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Castellani's *Romeo and Juliet:* Intention and Response

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THE OLD LADY crossed over to sit beside me in the Broadway bus. "I see by your program," she said, "that you've been there, too—wasn't it a pity about those two poor young things? I do feel so badly for them." We nodded and as I looked at her, I saw that she had tears in her eyes. So had I.

This desirable response to Shakespeare's tragedy of young love was not, as one might suppose, provoked by Renato Castellani's recent motion picture. It was recorded in 1936 (in the October *Catholic World*) after a showing of MGM's film starring Leslie Howard and Norma Shearer—actors whose special distinction did not, as with Castellani's principals, lie in their power to represent "poor young things." Castellani, what is more, was professedly dedicated in his interpretation to the theme of youth struggling against a hostile society. The MGM film, with all its superior fidelity to Shakespeare's poetry, lacked Castellani's poignant concentration on the theme announced in Shakespeare's Prologue:

> From forth the fatal loins of these two foes
> A pair of star-cross'd lovers take their life;
> Whose misadventur'd piteous overthrows
> Doth with their death bury their parents' strife.

It is both sad and puzzling that major critical response to Castellani's dedicated venture has been so perversely neglectful of his emotional intent. Far from coming close to tears, critics have failed to show even the slightest recognition of the piteousness of

the misadventured overthrows. Of the reviewers writing for the big weeklies and monthlies—the reviewers, that is to say, who can do the most damage—only Arthur Knight of the *Saturday Review* (December 18, 1954) seems to have been struck by the power as well as the surface beauty of the film; yet the possibility of *pity* did not occur even to him.

To almost all of the major critics the one glory, and yet also the tragic failing, of the film was its scenic brilliance. Emotional message might just as well not have existed. John McCarten of *The New Yorker* (January 1, 1955) ends his elegiac commentary on the picture with "At any rate, the scenery is certainly wonderful." Robert Hatch of *The Nation* (January 8, 1955) observes with a regretful sally, "We had come to see a play; perhaps we should not complain that we were shown a sumptuous travelogue." And he concludes, with a tenderness much like McCarten's, "This 'Romeo and Juliet' is a pretty thing." If there had been only pleasantries of this sort, and a purely facetious interment for the ill-fated venture, one might have reached the easy conclusion that the critics, having found a congenial subject for their wit, were just having a little fun at the expense of a producer notoriously willful in his artistry, or were simply registering their chronic distaste for film spectacle. But many of the reviewers land blows more earnest and solid than these; they point out just where, dramatically speaking, Castellani paid for his spectacle.

Time (December 20, 1954) declares that in his obsession with "the beautiful single frame," the director "has ignored not only the rhythm of Shakespeare's scenes but has even failed to set a rhythm when he cuts from frame to frame." Both Roy Walker of *Twentieth Century* (November, 1954) and Hatch deplore the slowing down of the action by the large, carefully photographed canvas. Walter Goodman of the *New Republic* (January 10, 1955), though inadvertently catching some of the somber poetry which Castellani surely intended in the relationship between the principals and their setting, really means to deplore the fatal effect of scenic richness upon the dramatic action:

A five-day interlude watched by so many sad-eyed Madonnas from the dusty corners of so many old churches. A nice young English couple reciting poetry to one another while the people of Verona who spawned the tale of feud and love and murder, who seem still close to the seat of it, go about their everyday living.

The many students of Shakespeare's plays who responded favorably (but not, one fears, too confidently or audibly) to the motion picture must have sensed that the magnificent photography of scenes in Verona, Venice, and Siena provided more than a decorative background to a tragic story; that, moreover, the prolonged views of massive Romanesque architecture did not so much slow down the story as comment upon it.

It is true, as Hatch observes, that "it takes time to get around the great chambers and through the narrow, terraced streets"; but it is not true that as a result "the tragedy collapses and is swept away in a visual flood." Motion—painful, frantic motion—is an intentional and basic part of Castellani's interpretation of the play, and it derives from Shakespeare's own intentions. The dramatist had tried to express the mood of driving, futile haste in the content and pace of his poetry. The play abounds in comments upon action—especially swift action contrasted with slow—and in lines in which the lovers express their impatience with a slowly moving world. The lines are sometimes beautiful, as in Juliet's "Gallop apace, you fiery-footed steeds"; at other times, they are mere froth, as in Romeo's early exclamations. Castellani, with characteristic impartiality, cuts the good and the bad and supplies in their place the real thing: frantic running. Both young people seem to run from the beginning to the end of the play. It is a harassed, compulsive, joyless sort of haste, the urgency of something which neither understands. And it is highly relevant that the long corridors, the endless flights of stairs, should forever frustrate them. Extremely effective is Romeo's desperate, baffled running near the end of the film as he tries to reach Juliet in death. The artistic use of both the running and the background seems to imitate comparable sequences in De Sica's *Bicycle Thief,*

an Italian neo-realistic film. In both productions, the opposition to the frantically running characters is not in the form of conscious villains, but rather in unwitting landscapes and streets and in the heedless movement and press of people. It is not, therefore, as Goodman asserts, a flaw in dramatic action that the people of Verona "go about their everyday living" as a backdrop to the tragedy. A more alert background of people would be as contrived as the chorus of a musical comedy.

The brilliance of the scenic background, however, does raise a special problem in that Shakespeare's play is not an intrinsically pictorial one. Its language is intense and exclamatory rather than descriptive. And the Italy which Castellani so intimately reveals had probably never been seen by Shakespeare; certainly it does not become part of the verbal texture of his Verona. But neither, one might say in defense of Castellani, does the France of *Henry V,* filmed by Robert Krasker, the cinematographer for *Romeo and Juliet;* and yet critics did not condemn the earlier film for irrelevance to Shakespeare's poetry. It must nevertheless be acknowledged that the problem of relevance in *Romeo and Juliet* is a more complicated one, and may not have been consciously enough grasped by Castellani. The dominant pattern of imagery in this play, as Caroline Spurgeon long ago ascertained, is of a brief, brilliant light (associated with the lovers) against a prevailingly dark background (associated with the hostile world). From the language of the play, one is far more aware of the stark light-darkness contrast than of intermediate colors, or of precise design of buildings, statues, and gardens. In a way, therefore, the very brilliance of Castellani's scene is not merely an irrelevance, but actually a contradiction of Shakespeare's image patterns. Where there should be lusterless gloom as a background, there is breath-taking, compellingly photographed beauty. The young lovers are thus in the very real danger of seeming less attractive than the hostile world which rejects and destroys them.

But somehow the result of this contradiction is not so unhappy as might be supposed. Though some of the poetry does inevitably

become less meaningful, the background of irresponsive, age-old sculpture and architecture serves even more poignantly than darkness to set forth the isolation, the temporariness, the fatal passions of the young couple. Castellani's, at any rate, is an interpretation with which John Keats would have sympathized. Both artists make one feel the warm, hurried anguish of living love contrasted with the cold, immobile beauty of art.

In addition, Castellani makes good use of the very massiveness and inpenetrability of the architecture against which the brief, intense struggle is enacted, gaining thereby an emotional quality similar to Shakespeare's image of darkness. Huge walls and forbidding, seemingly windowless exteriors emphasize the difficulty of access from one family to another. The photographic artistry makes one feel, as even Shakespeare's poetry does not, the full significance of a forbidden entrance into the Capulet household. From the interior court one does not see, as in Shakespeare's verse, the open sky and the stars, but long corridors, staircases, arches, and the ever-present walls. Two symbolic functions of the unyielding architecture will forever remain as a part of Shakespeare's play in the minds of those who see Castellani's film. One is the effect of the heavy grille separating Romeo and Juliet during the wedding ceremony. The other is the effect achieved upon Romeo's return from Mantua when he tries (in one of Castellani's invented scenes) to gain entrance to the church of Juliet's funeral. We see his desperate figure dwarfed by the beautifully wrought but adamantly closed door of the Church of San Zeno di Maggiore. Perceptive departures such as these from Shakespeare's text can scarcely be condemned. Unlike the interpolated and rightfully damned scene of Friar John's visit to Mantua, they comment, with all the poetic resources of cinematic art, upon the pitiable separateness of the two young lovers.

Aside from his heavy reliance on photography (as opposed to verbal poetry), the feature of Castellani's willful artistry which has been most singled out for skeptical commentary by the critics is his choice of actors. Upon the young principals, Laurence Har-

vey and Susan Shentall, the verdict seems to be: authentically youthful and innocent, but dramatically lightweight. Harvey reads his lines "with a kind of empty fervor" and "fails to generate much glandular heat " (*Time*). He is "too light of voice" and "trivial" (Hatch). Miss Shentall plays Juliet "at a good school level" and seems "very healthy" (Hatch). Neither of the two is "especially adept at delivering poetic lines, and whatever advantage their youth may give visually is offset by their lack of oral fervor" (McCarten). "When they come together, nothing explodes. When they kiss, only the twittering of birds" (Goodman). One is forced to acknowledge a significant agreement among these strictures. And although the judgment—on Harvey in particular—overlooks obvious merits in the interpretation, it is doubtless true that older, more accomplished actors would have given better readings of Shakespeare's poetry. (Sir John Gielgud demonstrated this truth with unintentional clarity in pronouncing the Prologue.) But Castellani was willing to subordinate the actors' command of poetry and passion to what he considered more important: their youthfulness and helplessness. Stage experience has proved that audiences cannot expect to have the lovers both guileless and experienced; and it must at least be conceded that youthful lovers, inexpert at both self-control and language, are consonant with Castellani's dominant purpose.

