indicated by square brackets above the staff), prepares for some important thematic transformations in the climax to come.

Of the scenes preceding this climax we may note only some snatches. When Martha bandages Walter's hand, after Sam's departure, subdued music accompanies the action for about two minutes. Half of this time is taken up by a variation of the Martha theme (Ex. 1), in which the characteristic three-note figure is again quieted down to even notes, as in Example 8. This modification of the theme accentuates the haunted and anxious aspects of Martha rather than her pathological ruthlessness. Since the scene between Martha and Sam at her office has no accompanying score, Martha's next musical appearance comes when she interrupts Sam and Toni at the hotel. Her entry is effective both musically (Ex. 1) and dramatically ("I have special privileges in this hotel, Sam. I own it"). The malicious remarks directed at Toni seem only natural, and when Sam demands an apology the music tells us that she does not mean it by repeating five times, accented, the characteristic motive from Example 1, this time restored to its original (uneven) time values.



We may disregard, for the purposes of our analysis, the dance music played as background in the night-club scene between Martha and Sam. It has the same deëmphasizing quality as the radio music had earlier in Dempsey's garage and precedes the large, continuous musical complex (almost ten minutes) that contains the second climax—Martha's attempted murder of Sam (corresponding to the murder of her aunt in the first climax at the beginning of the film). The plot here offers the composer an intricate and fascinating emotional

fabric: the lovelorn girl telling her hero the story of her life, the discovery that he was not present at the murder of her aunt, the realization of the danger of his now knowing the facts, her cruel attempt to do away with him, and, finally, unable to resist his embrace, her transformation from a would-be-killer to a lover, and the completion of the narration of her life story. When she begins to tell that story, about two minutes after the start of the scene, the thematic material of the music is, of course, one



of anxiety and fear (Ex. 5). The melody is not only slightly varied in pitch; it also experiences the same rhythmic transformation as in Example 1 earlier: the characteristic figure (square brackets in both Ex. 1 and Ex. 5) appears in equal note values.

By this similar treatment the fear theme (Ex. 5) substitutes for the Martha theme (Ex. 1) in a very real sense. The audience accepts it subconsciously as a symbol of Martha. I had occasion to show this film to several groups of students who had not seen it before; each time, the audience believed erroneously that the Martha theme was played. This kind of substitution, based on an identity of treatment rather than of notes, is excellent and its more general adoption in scores for feature films would be a welcome relief, since tragedy—and most of our feature films are tragedies or thrillers—must be intense but not tiresome.

The handling of this part of the film is so careful and ingenious that one cannot help regretting the brassy tones that accompany Martha's discovery of Sam's ignorance of her crime—a trite formula which such sensational turns of a plot frequently elicit. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that both in the local music for the old silent films and in the scores for our present sound films there are few things more annoying than the obviousness of the "hurry music" and the "loud climax." The use of these devices implies an assumption that the audience is so unintelligent that you cannot make things clear enough. Thus, such mechanical conveniences as the "mood-music files" of phonograph records tend to rubber-stamp the musical background into a few clichés. But why an original score, written to order, should fall back on these timeworn trappings is difficult to see, the more so in *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers,* wherein the third and final climax convincingly demonstrates how well the composer is able to build tension up to a culminating point by unconventional yet effective methods.

This final scene between Sam, Martha, and Walter is extremely well handled musically from beginning to end. The burden of the dialogue of these three persons, whose fates and lives seem so inextricably entangled, is musically unaccompanied, ending with:

Martha: "They [Old O'Neil and Walter] wanted everything."

Walter: "All I ever wanted was you."

Martha: "Everything you are . . ."

Walter: "I'm nothing."

Martha: "Everything you have, I gave you!"

Walter: "You gave me nothing."

Martha: "Then let go!"

It is only on the preliminary verbal climax of these words that the music comes in. The score then runs continuously for ten minutes. It follows the staggering exit of Walter, who is as desperate as he is drunk (Ex. 5), his catapulting down the stairs, and then (after one and three-quarters minutes) Martha's plea to Sam to set her free by killing Walter (Ex. 1). This plea is eloquent because it is so short (twenty seconds), and the Martha theme, being touched upon only briefly, does not sound stereotyped. In the next minute of playing there is splendid integration between acting, photography, and music. As Sam detaches himself from Martha and, anxiously watched by her, goes down the stairs to Walter, the orchestra plays his theme (Ex. 7), the only theme used during this minute. Pathos and tempo conform, of course, to the situation. As Martha's and the audience's suspense mounts, the rendition is intensified and accelerated, but when Sam has saved Walter instead of killing him the statement of the theme in the bass is funereal and slow. This may seem obvious, but it is done so economically and skillfully that it never sounds hackneyed. But what arouses our particular admiration is the climax itself at the moment when Sam reaches Walter, and Martha realizes that she cannot "manage" Sam to murder Walter. Here the orchestra seems to run out of breath, just as our capacity to sustain any more suspense reaches a breaking point. This is not a noisy and brassy fortissimo indicating a major discovery on the part of the chief protagonist; instead, the orchestra comes to a complete pause, a few disjointed notes, another general rest, and then softly, but tellingly, the dirge variation of Example 7 in the bass informs us that the drama is over. There are actually ten more minutes of running time, but the following denouement is a minor one. The handling of this climax is in the best tradition of dramatic music. One cannot help thinking of Mozart: the memorable scene from *Figaro* in which the Count expects the Page to emerge from the locked closet of the Countess, only to find that it holds Susanna.

Verbal and musical idioms will change in the course of centuries, and so will the medium of communication and the technical resources at the command of this medium; but the dictates of the drama, whether for presentation on the boards or on the screen, will not change. If our civilization is to produce cinematic works worthy of survival, the challenge to join dramatic insight with true understanding of a novel means of expression will have to be met by the writers, directors, and composers of our time. *The Strange Love of Martha Ivers* shows promise in the right direction. In spite of minor conventional flaws (and let us be charitable and disregard the brief and irrelevant happy ending) it exhibits swift and sure character delineation, interesting thematic work keyed to the dramatic situation, and, in its best pages, a rare and deft touch. More, gentlemen, more!

The Strange Love of Martha Ivers, 1946. Starring Barbara Stanwyck, Van Heflin, and Lizabeth Scott. Story by Jack Patrick. Screenplay by Robert Rossen. Directed by Lewis Milestone. Music score by Miklos Rosza. Musical and dialogue quotations are by courtesy of the producer, Hall Wallis Productions, Inc., and the distributor, Paramount Pictures, Inc.

Cantinflas

MARIE ROSE OLIVER

MARIE ROSE OLIVER, Argentine writer of articles and short stories, is on the staff of the magazine *Sur* and of the newspaper *La Nación*. During the war, she worked for two years as special consultant in the office of the Coördinator of Inter-American Affairs in Washington, D.C. At the invitation of the Council for Inter-American Coöperation she returned to the United States for a four months' lecture tour, giving seventy lectures in twenty cities.

CANTINFLAS, the most popular man throughout Latin America; the actor who sets enormous audiences roaring with laughter so that it is difficult to hear what he says next; the Mexican who appeals as much to the man in the street as to the most sophisticated intellectual; the young creole whose image in wood, cardboard, or tin, as toy or conversation piece, is shown south of the border in a thousand shop windows just like Micky Mouse or Donald Duck in the United States; he in whom Latin Americans recognize for the first time the embodiment of their most outstanding as well as their most subtle characteristics: Cantinflas has failed to amuse the Frenchmen.

In Cannes, where his film *The Three Musketeers* was shown for the Motion Picture Competition, critics not only were not amused, but wondered how he could amuse half a continent.

We do not wonder at their wonder. We know where it comes from: in Europe they know little about America, nothing at all about Latin America. We who during more than a century have absorbed European culture, and especially French literature, have had no literature to export capable of arousing the Frenchmen's curiosity about us. They have had some vague and stereotyped notions about our millionaires, the "rastas"; about the man of the wild, "le bon sauvage"; and, more vaguely even, about our cowboys. That is all. How can they understand an actor who expresses feelings, sentiments, attitudes, reactions unknown to them and untranslatable in terms of their old and conventional way of living? And especially when they do not know Spanish?

Cantinflas' humor or wit is mainly in his language. Chaplin did not speak, Chaplin had good scripts and good directors; Cantinflas has not had them yet. By his physique, clothes, and gestures Chaplin belonged to no special country and so could belong to any one; Cantinflas in his features, movements, and way of dressing is typically the man of our city streets with Spanish and Indian blood. Chaplin acted in the domain of poetry; Cantinflas acts in the human one. In his domain, the Anglo-American actor expressed through his mimicry sentiments common to all men; in his, the Mexican player expresses psychological traits so new, so unclassified, so unanalyzed till now, that it is difficult for foreigners, and especially for Europeans, to understand them.

Mario Moreno, the actor who has created "Cantinflas," giving thus to Spanish America the first generic type it has ever had, was born in Mexico City thirty-four years ago, of Spanish, French, and Indian descent. His father, a postman, sent his son to the Law University, but young Mario preferred to join a traveling tent theater, in which

he created a sort of clownish tramp. The actors in Mexico's variety theaters carry on dialogue with the public; Mario's retorts were so snappy and witty that he soon became popular. But the five Mexican dollars that he earned daily were not enough for the ambitious youth: he became a lightweight boxer and traveled about the country, challenging whoever was willing to measure strength and agility with him. While he was on his way to a championship, his former employer asked him to join the company again, offering him fifteen pesos a day. He accepted the offer, and it was in this second part of his career that chance put him on the way to fame. One day he had to substitute for the announcer and improvise an address to the public; panic-stricken, he stuttered, stammered, hesitated and was at such a loss to find the needed words that he resorted to every possible sentence or slogan that came into his head. The crazy speech was a hit. Six years later, as a movie actor, he was earning 250,000 pesos a year, a sum that by now he has greatly surpassed.

Cantinflas is of medium height, flexible body, feline movements; with an oval face shaded by the scarce beard of the mestizo and the jet-black, glossy, waved hair of the Spaniard; and with dark eyes, widely separated, which give to his face a clear look of childish astonishment that contrasts with the full-lipped, well-drawn mouth, enlarged at the corners by the few hairs of a little drooping mustache. He never has recourse to the *sombrero* or the *serape,* which could so easily add the touch of local color that foreign audiences expect and demand. True to reality, he wears the white cotton jersey shirt, the dark pants held by a string at an incredibly low waistline, and the misshapen and faded little felt hat of Mexico's poorest workmen. Those who are obliged to carry weights on their heads or shoulders cannot afford to wear the broadbrimmed *sombrero* or the, for them, cumbersome *serape,* for which Cantinflas substitutes the waterproof, called in rainy Mexico *gabardina.* His *gabardina* is only a narrow rag that he throws smartly around his neck or carries proudly over one shoulder.

Sometimes he wears other garments, but as bellboy or newsboy, as *taco*-seller or bullfighter, as Romeo in the parody of Shakespeare's play or D'Artagnan in *The Three Musketeers,* as soldier, police sergeant, or circus player, Cantinflas never changes his personality. Yet he is never monotonous. His public, even if continually expecting from him the unexpected, would not like him to become somebody else. Now a popular hero, he must face new circumstances in the psychological situations he has already established.

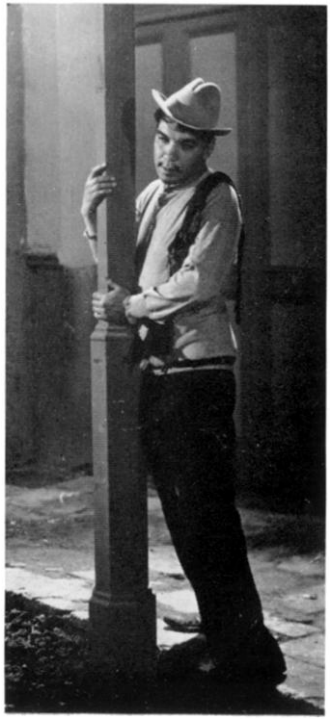
Those who believe that Cantinflas in front of the camera does not need to act but only to be himself are greatly mistaken. A couple of months ago at his sets in the Estudios del Tepeyac, where they were shooting his last film, *I'm a Fugitive,* I saw how the Mexican actor achieves those effects which part of the public believes to be merely the result of a spontaneous improvisation. While he speaks, in dialogue or monologue, the speech is recorded; immediately after the scene has been shot, he listens with great attention to what he has said. Then he has the scene shot again, sometimes over and over, and with a meticulous sense of values, of shading and modulation, modifies what he has to say, emphasizing a word, adding an-

other, repeating a term or suppressing it. Just as no director could think out for him the gestures he must make or the attitudes he must adopt, so too no screen writer could write down beforehand his sharp retorts or his nonsensical flow of surprising arguments, explanations, and reasoning. If it is true that his accent, garments, movements, gestures, and devices are those of the Mexican street boy, it needed an artist to give a definite style to the model taken from real life. Owing largely to intuition, Cantinflas' style of complete naturalness is also the result of patient work and acute observation.

Cantinflas is the carefree man of Latin America's city streets, who, without a definite trade, tries all the trades in order to live from day to day. He is the guy whom neither the work beside a machine, nor the salesmanship necessary to sell what that machine manufactures, has conditioned or molded. He knows that in one way or another he will be able to enjoy the sunshine or the moonlight with his girl, to find time enough to chat for hours with his pals, to slip unnoticed into the bull ring, to drink the glass of *tequila* or *pulque* that will help him to dream, and to earn the few cents needed to buy the hot and spicy *taco* that one eats squatting on the curb against a sun-warmed wall. Since, for all this, ingenuity, smartness, courage, humor, and deepness of soul are required, he lives intensely, with stirred senses and strong emotions, as a complete human being. And he mocks, with a laughter so internal that it never even becomes a smile, conventions, the law, formality, pretention, vanity, and above all the "he-man" attitude, that *machismo* we inherited, as a disease, from Spain. On the other hand, the Spanish tradition, alive in the streets of his Mexico, has taught him that what we all seek through mechanical inventions or individual devices is to live better and work less. To the Chaplin whom hard times bruise and hurt we could oppose Cantinflas immune to them. One could pity Chaplin, one cannot pity Cantinflas; we know that no matter how hard circumstances may be for him, he will defeat them with amazing dexterity.

More important, however, than the attitude toward life that Cantinflas presents are the psychological traits which he emphasizes and through which we Latins—no matter of what social standing or country—recognize ourselves in him. By attitudes that show him taken by surprise, or words that act as breaks in an emotional situation, by a certain slowness in his gestures and a dreaminess in his eyes, he conveys to us that part of ourselves which lives as a daydream in our subconscious while we act or talk, and prevents us from being totally in what we do, even if we do not seem distracted or slow-minded. Critical or emotional, held deep down in our consciousness by the strength of inertia to which it is linked, that other self lives its own life apart from our external activity.

It is difficult therefore to express in words the chaotic richness of our subconscious. We lack for it the traditional and elaborate language that Europeans have. When emotion or need compel us to say clearly what we feel, we do not find the words for it. Many times our terms only intimate what we want to say. We easily beat around the bush and, at a loss to come to the point, revert to a very personal language, from which sometimes might spring beauty



Cantinflas in his natural estate as a child of the streets of Mexico City appears at the left, complete with the ratty scarf that he describes as his *gabardina*. Somehow or other this character manages to get involved in burlesques of the classic and the literary—*Romeo and Juliet, Blood and Sand,* and, as above, *The Three Musketeers.* In the last he scored as a D'Artagnan whose romantic exploits and dashing swordplay were hampered only slightly by the drooping pantaloons which Cantinflas carried over from his Mexican *gamin.*

The essence of Cantinflas' screen art is to inject into an alien atmosphere the tramp he always impersonates. If he is not Romeo or D'Artagnan or an Ibáñez bullfighter, he may become an upholder of law and order, as in *The Unknown Policeman*. Even in conservative police uniform the Mexican comedian found the low-hanging trousers, as usual, a reliable instrument for creating smiles as well as infinite suspense.

World War II—and Hell—became the background for the recent Cantinflas production, *One Day with the Devil.* The script enabled him to play a newsboy, a tank driver, an artilleryman, an officer's orderly, a speech-maker, and a commando, and to make a tour of Hell with Satan as his escort, after St. Peter expelled him from Heaven for telling stories to the 11,000 virgins.

In *I Am a Fugitive* a Cantinflas janitor is mistaken for a bank robber and drawn into strange adventures. The actor's ability to win sympathy for the underdog through his brilliant comedy talents and deft Spanish double talk have made his great audience compare him to Chaplin. A poised comedian who has demonstrated physical courage as an amateur bullfighter in real life, he has helped the Mexican film industry to make great strides forword in its march to a leading role in the cinema world.

and originality, but also the most conventional sentences, not always employed accurately. Cantinflas is a master of this sort of crazy talk. He has a genius for bringing together nonsensical terms, sentences, slogans, proverbs. His addresses, harangues, monologues, explanations overwhelm the audience just as the acting of the Marx brothers does. The most unexpected and absurd comparisons, examples, analyses, reasonings follow one another like beads on a string while the speaker gets drunk with his rhetorical flow. Cantinflas employs this verbal pattern in a way so true to reality that it has come to be denoted in the language by the verb *cantinflear;* no Latin-American demagogue escapes being rightly accused by his countrymen of *cantinfleo.* But when the Mexican actor must express himself sincerely, in love or in self-defense, he stutters, stammers, hesitates, stumbles, and must substitute with gestures of his face, hands, feet, and his whole body for those words which in his poor language he cannot find.

The word *cantinfleo* is specially applied to scientific explanations. We Spanish-American – vain like Spaniards and equalitarian like Americans– do not like to admit that there is something we cannot understand or do which somebody else understands or does. Since our vanity is at stake, we try, in words, to convince others of our efficiency: our club strategist is the economist, the sociologist, or the scientist of the *fonda* or *pulquería.* In those establishments you can always find someone explaining why we must get rid of ceiling prices, why there will always be poor people, or how the atom is smashed, and of course one finds that same smug twaddle also in finer circles than those where cheap drinks are served.

Easy self-satisfaction is natural to a society in the making. We must remember that our America was organized by persons who were seldom experts and specialists, and in consequence could not afford to be very touchy as far as responsibility went. In the beginning there was not much competition. Improvisation was not only admitted, but needed; without it we would have lagged behind. Irresponsibility came with it, and irresponsibility was stronger where puritans did not make the laws and where behavior was less important than faith in Holy Church.

In work or in business, in politics or in love, we "latinos" expect that chance will be on our side, that hazard will help us; we count on it the moment we decide to do something, just as the silent *gaucho* suddenly begins to improvise verses on the guitar answering to his opponent in the two-man musical competition called *payada.* Thus man gambles on fate and bets on himself. The will to achieve what he undertakes is stronger in him than the doubt about his capacity to achieve it; therefore, knowing that he cannot transmit to others the faith in his will, he silences the doubt. Far apart as they are, both the Mexican Indian and the Argentine plainsman, when asked about something of which they are ignorant, substitute for "No" the more impersonal and evasive "Who knows?" or "Maybe."

It is this doubt which prevents the talkative Cantinflas from becoming a boaster, just as his daredevil's faith in life prevents him from becoming a cynic. He never attacks or ridicules men's hopes, but rather those men who use those legitimate hopes for their per-

sonal benefit. Indulgent of, and even sympathizing with, the minor sins of those who have to earn in hardship their daily bread, he is ruthless with the authority based on force and the tricky grandiloquence used as a means of imposing power or defending privilege. He pricks boldly the air-filled balloons of false and patronizing attitudes, of pretentious dignity and of conventional courage.

Therefore it is a mistake to see in Cantinflas, as some do, the satisfied personification of our negative characteristics or traits; he shows also our positive side. The people, the common men and women of our countries, see and enjoy the carefree innocence with which the Mexican actor shows it to them. But smug nationalists and puritans loathe him; they can admit only satire based on hate or moralizing pedantry. Both hate and pedantry are absent in the true mirror which, with mischievous tenderness, Cantinflas puts in front of us.

"The Best Years of Our Lives": A Review *

ABRAHAM POLONSKY

ABRAHAM POLONSKY, screenwriter, formerly a member of the English Department at the College of the City of New York, is an editor of the *Hollywood Quarterly*. During the war he served in the Clandestine Radio Division, ETO, of the Office of Strategic Services.

N'est-ce pas parce que nous cultivons la brume?
—MALLARMÉ

ABOUT this time each year, the Academy Awards remind us of the fictional odds and ends produced in the Hollywood studios. I suppose everyone will agree that *The Best Years of Our Lives* stands above its competitors as life itself dominates our fictions.

We are offered a view of three veterans from different social classes adjusting themselves to modern times in Boone City, America. It is a pattern of reality as Wyler and Sherwood see it, the life that touches their imagination with truth, with warmth, with communication. The social environment of former Captain Fred Derry is treated reluctantly and without a true perspective, but if Wyler and Sherwood knew better, like their most sympathetic protagonist, the banker Al Stephenson, they realize that some version of the Boone City bank is in control of the film industry. Author and director bowed and passed. Nevertheless, the area of human character which the *Best Years* makes available to its audience is a landmark in the fog of escapism, meretricious violence, and the gimmick plot attitude of the usual movie. It becomes very clear that an artist who happens to bring even a tag of daily experience into the studio is making an immense contribution to the screen. The *Best Years* indicates for every director and writer that the struggle for content, for social reality, no matter how limited the point of view, is a necessary atmosphere for growth in the American film.

As the plot goes, three veterans meet by accident and return to their city in the same plane. Each goes home and is welcomed: one to the rich emotional sympathy of an upper-class family; one to an earnest but narrow white-collar house; and one to a poor man's broken home and a slut of a wife. Al Stephenson is a hit-the-beach sergeant, and, oddly enough, a banker. Homer Parrish is an enlisted man from the Navy, now equipped with hands in the form of two hooks. Fred Derry, the poor boy, is the Air Force captain, formerly a soda jerk. Director and writer were intensely interested in these three men, but the same understanding was not brought to bear on their special problems. Homer, the petty bourgeois, has a girl whom he loves and who loves him. She

* This review was prepared before nine Academy Awards were announced for participants in the production of *The Best Years of Our Lives*. The award for best production of the year was given to Producer Samuel Goldwyn. He also received the Irving Thalberg Award for distinguished contribution to the screen. The award for Best Actor was given to Fredric March for his portrayal of Al Stephenson; the award for Best Supporting Role, to Harold Russell for his portrayal of Homer Parrish. Russell also received a special award for his work with handless veterans in army hospitals. The award for Best Direction was given to William Wyler; for Best Screenplay, to Robert E. Sherwood; for Best Film Editing, to Daniel Mandell; and for Best Musical Score, to Hugo Friedhofer.

wants to marry him, but Homer is self-concious about his hooks, resentful of pity. Wilma, in a slow and lovely scene, faces up to the broken flesh; Homer is rescued from himself; and we are left happily aware of their happiness, recalling a previous scene in which the government pension puts an economic base under their marriage. Fred Derry comes from "across the tracks" (we even hear the trains); his father is a drunk, his stepmother anomalous, his wife less so. Fred is forced back behind the soda fountain, loses his job with a punch, his wife to another man, an ex-G.I., and decides to leave town. His wife is going to divorce him because he can't make money, and finally he is magically offered a position as a laborer, which he accepts. Al Stephenson, the banker, has a "wonderful" wife and two of the "finest" children in the world. He gets a bigger job in his "old" bank, this time as a vice-president in charge of G.I. loans. Unable to grant such loans without collateral, Al gets drunk (evidently the forms of courage in the economic system need different stimuli than in combat) and makes a speech in which he beautifully points out that the soldier asked no collateral for his final sacrifices in the war. Al doesn't lose his job, and the final scene, although unresolved, is not unhappy.

These three unrelated plots are bound together with some wire left over from a million movies: the poor boy, having found himself, gets the daughter of the well-to-do veteran. Homer stays with us because his uncle owns a bar, in which some of the scenes are played.

It is obvious enough that we are here faced with the general stereotypes of the film industry and popular fiction. The original novel by Mackinlay Kantor is even more run-of-the-mill, and the Wyler-Sherwood changes move the story progressively toward realism. In Kantor's story, Al leaves the bank to become a small-time farmer and Fred narrowly escapes becoming a bank robber. The film's drive toward truth is evident in every sequence. There is immense patience for detail and emotional texture, especially in the homecoming scenes of Al and Homer, where the inventive commentary on human behavior is enormous. A passion for insight smashes the stereotypes, around the edges. The lesson for directors and writers is evident: writing for the movies is writing under censorship. The censorship forces stereotypes of motive and environment on the creators, and the problem is to press enough concrete experience into the mold to make imagination live.

Unfortunately, in the *Best Years,* as in most social-problem fiction, the artist falls into the trap of trying to find local solutions in existence for the social conflicts, instead of solving them in feeling. This is, of course, the industry's demand for happy endings. Now the truth of the matter is that veterans have been sold out *en masse* by society. The picture exposes the fraud of America's promises to its soldiers, the promises of businessmen and cheap publicists. We all remember the refrigerators that became planes and flew off to the lonely beaches and mud; we all remember the girls who waited at home and the jobs that would be there. The new world was articulate in the newspaper editorials. The soldiers would take care of the fighting, and the powers-that-be would take care of the peace and prosperity. In the *Best Years,* fak-

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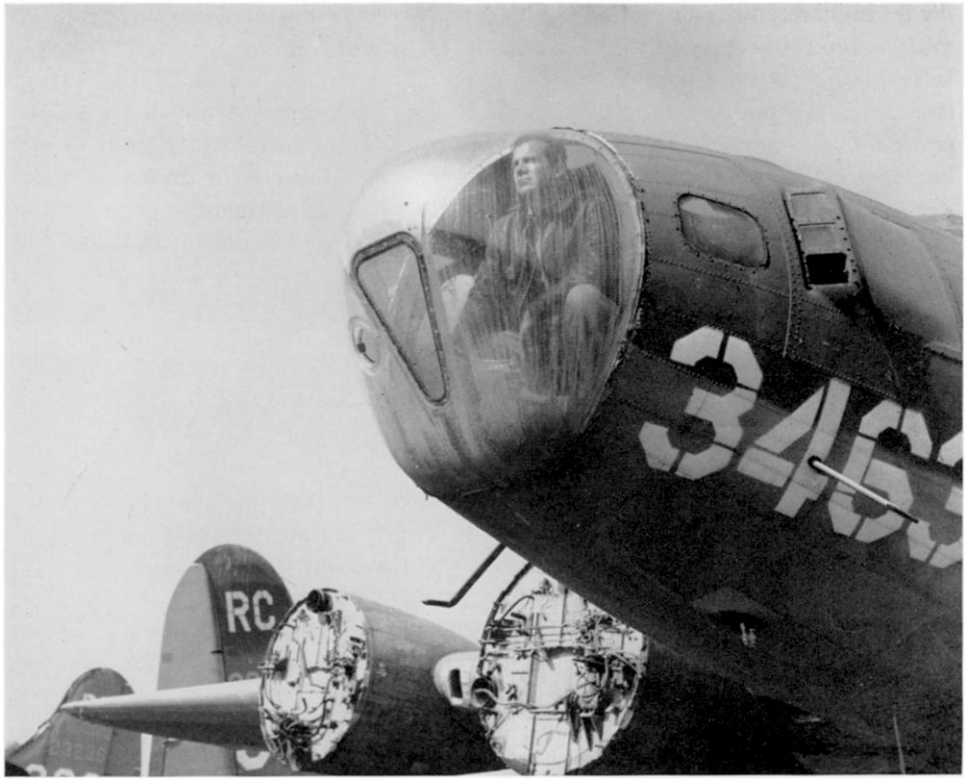
"... one to a poor man's broken home ... 'across the tracks' (we even hear the trains) ... his father is a drunk, his stepmother anomalous."



"... an endless pattern of power, nailed down to uselessness.... Derry climbs aboard a motorless bomber, sits in its nose, in the dust, in the sun, staring through the dirty plastic into the sky ... relives the terror, the individual destiny of combat ... and we are all relieved to know that the intense experience of the last few minutes has meant nothing at all."

ery is laid bare, but the plot forces easy solutions on its creators. Fascism is solved with a punch; a bad marriage by the easy disappearance of a wife; the profound emotional adjustment of a handless veteran by a fine girl; the itchy conscience of a banker by too many drinks. The future is not to be predicted out of such formulas.

Despite the fact that the Hollywood fog which hangs over modern life as portrayed in film is cleared from time to time, the basic stereotype holds constantly. Where the economics of life make naked the terror of a return to a bad old world, the southern California mist moves in and obscures the truth. This is why the crux of the story lies at the point where the veteran's problem is most mental, least rude and real. Al, the banker, has a bad conscience about the abandoned ordinary veteran. What happens to these "buddies" bothers him, and this intellectual approach is both sound and useful. But a story which has a Fred Derry who must meet the brutal indifference of society, solve it, or be destroyed, seems suddenly oddly accented when the story point of view is that of the man least involved, Al Stephenson.

I suspect that Wyler and Sherwood are not really emotionally conscious of the Derrys, the majority of veterans. People of the kind the author and director best understand, with whom their sympathies lie, are good people like the Stephensons. So it follows that the only family in the story with size, roundness, dignity, beauty, sympathy, and passion, is the family of the good banker. For Derry the environment of action has been specialized to mere plot, built for violent contrast, and localized in the inability of the poor boy who made a little easy dough flying a bomber to adjust himself to his former economic status. The concentration of human virtue in the least affected of the social strata lends a certain lopsidedness to the understanding of veterans' adjustment.

Two scenes most sharply indicate the attitude.

One is Al's daughter accusing her parents of being smug with happiness, of not understanding Fred's desperate plight of joblessness, a broken marriage, of general reorientation. The daughter tells her parents that they have escaped the basic conflicts of the times in a decent standard of living, a good job, and a honeymoon in the South of France. Smug self-pity replies that mama and papa have had their emotional ups and downs, that sometimes mama didn't like papa and vice versa. The girl is defeated and cries. This is blindness.

The other scene is a wonderful metaphor. Captain Fred Derry, the junked bombardier, walks in the graveyard of the air fleet, seen first from his point of view. The camera lifts until at last he is small and abandoned in what seems an endless pattern of power nailed down to uselessness, objects chosen for oblivion. A whole society has poured forth its strength to create these marvelous machines, and a whole society has combined power to train this former soda clerk to the machine. Now, both (the film tells us) are not needed. Finally, Derry climbs aboard a motorless bomber, sits in its nose, in the dust, in the sun, staring through the dirty plastic into the sky. The camera, returning to the outside, catches up in music the noise of the gunning motors, then advances head-on

toward the bomber, and from a low angle imaginatively lifts the plane into the clouds. Inside again, the music roaring like motors, Derry relives the terror, the individual destiny of combat—then the junkman appears, the bombardier is chased from his plane.

A life and a society are supposed to be summed up in this, one of the ultimate scenes of the film. Here for a moment the plot became almost identified with reality. Here the plastic values of the different arts merged as in some fabulous aria; and then, as always, the Hollywood fog moved in, obscuring what we have just seen and almost realized. Derry gets a job from the junkman, takes off his jacket, and we are all enormously relieved to know that the intense experience of the last few minutes has meant just nothing at all.

The movies just seem to find it impossible to deal with people who work for their living in factories and on farms. This submerged majority of the public is left inarticulate by the artists, covered with a fog which occasionally breaks to reveal a Capra pixie. Greatness was possible for the *Best Years,* but this meant examining Fred Derry where society hurts hardest. It was not done.

Technically, the picture is free from the nervous cutting for mechanical pace so holy in Hollywood, and close-ups do not pop in to fill dramatic vacuums. There is no excess of moving shots having the aesthetic value of vertigo. The style of shooting is round, built about the people in relation to one another, held in the shot to let the story come through.

Within its imposed limits and compromises the film is an enormous success, something like the war itself, which has invigorated many a European country and stirred vast colonial peoples, while here at home we have returned to cynicism from our betters, sharpened social conflicts, and a mood of vulgar despair among the artists.

The Best Years of Our Lives, RKO, 1946. Director, William Wyler. Screenplay, Robert E. Sherwood. Based on the novel, *Glory for Me,* by Mackinlay Kantor. Photography, Gregg Toland. Musical score, Hugo Friedhofer. A Samuel Goldwyn production.

Jean Vigo*

SIEGFRIED KRACAUER
Translated by WILLIAM MELNITZ

SIEGFRIED KRACAUER, literary editor of the *Frankfurter Zeitung* from 1920 to 1933, writing extensively on cultural affairs including cinema, came from Paris to the United States in 1941 and is now an American citizen. He has worked on the staff of the Modern Art Film Library and has received two Rockefeller grants and two Guggenheim fellowships to further his research in the history and political significance of the German film. His book, *From Caligari to Hitler: A Psychological History of the German Film,* has just been published by the Princeton University Press. His other works include a novel, *Ginfest,* and a biography of Offenbach in the Second Empire, *Orpheus in Paris.*

INTRODUCTORY NOTE

I SAW Jean Vigo for the last time in the summer of 1934. He looked even younger than he was—an adolescent with a pointed face, about to die from tuberculosis. Very few people knew his name then, or his work. *A propos de Nice* had been shown in a few theaters only, *Zéro de conduite* had been considered too "harsh" for general release, and, if I am not mistaken, *Atalante* had not yet been released. As a rule, rebels are not popular, and in the motion picture industry probably less so than anywhere else. And Vigo was a rebel, on two counts: against the screen formulas and, even more intensely, against the established order of things. He used the camera as a weapon, not as an anesthetic.

In today's France, Vigo's pictures are shown in the neighborhood theaters.

VLADIMIR POZNER

JEAN VIGO

JEAN VIGO—who died before he was thirty, in the autumn of 1934—left only a few films. His first film, *A propos de Nice,* can only be mentioned here, since for years it has been inaccessible. In 1933, this satirical documentary was followed by *Zéro de conduite,* a film influenced by René Clair and the French avant-garde, depicting a students' revolt in a boarding school. The brief series ends with *Atalante* (1934), a masterpiece that brought Vigo to the forefront of French motion picture directors. Among them, perhaps only Vigo and the René Clair of the great Parisian films have been able to discover and conquer territories reserved exclusively to the film. And although Vigo lacks Clair's wonderful lightness, he surpasses him in his profound concern with truth.

His very method of composition reveals an original relation to the screen. Vigo's plots are not the classic, hermetically sealed constructions designed to produce suspense by themselves alone; rather, they are slight, very loosely knit, and not at all purposeful. The plot of *Atalante* could not be simpler: Jean, the young master of the river steamer "Atalante," has married Juliette, who soon longs for Paris, away from the monotony of cabin, water, and landscape. She deserts her husband, who, jealous of Paris and the whole world, would be lost in the city if it were not for Père Jules, his old factotum: Père Jules brings Juliette back to poor Jean. The emphasis is on the

* This article was first published in the *National Zeitung,* Basel (Switzerland), February 1, 1940.

numerous little single episodes, each more pregnant with suspense than the commonplace story itself. These little episodes compose the plot without, however, depending on it for structure and meaning. The opening passage, in which Jean and Juliette in festive attire proceed like strangers, silently, side by side, through the forest across the field to the beach, far ahead of the wedding party, is a perfect piece of poetry. By stringing his episodes like pearls, Vigo endows a technical fact with aesthetic significance—the fact that the celluloid strip is virtually endless and can be interrupted at any time.

More important are the conclusions Vigo draws from the fact that the camera does not discriminate between human beings and objects, animate and inanimate nature. As if led by the meandering camera, he exhibits the material components of mental processes. In *Atalante* we experience with all our senses how strongly the fogs of the river, the avenues of trees, and the isolated farms affect the mind, and how the sailor's relationship to the city is determined by the fact that he looks at the lodgings perched on the quay from sea level. Other film directors, too, have identified objects as silent accomplices of our thoughts and feelings. But Vigo goes still further. Instead of simply revealing the role objects may play in conditioning the mind, he dwells upon situations in which their influence predominates, thus exploring camera possibilities to the full. And since increasing intellectual awareness tends to reduce the power of objects over the mind, he logically chooses people who are deeply rooted in the material world as leading characters of his two full-length films.

Immature boys are the heroes of *Zéro de conduite*. Early in this film two of them ride to school at night in a third-class railroad compartment; it is as if they were left to themselves in a wigwam that imperceptibly fuses with their dreams. We see a man's legs on one of the benches, and then, on the other bench, we see the upper half of a sleeping traveler. This halving of the sleeper, marking him as an inanimate being, increases the impression of isolation from the world, an impression already aroused by the smoke which shuts out the world behind the car window. The partition of the compartment lies somewhat obliquely in the picture, an angle which points to the fact that this entire sequence cannot be located within real space and time. Their adventurous ride stimulates the two boys to pranks. From unfathomable pockets they produce alternately a spiral with a little ball springing out of it, a flute, shriveled toy balloons blown up by the younger boy, a bunch of goose quills with which the older one adorns himself, and finally cigars a yard long. Photographed from below, they squat exaltedly as the smoke of the locomotive mingles with the smoke of the cigars, and in the haze the round balloons float to and fro in front of their pale faces. It is exactly as if the two in their magic wigwam were riding through air. With a jerk, the sleeper falls. "Il est mort!" one of the boys cries, frightened. With the balloons hovering around them, they get off the train; outside we read the sign: "Non Fumeurs," and immediately the wigwam is retransformed into an ordinary railroad compartment.

While the objects in *Zéro de conduite* participate in childish play or occasion-

ally frighten the boys, they become fetishes in *Atalante*. As such, they possess Père Jules. Michel Simon's Père Jules ranks among the greatest characters ever created on the screen by any actor or director. The old man, a former sailor, takes care of the "Atalante" in company with his accordion, innumerable cats, and a feeble-minded boy. Grumbling to himself inarticulately, he walks up and down between the steering wheel and the cabin in a sort of daze—so much one with the "Atalante" that he seems carved out of its planks. All that affects him is physical actions, which he, however, does not experience consciously, but immediately translates into similar actions. Jean lifts Juliette with whom he stands back to back: witnessing this amorous scene, Père Jules begins to shadow box. Juliette tries on him the coat she is sewing: the coat induces him to imitate an African belly dancer, and since Africa to him is not far from San Sebastian, he avails himself of the same coat, as he would of a red cloth, to irritate an imaginary bull. He does not remember the events, but reproduces them following certain signals.

Instead of using the objects at his disposal, he has become their property. The magic spell they cast over him is revealed in a unique episode in which Père Jules shows Juliette all the mementos he has brought home from his voyages. The piled-up treasurers which crowd his cabin are depicted in such a manner that we feel they have literally grown together over him. To evoke this impression Vigo focuses on the objects from various sides and on many levels without ever clarifying their spatial interrelationship—using nothing but the medium shots and close-ups made necessary by the narrowness of the cabin. The alarm clock, the musical box, the photograph portraying Jules as a young man between two women in glittering dresses, the tusk, and all the bric-à-brac emerging little by little, form an impenetrable wickerwork constantly interspersed with fragments of the old man himself: his arm, his tattooed back, his face. How accurately this piecemeal presentation renders his complete submission to the rarities around him can also be inferred from the fact that he preserves in alcohol the hands of a deceased comrade. The idols, on their part, display triumphantly their inherent powers. At the head of their great defile Vigo marches a doll which, when set into motion by Père Jules, conducts mechanical music from a puppet show like a bandmaster. The magical life of the doll is transmitted to the curiosities that follow in the parade.

"... un documentaire bien romantique," Brasillach writes in his *Histoire du cinéma* about *A propos de Nice*, "mais d'une belle cruauté, où les ridicules des dames vieilles at amoureuses, des gigolos et de la bourgeoisie décadente étaient férocement stigmatisés." Responding to the overwhelming appeal of material phenomena, Vigo, however, more and more withdrew from social criticism. In *Atalante* it appears, indeed, as if he actually had wanted to affirm an attitude hostile to intellectual awareness. Could it be, then, that Vigo's career had taken a retrogressive course? But in *Zéro de conduite* satire still manifested itself, and perhaps he indulged in the magic of mute objects and dark instincts only in order, some day, to pursue more thoroughly and knowingly the task of disenchantment.

American Classic

RICHARD ROWLAND

RICHARD ROWLAND is a member of the English Department at Columbia College. He served in the Army from September, 1941, to February, 1946.

EACH YEAR, the film classics are becoming more of a staple in the diet of the metropolitan filmgoer. Few months pass, in New York City at least, when one is not able to see *Carnet de bal, The Informer, The Lady Vanishes,* or *Chapayev.* But as one views again many of these films, the excellences of which seem to have lost so little through the passage of time, one is struck ever more forcibly by the fact that very few of them are American. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari,* filmed in Germany in 1919, is crude and violent and shocking—and these are the qualities at which it aimed in 1919. The wit of *Kermesse Héroïque* is as sharp and wry and full of poetry as it ever was. The pre-Hollywood Hitchcock films bristle with excitement today as they did a decade ago, even though one knows now the outcome of each taut episode. But what can we say for American films? The sweep and splendor of D. W. Griffith's films has not been surpassed; Charlie Chaplin's exquisite pantomime still wrings our hearts with the laughter which is so close to tears; one suspects that the superb legend of Garbo would still be valid, although we cannot be sure since her films are never revived.

But what else? These are mostly silent films, made before 1927 when the Warner Brothers and Al Jolson revolutionized the industry. Are there no talking films to equal these? The fog in *The Informer* no longer looks quite real; indeed, most of the John Ford films, excellent though they were, seem now didactic and literary in a sense that the great French films never were. The early performances of Bette Davis, a revelation in the 1930's, are now seen to be mannered—studied and clever, but rarely felt. The brilliant camera work which Orson Welles gave us in *Citizen Kane,* we realize sadly, was largely trickery and mechanical cleverness used to conceal the essential emptiness of the film.

Has nothing else survived, then? Yes; there is one series of films to which a little circle of devotees throughout the world return again and again to find a pleasure not antiquarian, not in the least diminished by the technical progress of recent years. This is, of course, the series of some twelve films which feature the Marx Brothers, made under various banners over a period of fifteen years. Almost nothing has been lost from them; when Groucho makes his sway-backed entrance into the regal palace in *Duck Soup,* the audience stirs with excitement, with the knowledge that an important personage has suddenly appeared on a screen usually inhabited by pallid phantoms.

Bits of the films, inevitably, are dated. When Groucho interrupts a passionate love scene to say, "Pardon me while I have a strange interlude," and, turning to the audience, unburdens his soul, I suspect that younger generations, who have almost forgotten that Mr. O'Neill startled us with an aside in 1928, are not as much amused as their elders.

And bobbie-soxers, who have not even literary recollections of the days of prohibition, probably can't appreciate the superb nonsense of the speakeasy in *Horse Feathers,* with its password and Garibaldi the iceman in the back room filling bottles variously labeled RYE and SCOTCH from the same sinister-looking jug. And always in the early films, when romance, in the insipid form of Zeppo, takes over, we realize that these films were not made yesterday, but a good many days before yesterday.

Even here there is more fun than in many old films, for unintentional farce nowhere reaches greater heights than in the various costumes which the late Thelma Todd sported in certain of the Marx Brothers opera. But this is not planned, while most of the fun of a Marx Brothers film is carefully planned and usually successful. Today, *Duck Soup,* made in 1933, remains as fresh as a buttercup, far fresher than today's newspaper with its uncanny echoes of familiar bumblings and catastrophes, far fresher than the tears of a *Love Letters* or the pratt falls of an Abbot and Costello film.

Why? What is there in these films which survives the rapid "progress" of our galloping atomic age? Is it due to the fact that the Marx Brothers had a competent script writer, whereas modern comedies are apparently written by twelve to fifteen semiliterates working in a vacuum? It is true that the hand of S. J. Perelman is very evident in the early films, and true, too, that Mr. Perelman has a remarkable talent for torturing the English language into a sort of insane poetry, formed by weird juxtapositions of formal diction and advertising copy, of slang and preciosity, so that he becomes a slapstick James Joyce. But the Marx Brothers continued to be funny after Mr. Perelman left the firm.

Or is it simply that the three brothers have comic genius? Certainly Groucho's eyebrow is raised to the precise degree where it becomes comic; certainly the sag of his pants and the eccentric contours of his body are wonderful caricature, though we are not quite sure of what. Harpo's destructive nature is clearly a brilliant release for all of us from the restraints of society; there is complete purgation in the moment in *A Night at the Opera* when Harpo, costumed unexpectedly as a gypsy woman, saunters nonchalantly from the chorus of the opera and strikes a match across the taut belly of the female half of a superlatively dull team of adagio dancers. Certainly Chico's Italian dialect is phony to just the right degree; if it were good Italian dialect, it would be only dialect. As it is, it is uproarious comedy. And his bouts with the piano have a precision and spontaneity which make them the most amiable thing in the comedies.

But the finest comedian in the world cannot be funny without something to be funny about. Even such wit and perfection of technique as Miss Beatrice Lillie's has succeeded in boring its audience when it has been forced to work without material.

It is not hard to find an explanation of the endless appeal of these films. They deal with the gravest question with which comedy can deal. They ask us, at least the successful ones do, intermittently but irresistibly, "What is reality?"

Theirs is an unreal world; anyone can see that. Harpo's wig is clearly a wig and, indeed, often seems in danger of

falling off. Groucho's mustache is either painted or fastened to his cigar, we are never quite sure which. Chico's accent is as detachable as the wig or the mustache, and is sometimes similarly askew. When they stow away on a ship in barrels labeled KIPPERED HERRING, they have all the comforts of home with them—alarm clocks, percolators, playing cards. Harpo's pockets contain everything but the kitchen sink; if you want a cup of coffee, he has it in his pocket, steaming hot. For somehow, in their world, disorder succeeds, and the way of order becomes the way of failure. When Margaret Dumont or one of the other stooges attempts to behave logically, as if there were rules of cause and effect, she is automatically doomed. This is more than a joke; it is a moral lesson. No world, dream or real, will allow itself to be fitted into a system—though the nature of man demands that he go on trying to make it fit.

What could be more unreal than the scene in *A Night at the Opera* in which dozens of people are crowded into a minute stateroom which obviously can hold six people at the most? And yet, is it unreal? We see it; as we tell ourselves that it is impossible, we realize that we have witnessed it. And we find ourselves doubting, not the film, but the sillier world which tells us that only a certain number of people can get into a stateroom, that one must be sedate and attentive at opera, that it matters whether Darwin or Huxley College wins the football game.

Occasionally, these films come to grips with the subject of reality directly. In *A Night at the Opera* there is a famous scene in which the Brothers are scrambling about in the flies of a theater while a pompous tenor sings below. As they swing, Tarzan-like, from rope to rope, the scenes constantly shift behind the harassed tenor; one moment he is in a castle, the next on a dead-end street, the next on a wharf. And we, in the audience, have a weird consciousness that in an utterly unsolemn way, quite unlike the magic of Prospero which brought us the same thought, this great globe itself will dissolve—dissolve probably into pure laughter; a happier fate, this comic fission, than the fate with which the scientists threaten us.

Or again, in *Duck Soup,* there is a frenzied episode which finds the three brothers all dressed as Groucho. Two of them approach a door simultaneously, and we are lost in a dream; is it a door or a mirror? Are there two of me? Is that other figure real? Who, indeed, am I? Am I real myself? Never, perhaps, has the shifting instability of the dream world been more vividly presented on the screen.