Certain of the other actors are less defensible. The parts of both the Nurse and Mercutio were, in the first place, badly cut; and neither actor was competent enough to make up for the loss. In the role of the bowdlerized Nurse, Flora Robson impressed the critics as "more a nanny than Shakespeare's Rabelaisian nurse" (Hatch), as a "dear old soul" (Walker), and as a "mild cliché" (Leo Lerman, *Mademoiselle,* November, 1954). Aldo Zollo as a Mercutio *sans* both his Queen Mab speech and the chaffing of the Nurse episode brought little to the mutilated role except a clownishly mischievous face; he was perhaps only a little too harshly recognized as "an ancestor of Chico Marx" (Walker). Castellani would doubtless have done well to make more of both these in-

dispensable roles. Their Shakespearian vigor and coarseness, their decidedly unromantic view of love, are precisely what Castellani needed to set off more emphatically the purer natures of Romeo and Juliet. Equally important, the softening of the Nurse, and the resultant loss of the upbraiding scene ("Ancient damnation! O most wicked fiend!") in which Juliet rejects her as a counselor, caused a blurring of Juliet's sense of aloneness and made less intense the following potion scene, which also was cut.

But there were redeeming aspects of Castellani's casting and character interpretation which almost made up for the distressing botching of Mercutio and the Nurse, and which restored much of the sense of the "piteous overthrows." Above all, the interpretation of Sebastian Cabot as Capulet, though drastically wrenching some of Shakespeare's lines, was perfectly in accord with the dramatist's avowed theme. Cabot's Capulet is no amiable, doddering host at the ball, speaking well of Romeo and trying with rough good cheer to keep the peace. There is a strain and grimness beneath an Italianate smoothness (and a personal plumpness), in his reception of Romeo; and his repressing of Tybalt's anger is less pronounced than the checking of his own. Here—for the first time and contrary to Shakespeare's text—is a very intelligent reason why the marriage of Romeo and Juliet must be clandestine. Guilio Garbinetti as Montague is also, though in a less prominent way, informingly new in the role. Castellani had obviously chosen him, as he chose many another, for his face. (Garbinetti was not an actor but a Venetian gondolier.) The face—angular, gaunt, sad with ancient Italian feuds—is not only a pointed contrast to the round, blandly cruel one of Capulet; it also is sufficiently like Romeo's to suggest the bleak future awaiting this young man if he were not to be immortalized by an early death.

Castellani was justifiably interested in faces. His intuitive way of choosing them is an acknowledged part of his cinematic genius. His camera broods over these interesting faces, singly and in groups. For the stage an interpretation so dependent upon line and mobility of features would never do. Shakespeare, in fact,

seldom describes a face in detail. But Castellani was translating for a different medium; and even those of us who affirm the primacy of the human voice speaking dramatic verse must confess that the Italian has caught nuances of facial expression—as in the Capulet ball or the grouping of mourners about the dead lovers—as satisfactory as words. Even when the face is not a mobile one, and Miss Shentall's is not, the cameraman has waited patiently for just the right angle or illumination or suddenly achieved expression to give it eloquence.

To say, finally, that Castellani has done more than critics have given him credit for doing, that he has, indeed, done almost precisely what he intended to do, is not necessarily to say that his *Romeo and Juliet* is an outstanding production or that it should have received more popular support than it apparently has so far done. In all likelihood, it is not so great a film as Olivier's *Henry V* or Mankiewicz's *Julius Caesar,* both of which are faithful to the text as well as the spirit of Shakespeare. But it is certainly a much better film than Orson Welles's *Macbeth* and probably a much better one than Olivier's *Hamlet,* both of which it significantly surpasses in fidelity to Shakespeare's *intentions.*

To a student of Shakespeare it is always pleasant, and usually possible, to make the pious generalization that the only successful way to do Shakespeare is to accept Shakespeare's text as well as his intentions. Mankiewicz did this with brilliant results in *Julius Caesar.* And even the MGM *Romeo and Juliet* succeeded incredibly merely by following Shakespeare with studious humility; it dumbfounded the critics (most of whom were totally unprepared for praise) and forced even the most hostile reviewers into an irritable acquiescence. But actually, when applied to Castellani's noble failure, this pious generalization proves to have a meaning no more profound than that it is safer to keep a stage play a stage play than it is to make it, entirely and profoundly, a motion picture. Castellani wanted, as none of his predecessors had wanted, a motion picture. One cannot deny that he has made one. And no one should deny that it was eminently worth doing.

That the result did not, as he had intended, impress even the sympathetic critics with the poignancy of Romeo and Juliet as lovers in a hostile world, is not mainly attributable to any defects in his translation from stage to screen. Most of the changes he made were conducive, as already noted, to a focus upon the predicament of the young couple; and, for those spectators who could silence Shakespeare's words in their mind long enough to give Castellani a fair hearing, the result was as deeply and beautifully disturbing a love tragedy as film artistry can produce. But most of the critics were not prepared to silence Shakespeare. They waited for the familiar words, and these did not come; they were surprised by climaxes which Castellani achieved not by words but by photographic short cuts; and, above all, they admired with a sense of its disastrous irrelevance the superb setting. No wonder that many people who normally would not miss a Shakespearian play conscientiously avoided this film. Critics had told them that it was "a pretty thing," but not Shakespeare; that it was a "sumptuous travelogue," a well-conducted museum tour, not a drama with a story and message.

What lesson, one wonders, will Castellani himself take from this disappointing experiment? Not, I hope, that it is aesthetically and morally wrong to translate Shakespeare. He need merely look back over seventeenth-, eighteenth-, and nineteenth-century adaptations of *Romeo and Juliet* to recognize that his own liberties with Shakespeare's text have been of the most innocent and moral kind. He is doubtless aware that former-day audiences not only tolerated but acclaimed the most preposterous changes in both the spirit and the letter of Shakespeare's text.

If Castellani submits humbly to any kind of instruction from this failure—and I trust that he will not—the lesson he should learn is a practical rather than an aesthetic one: it is no longer possible, as it had been ever since the seventeenth century, to alter Shakespeare and get away with it. Regardless of how stanch a producer's allegiance to Shakespeare's intentions, he will be judged by his allegiance to Shakespeare's text. The lesson is a hard one,

but probably no more unreasonable and no more permanent than the necessity which made seventeenth-century producers supply a happy ending, or which made eighteenth-century producers awaken the lovers for a final farewell in the Capulet vault, or which made nineteenth-century producers bowdlerize the play.

Regardless of the justice of Castellani's painful lesson, it is sad to step from the sparsely filled theater into the fully populated American city streets. For almost three hours, one had come to accept as normal a quietly passionate ancient world in which every physical shape, texture, and color was incredibly beautiful; in which all faces were worthy of long and anxious scrutiny; in which there were few words, but these the quintessence of Shakespeare's poetry; and in which two young people, who seemed to belong more to the story than to stage or screen, fled through brief sequences of Shakespeare's play. So immersed in Castellani's wonderfully hybrid world, one carries out into the heedless street throngs some of the proselytizing fervor that the Italian himself had brought to the venture. Critics who carried no absorbing emotion, none of the intended pity, from the experience are surely fit for treasons, stratagems, and spoils.

Films from Overseas

GERALD WEALES

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THIS IS A LITERARY QUARTER. English films have brought the work of George Orwell, Graham Greene, J. B. Priestley, and even Ronald Searle to local screens—more or less unhappily.

The failure of the cartoon version of Orwell's fable *Animal Farm,* which John Halas and Joy Batchelor produced and directed, is simply an extension of weaknesses already inherent in the original. The anger and bitterness that lie beneath Orwell's warning voice in *1984* and make it such an effective pamphlet, if not so effective a novel, are not often present in *Animal Farm.* There are, it is true, a few biting scenes, such as the barnyard version of the Moscow purge trials; but, for the most part, Orwell's ingenuity in finding direct parallels between Animal Farm and Soviet Russia is so beguiling that the reader sometimes forgets the point of the story in his appreciation of particularly clever inventions.

The film version has gone Orwell one better; it has completely discarded the message of the fable and has focused its attention on the processes. The five writers who worked out the story for the film became so interested in how the animals could master the mechanics of running a farm that Orwell's few descriptive paragraphs are spread across half the film. As much attention is given to the work of the farm—scenes, such as the one in which the ducks, wielding sickles in their beaks, cut the hay and drag it into an oblong heap which turns out to be two sheep balancing a ladder between them, an improvised haywagon—as is given to the growing power and corruption of the ruling pigs.

As if the farming sequences were not sufficiently like ordinary

cartoons, the producers have introduced a fluffy, gauche duckling, as cute and as saccharine as any character that ever came out of the Disney Studios, who is pointlessly underfoot for most of the picture. Otherwise, the film has reduced the number of characters, preferring to focus its attention upon the pigs Napoleon, Snowball, and Squealer, on Boxer the horse, and on Benjamin the mule. Such a reduction is perhaps practical although the absence is regrettable of such figures as Clover, the understanding old mare who remains loyal to the animal revolution even after Boxer has been carted away to the glue factory, and Mollie, the pretty trap horse who deserts the revolution for lump sugar and a ribbon to wear.

Of greater harm to Orwell's intention is the change that some of the characters undergo in their transference to the screen. The pigs come off best; they retain their essential viciousness, although it is inevitably softened by the fact that most of them seem unable to keep from resembling Porky Pig. Boxer, however, is no longer the stupid mass of muscle power that he is in the book; he still works himself to death for Animal Farm, but in the film he would never be capable of coining his famous maxim, "Comrade Napoleon is always right." Benjamin, the sardonic, unbelieving mule, who has a little of Orwell in him, is still taciturn in the film; but he works as hard as Boxer does for the farm, and he commands the counterrevolution—the film's most foolish invention, an enterprise that would hardly appeal to the mule of the book who expects that conditions will be bad under any circumstances. Moses the raven—who preaches of Sugarcandy Mountain, where all good animals go when they die, and who is the pet of farmer Jones and later of the pigs when they become powerful because his preaching is useful—has been completely freed of characterization in the film. There is a raven who sits on the edge of the barn occasionally; but, if it is Moses, he has become strangely silent.