Again, Harpo, in *Monkey Business,* tangles with a Punch and Judy show, and to the children watching the show he is not less real, nor more real, than the puppets. And it is like the child in *The Emperor's New Clothes,* the voice of sanity; for the children are right. Are we any more real than the puppets?

But usually the approach is less direct. We look at the world of anarchy and return with a curious distrust to our own sober, leaden-footed world. "I know where the picture is," runs the dialogue in *Animal Crackers.* "It's in the house next door!" "But there isn't any house next door." "Then we'll build a house next door." And they whip out blueprints and start to work. And the picture, we know, will be in the house when they have built it.

Or Harpo stalks a western gunman with a revolver which proves to be a feather duster which proves to be a revolver, and the joke is on the audience which laughed too soon, thinking it knew reality, when the reality which it saw was no less a shadow than the opposite reality which the gunman saw.

Nothing is sacred; nothing is real. Society as represented by Margaret Dumont, she of the magnificent bosom which has clearly launched more ships than Helen of Troy ever contemplated, teeters and collapses into absurdity. The opera turns into "Take Me Down to the Ball Game." The symphony floats out to sea, fiddling furiously and solemnly away at Wagner, drifting on into insignificance.

Politics? Football? Universities? All of them evaporate before the onslaught of the Brothers. Even sex, the sacred subject about which Hollywood must be serious, becomes a joke in these films. Groucho leers, the siren wears the most outrageously revealing clothes, there is the bed obviously built for sin, there is the predatory lope, the last word in carnality. Will Hays may have flinched now and again, but even he did not remove the ogles and the double entendres; and for once he was right, for sex, too, collapses into nothingness. No one was ever more lecherous in a movie than Groucho is; no movie, save Rin-Tin-Tin's, was ever less erotic than these.

Words, too, to which we pin our faith so easily, have collapsed. These films are, in a sense, elementary lessons in semantics. Words fail to function, somehow; nothing means what it says. "Cut!" says the card player, and Harpo whips out an axe and cuts the cards. "I'd horsewhip you," Groucho threatens, and then adds, "if I had a horse." "Come, come!" someone tells Harpo, "you can't burn the candle at both ends," but Harpo reaches into his pocket and triumphantly produces a candle which is merrily burning at both ends, and we feel the failure of words which seemed real but which have suddenly proved worse than useless since they always mean the wrong thing.

The latest production of the Brothers has only recently been released. Critical reaction to *A Night in Casablanca* has not been enthusiastic; most of it has taken the form of, "Yes, it's funny, but not as good as the Marx Brothers used to be." This all sounds familiar. Probably the Marx Brothers never have been as good as they used to be. Time haloes many things; we recollect in delighted tranquillity the first shattering impact of the Marx Brothers' destructive comedy; we forget the admittedly less successful bits which link each film together.

"There is too much plot in *A Night in Casablanca*," the critics have said. For a few moments, at the start of the film, this appears to be so. We see nothing but conspirators and corpses and sinister background. Then suddenly Harpo appears, leaning nonchalantly against a building. A gendarme approaches, clearly a New York cop strayed inexplicably into Casablanca. "Well, what are you doing?" he growls. "Holding up the building?" Harpo nods with a knowing leer. The cop snarls and drags him off, angrily, whereupon the building collapses into rubble, and we know that all is well in the Marxist world. There can scarcely be too much plot for the Marx Brothers; script writers may build skyscrapers of plots; the

Brothers will destroy them as easily as Harpo atomizes this building in Casablanca.

Their one complete failure, *Room Service,* was not caused by too much plot; it was caused by the formalities of conventional farce. *Room Service* was based on the curious literalness of the Broadway farce, where reactions are as pat and stereotyped as those of the characters in a Kathleen Norris novel. Even Groucho could not triumph over a book which depended entirely upon one set crowded with conventional fast-talking farce figures who had none of the operatic qualities which make La Dumont or Sig Rumann such admirable foils for the Brothers. No ordinary farce hotel room can hold the Marx Brothers; infinity can scarcely hold them. The well-made play—and *Room Service* was such—with its many doors, all carefully planned to supply comic entrances and exits, is too restrictive. The Brothers need Casablanca, where various worlds meet, or the backstage of a theater, which is whole worlds in itself, or the limitless background of a battlefield or the whole Atlantic Ocean, for their comedy, opening as it does on vasty vistas of eternity.

But the plot of *A Night in Casablanca* is quickly demolished and they are back to their old tricks, performing them perhaps not as brilliantly as they have at times, but still with a dash and imagination which make other comedians seem thin and pale. No film offers a better example of the perfection of their technique even within a fairly routine farce situation. The scene in which some six or seven people pack and unpack a trunk in a hotel room, acting out with complete conviction an elaborate pretense that they do not know the other people are in the room, is carried off with the timing of a ballet. Never has lechery been so ludicrous as in the scene between Groucho and the beautiful spy; all the paraphernalia of a seduction are there—Strauss waltzes, champagne, roses—everything indeed but the seduction, and frustration becomes the purest laughter.

In a world which becomes daily less stable, such as our world seems to be, where order is more desperately needed and more elusive than ever, perhaps the anarchy of their comedy—"Look! No hands!" Chico exclaims joyfully as their air liner tears down the runway with only an inexperienced Harpo in the pilot's seat—is hard for us to bear. But that is our fault and not theirs. We are driving with no hands; perhaps that is no longer a joke. Perhaps that is why they are less funny to us today.

What the Brothers have done in these films is not perhaps new, but it is rare indeed in comedy. Most comedians take words and ideas and the world with complete gravity. Most comedy relies upon the wisecrack; and what is the wisecrack but a wise remark about a serious subject, an admission that what one is talking about is reality?

Even those comedians who do not rely upon the wisecrack return to the pedestrian reality of the everyday world. Charlie Chaplin builds a dream world of purity and beauty in which the girl comes to his cabin and the rolls dance for her with a heavenly grace, but in the end his little vagabond is crushed by the world of prose and he shuffles off into drab familiarity. Charlie Chaplin's films are escape literature which does not escape. The romantic fiction of women's magazines and wom-

en's radio serials is escape literature which pretends that Life Can Be Beautiful and denies all ugliness, so that those who follow such things live in a world of unreality, becoming more schizophrenic daily as they try to integrate a dream world with a real world which is cut to a very different pattern.

But the Marx Brothers offer a pure escape; they do not falsify the world as does the world in which Portia Faces Life; but they show us another world, a moon world, a world which illuminates our own, revealing our familiar surroundings as so much nonsense. We realize that we all behave with a solemnity too vulnerable to the attack of the Marx Brothers, who exclaim with the naïveté of wisdom, "But the emperor has nothing on at all!" And we may remain a little less willing to be crushed by solemnity, aware of our own vulnerability, aware that nonsense has a poetry which sense has not, aware in the most profound way that perhaps—who knows?—this world is, if not worthless, worth less than we had thought, being perhaps less real than we had thought.

Duck Soup, Para., 1933. Director, Leo McCarey. Story, music, and lyrics, Harry Ruby and Bert Kalmar. Additional dialogue, Arthur Sheekman and Nat Perrin. *Horse Feathers,* Para., 1932. Director, Norman McLeod. Screenplay, Bert Kalmar, Harry Ruby, and S. J. Perelman. *A Night at the Opera,* MGM, 1935. Director, Sam Wood. Story, James K. McGuiness. Adaptation, George Kaufman and Morrie Ryskind. *Monkey Business,* Para., 1931. Director, Norman McLeod. Story, S. J. Perelman and W. B. Johnstone. Additional dialogue, Arthur Sheekman. *Animal Crackers,* Para., 1930. Director, Victor Heerman. Story, Bert Kalmar, Harry Ruby, George Kaufman, Morrie Ryskind. Screenplay, Morrie Ryskind and Pierre Collings. *A Night in Casablanca,* UA, 1946. Director, Archie Mayo. Screenplay, Joseph Fields and Roland Kibbee. *Room Service,* RKO, 1938. Director, William Seiter. Based on the play by John Murray and Allan Boretz. Screenplay, Morrie Ryskind.

Are Newsreels News?

NEWTON E. MELTZER

NEWTON E. MELTZER is a writer and narrator of documentary, industrial, and educational films.

"THE CAMERA doesn't lie!" has always been an overworked and meretricious platitude. The motion picture camera in particular is a natural liar; and it lies more artfully with the aid of a willing cameraman or editor. Among the five United States newsreels today, as a consequence, there is no more attempt at pure objectivity then there is in ordinary "straight" news reporting.

The most subtle form of cinematic falsehood is the unspoken one; e.g., the juxtaposition of two scenes taken at different times so that they appear part of the same action, or the accidental or deliberate omission of certain key scenes. Thus, as American occupation troops march through the streets of Tokyo the newsreel editor may cut to a shot of cheering, grinning Japanese onlookers. Later on in the story, perhaps, he intercuts other enthusiastic civilians. It may be that most of the citizens who happened to be around that day turned their backs on the Yanks or stayed indoors, that windows were shuttered, even, as the soldiers approached; but these scenes, let us say, were either unavailable, not filmed, or omitted. The effect created finally depends on the editor's attitude and honesty. Does he want to show the enemy as happy, complaisant in defeat, or as sullen, reluctant to acknowledge the conquerors' rule?

Newsreels are of necessity a selected segment of life. But is their content selected or rejected purely on the criteria of drama or news value? Not always. The attempted strikebreaking at Republic Steel in 1937 was thoroughly "covered" by most newsreels, but the films were not released until months afterward, at the instance of the Senate's LaFollette Committee. The committee members had seen the evidence of attacks on strikers by militia and company police—evidence incontrovertibly recorded in picture and sound. New York City's elevator stoppage in 1945 was treated more as a hilarious free-for-all than a serious labor issue.

Honest film reportage on the issues involved in labor disputes has not been entirely lacking, however. Pathé and Fox Movietonews last year gave space to statements by Walter Reuther and Philip Murray on the strikes at General Motors and in big steel. Paramount News, in a "Strike Report," summarized the major strikes of early 1946 quite fairly, concluding with a remarkable treatment of the support which the town of Bloomfield, N. J., gave to its embattled electrical workers. But these are significant exceptions rather than the rule.

Even in the unprecedentedly thorough newsreel record of World War II, much of which was film lent by the armed forces, there was distortion by omission. The Negro soldier and his part in European victory were almost universally slighted. The real issues of the fight against fascism were seldom mentioned. Partisan activities in the Balkans, China, Italy, and Czechoslovakia were all but overlooked.

Just two American newsreels, Pathé News and Paramount News, at least occasionally strive to present material with an eye to reality. Pathé, ancestor of all latter-day newsreels, came out of financial insolvency several years ago to assume a leading place in the field. It has settled upon a formalized but highly effective documentary style of writing and narration which holds stock library scenes down to a minimum. In wartime, Pathé spent comparatively little on domestic news coverage, relying heavily for most of its then seven-minute reel on European and Pacific battle pictures, sent to this country by Army, Navy, Marine Corps, Coast Guard, and foreign news sources.

Paramount, a comparative newcomer to the ranks, approaches its longer film stories much in the manner of a New York *Times* editorial. Lavish use of stock sequences bridges the narrative, or injects whatever point of view (if any) the editor brings to the subject. Paramount's release, for instance, on Il Duce's ignominious end in Milan was prefaced with library scenes of cheering Italian mobs under the live Mussolini's balcony. Its editorial implication: here was a brutish, turncoat people who would just as quickly kick and spit on a dictator as salute him, depending upon whose army was in power.

In 1945, nevertheless, by a curious piece of inconsistency, it was Paramount News which alone presented an unbiased report on the Chinese Communists. And while the Greek crisis was aflame, only Paramount dared touch it. Similarly, Pathé News—to the exclusion of all others—dealt with the international controversy over Trieste and with popular opposition to Belgium's king. Paramount tried (not quite successfully) to document intelligently the continuing story of the San Francisco Conference and the U. N. Assembly. More typical are Fox, Hearst, and Universal; to Lowell Thomas' loyal writer, recently, France's excursion against the Viet Namese became: "New *nationalistic rivalries* blaze forth in Indo-China." In another one of these newsreels a riot in Pola, Italy, over its cession to Yugoslavia was termed a "patriots' revolt," although the demonstrators protesting were clearly shouting "Duce! Duce!"

During the late war, the newsreel won for itself a wider, more attentive audience; no longer is its appearance on the screen considered an opportune time to visit the lavatory or discuss the merits of the feature picture. And because the newsreel commands today an interest it never before could boast, it is a medium of public information to be reckoned with. Its high-tension sound track reaches most members of the family in two out of three American homes. And as it unreels before them, they laugh, weep, are angered, ennobled, or bored. By dint of its highly compressed subject matter it is frequently able to concentrate more facts, or distortions of fact, in 800-odd feet than the feature picture does in ten reels. And owing to its seemingly documentary framework it often carries the weight of conviction. But how true a reflection of our culture and the social scene is this 37-year-old medium? Here is a cross section of its content, culled some months ago from the program of a New York newsreel theater:

Byrd at the South Pole
Laurel and Hardy in England
Auto Racing on Ice

Roller Skating Derby
Truman Decorates Arabian Prince
Train Wreck at Altoona
Sports Roundup
Italy: Citizens Protest Peace Treaty
Task Force Frost in Canada
Top U.S. Skiers in Olympic Tryouts
Bobsled Crackup
Golden Gloves Finals
Babe Ruth Comes Home
Truman Visits Mother
Royal Family Relaxes at Sea

Barring the Byrd, Italian, and train-wreck stories, and one or two other questionable exceptions, this is substantially the superficial and semiliterate format that was put out (minus sound, of course, and the dubious humor of Lew Lehr) back in 1920. In that year, as a matter of fact, some representative subjects were the launching of the battleship "Maryland," the destruction by Federal revenue men of a few homemade stills in the South, and a large oil fire. Nor is the above sampling atypical; any week's program will look and sound so much like it that one has the vague and restless feeling he has seen all this many times before.

Today, as the immensity and complexity of our peacetime problems deepen into sharp relief, the newsreel has many services to render. It can, as it did in the 'thirties, ignore the threatening shadow of a new depression and its reverberations in our domestic economy. Or it may, without necessarily becoming onerous or condescending, highlight the significant developments around us—such symptoms of the difficult transition as the economic readjustment of the veteran, the behavior and utterances of certain lawmakers in Congress, the experience of former war workers with unemployment insurance, the real role of an occupation soldier, the technique of collective bargaining (which few Americans fully understand). But of course bathing beauties, hat fashions, stunt motorcyclists, and horse races are simpler to handle, and since all the newsreels are sold as part of a package, there is no worry over whose product is best. No independent newsreel has ever succeeded in breaking the major companies' paralyzing hold on this industry.

As a result, the escapism that characterizes the screen's fiction dominates its treatment of news as well. Newsreels will not be *news* until they are freed from the superficial formula that has cursed them for nearly four decades, and turned into a useful and representative social document.

An Experiment at Biarritz

HERBERT F. MARGOLIS

HERBERT F. MARGOLIS, American editor of the *Penguin Film Review*, participated in the organization of the motion picture program at the Biarritz Army University and taught courses there. He has written articles for film journals here and abroad.

AN EXPLORATION into the possibilities of elevating artistic tastes through film-audience education was recently concluded at the United States Army's University Center in Biarritz, France. The stimulating results of its cinema courses deserve careful reëxamination today.

It is unfortunate that although more than 56,000,000 Americans weekly succumb to the filmgoing habit, only a meager handful of the established universities and secondary schools have thus far succumbed to the film-teaching habit. Only New York University and the University of Southern California offer four-year cinema-arts courses leading to a B.A. degree in liberal arts. The University of California, at Los Angeles, is now planning to integrate an extensive film program into its new Theater Arts Division. But, for the most part, educators are slow to recognize the importance of motion pictures in contemporary American life.

It was left to the Army, already among the leaders in visual education, to step in boldly where educators feared to tread. After a series of discussions in Paris, a Motion Picture Department was incorporated into the Theater Arts program of the experimental Biarritz University, under the direction of Hubert C. Heffner of the Stanford Drama Department.

Soon we had developed functioning courses in Scenario Writing, taught by Lieutenant Theodore F. Cox, Paramount screen writer; 16-mm. Film Production, under the supervision of camermen Captain William Boggess and Robert C. Hines; and Motion Picture Appreciation and Film Analysis and Techniques, both conducted by the writer of the present article. The courses served more than 250 G.I.'s during the three-term existence of the University.

One of the factors in the successful operation of this All-American University in France was undoubtedly its locale. Biarritz, a lovely prewar resort in the heart of the Basque country which had suffered little physically from the Nazi occupation, was a paradise to the war-weary soldier assigned to study there.

Another factor was the virtual elimination of rank-consciousness from its proceedings. Officers and enlisted men often shared living quarters in palatial hotels or private villas. Some of the instructors were G.I.'s. Corporals gave assignments to colonels, majors, and captains, as well as to privates. Civilian professors from the finest colleges in America formed the majority of the instructional staff. Away from the restrictions of established institutional policies, many found a new freedom of expression at Biarritz. They were further stimulated by the challenging attitudes and the war-born maturity of the soldier-students. Numerous field trips, social and athletic gatherings, wide informality, and the shared curi-

osity of visitors on a foreign soil led to an amiable and harmonious student-teacher relationship.

The general spirit of challenge and inquiry permeated the cinema courses. Since film training is rare, we had a free hand in organizing our approach. We wanted the students to learn to think in visual terms, to be able to comprehend the techniques and the aesthetic qualities peculiar to the film medium. The Scenario Writing and 16-mm. Film Production classes were composed of a selected group with specialized film interests. But the students in Film Analysis and Film Appreciation, which were introductory courses, were wholly unselected. The majority had not been through college and constituted a vast cross-section of high school youth. Many were frankly not prepared for serious film discussions. They preferred to "relax," seeing films in "snap courses" which could be complemented by surf swimming at Biarritz Beach. There were no compulsions, no tuitions, no future careers involved. The seeming disadvantages furnished the basis for a revealing study of the average film tastes. We had before us a rich sampling of the slightly better-than-average vulnerable film audience. There were those who accepted present-day films avidly, without question, and others in a small minority who refused to concede that the cinema was even an art. Ordinarily, they would never have been reached by film education. The fans' conception of motion pictures solely as escapist entertainment had led Hollywood to tab them as the "incorruptibles" and point with pride to the evidence that "they don't want to be changed!" Well, didn't they? Could we, in the short time allotted to us, materially refine their artistic standards?

Our unusual geographical position, and the fact that these were courses for Allied military personnel, led to wonderful international coöperation. Unprecedented aid came from the British Ministry of Information, the British Film Institute,[1] the French Ministry of Information, the Cinémathèque Française,[2] the Soviet cultural attaché in Paris, the U.S. Army's 16-mm. Film service, and six of the eight American commercial film firms in London.[3] They provided us with a rotating film library of more than seventy prints, including cinema classics and recent productions from the studios of England, the Soviet Union, the United States, and continental Europe. This mélange included choice excerpts from the works of American film makers (Lloyd, Sennett, Chaplin, Griffith, Von Stroheim, Capra, Ford, Welles, MacCarey, Stevens, Sturges, Wellman, Wilder, Dmytryk), French (Méliès, Delluc, Dulac, Linder, Gance, Cavalcanti, Clair, Renoir, Becker, Gremillion, Cluzot, Carné), Russian (Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Trauberg, Romm, Ekk), German (Lang, Murnau, Weine, Ruttman), and English (Watt, Jennings, Rotha, Lean). The surrealists, Bunuel and Dali among others, were also represented.

The courses were of two months' duration, ten concentrated hours a week; four hours devoted to lecture and discussion, six to film analysis. Naturally there were shortcomings. Overcrowded classes prevented wider informality.

[1] The National Film Library and Research Center of England.

[2] The National Film Library and Research Center of France.

[3] Columbia, MGM, RKO, Paramount, 20th Century-Fox, Universal.

Lack of adequate books and reference material hindered well-correlated outside reading. Many of these weaknesses were to be expected. Some were canceled out by advantages. For out of necessity the courses veered further and further toward the end we desired—a visual approach.

To gauge the speed of this teaching method, it was necessary to assess the mentality of the group, unselected as it was. These young G.I.'s had largely a matter-of-fact mentality based on the concrete, which was, not unhappily, far away from all abstract formulas. They had to be introduced to the cinematic language gradualy, since it was entirely new to them. They had a real curiosity about the magical power of films. Still, lectures to them were boring and generally to be avoided. They did not want to be "told" anything; they preferred to discuss and evaluate for themselves. To be "told" that Chaplin or Welles is great is relatively unimportant; but to be able to see, to feel, and to explain why they are great is really an accomplishment. Therefore, the emphasis was placed upon encouraging these elusive abilities to "see," "feel," and "articulate" in cinematic terms.

Using Lewis Jacobs' splendid book *The Rise of the American Film* as source material, we covered film history in terms of the social, economic, and artistic trends. In class discussions preceeding our film showings, student groups would be assigned to watch for examples of one or two film techniques. At first, they merely listed instances of cinematic movement. As they became accustomed to a critical approach, several points were included in one sitting—music, sound, editing, photography, plastic composition, etc.—until we had covered the wide range of applied film techniques.

Once we had planted the seed of this new "seeing" process, we moved on into the second phase. We began performing analytic shot-by-shot breakdowns of film excerpts in laboratory sessions. After running two thematically related scenes representative of diverse styles or eras, we would compare the effectiveness with which techniques were used. Concurrently we studied the evolution of the film narrative from its early maturity under Griffith through the decline of the pure visual elements in favor of the predominantly literary and verbal modern films.

During the third phase, the students began assuming the role of critic and analyst. It was gratifying to hear their analyses in class. A few short weeks ago they had been hesitant in their use of film terminology. Now they were able to compare in detail the treatment of power in Orson Welles' *Citizen Kane* (sound) with its far more ideological treatment in Ilya Trauberg's *China Express* (Russian, silent); or note certain resemblances between the opening sequences of John Ford's *Long Voyage Home* (sound) and Eisenstein's *Potemkin* (Russian, silent), where mood, theme, and conflict are tensely mounted through similar culminative shot patterns. Now the rhythm, the tempo, the nuances in the directorial style of a Ford, Eisenstein, Lang, or Welles became meaningful to them. The intensive probing had provided the students with a basic knowledge of the cinematic language; the roots, the syntax, the abbreviations.

To supplement these discussions and

lectures, the students were further exposed to the critical viewpoints of such professionals as screen writers Alan Campbell and Leo Rosten, directors George Stevens and Richard Whorf, producer Richard Bear, actress Marlene Dietrich, film designer Mordecai Gorelik. Roger Manvell spoke on British film, Herbert Marshall[4] on Soviet cinema, and William Novick and Madame Eisner-Escoffier on aspects of French and German film aesthetics.

To test the results of the eight-week courses, polls were taken, one at the beginning and one at the end of each term. Of course, many of the conclusions reached by the students in these polls cannot be considered independently their own. Undoubtedly, opinions of the writer and especially those of the professional guests had a profound influence in shaping the G.I.'s final beliefs. Yet, to conclude that their final views were forced upon them would be seriously to underestimate the students' abilities and energy. Students often conducted their own forums. Most of the extended discussions in the latter half of the courses were literally give-and-take affairs. Ideas suggested by the students, the writer, or the professional guests, had to stand or fall on their individual merit and logic in open discussion. And that is precisely why their conclusions are so valuable as an indication of the possibilities of film education.

The following summary of the survey results of the three terms reveals the metamorphosis that occurred in the students' basic thinking about films.