When, at the end of the book, the animals look in the window of the farmhouse and see the pigs and the neighboring farmers

enjoying a game of cards, they discover that they cannot tell the pigs from the men. This is the moment for which the book was written; this is the message, the failure of the revolution, on which Orwell insists. The producers, however, are not satisfied to end in despair, even though the despair be a warning; the animals in the film must knock the house down and overthrow the pigs. In the end, *Animal Farm* gets its message, not from Orwell, but from Tom Mix—"Straight shooters always win; law-breakers always lose."

If it were possible to accept this film simply on its own terms, to forget that it is based on a source outside itself, one could find the cartoon an occasionally interesting, occasionally amusing essay in naïve political optimism. But inevitably, one imagines that the sugar-coated ending (maybe Moses the raven worked on the script, too) was devised in the hope that the film would be appealing to more people; and it is difficult not to resent the transformation of the prophet Orwell into the profit Orwell.

* * *

If Halas and Batchelor made mistakes in bringing *Animal Farm* to the screen, Ian Dalrymple made a more basic mistake in deciding that a film could be made of Graham Greene's beautiful novel *The Heart of the Matter.* Although he and Lesley Storm, who wrote the adaptation, have managed to get into the film at least some of Greene's preoccupation with mercy and with the confusion between love and happiness, they are unable to make Major Scobie's sufferings real.

Trevor Howard's performance as Scobie, which is adequate enough on the surface, is not able for all the twitches at the mouth and the pain around the eyes to communicate either the intensity or the nature of the man's interior struggle. In a sense, the movie has reduced Greene's novel to the bones of the book, or to the simple plot triangle. Scobie's problem is not his adultery with Helen Rolt nor his attempt to hide the absence of his love from his wife Louise. The heart of the novel, in fact the heart of the matter ("If one knew, he wondered, the facts, would one have to

feel pity even for the planets? if one reached what they called the heart of the matter?"), is Scobie's deep sense of pity for his wife, for Helen, for Wilson who has come to spy on him, for the whole of the African West Coast where he is a colonial policeman. It is this pity that makes him finally accept suicide, which in his Roman Catholic belief means damnation, to protect the two women from any more pain. The definition of his sense of pity begins in the novel long before Helen Rolt appears out of her shipwreck, and is apparent in his scene with the Portuguese captain and in his reaction to the suicide of young Pemberton. Both of these incidents are in the film; but, since they remain incidental, they fail to clarify the vague unrest that Scobie is saddled with.

The film, too, fails to provide the sense of sin breeding sin—the multiplication that follows on the first lie that Scobie must tell because of Helen, that begins even earlier when he fails to report the Portuguese captain for carrying an illegal letter. By deciding to spare Scobie's boy Ali, whose death in the book is the immediate reason for his decision in favor of suicide, the authors of the screen version have weakened the chain of events that lead inevitably to Scobie's death.

Even the meaning of the death is lost in the film because it is no longer clearly, deliberately suicide. In the book, the terrible thing for Scobie is the care with which he plans his suicide, hoping to mask it from those who live after him, but knowing that he faces only damnation. In the film, Scobie leaps into a fight among some water-front toughs, and is killed. It is easy enough to say that, in facing this gang alone, he knows that he is, in effect, committing suicide; but, from what has been seen of Scobie to that point, he would have intervened even had he not been contemplating his own death. Thus, although the film's conclusion may be accepted as suicide without reservation, the momentary nature of Scobie's decision waters into meaninglessness the slow and certain planning that his death has in the book.

Absent from the film, of course, is the larger meaning of the

book, the theological one which does not have to be accepted in order to understand and to be moved by Scobie's suffering. And, if the film cannot quite define the terrible quality of Scobie's pity for his fellow man, how can it be expected to suggest, as the book seems to do, that Scobie's pity is only a weak imitation of the pity of God and that Scobie—like Rose Pemberton in Greene's *Living Room*—may find that God is capable of a mercy that the Church cannot quite understand? These, after all, are the peculiar concerns, even the confusions, that plague Graham Greene, that run through most of his serious work. If the film had failed to express them, but had still made Major Scobie's suffering believable, it would have succeeded as a film. But it does not do so.

Both Maria Schell as Helen and, particularly, Elizabeth Allan as Louise give performances that make the women clear; but they are simple characters compared to Scobie who is far too complicated a person to be made plain by means of the camera. The use of the background, which might have helped toward a definition of Scobie, manages instead to get in the way. Director George More O'Ferrall becomes preoccupied with the exotic fact of Sierra Leone—as Carol Reed has done with the background of *An Outcast of the Islands*—and his camera wanders off as if it has some travelogue intentions all its own. Only the heat is successfully communicated, and it is more important to an understanding of Louise than it is to an understanding of Scobie. There is no indication in the film of why the colony should have such a hold on Scobie, for that hold is another indication of his pity.

Father Rank who, like Father James in *The Living Room,* has a sense of his own inadequacy, becomes irrelevant in the movie. In the novel when Scobie most needs help, Father Rank's failure to find any words beyond the conventional ones of the confessional is part of the pattern of Scobie's destruction. Although the movie retains the early talk with Scobie in which Father Rank reveals his own sense of failure, the film's inability to show the close connection between that failure and Scobie's death thus turns the priest into a pointless character.

Many other scenes could be mentioned to indicate that the filmed version of *The Heart of the Matter* has been unable to take the audience inside Scobie. The basic problem is the almost impossible task to present so complicated an inner conflict in the visual terms that are dictated by the technique of the film. In a movie like *On the Waterfront* where the struggle within a character is much clearer and needs less articulation, the actor can project what is going on inside him. Trevor Howard's task was much more difficult than the one that faced Marlon Brando, and he failed at it. *The Heart of the Matter* is not a bad film. As an unhappy love story set in the English colony of Sierra Leone, it seems to be a reasonably good movie weakened by a number of glances at irrelevant material. As the story of Graham Greene's Major Scobie, it is singularly unsuccessful.

* * *

An Inspector Calls, one of J. B. Priestley's garrulous excursions into the supernatural, is as determinedly moral as either *Animal Farm* or *The Heart of the Matter* and much duller. When Inspector Poole appears at the Birling mansion, supposedly to ask questions about the death of Eva Smith, he is intent on showing to each of the Birlings and to Sheila's fiancé that they are all guilty, by omission or commission, of Eva's death; Priestley wants to tell us that we all have a social responsibility to our fellow creatures. Within the first few minutes of the film, Priestley's intention is clear; a series of flash backs show the relation of each character to the dead girl and serve only as repetition of a basically simple theme. Like an earnest schoolmaster, Priestley (or Desmond Davis, who adapted the film from Priestley's play) makes certain that we have not missed any of the points; after each revelation, some one of the characters (usually Sheila, the daughter) is called upon to summarize the argument so far.

The film is slow, obvious, and unimaginative. Director Guy Hamilton's one interesting idea of placing the people always in depth, usually with the speaker's face huge and pushed to one side of the screen in front, permits the camera to follow the reactions of the listeners; but such placement becomes stock and repetitious

before the film comes to an end. Alastair Sim's performance as the inspector, rather more fey than supernatural, helps enliven the picture a little. But even the endless mobility of his face, the arched eyebrows, and the wide wet smile are not enough to hide that *An Inspector Calls* is basically uncinematic, is simply a filmed play and an overwritten one at that.

* * *

Alastair Sim has much more to do with much less point in *The Belles of St. Trinian's,* in which he plays the headmistress of that unlikely girl's school and her race track tout brother. The film, which was inspired by Ronald Searle's sharp, funny drawings of public-school monsters, is remarkably free of inspiration. The script, contrived by Frank Launder, Sidney Gilliat, and Val Valentine, is a tiresome confusion involving an Arabian princess, a stolen race horse, and the school's lack of funds. Both Sim and Joyce Grenfell, who plays a police spy, go manfully through their comic routines with a minimum of success. Only George Cole, as a Cockney contact man for the lawbreaking schoolgirls, has anything very funny to contribute. The producers made a mistake by having Searle's cartoon figures accompany the titles of the film; under the circumstances, it would have been just as well if they had not reminded the audience of the cleverness of the film's source.

* * *

Even *The Intruder,* another film from director Guy Hamilton, may be said to have literary connections since its screenplay was written by novelist Robin Maugham with John Hunter. It is the story of Ginger Edwards, a heroic soldier in World War II, who has fallen to burglary, an occupation which brings him on his first try to the home of his ex-colonel. The film follows the colonel's efforts to find Ginger and to discover what has gone wrong with each member of the old tank group that he uncovers, we are given a flash back. At the end, of course, the colonel's trust gives Ginger the courage to surrender himself and face the consequences; and the audience is left with the certainty that the

colonel will take care of Ginger when he is released from the prison and that the comradeship of the war years will not again relapse into indifference. The flash backs to the war years and the unhappy first day of Ginger's demobilization never quite get integrated with the search for the young man. But a lack of unity is one of the film's minor faults, however. Despite some good acting, particularly from Dennis Price as a cowardly snob, the film's main problem is that the characters and story fail to command any interest.

* * *

Whereas the English films this quarter concern themselves with literary matters, from France comes *Holiday for Henrietta,* a Julien Duvivier film which has its fun at the expense of the movie makers. In it, two script writers argue about the film collaboration, and the story of Henrietta and Robert is seen from both writers' points of view. One of them wants the movie to be a simple tale of love in Paris; the other wants it to be full of violence, chase, and sudden death, the materials that he calls "adult." The idea begins to run thin before the picture is finished, but Duvivier manages to take some quite funny digs at the two most popular forms of continental film making—the sentimental story of everyday life that runs to banality and the extravagant hokum that is sometimes considered more serious than our native cops-and-robbers drama because it is a little more explicit about sex. The best joke in the picture is Hildegarde Neff's performance as an oversexed bareback rider, a caricature that is much like the performance that we expect from Marlene Dietrich.

The Art of Jacques Tati

ANDREW C. MAYER

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

AT THIS LATE DATE, it seems certain that anyone who is a devotee of art films, slapstick, or television has had at least a glimpse of Jacques Tati. *Jour de Fête,* his first film to be shown in the United States, achieved a moderate success; but with *M. Hulot's Holiday,* Tati has taken the country by storm.

The two pictures are, surprisingly enough, extremely different, both in technique and in effect. *Jour de Fête* is, first of all, a story—that of a bicycling French postman whose efforts to keep up with a mechanical age are somewhat less than successful. He is a real and recognizable protagonist; and the plot, what there is of it, moves from beginning to end and then stops.

But, neither plot nor character development gets much attention in *M. Hulot's Holiday.* Although the title seems to indicate that the story is about one man's vacation, the film is really a pastiche of unrelated visual jokes. On the whole, they are very, very funny; but the absence of a plot is decidedly a disadvantage.

The picture begins at a railroad station, where frantic holiday crowds are utterly bewildered by the strident and incomprehensible noises made by the track announcer. They run, en masse, down the stairs of one platform and emerge at another just as a train is pulling out. In seeing the sudden shift of the people, the audience anticipates their reaction to the stentor. Instead of this scene being the usual establishing or geography shot, it is not really followed up; and the spectator is left almost as confused as the film's participants.

In a later sequence, which seems totally unconnected with any of its predecessors, Tati is sitting in his kayak, rather negligently

painting it. He has placed the can of paint on the beach; the waves carry it out and then back in again, just in time for him to dip his brush. In this, as well as in the opening scene, there is a kind of logic: a feeling that this is, essentially, the way in which waves act and crowds react. The credulity of the audience is strained a bit further, however, when the kayak—which is a flimsy craft at best—splits in the middle, folds over with Tati still inside, and then floats slowly in to shore. This is unlikely, to say the least, but the possibility of its ever happening arises from the fact that such boats are eminently destructible.

One of the funniest episodes in the picture, although perhaps not in the best of taste, occurs when Tati accidentally drives his jalopy (itself the subject of many jokes) into the midst of a funeral procession. In the confusion, an inner tube somehow falls to the ground; and, when Tati picks it up, it is covered with leaves. One of the mourners silently and solemnly takes the tube from him, mistaking it for a wreath. This impossible situation has its own modicum of truth: inner tubes *do* have the same shape as wreaths; and, when they are covered with leaves, the resemblance is enhanced.

This resemblance is a visual truth, whereas the destructibility of kayaks is rather an intellectual one. The visual element is, on the whole, far more conspicuous throughout the film. There is one marvelously funny scene in which Tati, while continually running backward to return the ball in a ping-pong game, keeps disrupting two bridge foursomes. Of course, Tati's prodigious opponent is never visible; he remains a brooding omnipresence in the next room. After one particularly strenuous volley, Tati emerges to retrieve the ball; and, by means of a strategically placed amplifier, we hear the familiar sound of the ball dribbling to a stop. Nobody plays ping-pong like Tati; nobody could. But the exaggeration of his gestures, like the amplification of the sound of the ball, merely distorts by magnifying phenomena we know to exist.

The phenomenon of the audible but invisible ping-pong ball is one most people have experienced. Even when removed from the context of the game—and it is essential to the joke that the game itself is never seen—the sound can be recognized. An inner tube, removed from the context of the car, is still an inner tube.

But Tati can be more versatile with this technique of truncation than his purely comic scenes indicate. In one unique and extremely touching sequence, there is a close shot of two small hands reaching over a counter and giving a hundred-franc note to an ice-cream vendor. In return, the hands receive two large ice-cream cones. Then, there is a full shot of a serious small boy, slowly and deliberately carrying his prize up to the hotel, where his companion is waiting for him. He reaches the door—which, like the ice-cream counter, the path to the hotel, and the cones themselves—is far too big for him. He stretches as high as he can in order to reach the latch; and, in his concentration on this new task, he forgets the cones and loosens his grip on them; and they turn upside down from their own top-heaviness. Only a benevolent destiny prevents them from spilling. Like all small boys, he is too small even for his small adventures; and he is subjected to physical laws too vast for him to understand or even notice.

This is a wonderful scene, but it has no connection with any of the other wonderful scenes. This is not a picture about a man's holiday, because the man scarcely appears during the first ten minutes; and, when he does, he is not really a principal, for the incidents do not concern him except superficially and momentarily. Rather, he is an animated prop, like the anonymous passerby who slips on someone's banana peel—it could have been anyone. The picture, therefore, has no real theme.

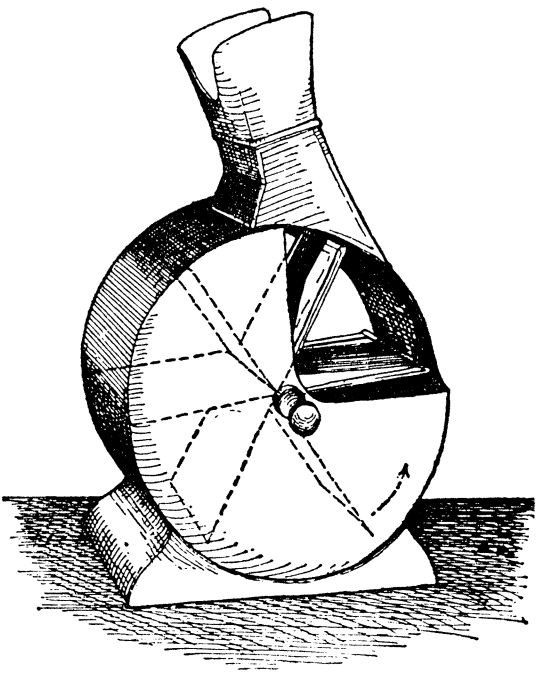
In contrast with *M. Hulot's Holiday,* in all of Chaplin's films—and the example is fairly analogous because Chaplin's humor too is predominantly visual—there is always a subject, even if there is not always a plot. Chaplin *is* *The Immigrant,* and *The Cure* is something he really experiences; his stage business is only an

incident, although an extremely important one. He too is a virtuoso, and his parody of a boxer in *City Lights* is certainly as adept as the one with which Tati favored his television audience. But Chaplin goes beyond this, and has made films, rather than a series of filmed episodes. That Tati will eventually do the same is a hope.

If *M. Hulot's Holiday* seems a bit spotty and episodic, this may perhaps be explained in terms of Tati's earlier work. For, although he now performs as actor, director, author, or producer, his beginning as an entertainer was not as any one of these functions. He began as a professional rugby player, and his first "act" was a caricature of certain players and referees, which he did for his teammates. His first public appearance as a comedian came in 1934, but it was a number of years before he achieved recognition as a music-hall performer. Then, after he had established himself in the music halls, Tati began his career in films, with his earliest screen venture in short subjects, several of which were made with René Clement. None of his prewar pictures, however, achieved much success. After the war, he returned to films and did a short called *School for Postmen,* which later was expanded into the full-length feature *Jour de Fête.* Although this expansion was effected with considerable success, it nevertheless gives a useful insight into the deficiencies of *M. Hulot's Holiday.* So many of the sequences would be so much more appropriate as short subjects or even as vaudeville acts that their expansion into a full-length picture occasionally seems quite unfortunate.

It is interesting to note that *Jour de Fête* was shown in America with subtitles, whereas *M. Hulot's Holiday* was not. This may partially account for the greater popularity of the latter picture, since it indicates that more use was made of nonverbal humor. Consequently, the picture has been promoted as one which has broken the language barrier. And, although it is true that subtitles would have been superfluous in *M. Hulot's Holiday,* this is by no means an unmixed blessing. In the earliest, as well as in the

simplest stereopticon, films there are no subtitles either. But those films are entirely comprehensible without them. Subtitles were introduced very early, however, in order to provide continuity; and this seems to be the one element in which *M. Hulot's Holiday* is lacking. Perhaps in Tati's new film, *My Uncle,* a more judicious combination of sight and sound may be achieved.



The first moving picture machine. In 1861, Coleman Sellers of Philadelphia made a series of six posed stills of his two children at play. Mounting these photographs on a paddle wheel, something like the later Mutoscope, he showed them through this apparatus. He recorded the scenes with stereoscopic lenses as well, thus pioneering the first moving pictures in three dimensions. (Ben J. Lubschez, *The Story of the Motion Picture.*)

A Father's Children's Hour

RICHARD ROWLAND

RICHARD ROWLAND is well known to *Quarterly* readers. Formerly a member of the faculty of the English Department at Columbia University, he has more recently been working toward a D.Phil. at Oxford. While in England, he gave a talk about children's reading over the B.B.C. Effective this fall, Mr. Rowland became an assistant professor of English at Rollins College in Florida.

LAST YEAR, in the pages of *The Reporter,* Marya Mannes praised without discrimination all the British Broadcasting Corporation's programs for children. It was not clear from her article how much of what she praised she had seen or listened to; she had, at any rate, looked at the *Radio Times* and noted what was available.

Certainly, what is available is less offensive than much of what American radio and television provide for children, but this is negative praise. I have had nearly two years of the B.B.C. now, and my enthusiasm is more restrained than Miss Mannes's. During the debate on "horror comics" which engaged everyone's attention in England last year, the National Union of Teachers published a list of approved comics, which were described as "harmless *or* educational [my italics]." I am afraid that the "Children's Hour" on the B.B.C. television and radio falls too often into one of those rather depressing categories. There is nothing wrong with education, let me hasten to say; but what child switches on the radio at 5 P.M. to be educated? When the B.B.C. is not educating, it too often slips into the world of "approved" comics, a world almost wholly without content or meaning, though—insofar as vacuity is harmless—harmless.