Part I: Foreign films.—At first there was a general apathy toward the French, British, and Soviet films. They were considered to be too slow, too talky, to inept technically, lacking in the Hollywood production values. But much of this prejudice gave way to willingness to reëvaluate opinions. The round-table discussions with our foreign guest-lecturers were provocative. Here the students gained an insight into the problems and methods of production peculiar to each country, as well as into the national characteristics of their moviegoing publics. For our screenings we chose the films possessing the most coherent traits of universality. The students were delighted by the social-satirical wit of René Clair's *À nous la liberté* and *The Italian Straw Hat.* They were touched by the simplicity, the lifelike, unpampered qualities of the children in Nikolai Ekk's *Road to Life.* They were gripped by the dramatic intensity of the final death sequence in Marcel Carne's *Le Jour se lève.* Many asked why these films had never been released in America. They were surprised to learn that the films had been released here, but only in a few art cinemas.

The vivid, realistic flavor of the British and Soviet war films, with their strong documentary quality, evoked deep admiration from the G.I.'s vexed with early American attempts at glamourized war epics. Their growing respect for adult subject matter, mature acting, and objective reality formed a new basis for appreciation of foreign films. Their first yardstick, "stacking it up" against the American product, began to give somewhat different readings. The American films continued to lead all the rest in musicals and in the techniques of opulent mounting, but

[4] He is the English film and theater producer (not the actor) who studied at the Soviet All-Union Institute of Cinematography in Moscow.

the students discovered that foreign films often had superior qualities of mood, style, and realism. Eighty-three per cent found a truer reflection of the times and society in foreign films than in the American products. Seventy-two per cent wanted a larger representation of foreign films on American screens—if only the language barrier could be successfully surmounted through intelligent dubbing or subtitles.

Part II: Hollywood film types.—There were no shifts in their favorite types of films during the three terms: comedy, adventure, drama, musical, psychological, fantasy, in that order, were their continuing preference.

The veterans felt that the best way to reach most Americans with serious social content was through comedies, unobtrusively, as in the films of Capra, Sturges, and Chaplin. The hard-boiled action-violence films, combining in some degree logical characterization and timely topics, were high in their ratings. In drama, they were constantly wondering whether Hollywood would honestly come to grips with their problems of social, economic, and educational readjustment to civilian life, or disdain to face them at all. They feared stereotyping of the returned veteran as a maladjusted character, a social "problem" case, like the gun-crazy gangsters of the early 'thirties. They felt that their problems were part of those of a postwar America, and as such were entitled to courageous, democratic treatment. There was a sharp preference for musicals with motivating story lines such as *Cover Girl, Meet Me in St. Louis,* and for the Pasternack formula of combining popular and serious music. Inclinations toward psychological motifs were tempered with the reservation that Hollywood must pay heed to the true functions and limitations of psychiatry. Their preference for realism over fantasy was persistently stated.

There are several marked differences in their "before" and "after" choices of the finest American films they had ever seen.

Before

1. Gone with the Wind
2. *Mrs. Miniver
3. *Going My Way
4. Good-bye, Mr. Chips
5. *How Green Was My Valley

After

1. *Grapes of Wrath
2. *Citizen Kane
3. The Informer
4. *The Long Voyage Home
5. *Going My Way

The "before" choices would seem to support the claim that the best films are the best box-office successes, since they are all listed among the top money grossers of all time—the first three, among the top ten.[5] But the students' new-found emphasis upon reality of content as opposed to sentimentality is evident in their "after" choices.

Although 87 per cent of those polled still believed that as a whole the American cinema capital produced the world's best film fare, they criticized the product with vigor and accuracy. The G.I. extroverts pulled no punches in lashing out at what one of them termed "a deplorable general apathy and lack of responsibility on the part of some Hollywood producers to their duties as guardians of the most influential of the art mediums."[6]

* Asterisk marks film seen during the course.

[5] According to the listings in the 1944–1945 International Motion Picture Almanac.

[6] A comment from one of the student papers which best expressed the feeling of the majority.

Herewith are listed the students' points of objection to present-day Hollywood production and distribution, giving the percentage of the whole group which reported each:

1. The monopolistic tendencies of the larger film concerns which would curb competition for quality and stifle the individual initiative of the smaller independent producers. 76 per cent.

2. The rigid censorship exercised by the Johnson Office and certain state and city boards, which, they felt, hamper the full development of artistic maturity in films. 70 per cent.

3. The double-feature vogue, which often purposefully promotes the manufacture of trite, stereotyped, cheaper films. 67 per cent.

4. The large amount of false realism in films, especially in the early war epics. 56 per cent.

5. The industry's addiction to distorting plots, situations, and characterizations in adaptations of stage plays and literature. 46 per cent.

6. The undue emphasis upon the star system—the padding of often worthless scripts with receipt-attracting names, in order to play the muscle-bound box-office game. 43 per cent.

7. The exaggerated advance publicity campaigns, deceptive trailers, and splashing of newspapers and playhouse lobbies with misleading and distasteful advertising. 37 per cent.

On the "we want" side of the ledger, the students listed wider use of the screen as a discussion medium for social problems, and reciprocal exchange of foreign films as a means of fostering better understanding among nations and men. They also wanted: some form of truly democratic censorship to avoid lewd abuse of the screen's power; the production of better grade-A films, interesting documentary features, and more educational and children's shorts; greater respect and recognition for the script writer in order to excite increased creative writing directly for the screen. The soldier-critics looked forward to the day when the film art would no longer be tied down intellectually by commercial considerations and censorship, when experimentation would become accepted as an integral part of cinema progress, and when inexpensive films would be made for various audience levels and still offer box-office returns.

In summing up, 95 per cent of those polled found some fault with Hollywood cinema; 63 per cent found serious fault; only 5 per cent were completely satisfied.

These results in themselves should not be overemphasized. They do not portend revolution. But these perturbations seem to indicate that intelligent critical opinion can take root and develop quickly when nourished properly and persistently. Admirable groundwork for the Herculean task has already been laid by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, the National Board of Review, trade-union councils, and various independent cultural film clubs throughout the country. The plan for a continuous yearly exchange of international film students, to be administered through UNESCO, finds wide support. The establishment of a motion picture foundation to assist financially the growth of 16-mm. film workshops in colleges and universities has been taken under advisement.

Whether we do harness the might of the screen for better or worse depends

to a large degree upon the future initiative of our educators. All these are manifestations of our struggle to control the hypnotic power of films both to educate and to entertain; to direct this vital instrument that can shape our minds, our attitudes, our patterns of thought, that can distort our social perspective and lull us into complacency or arouse our emotions and, through experience, stir us to action.

Within Hollywood there are talents capable of consistently creating finer films. But we cannot logically expect businessmen to produce artistically satisfying films if such films continue to fail financially. Our hope rests where it has always rested—not so much with the producer, director, or writer as with the audiences. Our mightiest weapon is still the box-office ballot. Ours must be the continuing task of influencing audiences and potential audiences and "getting out the vote," recognizing that in this process we are also fashioning the films' future professionals and critics. A widespread program of integrated film education is called for—from required elementary motion picture appreciation courses in secondary schools to extensive studies on various levels in colleges and universities. Only higher standards of film appreciation clearly expressed in box-office returns can assure finer commercial film products to the audiences of tomorrow.

One World Flight*

NORMAN CORWIN

NORMAN CORWIN is generally recognized as radio's foremost dramatist. *Untitled,* a new selection of his works, will soon be published by Henry Holt and Company, which also published Corwin's V-E Day broadcast, *On a Note of Triumph.* Following is the script of the opening broadcast in his current CBS radio series based upon his experiences as the first winner of the Wendell Willkie Memorial Award, a 37,000-mile trip around the world.

A NEW RADIO FORM

(Introductory Note)

By JEROME LAWRENCE

JEROME LAWRENCE, prolific radio writer and producer, edited *Off Mike,* a book on radio writing used as a text in a number of universities. *Favorite Story,* his current radio series with Robert Lee, is transcribed and heard on 400 stations.

READING this script by Norman Corwin is very much like studying the score of a symphony. You will find it interesting and stimulating. But it must be heard to be appreciated fully.

Here is real documentary radio. Corwin used a wire recorder which enabled his microphone to go traveling to places microphones have never been before. He listened. But he was more than a reporter, more than a recorder. Reporters are interested in news beats and headlines. It was good to send a poet around the world. He has a way of listening to the rhythms of tomorrow.

No actress in radio or pictures could duplicate the moving, authentic words of the Italian woman. You barely understand her, yet here is forty-five seconds of the most moving, naked emotion you ever heard on a radio broadcast.

Corwin has opened a microphone in the council chambers and down the back alleys of the world. And no self-respecting microphone could help but pick up the nervous overtones, the sounds of chaos and the sounds of hope. They aren't always pretty sounds, designed to soothe, like Guy Lombardo's saxophone section.

This wasn't an easy job. Radio from a shiny chrome studio at Sunset and Vine or at 485 Madison is kindergarten stuff in comparison. I did some recording in North Africa and Italy during the war. The equipment is awkward. People are suspicious. Power supplies are anything but reliable. Corwin encountered all these problems. Yet he brought back more than a hundred hours of material which will pin your ears back.

There was the Soviet physicist, for example. Corwin asked his opinion of the atom bomb. His answer made the wire recorder blush and tremble.

"Using atomic energy only for the atom bomb," he said, "is like using electricity only for the electric chair!"

I refer you also to the eloquent statement made by the Polish worker in the Warsaw power plant, quoted in the following script. I defy you to sit down at a typewriter and compose such simple, straightforward literary dynamite.

These gems, these recorded collector's items, have been transferred to paper tape, and clipped and cut in a manner that would make any Hollywood sound engineer or film cutter

* This script was broadcast Tuesday, January 14, 1947, over the Columbia Broadcasting System. The original musical score was composed by Alexander Semmler. Guy Della Cioppa was associate director with Norman Corwin.

swell with pride. The quality of the recording is not always Magnavox-clear; but its authenticity is startlingly refreshing to a fiction-tired radio listener, its sincerity rings round the world.

In this series, Corwin has not chosen to reproduce only the quotes and sounds and attitudes he likes or agrees with. He gives us the good and the bad, the democrat and the fascist, the builder and the opportunist.

We congratulate Corwin on not using any bell-toned narrator with ham in his soul and a built-in echo chamber in his vocal chords. He narrates the series himself, and his is the voice of a good human being.

The microphones and cameras of the world should be encouraged to take more "One World" flights. Here is proof once more that people speaking as people, and not reasonably accurate facsimiles, make the best drama and tell the most moving stories, after all.

THE SCRIPT

MUSIC: *A vigorous introductory passage: it diminishes for the powerful whistle of a subway train in an underground station, Moscow.*

NC: You are standing in the Maikovsky station of the Metro under the heart of Moscow. A waiting train signals to workmen in the subway to clear the track. (*Another blast of the whistle*) You are strolling along Hallam Street in London, and you are overtaken by a cockney street peddler selling cut iris, cut cauliflower, Yorkshire blue peas, and brand-new potatoes.... (*The street peddler: fade under:*) You are in the library of a pleasant house in New Delhi, India, talking with Pandit Nehru about the world and the future. He says...

NEHRU: But if you think of freedom for one world, then all this racialism, and one creed for one nation, and one country being fundamentally superior to another—that has to be given up. No doubt, (*fading*) People are not alike; nations are not alike; everybody is not the same, or as clever or as strong as everybody else... (*Fade*)

NC: You are in a hotel in Manila, sleeping at 6:45 in the morning, and suddenly you are awakened by sounds of the reconstruction of the Philippines, going on right outside your window. (*Hammering and chiseling in Manila; fade and sustain behind:*) What you have just listened to... the hammering, Mr. Nehru, the peddler, and the subway train... are fragments among several hundred authentic sounds of foreign places and voices of foreign people to be heard in a new series of CBS broadcasts, beginning with this one.

MUSIC: *The effect of hammering, which has continued faintly under the foregoing speech, emerges but is quickly swallowed by a reiteration of the introductory theme. The music comes down to make way for:*

ANNOUNCER: The Columbia Broadcasting System presents "One World Flight."

MUSIC: *Up sharply, and in the clear long enough to cue the exact pitch for:*

SOUND: *A wash of the motors of a DC-4, emerging from the music.*

ANNOUNCER: Last February, two American organizations, the Willkie Memorial and the Common Council for American Unity, established an award consisting of a flight around the globe—a flight intended to dramatize and perpetuate Wendell Willkie's concept of One World. The first winner of the

award, chosen on the basis of contributions already made to this ideal, was the CBS playwright and producer, Norman Corwin. Last June, Mr. Corwin, with Lee Bland of CBS and a magnetic wire recorder, set out on a globe-circling trip, in the course of which they preserved one hundred hours of the voices and opinions of the people of sixteen countries. (*Sneak in motors again*) Tonight, and every Tuesday night for the next twelve weeks, Mr. Corwin will bring you the story and record of his One World flight.

SOUND: *Motors up full, then fade quickly into: Arabs singing on a rooftop in Cairo. This comes down behind:*

ANNOUNCER: Footnote: All native music, all identified sounds, all voices heard in these broadcasts, were actually recorded by Corwin and Bland in various parts of the world. These singers, for example, are Arab women sitting on a rooftop in Cairo on a warm evening last August, celebrating the independence of Egypt, a historic event which occurred that very morning. *(Effect up full; it blends into:)*

MUSIC: *An arrangement of the Arab tune for full orchestra; it slows down and comes to a logical stop.*

NC: This is Norman Corwin. These broadcasts have to do with some of the people of the world, and with much of the state of the peace, and therefore I believe they have to do with you and me. For today, if war comes anywhere, it will be close to us. No place is far any more. We are one with others, whether we want to be or not.

Through our recordings, you will hear the voices of leaders of state, and some of their friends and enemies; the opinions of famous artists and scientists, and the opinions of unknowns; you will hear now and then native music, and the noise of foreign streets; the sounds of living and of dead cities.

Tonight we will stop in no single country, but, by way of preview, introduce you to some of the hope and despair that exist side by side in the world today. This aspect I present first, before beginning to tell you any progressive story of the flight, because, to the observer traveling as I did, it is what strikes you first and asserts itself most often.

The war has left in its wake all kinds of attitudes and conditions of mind and spirit, ranging from unshakable confidence to active fear; and it becomes apparent—at least, it did to me—that in the drawing together, toward the middle, of extremes of economic, social, political, and even of certain religious philosophies, lies the safest if not the only way to a lasting peace.

Within this theme, you will hear tonight moments out of interviews with people high and low; optimists, pessimists; liberals, fascists, communists; stevedores, prime ministers.

For example, in the cabinet room at No. 10 Downing Street you sit with the British Prime Minister, Clement Attlee, at the long, bare cabinet table. He puffs a pipe, and answers your questions in a friendly, relaxed manner. . . .

ATTLEE: After all, we're trying to clear up after the greatest war in history, and you can't expect all the problems of that war, and a good many left over from the first world war, to disappear overnight.

The trouble is, of course, all the differences make for dramatic news, but I think it's worth while paying some attention to the area of activity in which there's agreement.

NC: Hopeful enough . . . but there is the poor widow, Camelia, in the Italian mountain village of Lanuvio, who lost her husband and two of her three children in a bombardment. You stand in a square of the shattered village, under a broiling sun; her neighbors crowd about; you ask her questions through an interpreter:

CORWIN: How big is her family?

WIDOW: *Replies in Italian*

INTERPRETER: Three children: two have died, and she has one living now. Two were killed in the bombardment.

CORWIN: And what about her husband?

INTERPRETER: Her husband was killed in the same bombardment—all of them died together. Two children and her husband.

CORWIN: I see. And so she has one child left.

WIDOW: *Speaks*

INTERPRETER: She lost her father and her husband as well as two children and about ten relatives—close relatives—in all.

NC: You ask about her living conditions, where she lives, what she gets to eat. She says she never eats breakfast; at midday she has a thin soup and in the evening a piece of bread.

CORWIN: Can she not afford to eat more, or is there not enough food available?

WIDOW: *Answers*

INTERPRETER: Because she has no money, and the situation is so bad, she sort of farms her little boy out to various relatives who can feed him a little better every now and then.

CORWIN: What are her hopes for an improvement in this condition?

WIDOW: *Speaks in Italian*

INTERPRETER: It is very difficult to say. She has no idea at all what she can hope to look for.

NC: And then the tall, thin finance minister of Denmark, Thorkild Kristensen, who is not so sure that we are finished making widows through warfare. You interview him in an anteroom to the house chamber in the Parliament Building in Copenhagen. He pauses for a long moment before he answers your point-blank question about war.

CORWIN: Do you feel that there is going to be another war?

KRISTENSEN: (*After a long pause*) I am very much afraid of it, in fact.

CORWIN: You think there is a real danger of it?

KRISTENSEN: I think there is.

NC: And across the world from Copenhagen, at a dockside in the beautiful harbor of Sydney on a clear, sharp day of the Australian spring, a big, gray-haired, God-fearing stevedore takes time off from loading the good ship *Corinda,* to point out a path for the nations:

DOCKHAND: I am a member of the aristocracy of the working class . . . that's the Waterside Workers' Federation. . . and we are looked upon as the aristocracy because we give leads in matters of progress that affect the workers.

CORWIN: Now where did you learn your very good extemporaneous power of speech?

DOCKHAND: I learned it from intense study for many years by myself.

CORWIN: You are not a university man, college man?

DOCKHAND: No, I only had an ordinary education, but by the power of God through the Holy Spirit, He has put into my heart words that are acceptable to hearers by trying to live the life . . . trying, mark you; I don't say that I have succeeded, but I've made a reasonably successful effort . . .

CORWIN: Tell me, do you share with the two gentlemen that I have just interviewed here the confidence that we are going to get through the next twenty-five to fifty years without war?
DOCKHAND: No; you will not get through without war unless the world regenerates itself in a sincere mind. And I would suggest that the great powers assure Russia that they do not want war, and also get an assurance from her that she is satisfied to work out her own destiny with the territory she has, and her compensation as the result of her terrific sacrifice in this war.
NC: And in Russia, the editor of the *Moscow News* addresses a dinner given you at the Hotel Metropole by the Soviet Society for Foreign Cultural Relations. He speaks slowly, professing the friendship of his country for America, describing what he calls Russia's "tremendously difficult struggle to protect the great interests of a great people." And then he warns against those who are crying for war. You may have difficulty at first in making out the words "conflagration" and "influence" and the name of the writer "Gorky."
EDITOR: Please tell your people that conflagrations don't start at once. They start from a spark . . . from those who apparently have no influence. But the conflagrations start. And there are people who would start a world conflagration—as our great Gorky said—in order that it be warm for some people. . . . They don't care for the interest of humanity so long as it keeps them warm. Those are the warmongers, the war profiteers, those are the reactionaries who created Fascism, who brought up Fascism, and who are still cherishing the hope of some day using Fascism in order to kill you and me and every man, woman, and child who professes the great ideals of Democracy. . . .
NC: The phrase "One World" comes easy. Nothing hard to remember about it. It makes a picture. When you first heard "One World," there may have flashed through your mind an image of the globe itself, standing in miniature on a library table, or sailing life-size and grandly through space. Or perhaps you thought of a huge vehicle, transporting, on the face of the continents, the people of the earth, with all their burdens, their possessions, their parasites, their good and evil, their societies and their weapons.

There was a time when the world meant to the *average* man a blur of lands and matters outside his life—long journeys he could never take, languages he would never understand, customs he could never fathom. But twice in our time the world reached into his life and shook him up. That was the least it did. It was a *world* problem, not a local feud, which took your neighbor's boy out of his class, put him in uniform, and killed him. And it could happen again.

Tonight, if you think much about it, One World means, urgently and above everything else, survival. It has higher meanings, of course, such as the wholesale rewards of total unity—meanings not comfortably smirked at or dismissed, like good will and the brotherhood of man.

But it was within the less idealistic meaning of the phrase, within the immediate and concrete meaning, that I set out on this trip. I went looking for practical testaments of agreement, for signs of a uniting world. I found fewer of these than we would wish for, but I also found plenty of hope. I listened

to people's troubles and to nations' troubles (which are often the same thing); I witnessed many a disagreement, sometimes in the form of violence and death. But because I felt all of it belonged in the record, I took down as well as I could, whenever and wherever I could, what I thought related to the present and the future and to One World. At no time did I attempt to conduct a poll, or to make mathematical measurements. In essence, I recorded that which I felt to be significant to us, and to these days. Not always were the profoundest things the things said by presidents and premiers; often, in unexpected places, ordinary people, humble people, spoke wisdom which came through interpretation undamaged.

One night, I was dining outdoors at the Gina restaurant in Rome, and I fell to talking with Sonego, a young Italian partisan who had fought the Nazis in the mountains and killed a dozen of them with his bare hands. He was at first shy about talking, because he looked upon me as a foreign correspondent. But at last he opened up.

SONEGO: *Speaks in Italian, but this is faded down and goes out behind interpreter.*

INTERPRETER: I would have been rather unwilling to answer the question of a foreign correspondent, because I know that Italy has been beaten in this war, and that the winning party is the country to whom this foreign correspondent belongs. But once I heard what the creed of Mr. Corwin is—that is to say, One World, I must say that this is the creed of all my fellow partisans and of myself.

That's what we used to say when we were lost in the mountains, in heavy snow and rain, with nobody to protect us but the stars. Everyone said, "Why isn't there one world, one flag, under which we could be united?" That is why we have been fighting, and that is why we sincerely believe that all the world should be very simply unified under one flag, because we do not want to keep on fighting for separate flags, for several separate colors, but for one flag and one color throughout the world."

NC: And the grease-stained Polish worker in the power plant on the banks of the Vistula in shattered Warsaw. I asked him what he, as a man who worked in the generation of power, thought of the possibilities of atomic energy replacing steam and coal. He answered:

WORKER: *Speaks.*

INTERPRETER: I think that maybe it's possible, but I don't think that atomic energy will be the most, the biggest power in the world.

CORWIN: What does he think will be the biggest power in the world?

INTERPRETER: *Translates into Polish.*

WORKER: *Answers.*

INTERPRETER: I think that the human being will be.

CORWIN: Ah, very good. (*All laugh*)

NC: In the powerhouse, the restaurant, the city hall, on the farm, by the dockyards, in chambers of parliament, in the ruined village, underground in mines, and in planes flying above clouds, I found few people anywhere who did not want exactly what you want . . . to live in peace . . . to let others live in peace; to prosper, to progress; to think freely, to speak, assemble, worship, and travel freely. Very, very few whom I met considered it sentimental and visionary to talk in terms of a unified world in which security and peace

can become sensations greater than tension, crisis, and war. Some had doubts of the way to achieve One World, or cynicism with respect to their chances of living to see it. But they all want it; they yearn for it; they are willing to work for it.

There are exceptions, of course. I suppose there have to be in order to prove rules. The exceptions were mainly selfish or maleducated people, or the type incapable of drawing any inference from all that happened to them in their lives—incapable of learning the simplest lesson out of the costliest and most terrible experience in human history. There was, for example, the dockhand in the same group as our friend, the well-spoken aristocrat of the workers. This fellow thought Hitler was not a bad sort at all; felt that Der Fuehrer had rescued Germany from a great evil. . . .

DOCKHAND: Well, I was in Hamburg in 1923, and I saw the conditions brought about by the Jews in Germany . . . they sneaked into Germany when the war was over and the last war was on, and the conditions brought about by the Jewish occupation in Germany were frightful. . . .

NC: And the young Australian accountant, who said he was convinced that fascism was dead and buried. "The body," he said, "lies moldering in the grave, and will for a long time." Yet he had a race theory that was mighty like a fascist's. . . .

ACCOUNTANT: I consider that the potential danger to world peace lies in the colored races. I can see in them—in embryo, more or less,—I can see the very backward, primitive peoples of the islands, and the parts of Asia that I visited, a potential Japanese. . . . They talk about raising his standards of living, educating him, and more or less raising him to our standard of living, which is a highly industrial and mechanical standard. I think that he will possibly become a Frankenstein monster and turn on us and devour us, like the Japanese.

NC: And the young girl in devastated Manila, who, though she well knew what war can be, still could make this recommendation to America:

FILIPINO GIRL: If I were you people in America, I am going to induce President Truman right now to finish up Russia, because if he does that right now, we have no worry about her in the future.

NC: There were long distances and intervals between people who recommended this kind of solution for the world's problems. The last such instance before this one came ten thousand miles earlier—not directly, but within a story told me by an UNRRA worker, an American woman in Italy. She told this story of the way she had celebrated V-J Day in Bologna. . . .

UNRRA WOMAN: I was in Bologna on V-J Day when I heard that the war with Japan was over. I went into the nearest American hotel because I was very anxious to be around some fellow countrymen at this time, and I introduced myself to two young American lieutenants from the Air Corps. One of the boys talked with me and said that his father was a very wealthy man. His father had always been in favor of wars because he thought it was a good way of reducing the population. But he said he felt sure that his father, after *his* being in the war, and after his father knew of the horrors of the atom bomb, would change even his mind.

Consequently, this boy thought there was a good hope for future permanent peace.

Suddenly a man came up, another officer. He walked up, joined us, commenced talking about the atom bomb, and said that in his mind America had already lost the war and done a very serious thing when it had not used the atom bomb on Russia.

One of the young lieutenants arose, walked quietly over to where the other officer was standing who had made this remark, hit him with all his strength, and said, "You have desecrated this day for me."

NC: Among people who had experienced war the sentiments of this officer whose jaw was hit, and of the Filipino girl whose city had been hit, were rare. Much more representative were the Czech underground fighter, Dr. Cebe, the businessman Edgill in Bathurst, and the son of the president, Dr. Sun Fo, in Nanking. The first of these, Dr. Cebe, was an underground fighter, a lawyer who had been captured by the Nazis, tortured with exceptional cruelty, and sentenced to die. I would bring you now the voice of Dr. Cebe in his full statement, except that the quality of the recording is poor, as you can hear from this sentence:

DR. CEBE: This is what would be my humble message to the United Nations . . . (etc.) . . .

NC: Dr. Cebe said, "This is what would be my humble message to the United Nations: Not to breed the idea that there is a necessity of war between the Western and Eastern conceptions of life. I know that this is the last hope of fascism. In every part of the world, and especially in Germany, fascists and reactionaries do everything in their power to breed the conception of the inevitability of war. I hate this conception and I am deeply convinced that it is not true."

My talk with Dr. Cebe was in the lobby of a hotel in Prague. Seventeen thousand miles further along in the trip, in the city of Bathurst, on the edge of the Blue Mountains in New South Wales, the owner of a prosperous canning factory was in essential agreement with Dr. Cebe. I had a long interview with this industrialist in his plant one morning, and at the end of it he said:

EDGILL: The bogey of communism, I think, is a great deal less than it was some years ago, and anyway we are beginning to realize that communists are ordinary people much like ourselves, and their views cannot in the long run be so very greatly different to our own. And why shouldn't one be optimistic? What's the good of being pessimistic? I think it's only by optimism that we can hope to create the better world.

We can get better living conditions, perhaps shorter hours of work, and perhaps more money to spend and more leisure for sport. Maybe that's the best thing we all want. But whatever it is, we've got to work together, and be optimistic of the final result.

NC: Another man who thought it important to get together—and in a country which badly needs it—was Dr. Sun Fo, son of the late great Dr. Sun Yat Sen, founder of the Chinese Republic. Dr. Sun, now President of China's legislative Yuan, spoke at a reception to us in Nanking. Dr. Sun said he had been asked by Chinese newspapermen to comment on whether he thought that the opposing Kuomintang and Communist parties were sincere about wanting peace. He told the meeting . . .

SUN FO: I believe, naturally, that the Chinese Government and the Kuomintang are really sincere about peace within China. I also believe that the Chinese Communist Party is also sincere about peace. For there is no man in his senses who would want war and bloodshed. . . .

NC: A lawyer, a government leader, and a businessman, 17,000 miles apart, but eye to eye on the necessity of getting together. And all along those 17,000 miles, and the 20,000 more which lay across our route, the majority of people everywhere had, to greater or less degree, hope, optimism, confidence. This, in spite of the fact that many had lost their loved ones and seen their countrymen die, had been invaded and pillaged, had suffered cold, starvation, torture. They were hopeful in spite of the known terrors of the last war . . . hopeful they would not be made to know the thousandfold terrors of any next war.

There were places in the world where hope was feeble, or had been extinguished, and there the concept of One World had the toughest going: among the helpless, the homeless, the underfed, the underpaid, the undereducated, the underprivileged. And it seemed to me that not the least job to be done is to distribute hope, or the reason to hope, among those elements of great populations who today are hopeless and helpless. If the confidence of the lawyer in Prague and the businessman in Bathurst could be shared with the fellaheen of Egypt and the untouchable of India and with the widow of Lanuvio, then perhaps we'd be getting on toward the world of Wendell Willkie's dream.

But in the meantime, as I went around, the widow became to me a symbol of hopelessness—this woman with no food, no home, no prospects—her husband and two children buried in the ruins of Fascism. I heard her voice in many places far from Italy. . . .

WIDOW: *The effect, as heard before, of the woman speaking tearfully. It establishes and fades slowly under:*

NC: This voice, and the echo of guns only lately stilled, and the silence of the cemeteries . . . the begging of alms, and the whimper of hungry children; this voice, and the mute rubble of wasted towns and cities—these were the sounds of need: need for the hope and for the reality of a united world.

The Cinema and the State: England

ROGER MANVELL

ROGER MANVELL, Research Officer of the British Film Institute, editor of *Penguin Film Review*, and film critic for a number of journals and broadcasts, was introduced in the last issue as English correspondent for the *Hollywood Quarterly*. He is one of the four writers of the recent *20 Years of British Film*, reviewed elsewhere in this issue.

ON THURSDAY, December 5, 1946, *Kinematograph Weekly*, the British trade paper representing the exhibitors' branch of the film industry, first broke the news that a subcommittee of ten Labor members of Parliament had proposed certain revolutionary recommendations to the Labor Party's Trade and Economic Committee, which had met earlier in the week. These recommendations, later forwarded to Sir Stafford Cripps, President of the Board of Trade, were for the partial nationalization of the film industry in Britain. The three main clauses proposed that the government should acquire by negotiation some 500 theaters, mostly from the big circuits,[1] should set up a government-owned and -controlled renting organization to handle independently produced British films, and should acquire studio space to encourage and facilitate the production of such films.

The British film industry has been walking on its toes for some time under the watchful eye of the state. The spectacular dealings of Arthur Rank's organization, with its unilateral acquisition of cinemas, studio space, distribution facilities, and equipment manufacture first drew the attention of the government, and were the main target of the investigations of a committee appointed by the Cinematograph Films Council of the Board of Trade, whose findings were published by the Government Stationery Office in August, 1944, under the title, *Tendencies to Monopoly in the Cinematograph Film Industry*. This report also recommended the curtailment of the growth of the circuits, the acquisition of government-owned studio space, and the establishment of a film bank to assist in the production of independently produced films.

The rapid development in the quality of British films during the last five years and their phenomenal success at the British box office has again led to almost continual criticism of the ratio of American films to British exhibited on our national screens. Only the idealistic few were much concerned about this before the war, since American films were obviously better in every way than all but a few of the British productions. Now, after thirty years' easy dominance by Hollywood of the British market, criticism of the American product, both fair and unfair, is symptomatic of the postwar period. This is due partly to the swing of the nationalistic pendulum that follows any war, partly to maternal pride in the local product, and partly to con-

[1] In round figures, there are 4,750 cinema theaters in Britain, of which the three major circuits own 1,060, representing a third of the total seating capacity and a high proportion of the total box office. The circuits are the Odeon and Gaumont-British groups (both part of the Rank organization) and Associated British Cinemas (tied financially to Warner Brothers).

stant objections on economic grounds (often by people who don't go to the movies) to the expenditure of millions of pounds on the importation of the foreign product. It also coincides with what is believed by responsible critics and technicians to be a general slump in the quality of the films coming in.

What I am concerned to point out is something of the atmosphere behind the cries for government intervention within the film setup. It is no longer the cry of the impractical idealist, the hard-boiled Socialist, or the preacher who damns the film at any price. It is the result of a certain hardening of intelligent public opinion, both inside[2] and outside of the industry itself; though obviously it should be added at once that there will be strong opposition, very strong, to any attempt to interfere with the free trade of so profitable a line in public entertainment.

Three books published recently in London represent this background of opinion. In their different ways they all seek to make the cinema a priority matter of public concern. The first is Forsyth Hardy's collection of John Grierson's writings[3] over the past fifteen years: Hardy is himself a leading Scottish film critic with a special knowledge of documentary. The second book is *The Factual Film,*[4] an independent survey of the film industry in Britain with special reference to the problems involved in the production and exhibition of the nonentertainment film. This survey was financed by the Dartington Hall Trustees, who undertook in 1941 to place before the Ministry of Education and the future Ministry of Reconstruction the findings of four committees set up to investigate the place of the visual arts, the factual film, music, and the theater in our national life at a time when such information could be most provocative and useful. The report, *The Factual Film,* has now been published by the Oxford University Press in association with the independent and nonparty research organization called PEP (Political and Economic Planning). The third book is *Sociology of Film: Studies and Documents,*[5] by Dr. J. P. Mayer of the London School of Economics and Political Science, the first of three volumes which will cover ground similar to that of the Payne Studies undertaken in the United States some fifteen years ago: this book follows hard upon the British edition of Mrs. Margaret Thorp's *America at the Movies.*

No detailed survey of the contents of these important books can be given in the space at my disposal. On the slender bookshelf of serious books about the cinema we now have, all of a sudden, three additions, and the promise of others in preparation. The publication of books which take the cinema seriously is on the increase and is again symptomatic of the hardening attitude of the intelligent public, the sociologist, the politician, the economist, the film maker, and the critic toward film affairs. The demand all over Britain for lectures and discussion on the economic and social facts of cinema (instead of on the stars or amusing back-studio technicalities), the extensive rise of the

[2] For example, the report published by the Association of Cine-Technicians, *A State Film Industry?* (1941), boldly advocates state participation in every branch of the film industry: finance, production, distribution, and exhibition.

[3] *Grierson on Documentary,* edited by Forsyth Hardy. London: Collins, 1946.

[4] London: Oxford University Press, 1946.

[5] London: Faber, 1946.

film society movement, and the phenomenal sale of the first number of *Penguin Film Review* (a journal of international cinema concerned with the aesthetics, sociology, history, and economics of the film), all help to indicate the scale and quality of this public interest.

Grierson's views on the film will already be familiar to readers of this journal. His influence in the Brtish documentary movement long survived his absence from this country in Canada and America. It is not easy to forget the responsibilities which he never ceased to emphasize as a producer, lecturer, and writer. There are many people who do not like him and who feel that his influence has been too academic, and that documentary films, if they are to stir the wider public, must be prepared to stir them through the emotions. But this does not alter the fact that the large nontheatrical audience in Britain for films made largely according to Grierson's pattern has survived the war with its loyalty unimpaired, and that the regular roadshows of the wartime Ministry of Information are being maintained by the peacetime Central Office of Information. Grierson's later essays and articles persist in emphasizing the need for the state-sponsored film for the nontheatrical audience, to bring alive the problems of the world to the citizen, or, to use his words, "to make peace exciting." Grierson's twenty years' service to this use of the cinema by the state has spanned the world, and his new international venture in America should be the climax of his career as a producer.

The Factual Film has for some time been a focal point of discussion among a large number of persons concerned with the sponsored film. It has behind it a group of experts who worked under the chairmanship of H. L. Beales of the London School of Economics. It was circulated some two years ago to two hundred specialists outside the group for their comment, in the light of which it was then revised. It covers in detail the development of documentary in Britain before and during the war, the use of the film in education, the facts about the production of newsreels in Britain, and the development of the record film. It has sections on the films and the public, the international use of factual films, and detailed appendices on the structure and economics of the British fiim industry as a whole and on film censorship in Britain. It assembles between two covers more facts than have ever been put together before about films in this country. Its main concern, however, is with the factual film and not with the feature film.

As a result of its inquiries it makes certain recommendations all of which emphasize the importance of state intervention in this field of cinema. Here is the Report's own summary:

"I. THE ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL FILM OFFICE, to produce and distribute factual films, to ensure efficient coöperation between Government departments and independent producers of factual film and to advise Government departments on all matters relating to the factual film.

"II. THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN EDUCATIONAL FILM POLICY BY THE MINISTRY OF EDUCATION to include the sponsored production and distribution of educational films, the provision of projectors and the training of teachers in the use of films.

"III. THE RECONSTITUTION OF THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE, whose main functions should be to encourage the use of the film in Great Britain for educational, cultural, scientific, and recreative purposes, to protect the public interest, and to assist the British film industry.

"IV. That encouragement and support be given to the ESTABLISHMENT OF A FILM DEPARTMENT WITHIN THE UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANISATION: this Department to provide films for all United Nations organisations and national governments in order to meet the short-term needs of reconstruction and eventually to concentrate on the international exchange of films."[6]

Bearing in mind the number of prominent people who have taken direct or indirect part in the formulation of the report, the influence of its recommendations is likely to be considerable.

Dr. Mayer's book is concerned almost entirely with the influence of the commercial feature film on the child, adolescent, and adult. His book does not produce new results; rather does it emphasize what was revealed by such similar undertakings as the Payne Studies and relate relatively familiar facts more closely to the contemporary situation. Dr. Mayer is a political sociologist whose attention has been turned to the cinema. He writes:

"I came to be interested in film reactions from sociological studies on the organisational structure of political parties, studies which I intend to continue, once I have brought these volumes on film reactions to a preliminary conclusion. The example of pre-Nazi Germany made me inclined to believe that even so-called nonpolitical films can become an instrument for shaping political opinions. Consequently I am less interested in the intricate psychological mechanisms which seem to underlie film reactions than in those structural features which may help us to explain the sociological implications of films."[7]

Dr. Mayer bases his arguments on a series of documents and interviews obtained from children, adolescents, and adults, most of whom were asked to express themselves freely on their experience with films. These documents are of great interest and collectively occupy nearly half the book. He is highly critical of children's cinema clubs organized on a commercial basis, and he examines the general content of motion pictures and its effect on the children and adolescents who crowd in to see them daily. He reaches the following conclusion:

"Education in film appreciation must be combined with state supervision of the commercial children's cinemas and also with the establishment of a public distributing corporation along B.B.C. lines. By such a combined effort it may be possible to safeguard the spiritual health of the nation."[8]

With respect to adults, the nature of public intervention is more complex. Dr. Mayer deplores the loss of individuality which follows the worship and imitation of the stars which his documents amply demonstrate; he deplores the static scheme of values implicit in films produced under an out-of-date censorship code and in the expressions

[6] *The Factual Film*, p. 36.
[7] *Sociology of Film*, p. 267.
[8] *Ibid.*, p. 177.

of opinion about life, obviously based on film education, which the documents reveal. "I give an example," he writes; "take a film like *To Have and Have Not*. What are the values which this film carries? Excitement, lust, passion, beauty, love, bravery, self-sacrifice, heroism, friendship, family, patriotism. I hope I have omitted nothing of 'importance.' Moreover, I have mentioned only the positive values because the negative ones never triumph in films. These are the very same values, though with some modifications and additions, which you find in our documents or in other films with a similar theme. Now I would contend that our real life is—still—very much richer. Furthermore, the values in our real lives are less listable. In other words, social attitudes are varied, subtle, full of meaning, transitional and enigmatic."[9] People are deprived by the static values of the cinema of realizing the rich implications of human emotion and self-expression. Dr. Mayer concludes with the suggestion of state intervention in the form of civic cinemas and the distribution of films normally denied access to the commercial screens:

"I think it is feasible to form a State Distributing Corporation which might import (and export) those films which the dictatorial heads of the big distributing agencies either do not like or which they think not profitable. Such a State Distributing Agency would certainly create new and powerful bonds of understanding, for example, with Soviet Russia and France. Moreover, it would enter into important and effective competition with the existing circuit monopolies. Last but not least, the profits of such an organisation might be invested in making intelligent feature films, for which those directors who still have their own ideas and refuse to be brought up by the monopolistic and purely commercial film interests might be won.

"I envisage also that communal authorities might build their own cinemas and administer them (I believe this is the case in Norway). From such communal cinemas beneficial and constructive ideas would permeate the State which, otherwise, as we have seen, is bound to decay in an age of increasing centralisation."[10]

Never was there a time in Britain when the film was more loved or its better-informed public more critical. There are double the number of film societies that there were before the war. Everywhere the large intelligent minority is demanding a say in the handling of its film entertainment. There are publicly owned libraries, they exclaim, we can demand the books we want; why cannot we see the films we want? In this public demand progressive film makers see the beginnings of a movement sufficiently widespread to pay the production costs of films of a standard at present unknown in the ordinary cinemas. But the problem remains for discussion: How far is it right and necessary for the state to intervene to break the commercial stranglehold and to assist in the establishment of new levels of entertainment in some, if not all, of the nation's cinemas?

[9] *Ibid.*, p. 272.
[10] *Ibid.*, p. 282.

Polish Film Builds for the Future

CHRISTINA AND EUGENE CENKALSKI

CHRISTINA CENKALSKI, American writer, and her husband, EUGENE CENKALSKI, screenwriter and director, visited in Hollywood last year before returning to Poland. During the war, Mr. Cenkalski worked for the Polish government in England and the United States, producing and editing war film for Poland. In Lodz now, they are collaborating on a screenplay which is planned for early production.

ALTHOUGH Poles contributed to the invention of film techniques in the days of Lumière and Edison, Polish film as such did not exist until 1919. From the beginning there were no production companies in the American meaning of the term. The studio was rented out by a landlord to anyone who was willing to produce and able to pay. Production was sporadic; production companies disbanded or went bankrupt after the first production. "Angels," for the most part moneylenders and speculators, put the producer under such stringent conditions that he was lucky to cover the costs of production. The profit went to the subscriber or patron. Only one production company weathered the financial crises, though its history was not without moments of grave danger.

Under these circumstances, 30 to 35 features were produced in Poland each year. Profit, however, was limited, since Polish films were produced almost exclusively for the internal market. Foreign distribution was confined to Polish movie houses in Palestine and the United States. Even in Poland, Polish films were relegated to a secondary position. In 1939 the 700 theaters gave 80 per cent of their screening time to American films.

In 1930 a serious group of young writers and technicians organized a film club called *Start*. Their first activities were limited to study and discussion of film as a new medium of art and education. They organized showings of the best foreign films—French, English, American, Russian—and wrote film reviews and articles. Many of these showings and articles were suppressed by the Polish censor.

The efforts of *Start* to break into production failed. A first chance for its members came, however, in the field of short films. In order to stimulate production of Polish films, the Polish government reduced taxes for exhibitors on condition that Polish short films were included in the program. There was suddenly a demand for educational, artistic, and cultural shorts in Polish.

Start ceased to exist and some of its members organized a film coöperative which produced short artistic and cultural films. The coöperative also published *Film Art,* a monthly magazine which contained articles on the theory of film art and critical evaluations of films produced in Poland and abroad. In 1938 the coöperative produced an entertainment feature, and in 1939 it started work on two feature films. Just then the war broke out.

During the years of German occupation, film production in Poland was stopped. Unlike Czechoslovakia, where the Germans developed the film industry, and France, where the film industry was left intact, Poland suffered a complete loss. Warsaw was leveled to

the ground. Not one studio, camera, or lens, not one foot of film, remained.

To speak of the Polish film industry today, it is necessary to go back to April, 1943, in Russia. Poles evacuated from Poland at the beginning of the war were mobilized into the Kosciuszko Division in Moscow. A Polish Army film unit was organized within the Division, composed principally of members of the prewar *Start* and of the coöperative film group. The unit was with the Division in the campaigns, photographing and editing its exploits in the advance westward to Poland. As the Division grew into an Army, the unit of cameramen grew into a complete production unit. Its first permanent base was established in Lublin, Poland, in the fall of 1944.

In January, 1945, Warsaw was liberated. But Warsaw had been completely destroyed, the whole population evacuated. No lights, no water. Streets were covered with rubble. Temporarily Lublin remained the capital of Poland. Meanwhile, fighting was still going on. The German army, though routed, was still fighting. The Film Unit went along with the Polish Army and marched into Berlin together with Soviet divisions. Back in Poland, Lodz was chosen as the temporary film center, while plans for the reconstruction of Warsaw were pushed ahead. Out of nothing a film organization began to grow.

The first steps were to nationalize the film industry and to demobilize the Army Film Unit. Then came the period of organizing technical equipment. Some cameras were received as reparation from the Germans; other equipment had to be improvised. A candy factory was converted into a factory for projectors. A gymnasium and an athletic field were requisitioned for a studio. Another factory was acquired for the production and rehabilitation of technical equipment. Everything was produced on the spot, from precision instruments and new models to simple screens. Technicians, skilled workers, cameramen, young people eager to learn, all flocked to *Film Polski* (*Polish Film.*) Some came from concentration camps, others from armed forces in Great Britain and Italy, others from Germany where they had been put to forced labor; a small proportion were found among those who survived the occupation in Poland.

At the head of *Film Polski,* in charge of production and distribution, stand an executive director and four assistants. An artistic committee is already formed. It will discuss the merit of film scenarios and advise writers, directors, composers, actors, and other artists and technicians. Feature production is a separate unit with a director for feature film scenarios and a feature film art director. Another unit is in charge of scenarios for short subjects and the production of newsreels and shorts. Since at the moment only one stage has been completed, the same technical and production managers work with both units.

News cameramen, for the most part young men trained in the past year or two, are dispersed in all key centers of Poland. Their news material is distributed abroad in France, England, and through MGM news. On December 5, 1946, a congress of cameramen was called in Lodz. Here they discussed wages and conditions of work. Reports from each base and criticism of film technique and subjects followed. It was concluded that a cameraman is not

merely a technician. He must, in order to become a good cameraman, (1) be part of the society in which he works, (2) give meaning to his work, and (3) create individual style; a camerman's work is significant and carries great obligations since it reaches more people in Poland and abroad than any newspaper.

The one-stage studio in Lodz is complete with sound equipment, cameras, and lights. A factory for the production of film stock is being started. One hundred newsreels have been released since the end of the war. Two feature films are completed, others are in production, still others are being planned. Numerous short subjects have been released. Out of a small group of army cameramen has grown a body of 6,000 workers, technicians, and artists. In addition, motion picture theaters which were completely destroyed or stripped of equipment have been rebuilt and provided with sound projectors, either produced in the Lodz factory or rehabilitated by Polish technicians. Today there are 500 theaters in Poland playing to capacity audiences.

Foreign films, in just proportions, are welcomed and deemed necessary, not only for entertainment but more for their cultural and educational value. Already films have been brought from Sweden, Russia, Czechoslovakia, France, and England. It is hoped that soon films from America and other countries will be shown.

In Poland, 16-mm. production is still in its beginning stages. Plans are being made for 16-mm. production of educational films and for the distribution of 16-mm. features to villages.

In evaluating these accomplishments of *Film Polski* in its two years of activity, one must bear in mind the fact that Poland is simultaneously rehabilitating factories, providing food, clothing, and homes for the needy, increasing production, reconstructing schools, reorganizing education, raising the standard of living, taking care of orphans. In the midst of chaos and destruction the film industry was started from nothing by men who during six years of war were uprooted from normal life. They began in a country which more than any other had suffered and lost because of war.