It is a curious fact that the B.B.C.'s "Schools Programme" in the morning and early afternoon, which is designed to educate, is often more exhilarating than the evening "Children's Hour." History is presented through vividly dramatized anecdotes—from Herodotus, perhaps, or the trials of the Pilgrim Fathers made immediate without recourse to false melodrama. For English classes,

there are such delights as dramatizations of *Treasure Island* or E. B. White's *Charlotte's Web*. In music, the various instruments, tempi, and simple fugal structure are clearly explained and demonstrated.

These programs are a great credit to the B.B.C. in its role as a public service. How many schools use what is offered is another matter. I have talked to no teacher who has indicated any very strong reliance on the B.B.C.; perhaps this is a good thing, for I would hate to see the passive acceptance of a dramatization of *Treasure Island* replace the child's own discovery of that incomparable yarn or the sort of delight in knowing which a good teacher can induce. But for certain subjects, radio can clearly be most valuable, and especially to the small or remote school, which cannot hope to have all the instruments of the orchestra on tap or an extensive library to supplement the individual teacher's limitations. During the past two years, when my two elder children (now six and eight) were home with colds or whatnot—as children of such ages so often are—they were more likely, I believe, to be both occupied and amused by the supposedly educational "School Programme" than by the supposedly entertaining Children's Hour."

Some of the faults in "Children's Hour" seem to be merely organizational. Here is one hour a day when the B.B.C. hopes to amuse as many of Britain's children as possible or, more precisely, fifty-five minutes, for the weather report fills the last five minutes. How to cope with the variety of tastes and the great range of age? My own solution to the age problem would be to give half the program to young children and half to middle-aged children. (The really older children are probably fending for themselves on the "Light Programme.") But the B.B.C. has no such simple scheme; I have not been able to establish that they have any scheme at all. Some nights, the younger children are excluded entirely, and the *Radio Times* duly warns them of this by printing FOR OLDER LISTENERS above the details of the program. On other days, the program will be a series of nursery rhymes and

very simple stories which will strike any child over seven as hopelessly silly. This is frustrating to the child who looks forward to "his" hour on the radio, but need it be so? Fifty-five minutes is long for a program; not many children have the staying power to sit still for so long. Why not regularly give the first twenty-five minutes to the small children and the remaining half hour to the older group, and thus try to hold the attention of both groups seven days a week? Certainly the occasional program in which a five-minute story for babies is followed by fifty minutes of sober information for older children is designed to irritate both children and parents; among other defects, it makes meals hard to relate to the B.B.C. Shall we wait till after "Children's Hour" for tea? But then after five or ten minutes, "Children's Hour" abandons the small ones, and you find restless children calling for food that is not yet prepared.

Similar to this failure to establish a clear pattern for the different age groups is the too inclusive scheme of "Children's Hour." It attempts to reproduce for children nearly all the activities of adult radio. There is a sports program (once a month), a quiz program, a radio newsreel, book and film reviews, nature talks (full of recordings of bird calls), serials, music, amateur hours, etc. In the abstract, this sounds admirable. But when, for instance, Sunday night is given over entirely, as it sometimes is, to a church service, I balk. Sunday night is, by official decree, either inspirational or patriotic; and perhaps this must be accepted. But surely some pretence of entertainment should be kept up.

There are other persistent irritations. The B.B.C. is self-consciously regional, and this is splendid; London does not foist its accent and tastes on all of England, for there are independent regional programs. But often, London borrows these regional programs, and I have doubts about the wisdom of this on "Children's Hour." Children, I have always found, resent dialect. As a child, I would never read *Kidnapped* because of the mysterious Scots tongue in which its characters spoke; my wife confesses to a similar feeling about Uncle Remus. But on "Children's Hour," a

surprising number of the programs seem to be couched in impenetrable Scots, singsong Welsh, or other quaintnesses, which delight me now but must merely impede a story for most children. One program, "May We Recommend," is particularly perverse in this way. Coming from Scotland once a month, it dramatizes excerpts from famous old books. Since the chunks dramatized are too bitty to arouse anyone's interest very much, this program is an unsatisfactory affair anyway; but, no matter what the book—*Anne of Green Gables, Feats on the Fiord, Huckleberry Finn*—it is all overlaid with a gentle but unmistakable Scottish burr.

Bad for another reason is an old faithful program called "Nursery Singsong" in which various "Aunties" and "Uncles" sing nursery rhymes, an innocuous enough form of entertainment were it not that the manner of singing is atrociously coy and condescending, the simpering sort of silliness which assumes that children are tasteless and stupid and must be nudged to appreciate any joke. My wife and I disagree on the explanation for this program. She thinks the particular singers were chosen for the program because they sing that way naturally; I refuse to believe that anyone could do so; I believe that they sing that way because they have been hired for this program, which is even harder to forgive. Listening to them, I realize how straightforwardly adult is the manner used toward children by such American singers as Charity Bailey, Burl Ives, Tom Glazer, Danny Kaye.

But much of "Children's Hour" is excellent. Friday-night serials are likely to be more vigorous than other programs; the theory is, I suppose, that the children don't have to go to school tomorrow, so a few screams won't do any serious harm. We have just finished hearing *Counter Spy,* a clean exciting action tale that is rather better than many adult thrillers and much relished by my young family, although they held their ears in delighted horror at the cliff-hanging conclusion of each chapter. *Alice in Wonderland* and *Through the Looking Glass* have been serialized in loving and witty performances. E. Nesbit and Mrs. Molesworth have been the sources of other serials which were successful with

my daughters. The rule holds in "Children's Hour," as for the B.B.C. generally, that straight drama has a higher standard than almost any other department. Not that all of the "Children's Hour" plays are good; like juvenile publishing in England, they are long on a rather silly vein of fantasy and short on any sort of reasonable accounting of ordinary children's lives. But on the whole, the level of "Children's Hour" is high.

In addition to "Children's Hour" and the "Schools Programme," there are two other regular features of children's radio—one deplorable, one admirable. Our Saturday mornings start with a children's request program which is abysmal. The same dreary round of "How much is that doggy in the window?" and "The Teddy Bear's Picnic," interspersed with "Greensleeves" and "There is a green hill far away" has kept us going for two years. Alternate weeks, we touch rock bottom with a peculiarly nasty ditty about a love affair between a pink toothbrush and a blue toothbrush. It may be protested that this is a request program and that this is what the children want. But the program clearly gets many more requests than can be played; and children want, on the whole, what they have heard. This program will never get out of the toothbrush rut unless it gives the children a chance to hear more varied music.

This must be an annoying program even to its devotees; for it has a rule, apparently, that nothing longer than a single record side can be played. *Peter and the Wolf* turns up periodically, but only as a snatch taken out of the middle. Even two sides are too much; if you request *Tubby the Tuba,* you will only get half the story. This program makes "Big John and Sparkie," who used to be our Saturday-morning diet in America, look quite dazzling in contrast. More than anything else, it reminds us how lucky American children are in the splendid records available to them. There is nothing in England remotely comparable to the Young People's Records or the Children's Record Guild series. Almost the only broadcasted records which display any glimmering of taste or distinction are American in origin, notably those by Burl Ives and Danny Kaye.

At 1:45 weekday afternoons, there is a fifteen-minute program for preschool children called "Listen with Mother." For this I have nothing but praise. Its scheme is simple: a few songs—not the most obvious ones—played and sung with straightforward sympathy, followed by a little story which is simply but strongly plotted, based almost always on everyday life, generally humorous as well as understanding.

For children's television, there is less to be said, but then English television in general is still fumbling uncertainly. The most elementary rules of television production seem never to have occurred to the B.B.C. producers. They take cruel delight in making jugglers or tap dancers perform before the confusing background of an audience sitting around at tables. Or they televise a stage play direct from a theater with no attempt to adapt it to the new medium. My family were delighted with a performance of A. A. Milne's *Toad of Toad Hall* done in this manner; but I found it nerve-wracking because the screen was cluttered with bits and pieces of musty stage scenery, so that the principal actors were almost indistinguishable from old rags of burlap representing trees.

But television is still a novelty to my daughters. They see it only when they visit their grandparents; and, though highly critical of radio, they will watch anything on TV with patient wonder. They were highly indignant once when their grandmother firmly snapped off the set on the grounds that the program had turned into a "Children's Hour" in Welsh which they couldn't understand. What did that matter? It was television, wasn't it? And to prove their point, some weeks later when someone less strong-minded than Grandma was in command, they sat openmouthed through the whole of a Welsh "Children's Hour."

Whereas the B.B.C. children's radio is often admirable, the B.B.C. children's television is almost always deplorable. It crawls with puppets, puppets notable for their inability to do anything much beyond joggle inanely on their strings, puppets whose personalities seem to bear no relation to any reality and whose voices

all seem to be the same girlish giggle. One responds to good puppets with the surprised comment, "They're so human!" This is how one feels before the Piccoli or Professor Skupa's puppets or even an expert Punch and Judy. But it is a remark no one thinks of making about the B.B.C. puppets. Bill and Ben the Flowerpot Men and Mr. Turnip are my unfavorites of the dreary lot, because of the desperate aimlessness of their activities. They have their quota of minutes to fill, and that seems to be the only controlling thought behind their activities. These very characters, it is only fair to admit, are very popular with British children; but their popularity, I insist, proves little enough. The B.B.C. still has an absolute monopoly of television; if children don't watch Mr. Turnip, there is nothing else to look at. Perhaps the competition of commercial television, when it arrives next year, will drive the B.B.C. into professionalism or even into the exercise of imagination.