Difficulties notwithstanding, there is enthusiasm and belief in the future. Construction of a four-stage studio has been begun in Warsaw. At the Lodz studio a second stage is being completed. Another studio with two stages will be built in Wroclaw, in Western Poland. An increasing number of short subjects is appearing. The weekly newsreel is coming out regularly. There are still too few experts in every field, and these few must fulfill the functions of organizers, producers, and instructors. Young people of all classes are given every opportunity to work. It is heartening to see how well these people work, how eager they are to improve. Today, as never before, Poland has an opportunity to rebuild its film industry so that it will not merely provide entertainment but become an integral cultural and educational factor in the life of the Polish people.

Notes and Communications

THE TRAVELING CAMERA

FILM historians long ago pointed out that motion pictures as a unique medium of expression were made possible only when the principle of editing was discovered and applied. This took the camera from its stationary position and enabled it to record action from several vantage points. The resulting scenes were edited into a meaningful unit. Georges Sadoul in his article in the *Hollywood Quarterly* for April, 1946, gave an excellent account of some early uses of this principle. We know that it was further developed in a masterful fashion by Griffith and then taken up by the Russians, who built up the concept of the edited film into a rationale of motion pictures.

What is not so fully understood is that alongside the edited film or film of montage there has grown up another important film concept, that of the continuous recording of a long series of actions through the use of the moving camera. Whether this method or the montage method is more basically or more truly *the* film method is less important than the fact that both have been used and are today indispensable means of film expression.

The two methods differ widely in their approaches to film expression. The edited film takes its cue—at least in its extreme form as practiced by the Russians—from impressionism in that it relies for its effect on the construction of a whole from short strips of film. The film that is keyed to the moving camera may be termed descriptive film; its effect is produced by the gradual display of what passes before the camera lens or what is made available to the spectator when the camera approaches objects closely enough to let them be identified.

Although no school of film makers has ever relied entirely on one or the other method exclusively, the method of the long, moving shot was fully developed by the Germans of the era following World War I. Working for the most part in studios, with highly skilled technicians, they had the technology that was a prerequisite for making such shots: the control over camera focus, over lighting, over traveling devices which bore the camera. In their time they produced films which, if slow in tempo, were models of studio craftsmanship. Even modern audiences can appreciate the bold effect produced by F. W. Murnau in *The Last Laugh,* the opening scene of which consists of a descending elevator shot to the floor of a busy hotel lobby, continuous with a dolly shot across the floor of the lobby. This splendid scene admirably sets the background against which the body of the film is enacted.

The development of the traveling shot would be of only academic interest were it not for the fact that it has now become part of the equipment of virtually every director in Hollywood. In itself, this, again, is not bad. What is to be regretted is that at the slightest provocation Hollywood directors are mounting their cameras on wheels, on booms, on elevators to go zooming across hundreds of feet of studio floor,

bursting through windows, worming between furniture on living-room floors. All that they are usually able to achieve is sheer physical movement that adds little or nothing to the dramatic effect of their films.

While it is true that movement for its own sake has always been a film staple—witness the "westerns,"—surely films have reached a maturity sufficient for more than spectacular ends.

If the moving camera is so generally used ineffectually, it is to the credit of our more imaginative and inventive directors that evidence of truly functional use of the moving camera can be found. And from the few instances that we shall cite here it should be possible to draw certain conclusions about the dramatic, integral value of the traveling camera.

Vincente Minelli's *The Clock* opens and closes with two effective examples of the traveling shot. The first begins from a point high in the Pennsylvania Station with an over-all view of crowds of people. Then we begin slowly to move down to the station level, being gradually able to distinguish individual groups of persons. Finally we single out one figure, who is to be a central figure in the picture. Here the moving camera sets the tone of the film: that we seek out one typical person in a crowd—almost any person—and learn what happens to him in a brief period. Fittingly, at the end, this shot is reversed, and we move from a close shot of another central figure in the same setting back to the over-all view of the station. Thus, this central character recedes into the crowd with which we began. To have approached and receded from these characters by cuts would not have been nearly so effective, for it is the *process* of singling out in the opening shot and the *process* of leaving these characters that is dramatically fitting and important.

Alfred Hitchcock used this type of shot brilliantly in *The Man Who Knew Too Much,* made while he was still in England. The setting is a crowded dance floor; in the background, unobtrusively playing, is an orchestra. The camera begins moving—exactly where, the spectator is at first not quite sure. Slowly it becomes apparent that the orchestra, its members in blackface, is the objective, but why is still not clear. Then one member of the orchestra, the drummer, is singled out. As the camera moves to a close-up, we see his face twitch; it is the revelation of this movement that is the purpose of the whole shot, for the tic uncovers him as the murderer in the film. Here, by enabling the spectator to identify for himself the murderer, Hitchcock achieved an effect which would have been impossible by simple cuts.

In *Citizen Kane,* a brilliant but erratic film, Orson Welles uses a traveling shot somewhat differently. In the two examples just cited, the camera travels through an area which is already generally visible to the spectator, although all details cannot be singled out. In *Citizen Kane,* Welles moves the camera upward, in one plane, bringing into the scene a new, previously unseen area. He begins with a view of an opera singer on a massive theater stage, then moves slowly up through the flies above the stage, the voice meanwhile receding, and finally reaches a pair of stagehands listening on a catwalk. One of them provides the perfect comment on the singing: he clasps his nose between two fingers. Here the impressiveness of

the tremendous theater is ironically set off against this earthy but apt gesture. It might be noted with regard to *Citizen Kane* that Welles was not always so effective in his use of the traveling camera. In one scene he breaks through a neon sign on a roof and a skylight to reach a character who is seated at a table on the floor below. This is sheer filmic exhibitionism; the process of arriving at the seated character has no bearing on her or on the setting in which it places her.

The commendable examples just cited should make clear that the moving camera can serve a purpose which edited shots cannot achieve. The tendency in so many current films is to use the moving shot without due regard for the really splendid effects that can be obtained. As greater technical improvements in cameras and in ways of carrying them through space are devised, as larger film magazines are made, we shall probably see more and more films recorded with an ambulatory camera, but the law of diminishing aesthetic returns will operate to negate even the elementary advantage of physical movement for its own sake if such movements are not planned with an eye to using them as functional, expressive elements of film making.

ROBERT RAHTZ

PRELIMINARY REPORT ON FILM MUSIC

MUSIC for the movies is a contemporary medium and an idiom of expression that reaches millions of people every day, *nolentes volentes*. Happily, film audiences seem on the whole to be more tolerant of modernism and less hamstrung by conservatism than the conventional concert public. Those who are interested in the cultural development of our civilization feel great concern over the fact that public taste is held fast within the narrow limitation of two centuries of musical style and expression by the heavy emphasis that is put on the performance of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century music. So unbalanced a diet inevitably leads to musical stereotypes which high school and college students carry over to maturity and which form the pattern of their lifelong musical taste.

Specifically, therefore, musical scholars and educators are concerned with the total inability of a lay audience to judge the music it hears on the basis of its intrinsic worth, regardless of period. Our musical culture is bound to crystallize rapidly into a repetitious mechanism unless our symphony programs expand beyond the performance of "old warhorses" and unless interest centers on *what* is conducted as well as on *who* conducts.

It is true that many film scores have to be gotten out in too short a time and lean too heavily on well-established models. But every art form that satisfies a contemporary need and supplies the functional answer to a continuous box-office demand will produce hackneyed products along with a few masterpieces. In this respect the cinematic scores of Hollywood do not differ from the Italian operatic scores of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. What really matters is that the composer is given a chance to write a fairly continuous, extensive piece of music which will unquestionably receive a hearing; moreover, the audience will outdistance in number any public of the prefilm era.

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However tolerant and capable of real enthusiasm this public may be, it needs enlightenment, and the younger generation should have competent instruction. The courageous pioneering of such men as Virgil Thomson, Aaron Copland, George Antheil, Vaughan Williams, George Auric, William Walton, and others, deserves to be encouraged by an intelligent response from teachers and students. As a result, enlightened film directors may be induced to offer more equitable terms of collaboration to their musical associates.

It is probably no exaggeration to say that the next few decades will be a crucial period in the evolution of the film. Although the art of handling the camera has been explored for half a century or more, even the visual tradition is still in a fluid state, as experiments with color and three-dimensional projection show. The craft of script writing also looks forward to a healthy and steady growth, if it does not succumb completely to the deplorable tendency of best-seller adaptations. But above all, the music of the sound films is so young an art, of which so many aspects and facets are unexplored, that public opinion, led by our schools and our publications, must determine in the decades immediately ahead whether this potent medium will realize a mature idiom for the expression of contemporary ideas or whether it will be reduced to rearrangements and reinstrumentations of Tchaikovsky and Wagner *ad infinitum* and *ad nauseam*.

The powerful emotional impact of an average—even of a below-average—production upon an audience is familiar to all of us. Here, as we know, is one of the most potent make-believes of our civilization, one that affects sophisticated, mature persons as well as impressionable children. The lump-in-the-throat feeling with which one leaves a theater is an indication of the influence the cinema can wield over taste and standards in our time. Subconsciously, youngsters and adults alike absorb the modes of musical expression prevalent in the movies they see—and hear!

Needs.—Because we believe in the importance of film music we propose that eventually colleges should be equipped to show full-length 35-mm. features and to have available in their libraries a print of the film, a copy of the release dialogue script, a copy of the composer's piano score, and a copy of the arranger's final instrumentation. With the copy of the print it would be possible to mask, at times, the sound track or the visual images and thereby to isolate and analyze the component elements of the music, so that their integration into a unified whole can be apprehended and understood. Phonograph or wire recordings of the music, whenever these are available, should also be obtained from the producing studio.

For the time being, 35-mm. films will often have to be shown by the local neighborhood theater instead of at the college. But the *sine qua non* for an intelligent discussion is to have the release dialogue script and the score available. What college teacher could tell his students in composition or in music literature much that is significant about Strauss's *Rosenkavalier* or Stravinsky's *Petrouchka* or Copland's *Appalachian Spring* or Prokofieff's *Alexander Nevsky* unless he and his students alike were in a position to

purchase from a music dealer at small cost the score for study and close scrutiny?

Here is an eminently practical, organizational need that has to be met. In Hollywood two types of musical scores are used. One is the composer's piano score, notated on two, sometimes on three staves, with the instrumentation cued in at a few prominent places. Of this score a goodly number of copies are run off from ditto stencils, and it should not be difficult to obtain from these stencils a sufficient number of copies for college teaching purposes. Of the arranger's full instrumental score, which runs on the average from 300 to 500 pages, copies are less easily obtainable at the present time, and the Committee has been informed that it would be necessary to photostat the orchestral score from the Hollywood master copy.

Nevertheless, master copies of the orchestral score should at least be deposited in a few libraries strategically located, such as Queens College, New York, for the East, the University of Michigan for the Middle West, the University of California at Los Angeles for the West. In each of these institutions members of the Committee are active. Of the many and various offerings of our musical curricula that will make use of the material just outlined we mention, for the sake of convenience and brevity, some of the course work carried on in the institutions of Committee members: a course in Contemporary Music at Vassar and Queens, a course in Dramatic Music at Dartmouth, and graduate work on film music at Michigan. We have been informed that the only reason why several colleges have held off giving similar courses is the uncertainty of procuring the necessary teaching materials.

In addition to these few copies of the orchestral score, an adequate number of copies of the composer's piano score must be available as study scores for teachers and students throughout the country. A college teacher who includes the study of cinematic music in his course work must have this study score at his elbow the year round. For the brief time in which he is conducting an intensive study of an individual score in the classroom he must also be able to have duplicate copies for his students. The need for these piano study scores, then, is twofold: there must be *duplicate copies for students,* which may be deposited along with the orchestral score in the depository libraries and lent for classroom use during the year when requested; and *study scores to be used by the teacher* in the preparation of his classes, which must be marketed so that he or his institution can purchase them at any time.

It seems unwise at this time to attempt any concrete planning on the marketing of such study scores. They may be distributed by the separate studios, provided each studio already has a music department with facilities for distributing its song hits, et cetera, through commercial channels. Or, these scores may be marketed through commercial music publishers just as are those of operas, ballets, symphonies, and chamber music. Finally, distribution could be made either through a branch of the Motion Picture Academy or the Motion Picture Producers Association or an educational, nonprofit organization. In these, as in other matters, we should proceed care-

fully and with caution, feel our way, and establish numerical needs by questionnaires over a period of time.

Organization.—Our Steering Committee consists at present of five members: Dr. Joseph Brewer, Queens College Library, Flushing, N.Y.; Dr. George S. Dickinson, Department of Music, Vassar College, Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; Dr. Helen Hooker, for the *Hollywood Quarterly,* University of California Press, Los Angeles, Calif.; Dr. Raymond Kendall, School of Music, University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Mich.; Dr. Frederick W. Sternfeld, Department of Music, Dartmouth College, Hanover, N.H. The Committee is at present not attached to any existing organization, although through its membership it is in liaison with various larger groups, such as the American Council of Learned Societies, American Library Association, Music Library Association, American Musicological Society, Music Teachers' National Association, and the National Association of Schools of Music. The members of the Committee feel that in this as in other matters it would be unwise to make a decision now about affiliation. The Committee has much to offer and little to ask, and therefore should take more time for planning and reflection.

Once the administrative work has settled down to a routine, some of the more important functions of the Committee will be to select from the large annual output of feature pictures about half a dozen for serious study; to make available bibliographies, articles, and books on film music; and, possibly, to arrange for the shelving of some brief explanatory matter, together with script and score, in the depository libraries.

Some correspondence and conference work has been carried on with the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, the Motion Picture Producers Association, and studios such as Paramount, Warner's, Republic, and United Artists.

It seems to us, then, that for the immediate future our achievements will be modest. But, if we plan carefully, we should succeed in a few important aspects. We should be able to promote a better knowledge of what constitutes good and bad film music, so far as the general public is concerned. We should help in the training of some of our professional music students, to the end that their subsequent work for the studios will set an increasingly higher standard for film music. We should be able to make a breach in the wall of tradition that now separates the people of our time from the music of our time. Finally, we should, through discrimination and selection, be able to establish a few works of the screen as part of a permanent repertoire for schools and repertory movie theaters, so that the cultural values of these productions will not be wasted, as they now are when good and bad alike are plugged, worked to death, and then thrown into the ashcan.

What we aim to do, then, is to serve not as custodians of an antiquated past nor as gravediggers of the present, but as pioneers of the future.

FREDERICK W. STERNFELD
Chairman

THE FARM FILM FOUNDATION

GENTLEMEN: I should like to call to the attention of the *Quarterly* the new and interesting activities of the Farm Film Foundation which was organized by

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the Foundation for American Agriculture for the express purpose of opening a channel to rural America through which meritorious educational and commercial 16-mm. films might flow. In the past, producers and sponsors of these films have found the rural audience, numbering 57 per cent of the population of the United States, so isolated and unintegrated that efforts to reach these people were foredoomed to failure because of excess expense in rigging circuits and holding showings.

In the spring of 1946 the information directors of the major farm organizations, the National Grange, the American Farm Bureau Federation, the National Council of Farmer Coöperatives, and the National Coöperative Milk Producers' Federation, met with members of the Foundation for American Agriculture and organized the Farm Film Foundation.

Set up as a nonprofit organization, the Farm Film Foundation arranged for circuits using the organizational mechanisms of the four groups, and is now able to offer integrated film circuits through nearly thirty thousand outlets, ranging in size from township Granges to annual encampments of national groups.

Naturally, all these groups do not have projection equipment; indeed, the actual figures are not available. However, another project undertaken by the Farm Film Foundation was to obtain a sizable discount on a standard make of projector, and orders have been flowing through the Foundation's offices at an average rate of five per day from county and town groups. In the existing setup of the groups the possession of a projector by a county group insures facilities for all local groups.

A Board of Consultants, made up of the information directors of the farm groups plus several outstanding farm editors and publicists, reviews each film which is presented to the Foundation for distribution. Knowing the rural audience to be extremely vigorous in its rejection of poorly made films and films in which advertising is too blatant, the Board of Consultants had reviewed, as of the first of January, 307 films, of which only 24 were found to be acceptable for distribution through the Foundation's circuits.

The films are circulated rapidly and carefully, and because of the nonprofit character of the Foundation, the cost of handling, which is passed back to the films' sponsors, has been steadily reduced. Originally set at $3.00 per showing, the price was lowered, January 1, to $2.00 per showing, and as the volume increases, it is hoped to lower this cost still further, eventually, it is possible, to about $1.00 per showing. Under any system of accounting, this enables the producer of outstanding films, bringing a serious, intelligent, and worthwhile message to rural America, to show his film for much less than through any existing commercial operation.

In addition to this service, the Foundation offers, again at the bare cost of handling, a consultation service to film makers. Plans, treatments, script, technical advice, editing, scoring, in fact every phase of motion picture making, can be carefully screened before a picture is made in order to insure that the finished product will be as acceptable to farm audiences as is possible. Picture making for farm audiences is as technical a problem as picture making for medical men, and the opportunities

for making mistakes are endless. Careful consultation at all times in the making of a farm picture will preclude the making of the errors of mannerism, speech habits, dress, methods, etc., which, while they seem small, subject the entire picture to ridicule by farm audiences.

Less than a year old, the Farm Film Foundation has already entered into distribution and supervising contracts with several of the largest producers of commercial and educational films, and has opened its facilities to some of the most active film advertisers in the country.

Sincerely,

ALBERT N. WILLIAMS
Associate Director,
The Farm Film Foundation

HOLLYWOOD NOTES

GENTLEMEN: I shall never forget the one-fourth serious and three-fourths comical astonishment with which, on my return to America one hundred and five years after my first visit, I watched some scores of authors as they listened to a Mr. Gallop instruct them in those ways of writing that will make for popular success. This is something that I must confess I never thought about when writing my novels, though they did achieve some little popularity in their time and are still remembered, I believe. I rather imagine, too, that Thackeray and Hugo and Cervantes wrote what they wanted to write, and not what they were sure the generality of mankind would eagerly devour.

The walls of the Beverly Hills hostelry where the meeting was held rang with phrases to which my ears were unaccustomed, perhaps because of my relative unfamiliarity with the subject under discussion, to wit: the cinema. However that may be, I heard again and again about something called "the Industry," followed by such unfamiliar arrangements of words as "in this business," "pictures that make money," "stories that click," "a three million dollar gross." I had heard something of the sort on 'Change in the City, but never where authorship was involved, not even in Fleet Street.

The purpose of the meeting, which, I was surprised to discover, had been arranged by a guild of writers, was to draw from the said Mr. Gallop an exposition of his methods of estimating how the common public of cities, villages, and the countryside might like a particular motion picture or, indeed, a piece of fiction that had not yet assumed celluloid form. I must confess that I was surprised and a little alarmed—emotions shared, I am happy to say, by most of the authors present—to discover that the merit of the piece of fiction in question was tested by the reading of a seventy-word synopsis to a sample of the citizenry.

Be it said for the authors who made up the gathering, that they appeared to receive the dicta of Mr. Gallop and his assistant with something less than complete enthusiasm. For some reason they were not stirred to applause by statements that "You are in the creative field and have to use your imagination," "Give a writer a good subject and he can make a good script." If any one of them was flattered by being told that the author is in "the creative side of the industry," he did not display the fact. Indeed, one young woman—blessed, may I say, with a charming accent that was almost English in its tone and precision—spoke quite critically of

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The Student Film Group's activities consist of doing research and giving reports in specific cinema fields, listening to talks by guest speakers, seeing special film showings, and making short experimental films.

When the group is sufficiently experienced, it will make a documentary film that deals with a present-day social problem. The group feels that film making carries with it certain obligations that must not be ignored because of commercial considerations; realization of this fact is not less important than mastery of creative cinema technique.

It is hoped that more groups of a similar nature will be organized. The Student Film Group welcomes correspondence from individuals and groups that may be interested. Letters should be addressed to the chairman, Ross Lowell, 606 North Alpine Drive, Beverly Hills, California.

MARCIA ENDORE

FEATURE-LENGTH FILMS, 1944, 1945, AND 1946

THE FOLLOWING breakdown of the types and kinds of feature-length films approved during 1944, 1945, and 1946 by the Production Code Administration is made available to our readers through the kindness of Mr. Joseph I. Breen and Mrs. Alice Evans Field, of the Motion Picture Association of America.

	1944	*1945*	*1946*
Melodrama:			
Action	26	19	33
Adventure	3	7	6
Comedy	21	22	12
Juvenile	6	6	4
Detective-Mystery	7	9	9
Murder-Mystery	33	40	47
Social problem	7	11	9
Romantic	0	2	5
War	4	4	0
Musical	1	0	2
Psychological-Mystery	1	0	0
Psychological	0	8	8
Crime	0	0	5
Murder	0	0	7
Mystery	0	0	2
Fantasy	0	0	2
	109	128	151
Western:			
Action	71	63	68
Musical	4	8	13
Mystery	10	2	7
	85	73	88
Drama:			
Romantic	6	13	13
Biographical	5	1	2
Social problem	39	24	37
Musical	8	5	8
Comedy	9	11	25
Action	5	2	7
War	4	14	2
Psychological	4	4	4
Religious	3	0	0
Historical	0	1	1
Murder-Mystery	0	0	1
	83	75	100
Crime:			
Action	5	6	6
Prison	0	2	0
Social problem	0	1	0
	5	9	6
Comedy:			
Romantic	42	25	31
Musical	56	31	16
Juvenile	6	2	4
Fantasy	0	0	1
Murder-Mystery	0	0	1
	104	58	53
Miscellaneous:			
Fantasy	1	5	2
Fantasy-Musical	0	1	0
Comedy-Fantasy	1	2	0

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Comedy-Fantasy	1	2	0

Comedy-Fantasy-Musical	0	1	0
Farce-Comedy	20	19	15
Farce-Murder-Mystery	11	2	0
Horror	13	11	2
Horror-Psychological	2	0	1
Documentary	4	3	0
Musical-Crime-Drama	0	1	0
Drama	0	2	0
Travelogue	1	0	0
Folklore	0	0	1
Folklore travelogue	0	0	1
Cartoon-Musical-Fantasy	0	0	1
Musical romance	0	0	4
Farce-Horror	1	0	0
Cartoon	1	0	0
Historical	1	0	0
	56	47	27
Grand totals	442	390	425

CORRECTION

GENTLEMEN: Mr. Herman G. Weinberg has requested me to correct certain inadvertent errors in the references to my Index on D. W. Griffith in Mr. Weinberg's article on film research in the January issue of the *Hollywood Quarterly*. (1) The Index, one of the British Film Institute's series on directors, will consist, when completed, of eleven installments. (2) The installment on *The Birth of a Nation,* published in July, 1945, has sixteen pages. (3) Owing to the paper shortage in England, none of the installments of the Griffith Index has been published complete as submitted to the Institute. The most nearly complete is the 31-page installment on *Intolerance.* It is hoped, however, that the fifth installment, dealing with *Hearts of the World* and others of Griffith's films based on World War I, scheduled for publication in May, 1947, may appear complete as submitted and, therefore, run to fifty pages.