"Children's Newsreel" is another example of how unimaginative the B.B.C. television for children can be. A promising title—the world is full of excitement and activity; how splendid to offer the children their own specially prepared version of news events! But watch "Children's Newsreel" for a few weeks, and you discover that the world consists almost entirely of animals; it reverses Terence's line: "I am a human being; I am interested in everything human." "Life in the zoo" is a more appropriate description of what goes on in this program. Of course, children love to look at animals, but even they must tire of the sameness of this diet. Throw in a few bathing beauties and the crude buffooneries of Lew Lehr, and you will scarcely be able to tell it from Fox *Movietone News* which, as any film fan knows, has very little to do with the news.

Pedestrian, too, are the variety shows which waste so many hours. Too much of children's television, someone complained recently in the *Times,* seems to be designed for the tired business child. The toothy hearty *compére,* the just barely professional vaudeville turns, the hectic efforts at comedy—these present at times an unconscious parody of the worst sort of evening tele-

vision. Amateurs are better, for when juvenile amateurs are being interviewed, they are often fresh and natural and appealing, however undistinguished their ensuing performance may be on the xylophone or musical glasses.

The best of children's television, again, are the plays. Last Christmas, there was a wholly enchanting *Arabian Nights,* adventure, done with style, humor, and pace. More recently, *The Children of the New Forest* was serialized with a straightforward vigor that delighted my family, although when we returned to Captain Marryat's clumsy prose we could not imagine what had kept the book alive long enough for it to be televised. These tales were handled with real care; the picture was always carefully stripped to essentials, the tiny screen was never cluttered, and the camera moved with such freedom that we were never aware of the artificial limitations of the medium. In such programs, there is some hope that the B.B.C.'s television staff may yet learn to feel at home with their medium; perhaps then, some of the distinction and thought to be found in "Listen with Mother" or the best of the radio programs may begin to infiltrate children's television.

Meanwhile, as we prepare to return to the United States, my younger daughter asks plaintively, "Is there 'Children's Hour' in America?" Perhaps someone can tell me how to answer that.

"Labor Day: San Francisco"

JACK HOWARD

JACK HOWARD is labor reporter for the San Francisco *Chronicle*. Several of his articles have appeared in the *Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television,* as well as in *The Nation, Frontier,* and *Journalism Quarterly.* His analysis of the struggle now going on between advocates of free- and pay-television appeared in the Summer, 1953, issue of the *Quarterly.*

A YEAR AGO—on Labor Day, 1954—television viewers in the San Francisco Bay area received proof that a great deal of imagination and a basic idea can overcome a severely limited budget to produce a serious, purposeful television program. The show in question was "Labor Day: San Francisco," sponsored by the San Francisco Labor Council of AFL unions. In many ways, the production entered a field previously all but barren of labor-sponsored programs; in this context, the program represented a departure for Bay area unions. Thus this program has been most significant for the newest medium because it has indicated that the labor movement, which has an important message to get across to the general public, is beginning to consider television as a subject for attention.

But of general importance and application is the fact that the San Francisco Labor Council, with an expenditure of less than $800, was able to present its half-hour message of the importance of Labor Day to an audience estimated to have been at least double that which could have been expected to watch a Labor Day parade.

"Labor Day: San Francisco" was frankly a substitute for the traditional parade—a tradition increasingly unpopular in large cities congested with traffic, in cities from which many persons flee for the last long week end of the summer. Experimenting with a new approach, the Labor Council sought professional writers and producers and presented a program surprisingly effective considering that it was an original and inaugural essay.

It is most important to stress properly the financial limitation;

many organizations with small budgets have shied away from television because of the competition of network shows costing many times more per minute than did the Labor Council's entire half-hour production. A shoddy production with the budget showing through is worse than none at all; so, whenever a creditable show is mounted within the limits of an astonishingly small budget, the lesson is of wide importance.

"Labor Day: San Francisco" was telecast from 9:00 to 9:30 P.M., September 6, 1954, over KGO-TV (American Broadcasting Company). The program is believed to have been the first union-sponsored television production with its goal the explanation of the significance of the labor movement—and specifically, the labor movement of the broadcast area.

It should be remembered that the Labor Day parade is an honored custom of the labor movement. Originally designed to demonstrate to the community the size and the unity of unions, the parade of course has a reciprocating effect upon the members who participate. San Francisco, with its history as one of the first and most strongly unionized areas in the West, has had particularly extensive Labor Day celebrations that have involved floats, vehicles, and thousands of marching union members. In the last decade, however, interest and participation in Labor Day parades have so diminished that the observances are officially on an alternate-year basis in San Francisco; and even this arrangement has not proved satisfactory.

Last summer, the idea developed among leaders of the San Francisco Labor Council—made up of unions representing a quarter of a million workers in the city—to examine the possibility of sponsoring a television program as a means of calling community attention to Labor Day. Dave Selvin, who edits the twice-monthly newspaper published by the Council, was named executive producer when it was decided to go ahead with the program. The show was budgeted for $700 and the final costs did not exceed $800. KGO-TV contributed the time, but the Labor Council paid all the program's production costs.

What an estimated 200,000 persons saw that evening was a business agent explaining some of the principles and objectives of the labor movement and reviewing the history of labor in Northern California since the days of the Missions. Occasionally, he walked over to the "window" of his office where a rear-screen projector was used to show newsreel clips of past parades and other materials to illustrate the account. Easel shots of photographs and drawings were also used.

There are other union-sponsored television programs, notably the AFL Retail Clerks' productions in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. The latter is being considered for network showing on the A.B.C. through a coöperative arrangement with locals of the union in cities throughout the United States. Several years ago, the International Association of Machinists sponsored in California a series of dramatized presentations of some of the social problems labor unions meet and deal with. There have also been one-shot affairs, such as the Labor Day addresses by presidents of both the AFL and CIO last year.

Reaction to the San Francisco Labor Council's program came from both within the labor movement and the community as well. The Northern California Academy of Television named the program one of the four outstanding local public-service shows of 1954. Local union officials reported that their members approved the show and its intent, and many voted to support such productions in the future. One union called for the Labor Council to investigate the possibility of having a regular weekly program designed to report to the public on union activities. Another Labor Day program was produced this year, with the clear possibility that it will become a regular annual production.

The script for "Labor Day: San Francisco" was written by Gordon Waldear. Certainly the program, as presented, represented no startling deviation in techniques; the important considerations, of course, were the labor sponsorship, the content of the program, and the achievement of a creditable production at what must be acknowledged to be a minimum cost. That such a

program, utilizing stills, movie clips, drawings, and rear-screen projection, could be produced at a cost of $800 is of great interest to the medium and its potential users.

The program began with a brief exposition of labor's economic and social goals, after an introduction suggesting the continuity betweeen the program and the parades of former years.

MUSIC UNDER

MCU window area of union office; rear-screen projection of Market Street beyond window

EMCEE: (Off camera)
Yes, old Market Street has seen plenty of parades . . . but few so big—so memorable as the mighty Labor Day parades of the past.

DB to see Emcee standing at window

Remember them? . . . Great columns stretching from the Embarcadero to Civic Center—and spilling over into a dozen side streets. Lively bands . . . gay flags . . . gold-fringed banners of every size and color . . . clever floats. And people . . . vast armies of working men and women . . . white-capped sailors . . . painters . . . carpenters . . . salesgirls . . . printers . . . barbers . . . musicians. They were all there—marching together in an inspiring show of unity and strength.

PAN with Emcee to desk

MUSIC OUT
There wasn't a labor parade in San Francisco today . . . maybe television is today's version of yesterday's parade . . . but the spirit of those past parades is marching. Nothing can change that. San Francisco is pretty famous. Seal Rocks . . . Fisherman's Wharf . . . Chinatown . . . Golden Gate Park—all attract a lot of attention. But this city of ours is still basically a city of people—working people.

CU sign on desk: "Business Agent." TILT UP to Emcee

The people built San Francisco . . . made it a great place to live . . . gave meaning to its attractions. Without them, the city just wouldn't be what it is today. In fact, it just wouldn't be . . . You know, it's a pretty wonderful thing to look back over the past—to see where we've been and how far we've come. We wouldn't have traveled so far so fast if

it weren't for our labor unions—unions like mine. They've worked endlessly—our working people and their unions—with employers . . . with city officials—in a united effort to build a bigger and better San Francisco.

DISSOLVE to CU of Emcee

And these unions have worked with just one basic purpose . . . people—their problems and their welfare. We care what happens to people and that's what sets unions apart from so many other organizations in this cold and impersonal world of ours. Unions are and always have been working—and fighting if necessary—for members and their needs.

PAN with Emcee to wall bulletin board mounted with still pix

DISSOLVE for CU of still pix of home

Working to see that all of us—whatever our job—have decent homes to live in . . . To provide good schools for our youngsters to attend . . .

PAN to still pix of school

PAN to still pix of park

To give us the time and facilities for relaxation and recreation—where we can take things easy and have fun in our hours away from work . . .

PAN to still pix of hospital

To guarantee good medical and hospital care when the need arises—without forcing us into debt . . .

Emcee

And, of course, to make sure that our people—and all workers—earn decent wages . . . work reasonable hours . . . and work under safe, healthful conditions.

All of this for union members alone? For working people only? No—for the welfare and prosperity of our city are bound tight to the welfare of its working men and women. What's good for the workers is good for the city. And—likewise—what's good for the city is good for the workers. This is a lesson organized labor learned a long time ago—and, as a result, the welfare of the city and its working people have grown together.

Emcee moves to bookcase, takes out book and places it on desk

Labor started learning that lesson a century and more ago. It's all written out in the story of San Francisco and its working people—a story that began before the gold rush . . . in the days when the American era here was just getting started.

DISSOLVE to CU of book: *The Story of Labor in San Francisco*

It's a story with all the ingredients of a Hollywood thriller—adventure . . . blood and thunder . . . romance . . . humor . . . tragedy . . . fabulous people—all set against the background of a young, lusty city.

WAVER SCREEN: (Audio oscillator)

BACKGROUND MUSIC

There followed a historical survey of San Francisco since the Mission days, with special emphasis placed on the part labor played in this history. Old prints and photographs were used to illustrate the narrator's account, and background music was selected to suit the times. Although the narrative had to include many facts well known to the audience, such as the 1906 earthquake and fire, provision was also made for discussion of significant developments in labor history that undoubtedly were not as well known. The beginnings of unionism in San Francisco, for example, were covered in this narration:

On easel: Copy of early *California Star* newspaper

ANNOUNCER:
Then in 1846, Sam Brannan—one of our city's most colorful figures—arrived and brought with him the first skilled tradesmen—among them printers to publish his newspaper *The California Star.* These printers demanded certain guarantees from Brannan in return for their labors.

On easel: Drawing of *Star* printer at work

Thus it began—the unending march of San Francisco's working men and women toward some measure of security and dignity.

On easel: Drawing or still pix of gold-rush scene

BACKGROUND MUSIC—'49er THEME
Two years later—in 1848—gold was found in the Sierra Nevada foothills, and a great migration began—a migration that changed the course of history and changed the social and industrial patterns of old Yerba Buena.

On easel: Drawing or still pix of San Francisco during gold rush

In the next turbulent years, labor prospered in our city. Just about everyone—including the crews of hundreds of ships which lay stranded and

rotting in the bay—had gone to the gold fields. Workers who stayed here made their own terms for work. Some earned as much as $20 a day—fantastic wages in those days . . . and a century later still a high wage.

On easel: Still pix of early carpenters in San Francisco

Organized labor was born here in 1849 when the carpenters of the city joined forces to make a united demand for a pay raise. But they didn't organize formally.

On easel: Emblem of SF Typographical Society

That honor was left to the printers who in 1850 formed the San Francisco Typographical Society—the forerunner of today's local printing unions. The printers—in force—asked and won several important concessions from their employers.

On easel: Montage of emblems and insignia of early unions

That broke down the barriers. Seeing what trade unions could accomplish for their members, men of other trades organized. In the next decade teamsters . . . bricklayers . . . tailors . . . coopers . . . musicians . . . and the workers in dozens of other crafts formed unions—most of them only short-lived. Of these early societies—as they were then proudly called—only the printers maintained their group continuously through the years—and they were the first to become affiliated with a national organization.

On easel: CU of ITU emblem
DISSOLVE to
On easel: Still pix of San Francisco 1859

The 1850's were hectic but productive years for San Francisco. It grew from a remote village to a metropolis of the West. It passed through an era of frenzied finance and—though still lusty and rowdy—began to find stability and maturity. Organized labor too became stable—a definite part of the city's life.

Another important part of the historical narrative—as indeed, of the whole program—was that devoted to acquainting the public with some of the ideas and practices of the unions. The use and purpose of union labels, a subject quite often completely foreign to the outsider, was touched on in this manner:

On easel: Still pix early labor group

But, behind this spectacle of luxury and power, the working people were moving—moving to end child labor . . . to halt the importation of Oriental laborers . . . to organize their unions . . . to end sweatshop conditions.

On easel: Still pix of Chinese agitation

The agitation against bewildered Chinese workers was a black mark on San Francisco's colorful history—but out of it grew one of labor's most powerful weapons—the union-label movement.

On easel: Drawing of cigar makers label

From a crude label designed by the cigar makers union in 1874, the union label has spread worldwide to virtually every organized trade. It has become a familiar sight—a mark of quality to shoppers everywhere. It is the symbol of fair wages . . . fair conditions . . . of working agreements fairly and openly arrived at.

On easel: Montage of labels. PAN slowly

An important milestone in the history of San Francisco labor—and of relevance to the program—was the establishment of the Labor Council. One section of the narration gave the facts of this development and a generalized idea of the part the Council was to play in the labor community.

Emcee at window; slide pix of 1890 San Francisco street projected on rear window

BACKGROUND MUSIC—GAY 90's THEME

EMCEE:

This was the time of the birth of a great new era for labor in San Francisco. Despite the prosperity of the period, labor was not enjoying it. Low wages—$2 a day . . . long hours—10 to 16 hours—were the rule rather than the exception, and there were 36,000 unemployed. There was a wave of disastrous strikes which accomplished very little except to stir bad feeling.

Level heads in the labor movement knew something had to be done. To do it they created the San Francisco Trades and Labor Council . . . the forerunner of today's powerful San Francisco Labor Council—central body for more than 150 of our city's unions. The Council went firmly on

record favoring judicious use of strikes and boycotts . . . a policy that still guides its actions today. Thirty-one unions—with some 4,500 members—sat on that first Council.

DISSOLVE to 16-mm. motion pix: Labor Day parade, marching feet

ANNOUNCER:
Now labor was really on the march. Led by men whose names have become synonymous with labor in San Francisco—Frank Roney . . . Andy Furuseth . . . Mike Casey . . . John P. McLaughlin . . . John O'Connell—the workers of the city moved forward—slowly at first but persistently—keeping constant pressure on equally relentless opposition. Demands for higher wages . . . shorter hours . . . a half holiday on Saturday . . . and the closed shop were made in endless succession. The gains were small, but there were gains. The worker was finding more security and greater dignity through his union.

The final part of the program brought the account of the history of San Francisco labor up-to-date. In addition, the important objective was undertaken of relating labor to the community as a whole. Much of the earlier part of the program was directed to a general audience—union members as well as businessmen and professionals. But this last section was obviously aimed at the community beyond the union:

Emcee at desk

EMCEE:
Yes, organized labor here in San Francisco has come a long way in the past 108 years. It wasn't an easy march but it was worth the trouble and effort.

Emcee picks up pamphlets from desk.

Look at what we have today. Some 225,000 workers belong to our unions. Their families make up two thirds of the population of our city.

DISSOLVE for CU of pamphlets dropped one by one on desk

Emcee drops pamphlet on wages

Our pay envelopes today average out at about $75 a week. I can remember just 20 years ago when we took home about $20—if we were lucky enough to have a job. We get paid for overtime today too.

Emcee drops pamphlet on vacations

We get paid for certain holidays and most of us get at least two weeks paid vacation every year—weeks when we can get away . . . relax . . . have some fun . . . and come back set for another year of productive work.

Emcee drops pamphlets on unemployment insurance, social security, workmen's compensation, health and welfare plans

And look at these things—unheard of a few short years back—insurance against unemployment. We're not going to be flat broke if we lose our jobs . . . social security to give us some income when we get too old to work . . . disability insurance and workmen's compensation to help us out in case we get sick or hurt on the job . . . health and welfare plans to save worry and endless bills when we—or members of our families—need medical or hospital care.

Emcee at desk

Our unions won these things themselves. They did it by patience . . . by persistence . . . by working together. Yes, by strikes and picket lines and by going hungry . . . by pushing with the full force of their united strength.

DISSOLVE to CU Emcee

I can hear somebody say, "So what. I'm a business man—or professional man—or executive. What does all that mean to me?"

Let me tell you what it means. What we've gained for our members we've gained for all workers. When we get increased wages, it pushes all wage standards up. When our hours are shortened, everybody's hours are shortened. When our working conditions improve, all working conditions get better.

MS Emcee

And did you ever stop to think that the laws labor initiated and fought for—social security and unemployment insurance and the rest—don't apply just to union people but to everyone.

There's another angle, too. Each week our pay checks put about $15,000,000 into circulation here. That's the stuff that makes business—for department stores and dime stores . . . for banks and bars . . . for every kind of business.

It isn't only on this side of our town's life that unions play an important part. Our members today sit on almost every civic and community body—taking an active part in government and welfare projects. We've worked and fought for better schools . . . for the protection of our business and industry . . . for an end to civic problems . . . for a long list of projects designed to make life here in San Francisco more comfortable . . . more secure . . . and more productive. And we haven't stopped. There's plenty still to be done—for you . . . for us . . . for San Francisco. Actually, we're only beginning.

PAN with Emcee to wall bulletin board mounted with still pix

What are we shooting for now?

Well, higher standards of living for one thing . . . standards that are in line with the constantly increasing ability of working men and women to produce . . . in line with the constantly climbing productivity of workers on the job . . .

DISSOLVE for CU of still pix of industry

And jobs—decent jobs at fair pay for all who are able and willing to work—not tomorrow but now . . . today . . .

PAN to still pix of housing

We want decent homes to live in—with slums a thing of the past. . . low-cost homes and low-rent housing for those of us who need them.

PAN to still pix of hospital

Labor also wants to see comprehensive medical care for all of us—at a cost that we can afford and budget.

PAN to still pix of union meeting

We're going to keep slugging at laws that treat union members as second-class citizens. These laws hurt us—and they hurt the farmer . . . the professional man . . . the businessman who depend on selling to working men and women.

DISSOLVE to Emcee at office window

There's plenty to be done, but our route is laid out for us and we're on the march.

There may not have been a Labor Day parade on

> Market Street today. But labor isn't on parade just one day a year. It's marching every day.
> And the parade is growing longer all the time. There's no stopping us now. We've come a long way, and there's a long road ahead.

It is not inconceivable that within a few years labor unions will be sponsoring regular television programs designed to get their ideas across to the public. Although nearly all programs so far placed on radio and television by unions follow the pattern of sponsored news commentators, interviews or addresses, the direction pointed by "Labor Day: San Francisco" and the Machinists' programs can be considered a new approach that more and more unions may want to explore. Television programs that avoid the static commentator or speaker, that present a maximum of visual as well as aural content, especially when they can be produced at the minimum figure cited here, cannot be ignored as a powerful voice for labor in the increasingly important maneuvers for general community support.