SEYMOUR STERN

Comedy-Fantasy-Musical	0	1	0
Farce-Comedy	20	19	15
Farce-Murder-Mystery	11	2	0
Horror	13	11	2
Horror-Psychological	2	0	1
Documentary	4	3	0
Musical-Crime-Drama	0	1	0
Drama	0	2	0
Travelogue	1	0	0
Folklore	0	0	1
Folklore travelogue	0	0	1
Cartoon-Musical-Fantasy	0	0	1
Musical romance	0	0	4
Farce-Horror	1	0	0
Cartoon	1	0	0
Historical	1	0	0
	56	47	27
Grand totals	442	390	425

CORRECTION

GENTLEMEN: Mr. Herman G. Weinberg has requested me to correct certain inadvertent errors in the references to my Index on D. W. Griffith in Mr. Weinberg's article on film research in the January issue of the *Hollywood Quarterly*. (1) The Index, one of the British Film Institute's series on directors, will consist, when completed, of eleven installments. (2) The installment on *The Birth of a Nation,* published in July, 1945, has sixteen pages. (3) Owing to the paper shortage in England, none of the installments of the Griffith Index has been published complete as submitted to the Institute. The most nearly complete is the 31-page installment on *Intolerance.* It is hoped, however, that the fifth installment, dealing with *Hearts of the World* and others of Griffith's films based on World War I, scheduled for publication in May, 1947, may appear complete as submitted and, therefore, run to fifty pages.

SEYMOUR STERN

Book Reviews

Book Review Editor, FRANKLIN FEARING

COLLECTED BLUEPRINTS VOLUME III

Best Film Plays, 1945. Edited by JOHN GASSNER and DUDLEY NICHOLS. Crown Publishers. 1946

MOST OF the people involved in the tremendous collective undertaking of motion pictures have an understandable yearning for some sort of individual permanence and dignity, in addition to screen credits.

They want to be related to the past and to the future.

None of us wants to feel that he is merely at one hell of a party, throwing confetti in the air, to be carried off on the wind; we want part of it to stick in our hair.

For some time—out of this awkward yearning, this uncomfortable feeling that they were merely street singers—a great many screenwriters have had their scripts bound in fine leather that smelled of Milton, Browning, and Pope. These scripts have gone up on the library shelf. They have been dusted off occasionally; and guests have taken them down, respectfully, to admire the leather. But they have seldom been read, even by the screenwriter himself, and have not been available to the people who might really enjoy them.

In 1943, John Gassner and Dudley Nichols apparently decided to remedy this, to formalize this impulse for permanence, to make good screenplays available to everybody. They decided to do for the screen what Burns Mantle had done for the stage.

This is now their third volume, and by all the rules of Baseball the cup must become their permanent possession. From now on, *Best Film Plays* will have to be regarded as an institution, not as a vanity or whim. The anthologies will presumably continue, unless the editors get tired or discouraged with what is undoubtedly a difficult editorial task and probably less than a gold mine. They should continue, because the screen needs this sort of record. It needs standards. It can benefit by the yearly judgment of these men, which is somewhat more valuable than the annual judgment of *Look* or the Fawcett publications.

This year they have included ten screenplays: *The Lost Weekend; Spellbound; Double Indemnity; A Tree Grows in Brooklyn; None but the Lonely Heart; The Southerner; The Story of G.I. Joe; Thirty Seconds over Tokyo; Over Twenty-one;* and *A Medal for Benny.*

Anyone is entitled to play games with this selection—to be annoyed, hurt, or outraged,—but these are the screenplays that Gassner and Nichols have chosen.

And they speak for themselves. There is no point in reviewing them here. They have already been reviewed, in another form. In this form they should be read and studied, not judged as literature. They were never intended as literature.

The fact that some of them sound better on paper than others is a trap. It can lead to academic foolishness. It

can lead (it hasn't yet) to the inclusion of screenplays just because they read well. This would be taking motion picture writing too seriously, in the wrong way. A screenplay is primarily a blueprint. It must work out on the sound stages, in the cutting rooms, and in the dubbing rooms—where it comes into climactic collision with the mechanical forces Dudley Nichols discusses so brilliantly in his introduction. It must work in the minds and hearts of people sitting in a theater, holding hands.

Nevertheless—and this may sound like a real fancy contradiction,—screenplays can be rich and interesting. Most of those in this volume have too spare a look. Perhaps it is in the editing. Perhaps it is something inherited from the old Spartan dogma of playwriting that overemphasized the self-sufficiency of dialogue, its purity, and insisted on blunt stage directions.

G. B. Shaw has belabored this point at some length, arguing his right to include anything he pleases in the body of his published plays. And it should be agreed by now that the same rule applies to screenplays, either for production or publication. It should be agreed that anything that can be acted or photographed is permissible—any description of mood or action needed to inform the dialogue or guide the director and his technicians.

Dudley Nichols' own careful scripts would indicate that he believes this and practices it. Clifford Odets' scripts indicate that he believes it, too; his *None but the Lonely Heart* must once have had more meat on its bones that it has here.

There is a little matter of paper and space, of course. The editors have no doubt compromised here and there.

At any rate, a private, extremely unscientific poll indicates that people like to read these screenplays in this present form; that they particularly like to read screenplays of films they have missed or have not seen for some time; that (in Hollywood, at least) their interest in them is technical rather than literary; that they are sensible enough not to expect the screenplays to communicate the full excitement of the screen itself.

This is all to the good. And it is a good thing to spread to the remote sections of the country the news that motion pictures are no longer extemporaneous exercises, that they are now written down.

JOHN PAXTON

THE SPOKEN WORD

Radio Pronunciations. By JANE DORSEY ZIMMERMAN. New York: King's Crown Press. 1946

POPULAR statements on English pronunciation, as well as many that are found in textbooks, almost unanimously judge pronunciation in relation to a "standard" or "correct" English. Deviant pronunciations are described as "mistakes" resulting from poor education or as due to "carelessness" in speaking. Standard correct English is defined as that taught in the schools, or that prescribed or "authorized" by "*the* dictionary," or, less often, as the English spoken habitually by educated native-born citizens of the United States. The obvious facts that all schools do not teach the same standards of pronunciation, that dictionaries not only vary widely in "authorized" pronunciations but also often "authorize" several pronunciations of the same word, and that educated individuals may vary in

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pronunciation are conveniently, but confusingly, disregarded. Those who know something of language realize of course that the pronunciation patterns of a community are set by its speakers. Where communities are large and endlessly subdivided by geographical, social, economic, and other boundaries, there is not one standard of pronunciation, but many. Each of these may be "correct" for the area in which it is used. A politician speaking to low-paid workers who have little education does not, if he is wise, use the same speech he employs when addressing a university audience.

In the work under review, Mrs. Zimmerman sets out to examine the speech of educated persons and to find out just how their pronunciation relates to so-called "accepted standards." She defines her study as follows.

"The purpose of the present study was to extend the preliminary investigation to include a group of two hundred educated Americans, who were not professional radio speakers, and to record in phonetic transcription every occurrence of the words which were spoken by them over the radio.

"The second purpose of the study was to compare the pronunciations recorded for these speakers with the pronunciations of the same words listed by a standard dictionary published in the United States, as 'most generally approved at the present time by well-educated people,' in order to determine to what extent the dictionary reflects the pronunciation usage of this group of educated speakers.

"A third purpose was to determine how consistent these speakers were with themselves in the repeated pronunciations of words, and to find out whether they were more consistent with themselves, or with the dictionary.

"A final purpose was to consider the significance of the findings for teaching the subject of pronunciation, and for using the radio as a means of such instruction, through ear training and practice lessons." (Page 6.)

Mrs. Zimmerman describes her procedures and techniques in great detail (chapter ii), and summarizes, with painstaking care, the results of her studies (chapters iii and iv). Most of this material is highly technical and will concern only the student of language. The general reader will be interested in knowing that Mrs. Zimmerman collected radio speeches delivered by two hundred educated speakers, none of whom were professional radio speakers. All her subjects were native-born, over thirty-five years of age, and had at least a secondary school education. Most of them held college degrees and many had achieved national or international fame in their occupations and professions. According to geographical regions of birth, the subjects were divided as follows: New England, 42; Middle Atlantic States, 38; Southern, 51; Central, 56; and Western, 13. The author feels that "such pronunciations as have been recorded for the two hundred speakers in this study can be considered representative of the speech of a much larger group of educated persons in the United States, and therefore should be taken into account by everyone who deals with the problem of pronunciation in this country." (Page 106.)

Mrs. Zimmerman recorded the radio speeches of her subjects on aluminum disks. These were then transcribed by means of phonetic symbols and each word was entered on a card. The total

number of words so collected amounted to more than 85,000. These were compared with one another and with "authorized" pronunciations given in *Webster's New International Dictionary*, second edition, unabridged, in order (1) to determine variations in the pronunciation of the same word by the same speakers, and (2) variations in the pronunciation of the same word by different speakers, and (3) the difference between the speakers' pronunciations and those given in the dictionary.

Conclusions which may be drawn from this study are summarized by Mrs. Zimmerman in chapter v. She finds that "speakers tend to be consistent with themselves in the repeated pronunciation of the same word, or of different words in the same word group. The two hundred speakers kept the same pronunciation in 78 per cent of the occurrences of words pronounced more than once." However: "Speakers are also inconsistent with themselves in pronunciation. Although the consistency rating for speakers is high, changes were made in 22 per cent of the occurrences of words pronounced more than once." (Page 105.) Mrs. Zimmerman offers no explanation for these inconsistencies. Some of them doubtless can be explained in purely linguistic or phonetic terms, while others may easily reflect a general tendency of educated Americans to use, consciously or unconsciously, variant pronunciations of the same word.

Mrs. Zimmerman also finds that only about 70 per cent of the pronunciations recorded were like those authorized by Webster's dictionary. The remainder were "pronunciations which are commonly used, but which have not been authorized by *the Dictionary* editors." (Page 105.) This of course is a very valuable conclusion, for it emphasizes the fact that dictionaries tend always to be far behind usage. Since it takes a long time to compile a dictionary, this is neither surprising nor necessarily due to faulty dictionary editing. It is probable, however, that most dictionary editors place less emphasis on spoken than on written forms. Dictionaries in general are not so useful as guides to pronunciation as they may well be for the writing of language. In this connection Mrs. Zimmerman points out that "the two hundred speakers in this study used a great variety of pronunciations in the 2,206 words which occurred 39,369 times, and this is an important factor to be taken into account by those who contend that each word should have one, or at most two, 'correct' pronunciations." (Pages 105–106.) It is obvious that the myth of one "correct" pronunciation per word will not survive any truly objective study of community standards of speech.

The author's conclusions on how the radio may be useful in teaching pronunciation are well worth quoting in full:

"The writer believes that listening to every kind of speech that is spoken over the air, good, bad, and indifferent, will arouse the student's interest in the subject of pronunciation, and will train his ear. But she would like to recommend the presentation of units of study in which the attention and interest of the listening students will be concentrated, at least for a time, on the pronunciations of such educated nonprofessional radio speakers as are represented in this study. Here will be found many representatives of that group of persons who, according to

Professor Krapp, 'must be counted as among the conservers and representatives of the approved social traditions of a community,' and to whose current usage in speech he applies the term 'standard.'

"Through listening to these and similar groups of speakers, students will hear pronounced over the air most of the words they are using regularly, and most of the words they may wish to add to their speaking vocabularies, and will hear them pronounced more 'naturally,' that is, more in the pattern of everyday speaking, than is possible when the same words are spoken in the exaggerated fashion which is characteristic of many professional radio 'performers.' And in spite of the fact that the words are spoken as read, it is the writer's observation that, for nonprofessional speakers at least, the pronunciations used are, on the whole, very little different from those used by the same speakers when they are talking away from the microphone, in any but the most informal speaking situations.

"Each teacher will wish to plan listening periods with her own students, of course, on the basis of their particular interests in the study of pronunciation, and the radio facilities of the school. Examination of the list of speakers and topics used in this study, and of the list of words presented in Table II, will give some indication of the abundance of material that is available over the air." (Pages 113–114.)

Radio, it is clear, has much to contribute to studies of speech and, used intelligently, will make this contribution. It should not be overlooked, however, that radio performers, in particular announcers, newscasters, and others whose jobs require them to speak professionally on the radio, can learn a great deal from students of speech and language. Radio professionals are still too prone to search for "authoritative" pronunciations rather than intelligently to adapt their community-learned speech to radio needs. As a result, we too often hear dreadful examples of "dictionary English" over the air—experiences which are surely no recommendation of either the speaker or the product he is selling.

HARRY HOIJER

WORDS, WORDS, WORDS

Signs, Language, and Behavior. By CHARLES MORRIS. New York: Prentice-Hall. 1946

A Grammar of Motives. By KENNETH BURKE. New York: Prentice-Hall. 1945

A Treatise on Language. By ALEXANDER BRYAN JOHNSON. Edited, with a critical essay on his philosophy of language, by David Rynin. University of California Press. 1947

People in Quandaries: The Semantics of Personal Adjustment. By WENDELL JOHNSON. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1946

The Art of Plain Talk. By RUDOLF FLESCH. New York: Harper & Brothers. 1946

THESE ARE five of the current output of books on semantics. It is apparent that the serious student of the mass media of communication will have to take sematics in his stride, along with psychiatry, psychoanalysis, and possibly psychosomatic medicine. Communication is not, as the layman may have supposed, a simple matter of ideas which are "communicated" through the medium of language and speech, with

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the possible assistance of a dictionary. It is also a matter of signs, signals, symbols, and behavior. The books under review are all concerned with the technics of communication within the context of society and culture. They differ enormously in topics covered, terminology, and basic theoretical assumptions. The layman is bound to conclude, superficially perhaps, that sematics, in spite of the ardent efforts of its practitioners and supporters, has yet to achieve a body of accepted principles or even a coherent point of view.

It is admittedly somewhat difficult to assess the values of works in the study of semantics. This is due not only to the confusions and difficulties in terminology, but also to the atmosphere of cultism which seems to invest the subject. This is unfortunate since it is impossible to understand the patterns of a culture without understanding the patterns of communication through which it exercises its controls. To an extent far greater than the average person suspects, this is achieved through signs and symbols. The science of signs does not itself produce the signs which have such potent effects, but it should clarify the process by which signs acquire significance or "meaning," and the relationship between meaning and human action. As Morris points out (*Signs, Language, and Behavior*), the processes by which society acquires control over the individual and insures his participation, particularly in times of crisis, involves the use of signs. This use is different in totalitarian as contrasted with democratic regimes, but signs are important to both, and this, if nothing else, should supply a legitimate reason for a science of signs.

The significance of all this for the mass media of communication is clear. But the extent to which the creative worker in these media will improve his skills or deepen his insights by the study of semiotic (Morris' term) is not so clear. He will confront a formidable terminology—Morris recognizes this and appends a glossary of technical terms. He might, for example, open *Signs, Language, and Behavior* at random and run into the following: "A *formative ascriptor* is a compound ascriptor such that the denotation of one or more of the component ascriptors (called the *antecedent ascriptors*) is, because of the signification of the ascriptor, a sufficient condition for the denotation or lack of denotation of the remaining component ascriptor or ascriptors (called the *consequent ascriptors*), and hence for the denotation or lack of denotation of the compound ascriptor itself." The first fine edge of enthusiasm will probably be dulled, and the creative worker may decide that the science of semiotic, like nuclear physics, had best be left to the specialist.

Professor Morris has written a systematic, comprehensive, and difficult treatise on the science of signs. His theory is heavily grounded on behavioristic psychology, especially that of Tolman and Hull. More than by these, however, Morris has been influenced by the late George Mead, and the serious student of the subject will find Mead's *Mind, Self and Society* indispensable collateral reading.

Kenneth Burke approaches the fundamental problems of meaning and communication from the point of view of what he calls "dramatisms." The result, according to the dust cover, "is semantics with a difference." Language

and thought are regarded as modes of action, the key to which is the imputation of motives. This theme is a logical development from the author's earlier works, especially *Permanance and Change.* This latter book was a work of great subtlety and full of insights for the social psychologist. The present volume, according to the publisher, is directed "to all writers and readers concerned with the literary problem of form, expression and communication." *Permanence and Change* for most persons was difficult but rewarding reading. To this reviewer these difficulties are enhanced in the present volume and he wonders how many "writers and readers concerned with the literary problem of form" will have the patience to surmount them. When this reviewer surmounted them (if he did!), the reward seemed a little meager.

The *Treatise on Language* is a work of a wholly different order. Alexander Bryan Johnson was a successful banker in Utica, New York, who seems to have made philosophy a hobby. In 1825 he delivered a course of lectures before the Utica Lyceum. These were published as *The Philosophy of Human Knowledge, or A Treatise on Language* (1828), revised and published under the title, *A Treatise on Language: or The Relation which Words Bear to Things* (1836). This work seems to have remained unknown until the present reprint, to which Professor Rynin has added an extensive critical essay.

Aside from its historical interest, the *Treatise* is remarkable in that it appears to have anticipated current views regarding the importance of language as a key to philosophy and science. Johnson seems also to have anticipated the operationalism of Bridgman and others—that is, the view that a statement is without meaning if it cannot be tested in experience or in "operations." Professor Rynin believes that the views of the contemporary school of logical positivists were completely anticipated by Johnson.

For the serious student of semantics Johnson's work is indispensable. The difficulties that the reader will probably have in reading the *Treatise* are attributed by Professor Rynin to Johnson's "highly condensed, almost aphoristic style." The present reviewer is inclined to doubt this. With an exception to be noted later, the uniform difficulty of writings on the subject of semantics—even, apparently in 1836—seems to be a phenomenon worthy of consideration in its own right. It is to be feared that the ordinary reader, even with the help of Professor Rynin's scholarly and lucid essay, will find Johnson tough going.

No such problem confronts the reader of *People in Quandaries.* This is an eminently readable book by the Director of the Speech Clinic at the University of Iowa. The subtitle, *The Semantics of Personal Adjustment,* suggests its scope. The enthusiasm of the author for his subject is infectious, and the plausibility and clarity of his statement make the book at least good reading. By sheer good will and warm human sympathy the author convinces the reader, if he doubted before, that semantics can solve our problems. We follow him, fascinated, through the devious verbal paths and linguistic twistings by which the human animal manages to avoid coming to grips with reality. It is mostly good stuff and it needs to be said. The realization of the degree to which many of the prob-

lems discussed are oversimplified comes later. The fundamental proposition of semantics, that man is the only animal able to talk himself into difficulties that otherwise do not exist, is a plausible and even exciting formulation. It contains an important nugget of truth. But it is not enough to say, as Johnson does, regarding the problem of Negro-White relationships, that the "most serious thing about them is that so many fair-skinned people are not on speaking terms with so many persons who have dark complexions."

This is not only bad social psychology, it is the kind of analysis which gives the unwary a sense of solving a problem when it isn't even understood. It is positively dangerous to discuss, as Morris does, the complex phenomena of communication through radio and motion pictures as if it were a form of posthypnotic suggestion induced by signs. In our society signs are doubtless nasty little devils full of devious strategies which need looking into, but they are not the only villains in the piece.

According to Rudolf Flesch, author of *The Art of Plain Talk,* there are 70,000 persons in the United States who earn their livings by writing. It is interesting to speculate what would happen if all of them should study this persuasive little book. One thing is certain, they couldn't shrug it off—not if they read as far as the bottom of the first page. The writer must have a colossal ego indeed who doesn't occasionally wonder if his audience understands him. This is the disturbing question that Mr. Flesch raises at the beginning. It is, he says, a question that concerns all those who "make speeches, address meetings, give lectures and radio talks, write letters or reports or articles or books." *The Art of Plain Talk* is a book about how to talk and write so that your audience will understand what you say. It describes a method for testing the intelligibility of your own product for a particular audience. It describes the kinds of audiences which make up the literate public. These vary from the audience which can read very easy English (about 85 per cent of the adult population) to the audience which can understand very difficult English (about 4½ per cent of the population). For a variety of reasons these audiences differ not only in what they can understand, but also in what they are willing to listen to. There is no condescension in Flesch's discussion of these audiences and their capacities. He makes it clear that he is talking about levels of reading ability of language experience, and *not* about levels of "intelligence."

This is an exciting, readable, witty, and practical little book. It is certainly about some of the problems of semantics (Mr. Flesch has some pretty sharp things to say about semantics), but it is the only book in the present group which professional writers are likely to find specifically related to the problems of their craft. It is recommended to any person professionally concerned with communication in the mass media and especially to writers—all seventy thousand of them!

FRANKLIN FEARING

MORE RED IN THE SUNSET

Radio's Second Chance. By CHARLES A. SIEPMANN. Boston: Little, Brown. 1946

LEE DE FOREST, whose invention of the audion tube confers on on him the title of Father of Modern Radio, is quoted

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LEE DE FOREST, whose invention of the audion tube confers on on him the title of Father of Modern Radio, is quoted

in the press as saying, in a recent letter addressed to the National Association of Broadcasters: "What have you gentlemen done with my child? He was conceived as a potent instrumentality for culture, fine music and the uplifting of America's mass intelligence. You have debased this child. you have sent him out on the streets . . . to collect money from all and sundry. . . . He has been resolutely kept to the average intelligence of thirteen years . . . as though you and your sponsors believe the majority of listeners have only moron minds. Nay, the curse of his commercials have grown consistently more cursed, year by year."

We hope that Mr. De Forest has read Charles Siepmann's book. He will discover a clear-headed, documented diagnosis of the sickness that is radio's, and an answer to his questions from a man who has had extensive practical experience in broadcasting in America and Britain. He was radio consultant for the O.W.I. and the F.C.C., and is at present a member of the faculty and Director of the Film Library of New York University.

Mr. Siepmann shares with Mr. De Forest the belief that American radio has been sold down the river. Who is responsible? The answer is indicated in a letter, quoted by Mr. Siepmann, published in the New York *Times* for July 15, 1945, written by the well-known writer for radio, Mr. Norman Rosten:

"Imagine a painter working at his easel, say in a park. A man comes along, regards him for a moment, then approaches him and says cheerfully, 'I don't know anything about painting, sir, but would you be so kind as to put more red in your sunset. Just a bit more, if you please.' This kind of madness goes on in radio even more cheerfully and on a gargantuan scale. The man who wants more red in the sunset is the sponsor. He wants more love in the script. He wants a shorter scene. He wants a longer scene. He wants more action. He wants less action. Who is this sponsor? . . . He is the man with money. He belongs. The sponsor and the advertising agency have taken over radio in this matter of right. . . . The broadcasting company sells Time. It owns the air. It will sell you a piece."

The man who wants more red in the sunset calls the turn in radio. In a chapter significantly entitled "The Midas Touch," Mr. Siepmann calls the witnesses to testify. He cites Mr. J. Harold Ryan, then President of the National Association of Broadcasters, who said in 1945 that American radio was a business product in the same category as "the vacuum cleaner, the washing machine, the automobile and the airplane." He cites Mr. Jones, head of the Duane Jones Company, an advertising agency said to place more than two thousand commercials on the air each week, who is quoted as saying: "The best radio program is the one that sells the most goods, not necessarily the one that holds the highest Hooper or Crossley rating. . . . No program can long endure that does not sell goods." He cites the president of the American Tobacco Company, who is quoted as saying in 1945: "Taking 100 per cent as the total radio value, we give 90 per cent to commercials, to what's said for the product, and we give 10 per cent to the show. . . . We are commercial and we cannot afford to be anything else." And there are others.

The rationalization of all this from the point of view of the sponsors is that

the present radio fare is what "the public wants." Mr. Siepmann points out what every psychologist knows, namely, that "the public" is a pure abstraction, that there are in reality many "publics" with many and diverse "wants," and that radio, so long as it uses a medium which belongs to everybody, will have to find a way to serve these diverse wants. He further makes it quite clear that, in any event, program popularity is not the sole criterion by which the public interest in radio should be defined.

The "second chance" for radio is FM broadcasting. In Mr. Siepmann's view, it has three great advantages: it eliminates static and interference, it gives nearly perfect fidelity, and it eliminates traffic congestion. This last is the most important from the point of view of radio's potentialities for public service, since it makes technically possible 3,500 to 5,000 additional radio stations. These new stations may cater to particular publics such as labor, religious, and similar groups. Another insufficiently explored use of radio is in education. Classes on the air are not new, but their number may increase with the use of FM. Mr. Siepmann has much to say about the pitfalls and possibilities of educational broadcasting. In particular, he emphasizes that the former will be avoided and the latter realized if educational broadcasting makes use of expert staffs as writers, producers, and engineers.

Mr. Siepmann's blueprint for the future of radio is interesting. First, he believes that there must be more informed and responsible critics in radio. People in general must hear more about radio. This includes not only critical reviews of programs, but what the author calls the "higher criticism" of radio. By this he means reviews of policy, F.C.C. decisions, comment on trade practices, and the like. His second suggestion is the establishment of a journal devoted to everything that pertains to radio (this was written, of course, before the *Quarterly* was launched!). There must be an expansion of research in radio—not mere statistical compilations, but focused, interpreted research, either university-sponsored or through a central research institute. There must be an increased use of radio in education and, finally, listeners, "the sleeping partners in radio," must organize. Such organizations as listeners' councils may correct what Siepmann regards as a serious defect, the essentially passive character of the radio audience.

Mr. Siepmann's indictment of contemporary American radio is extensive and devastating. But he makes it crystal-clear that he does not endorse any system of government-controlled radio. "I start from the premise that the [American] system is basically sound, much of the output good, some of it the best in the world." The fundamental question is: "Is it good enough?" Mr. Siepmann answers with an emphatic "No." He points out that ideas and information are precious commodities in a democracy, and he raises the question whether salesmen of soap and food, drugs and tobacco, are the persons best qualified to decide on what kind of ideas and information a democratic people will thrive.

This is a "must" book for every person who wants to understand the present status and potentialities of radio in the U.S.A.

FRANKLIN FEARING

BUSINESS ACCOUNT

This Fascinating Radio Business. By ROBERT J. LANDRY. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill. 1946

MR. LANDRY'S book is one of a series which also includes *This Fascinating Oil Business, This Fascinating Railroad Business,* and *This Fascinating Lumber Business.* The latter two volumes have been awarded fulsome praise, respectively, in *Railway Age* and from the president of the California Redwood Association, and I would expect Mr. Landry's book to be well received by such publications as *Broadcasting,* which is the favored paper of station owners and executives.

The book surveys the early history of radio, carries it through the invention stage, the days when it was regarded by business, government, and the public alike primarily as a new means for the communication of messages, down through the broadcasting boom of the late 'twenties and early 'thirties, through the war, and more or less up to the present. Some of the early chapters contain interesting information on the formation and growth of such giant companies as the Radio Corporation of America (parent company of NBC, the biggest broadcasting company), but this material is apparently based on newspaper clippings and is at any rate entirely undocumented.

The later chapters constitute a kind of wandering survey of the industry, its relations with government, with advertisers, and with the public. Mr. Landry traces the development of programs and the growth of the star system, and includes an interesting chapter which describes in some detail the stations in three "typical" communities of various sizes—Green Bay, Wisconsin, with one station; Denver, Colorado, with six; and New York, with twenty-two.

The Green Bay station is run by the St. Norbertine Fathers, a Belgian Catholic order, and apparently makes a real effort to satisfy the community with home-flavored entertainment in that part of its schedule which is not occupied by network programs from CBS. (CBS material uses up 75 per cent of the time.) The station has a staff which includes three writers, a large number for a small-town 5,000-watt operating plant.

The Denver layout begins to approach the dull pattern of familiar metropolitan radio—the non-network stations play recordings generously interlarded with commercial announcements. Most promising, however, is a Denver enterprise known as the Rocky Mountain Radio Council. This organization, developed with funds from the Rockefeller Foundation, serves "the states of Colorado and Wyoming, includes in its membership about twenty colleges and universities and a like number of local radio stations. . . . The Council works for and with educational institutions and commercial stations. It seeks out and exploits acting, writing, speaking talent among the colleges and communities it covers." This group, according to Mr. Landry, is now producing 375 programs a year, and is in a fair way to become self-sustaining.

Mr. Landry's book becomes most disappointing when he takes up such questions as the 1946 report of the Federal Communications Commission, the famous Blue Book which dared to assert the right of the Commission to scrutinize critically the general quality and balance of station programming.

His defense of the industry is that "radio manages with remarkable fidelity to be a reasonable facsimile of the United States itself," and he echoes the fears of station owners that a concern for the public interest is a step toward censorship. The last sentence in his book reads: "And it is worth remembering that until now the really serious abuse and misuse of the air have been by governments, not by advertisers."

A considerable body of radio listeners would take the position that advertisers have given the American air about as much abuse as it will stand. What is more, the National Association of Broadcasters is even now pressing for legislation in Congress which will overrule the F.C.C.'s "Mayflower Decision," in which the basic doctrine of equal representation for all points of view on all stations was laid down. There is real danger that the government will shortly begin to collaborate actively with advertisers in the further corruption of the air, but Mr. Landry's book shows no awareness of it.

SAM MOORE

BRITISH PICTURES COME OF AGE

Twenty Years of British Film: 1925–1945. By MICHAEL BALCON, ERNEST LINDGREN, FORSYTH HARDY, and ROGER MANVELL. London: Falcon Press. 1946

TWENTY YEARS ago the British Film was a matter to be dismissed with a smile on this side of the Atlantic, and with a sigh on that. Now, and very suddenly it seems, we have sustained the impact of four or five or six pictures from England which have evoked the respect of the makers of our pictures and the fear of those who finance them. The respect is for something we vaguely call quality; the fear is a matter of dollars and cents. The new British pictures threaten to steal a large slice of the English market from the American product; they have been warmly received in America itself, and they have qualities which must certainly appeal to audiences in postwar Europe.

These qualities have very little to do with the technical side. In the minutiae of direction, camera work, cutting, and so forth, Hollywood fears no rival. And here Hollywood's complacency is well founded, not because no rival exists, but because purely technical accomplishment is not a deciding factor in the important markets. Moreover, if England should nose ahead of Hollywood in technique, Hollywood could still make a sprint and recover the lost ground.

And equally, had some sort of miracle occurred, and one or two great works of art appeared at the hands of some hitherto unknown genius, Hollywood might take heart, for the next miracle might happen as well here as there. Not so, however, if the advance is due to a development at a level deeper than mechanical ingenuity or executive energy can reach. And this is what seems to have happened. With no very great increase of technical skill, and with not the least approach to anything like a great work of art, English pictures have begun to please sensible people wherever they are shown.

Sensible people are astonishingly easy to please, perhaps because they have been starved of sense so long. A little candor, a little taste and integrity, and above all a view of life such as can be called adult or postwar, will

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appeal to postwar adults all over the world. And, in comparison, anything that is still prewar, or not adult, suddenly seems as provincial as English films were a very few years ago. Provincialism is not popular in most countries in these days; it is viewed not only as dull, but as malignant. Hollywood has good reason to fear any comparison by which Pacific Coast glamour is made to appear provincial.

What germs of their new quality were active in British films twenty years ago, how they developed, were set back, were threatened with extinction, were revived by the most unlikely influences, and finally came into their own—this is material for an "important and comprehensive popular history of the development of British films from the beginning of the industry to the present day." Such is the claim made for *Twenty Years of British Film* by its publishers, and it is accordingly a little disappointing to find that its main contents consist of three shortish articles by Ernest Lindgren, Forsyth Hardy, and Roger Manvell. These, with an introduction by Michael Balcon, take up some fifty pages of text, and as they set out to deal with both documentary and feature films over this immensely complex and exciting twenty years, it is only to be expected that each article is little more than a list of titles. Even another fifty pages devoted to excellent "stills" fails to compensate for the extreme sketchiness of the book, which is the more annoying in that each contribution, and particularly that of Mr. Manvell, shows indications of comprehension and insight enough to have made this book a very valuable one had the authors put more substance into it.

JOHN COLLIER

HOW AND WHAT TO TELEVISE

Here Is Television. By THOMAS H. HUTCHINSON. New York: Hastings House. 1947

MR. HUTCHINSON might well have called his book How and What to Televise, for the answers to these current questions are exactly what he offers to a public of potential television-set owners and future workers in a new industry. His experience is well founded in his background as a producer of all types of television shows for several years. Since 1940 he has been teaching a course in Television Programming at New York University, as a result of which *Here Is Television* fulfills the need for a book that is clear, concise, and thorough in its presentation. This is not a book for engineers. The author has directed the material toward those interested in making television their vocation.

He describes in detail the complex organizational and mechanical structure involved in broadcasting every type of program, a continual challenge to the resourcefulness and imagination of highly skilled crews. Of particular interest to this reviewer was the author's drawing upon the comparison of the techniques of film and radio with those of television today. The television director, for example, is a composite of radio director, film director, and cutter. Film and radio writers have already contributed much to the television script, and their further participation in this new medium can advance writing techniques in all three fields. In television, the problems of camera, acting, set design, writing, sound, lighting, etc., have their own difficult pecu-

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Every type of program from news coverage to opera is discussed, and it is here that the author's information becomes fascinating and absorbing. After describing a variety of programs which are being televised at the present time, a realistic account of a news broadcast in 1960 seems at once both feasible and exciting.

It is unfortunate that Mr. Hutchinson has weighted his approach to the future of television with the sea-diver's shoes of commercialism. We can be sure that the manufacturers of Puffo and Squnchies will discover the way to use television to increase sales, but the crews described by Mr. Hutchinson, together with their allies in present forms of communication, must be responsible for the creative future of the young and impressionable child, television.

L. S. BECKER

FRENCH FILMS AND FRENCH CRITICISM

Film in France. By ROY FOWLER. A Pendulum Popular Film Book. London: Pendulum Publications, Ltd.

IN THE 56 pages of text and 32 pages of illustrations of the recent British booklet, *Film in France,* Roy Fowler (notable heretofore as the biographer of Orson Welles) attempts to give a quick summary and recapitulation of the French film industry since the declaration of war. He is well informed on the period, and his pamphlet is a handy reference list of films produced and dates of production.

However, a number of faults keep the work from being the document one would like to see on the subject. Sloppy reproduction of French titles and quotations (perhaps more the proofreader's fault than the author's) tends to bring into question the writer's competence to pass judgment on French dialogue and other details requiring more knowledge of the language than he displays in the book; the accumulation of so vast a number of titles in so short a space tends to make the book nothing more than a catalogue. Overlooking the apparent contradictions in some of the repeated references to the same works, all of them too hasty to be definitive, it is not possible to leave without comment the lack of any appreciation whatsoever of what the films of this period mean in the life of France or of its people.

Stating that some of the films made under the Occupation were intended subtly to be resistance films, while the German authorities construed them otherwise, and that to an objective observer the films of this date seem completely neutral, Fowler fails in any way to report or to analyze the tremendous struggle between collaborationists and patriots which went on within the film industry of Occupied France. Only in an allusion to *Le Corbeau* do we realize that the Nazis made use of French films as propaganda against the French. And the author feels that the banning of Clouzot, who made this film of French degeneracy for the Germans, is the greatest loss the French cinema has sustained.

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Certainly, discussion of such films as *Goupi-Mains-rouges (It Happened at the Inn)* or Cocteau's new "poetic" masterpiece, *La Belle et la bête (Beauty*

and the Beast), requires some analysis in terms of French life. For instance, even though *Goupi* is a fine film, was it not condoned by the Germans because it showed the French as a degenerate people? And as such does it not remain essentially anti-French propaganda? I am not sure. I would like to see the subject discussed.

One may answer that this is outside the realm of Fowler's subject. And that would be an acceptable reply if serious film literature were published in great abundance the world over. But with the paucity of outlets for such material, it is regrettable that a chance such as this to give a real summing up of the past six years of the important French cinema should add up to a quick cataloguing of the titles shot, a tribute to the "art" elements of some of the newer French films, and a brief allusion to the individuality of French film production. French films have had and are having a tremendous influence throughout the world because, in their higher manifestations, they reflect France, its liberal tradition, and the struggles of its people for their ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality. Mr. Fowler solves the equality problem by giving equal prominence to Nazi-sponsored films, routine French "B" pictures, and the best of the postwar output—unfortunately, a highly superficial, if well-documented, journalistic approach.

La Revue du Cinéma. Nos. 1, 2, and 3 (October, November, December, 1946). Paris

THE LEADING *avant-garde* film publication of the late 'twenties has resumed publication in Paris, with the same title, the same editor, Jean-George Auriol, and an approach to the film medium which reflects a tremendous deepening of understanding and a high degree of appreciation of the lessons learned in the years between.

In only three issues, *La Revue du Cinéma* has articulated a policy and a level of criticism and discussion which one would be hard put to find anywhere else in the world's film literature. Its critical back pages bring thorough studies of films produced the world over, as they appear in Paris or other accessible centers such as London. In *La Revue,* as elsewhere in the serious French press, films are discussed in terms of an already existing history and tradition of motion picture culture, rather than each film in terms of itself and its own producers as we tend to consider them in this country.

Because of the vast extension in France of ciné-clubs and their constant revival-for-study of films or cycles of films, no important motion picture subject ever becomes "dated" in France. And while this is true even of the better fan magazines, like *L'Écran Français,* it is the eminent characteristic of *La Revue du Cinéma.*

However, the main body of creative writing on motion picture subjects, rather than the critical level, is what makes *La Revue* the important publication that it is. The first three chapters of a major work by the editor, Auriol, titled *Faire des films* (*To Make Films*), have covered the origins of film direction (tracing back the expression of motion in the history of painting), the problems of writing, and some of the technical problems. Auriol, for all that his conclusions are at times highly personal, is developing a theory of motion picture aesthetics which may be of the deepest value.

The main emphasis of the first issue, along with Auriol's first chapter, was on painting and its relation to the films. No. 2 devoted about half its space to D. W. Griffith and his contributions to motion picture development. In the same issue, Jacques B. Brunius discusses color on the screen and its relation to the emotions expressed, and Irving Pichel's article, "Creativeness Cannot Be Diffused," from the first issue of the *Hollywood Quarterly* is translated and featured.

In the third issue, there appear excerpts from two screenplays by Orson Welles (*Citizen Kane* and *The Magnificent Ambersons*), excerpts which reveal how little one can get from the text of a screenplay itself but are also indicative of the depth of interest the magazine displays. Almost half the issue is devoted to Welles, including biographical and critical material, and a rapprochement of Welles' style to that of Proust (particularly satisfying to this reviewer, who was, he believes, the first to characterize *Citizen Kane* as the first film to reflect the fact that its author came after and understood Proust).

Other excellent features include three installments of Pierre Schaefer's *L'Élément non visuel au cinéma (The Nonvisual Elements of the Films)*, covering sound, music, and the psychology of sound-sight relations; first-rate news notes on events and developments of importance; and a glossary of film terms used internationally with a discussion of how their adoption in various tongues reflects the formation of the film industry and film art of those countries.

It is to be hoped that, with *La Revue's* reprinting of Pichel's article from the *Quarterly,* a serious and thorough exchange of material may be worked out, for *La Revue* offers creative material of a quality unsurpassed elsewhere.

HAROLD J. SALEMSON

MOVIES FOR CLASSROOMS

Movies That Teach. By CHARLES F. HOBAN, JR. New York: The Dryden Press. 1946

UNTIL 1941 the films that were made for use in the nation's classrooms were the ugly ducklings of the film industry. Indeed, the view was held by many that the relation between instructional films and those intended merely to make audiences sigh, weep, and laugh was most tenuous, based almost solely on the fact that both varieties were run through projectors and showed people and objects in motion. Much of the criticism of instructional films was justified, for they were dull, badly made, and often of doubtful teaching value.

But the bombs that blasted Pearl Harbor were to transform the ugly duckling into a swan. In the four years of conflict, instructional films were put to the service of teaching the nation's fighting men how to fight, how to defend themselves, and to appreciate what they were fighting for. They proved their effectiveness as teaching aids, to the satisfaction of even the most skeptical. The public which saw such films as those in the *Why We Fight* series, and others like *Cold Front* and *Two Down and One to Go,* can attest to the excellence of the service films, and the statistics which Dr. Hoban cites in his valuable study point to their effectiveness in reducing learning time and impressing their content on their soldier and sailor audiences.

Dr. Hoban is an old hand at the

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Movies That Teach. By CHARLES F. HOBAN, JR. New York: The Dryden Press. 1946

UNTIL 1941 the films that were made for use in the nation's classrooms were the ugly ducklings of the film industry. Indeed, the view was held by many that the relation between instructional films and those intended merely to make audiences sigh, weep, and laugh was most tenuous, based almost solely on the fact that both varieties were run through projectors and showed people and objects in motion. Much of the criticism of instructional films was justified, for they were dull, badly made, and often of doubtful teaching value.

But the bombs that blasted Pearl Harbor were to transform the ugly duckling into a swan. In the four years of conflict, instructional films were put to the service of teaching the nation's fighting men how to fight, how to defend themselves, and to appreciate what they were fighting for. They proved their effectiveness as teaching aids, to the satisfaction of even the most skeptical. The public which saw such films as those in the *Why We Fight* series, and others like *Cold Front* and *Two Down and One to Go,* can attest to the excellence of the service films, and the statistics which Dr. Hoban cites in his valuable study point to their effectiveness in reducing learning time and impressing their content on their soldier and sailor audiences.

Dr. Hoban is an old hand at the

teaching film, having been a close observer of the prewar variety and an active participant in war-training film production as Chief of the Film Distribution and Utilization Branch of the Army Pictorial Service. His book should be studied by those who will be responsible for the production and use of educational films in the years to come: teachers, visual-education supervisors in the schools, and film workers. He analyzes the reasons for the success of the war films and, on the basis of this analysis, postulates a number of principles by which postwar teaching films and film production must abide if motion pictures are to assume a peacetime role as effective teachers.

Dr. Hoban's first principle calls for a greater degree of correlation between film production programs and film utilization. In this way the actual film needs of educational agencies could be met, with resultant expansion of film production, and production of new films to replace obsolete pictures and those which have fallen short of teaching effectiveness.

His second principle is one that is already being realized to some extent by instructional film makers, namely, that films should cover the basic areas of the curriculum rather than limit themselves to those subjects which are most obviously film material. A concept in social studies, a principle of English composition, a set of standards for nutrition and health may be more difficult to present interestingly in films than the operation of a gasoline engine, but these and other basic subjects are part of the whole curriculum which must be taught—and taught well—if the schools are to be the training ground for life in a democracy.

Thirdly, Dr. Hoban calls for a shift in approach from subject matter for its own sake to subject matter presented in terms of the needs and experience of a particular audience. Good teaching has always abided by this principle, but it was not applied systematically to films until the war training program found it indispensable in keeping the interest of its students and in making the lesson of the film meaningful to them. With this concept, Dr. Hoban points out, a film on nutrition would not be a presentation merely of the chemical and physiological aspects of food, but would present the information so that desirable habits of diet would be imparted to the students. Furthermore, if the psychological approach were to be used, every film would be directed toward a specific age level which could respond to only certain aspects of the subject matter. To film producers this would mean the opportunity to make vastly increased numbers of films.

The author's great faith in the instructional film is expressed by his fourth principle. Educators have generally regarded the instructional film as a supplement to teaching, but Dr. Hoban sees it as a basic instrument of teaching which will be used in every phase of education and which, consequently, will be able to "spearhead" new developments in the curriculum. This is a responsibility that most film makers would hesitate to assume at the present time, but once the unity of operation mentioned earlier is attained, this policy would, once again, pay off for producers in terms of a material increase in the number of films which they would be called upon to make.

Finally, Dr. Hoban calls for the professional production of educational films—professional in the sense that they should equal entertainment films in quality through the use of "dramatic structure, excitement, and suspense, created and sustained by highly paid and skilled artists and craftsmen." Again, this depends on the ability of the schoolmen and producers to work together, the former providing guidance and the latter enjoying an opportunity to make the best films they know how.

Educational film makers will find that Dr. Hoban's book opens for them a new perspective and gives them a new sense of dignity in their work. Whether they can achieve the objectives the author sets for educational films depends on their integrity and their ability to take a long-range view of their field. Surely a major danger will stem from the commercial setup of educational film production, which might express itself in two ways. Producers may, in order to sell their films, seek to outdo their competitors by means that are not sound educationally. Furthermore, they will be extremely cautious and make films which they feel sure will be satisfactory in content to school film buyers the country over. This will eliminate "controversial" elements from films to be shown in schools, although, of course, what will be considered controversial by the Southern educator, say, will be quite different from his Northern colleague's concept.

Educational films can have a useful future. It would be ironic if the unity of purpose and practice achieved in bringing them to maturity during the war were not exercised in peace.

ROBERT RAHTZ

BRIEFER MENTION

THE Bureau of Educational Research, Ohio State University, has issued a mimeographed bulletin entitled *Radio, Movies, Press: The American Communications Networks* (Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio). It is written by Norman Woelfel. Dr. Woelfel makes the point (it can't be made too often!) that it is undemocratic not to use the great mass media as a means to attain our cultural and social objectives. He has some shrewd things to say about the way in which these media are prevented from achieving their potentialities. In the film field he estimates that approximately 20,000 feature-length films have been produced in Hollywood since 1915, and raises the question, How many of these films would be judged adequate as interpretations of American culture? He draws up a list of major productions in recent years which "are capable of directing the American mind towards an understanding of its past and present." In the radio field, he has some sharp comments about the use of audience ratings as a basis for determining what programs shall remain on the air, in the course of which he punctures the belief so blandly advanced by the broadcasters that this method insures the democratic control of radio.

The National Publicity Council for Health and Welfare Services (130 East 22d Street, New York 10) has issued a brochure entitled *Radio: How, When and Why to Use It.* It is written by Beatrice Tolleris, Chief Consultant for the Council, and covers such topics as the value of radio as a medium, choice of format, building a radio audience, and tapping local talent. The manual

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is designed to raise the level of public service broadcasting sponsored by community agencies. It will be of particular interest to agencies and schools contemplating radio programs, and to station managers and program directors who wish to coöperate with these groups.

Survey Graphic (published by Survey Associates, Inc., 112 East 19th Street, New York 3) devotes the eleventh of its *Calling America* series to the general topic, *The Right of All the People to Know*. Unfortunately, the winter number of the *Quarterly* was already in press when *The Right of All the People to Know* appeared. The extended review which the issue merits seems scarcely appropriate at this late date. *The Right of All the People to Know* includes sections on Communication among Men, The Right to Read, Rights to See and Hear, and Implementing Our Right to Know. Among the contributors are Louis D. Brandeis, John Winant, Leon Whipple, Morris Ernst, David Sarnoff, James Fly, James Shotwell, and Roger Baldwin.

The twelfth in the *Survey Graphic* series is entitled *Segregation*. It is an extraordinarily good survey of the patterns of race discrimination as they manifest themselves in the U.S.A. The contributors include Louis Wirth, Carey McWilliams, Loren Miller, Joseph Curran, Donald Yound, E. Franklin Frazier, and Alain Locke.

E. F.

An organizational manual for local film councils, *Speaking of Films,* has been prepared by Thurman J. White for the Film Council of America. It is directed to the members of local communities who are ready to participate in bringing together representatives of community and social agencies, service clubs, and schools with producers and distributors of informational film to plan for the most effective use of films in the community.

The special educational potentialities of film and the efficacy of the local film council form are taken for granted in the manual's discussion of practical organizational procedures. Within the limits of its purpose the manual is a model of clarity. Its usefulness, though limited to those already persuaded and impatient to implement their interest, is nevertheless undeniable. Requests for copies should contain information about the already existing local interest, and should be addressed to The Film Council of America, Room 1228, Manhattan Building, 431 South Dearborn Street, Chicago 5, Illinois.

S. G. J.