A New Kind of Diplomacy

GENE KING

GENE (EUGENE H.) KING is Program Manager of *The Voice of America,* the radio service of the U. S. Information Agency. His more than 20 years' experience in radio has been with several independent stations, two commercial networks, and the U. S. government's information program in Europe. Mr. King has also lectured at Harvard, New York University, and Columbia School of Journalism; and he has been a member of the faculty of Boston University. The succeeding article was given as a talk by Mr. King last spring at the Institute for Education by Radio-Television, Columbus, Ohio, as part of a general evening session on "Some World-Wide Aspects of Broadcasting."

FOR A RADIO MAN, my present job on *The Voice of America* is just short of Heaven. "Short" because there are problems, to be sure. We practically always, for example, have budgetary troubles. *The Voice of America,* last year, had only a little over sixteen million dollars; when I add that with that we cover the world, what I mean by budgetary troubles is understandable. There are a number of industrial firms which spend twice that a year on advertising. All in all, private business in the United States spends nearly eight billion dollars a year on advertising, and a goodly percentage of it goes into radio and television.

Americans generally believe in advertising, but it took us a long time to appreciate that advertising had a place in our international relations. Assistant Secretary of State George Allen, former United States Ambassador to India, has called U. S. Information Agency activities "a new kind of diplomacy." He has pointed out that, in the past, diplomats dealt only with the officials of other countries. Now we know that widespread public understanding of our foreign policies and objectives is necessary to their success. President Eisenhower has put it this way:

> It isn't enough for us [the United States] to have sound policies, dedicated to goals of universal peace, freedom and progress. These policies must be made known to and understood by all peoples throughout the world.

"All peoples throughout the world" is a large order. Making United States policies "known to and understood by" these people

is a considerable job. But it can be done. Modern communication techniques have given us the tools with which to do it.

I have, naturally, a slight bias in favor of radio; but honesty compels me to admit that there are areas where radio, today, is not the most effective communication technique. India, for example, has only about one million receiving sets. In a country of 370 million people, this situation reduces the effectiveness of radio. Those million receiving sets are important. We must not ignore them. But to reach the great masses in India, we have to supplement radio.

Radio, however, is our chief technique for penetrating the Curtains. For that reason about three fourths of *The Voice of America* broadcasts are beamed to the Communist orbit. Budgetwise, we spent about ten of our sixteen million dollars last year on these programs.

Last year, *The Voice of America* moved its studios from New York to Washington. The move was made under a Congressional directive, and created problems. But, organizationally, the new location is more efficient; and the psychological value of "This is Washington" is important. Our studios are now housed in a building just at the foot of Capitol Hill, in the very shadow of the great, gray Capitol dome.

The move from New York, which got under way in the spring, was completed November 1, 1954, without any interruption of the broadcasting schedule. This required some doing since we have more than 75 separate programs a day. Broadcasts are made in 38 different languages. The new layout has 14 studios; and, with that kind of a schedule, they are occupied almost continuously. It sounds like Babel in old Shinar or, at least, Bedlam; but it isn't. It is a very smooth working operation.

In addition to the studios, there are ten recording rooms with equipment to make 40 discs or tapes simultaneously, ten tape-editing booths, a recording control center, and the master control room. The rest of the nearly 100,000 square feet of space allotted to us is occupied by editorial offices, music and transcription

libraries, and other offices required to keep *The Voice of America* in operation 24 hours a day.

To give a few more technical details, *The Voice of America* has a network of 78 transmitters, including 30 short-wave stations in the United States which are operated for us by private broadcasting companies. Overseas, the U. S. Information Agency owns and controls relay stations at Salonika, Tangier, Ceylon, Honolulu, Munich, the Philippines, and Okinawa. The last three—Munich, the Philippines, and Okinawa—have million-watt transmitters, the world's most powerful known broadcasting facilities.

Relay facilities overseas are also leased from the B.B.C. in England and from local broadcasters throughout Western Europe, Africa, the Middle East, and Asia. To combat "jamming," we have, in addition, a floating relay station in the U. S. Coast Guard Cutter "Courier," now stationed in the Mediterranean.

The Voice of America's daily program includes 30½ hours of direct broadcasts and 64 hours of repeat programs. To counter Soviet jamming, these are recorded at overseas relay bases and repeated on short-, medium-, and long-wave. Jamming is, of course, one of our problems. The Communists spend more on jamming than we do for the entire *Voice of America* operation.

We give the U.S.S.R. and the Soviet-controlled areas about 76½ hours daily. Despite all efforts to prevent, *The Voice of America* does get through. We have conclusive evidence of that. Josef Swiatlo, former head of the Communist secret service in Poland, tells us that *The Voice of America* is the most effective instrument employed by the free world in combating the spread of communism and in keeping hope alive in the hearts of the peoples behind the Curtains. He reports having attended sessions of the Polish secret police where the topics of discussion were *The Voice of America* and how to keep the Poles from listening. Nevertheless, according to his report, the broadcasts are heard; and they are effective. We have literally thousands of similar reports. Practically all escapees and defectors, in fact, report having listened. And that goes for the U.S.S.R. as well as Communist China and the satellites.

Generally speaking, the programs consist of news, news analyses and features, political commentaries, press reviews, round-table discussions, documentaries, and special events. The breakdown between news and the other programs is generally fifty-fifty. We have found that *The Voice of America* audiences, particularly behind the Curtains, are eager for news. They want to know what is happening in the world. They want facts and not propaganda.

Sometimes, of course, news and features can be included in the same broadcast. Recently, for example, we have noted that Communist diplomatic officials throughout the free world are making a concerted effort to spread the impression that the United States has a Curtain. A prospective traveler to the United States goes to the consular office of one of the satellite nations. The officer politely advises the would-be traveler not to let the American consul know that he is also applying for a U.S.S.R. visa. Then the Communist officer offers, ever so courteously, to give the required U.S.S.R. visa on a separate piece of paper. Or, he tells the applicant to come back after a visit to the United States consular office. All this is done very, very politely. The Communist consul is trying so hard to spare the traveler embarrassment.

On March 2, we answered the above in a broadcast. We just gave the facts: the number of Americans, about 500,000, who had applied for passports last year and the 378,000 Europeans who came to the United States during the same time. We posed a few questions about the number of Soviet citizens who had stepped from behind the Iron Curtain in the same period. We also asked about the number of visitors to the U.S.S.R., Communist China, and the satellites. Then, we included a few remarks about those who had left the Curtain countries without visas, having fled to freedom at the risk of their lives. This kind of program we would ordinarily term a feature, but it did have a news angle in light of the current Communist campaign.

To give another example, we recently had a lot of fun with an international quiz program. Daily, Monday through Friday, we directed a question at some particular Communist paper or radio

station. On Saturdays, *The Voice of America* obligated itself to repeat the answers received. The program stretched over several weeks. We are still waiting for the first Communist reply. Of course, our questions were a bit ticklish to answer. One, directed to Radio Tirana and three Albanian newspapers, asked why bread in Albania was still rationed after ten years of Communist rule. Czechoslovakia was asked why the store shelves of the country were empty if Czech factories, as reported in the Communist press, were producing so much. The Communist silence is understandable.

Outside the Curtains, there is no difficulty about our audience. The letters that pour into each of the Agency's 210 posts in 79 countries bear witness to *The Voice of America*'s appeal. A 15-year-old lad has written our Cairo post recently that he is poor and adds, "Of course, I do not have a radio." Because of his poverty and his youth, he cannot sit in cafés and listen. But he has found a way to hear *The Voice of America.* A neighbor in the adjoining apartment has a radio, and by placing his ear to the intervening wall he can hear. When our program in Arabic goes on the air, he is at his post, his ear against the wall. The programs have become his teacher. They are his contact with America—with, indeed, the outside world. He prays that they will be continued. "Do not forget," he ended his letter, "that I am listening behind the walls."

I have found that letter particularly moving. Throughout the world, there are many walls between the United States and other peoples—walls (as in this lad's case) of poverty, walls of prejudice, walls of ignorance, walls that we know as the Curtains. But they are not impenetrable, as this letter writer and many thousands of others bear witness.

The Voice of America coöperates, of course, with other Agency media in publicizing United States foreign policies. One major Agency project this past year has been President Eisenhower's proposal for world coöperation in the advancement of the peaceful use of atomic energy, which was first announced in his speech

before the General Assembly of the United Nations, December 8, 1953. The President had not finished speaking before *The Voice of America* was on the air. The story was carried first in English and, later that day and the next, was repeated on all of our foreign-language broadcasts. It was given the most thorough follow-up of any story ever handled by any radio broadcasting service. We devoted program after program to developments; we still are, in fact; and we will continue to do so.

In addition, the Wireless File, a daily 7,000-word news bulletin of the Agency's Press and Publication division was transmitting the full text of the President's speech before he had left the United Nations rostrum. Our overseas posts were supplied with reprints of articles on the subject appearing in United States publications, roundups of editorial comment, special features, news pictures, leaflets, and pamphlets.

And the Motion Picture Division swung into line with full newsreel coverage and a series of special documentary films prepared either in our shop or by private producers. These films are now being shown throughout the world.

As a part of the coöperative effort, the libraries of our 157 information centers overseas and of the binational centers set up special shelves of books on the subject. Lectures were arranged by specialists sent abroad under the Department of State's Educational Exchange Program. Exhibits were opened to the public in a number of the larger cities: Rome, Brussels, West Berlin, São Paulo, New Delhi, and Karachi. After weeks or sometimes months at their original stand, the exhibits went on tour of the smaller towns and provinces. The response has been magnificent. Over two million persons, for example, have already seen the Rome exhibit. The São Paulo exhibit is on permanent display in that city. Some 250,000 saw the Karachi show in its first few weeks.

Our Office of Private Coöperation has arranged for United States business firms to include high lights of the President's speech in their overseas correspondence. Other projects are under way by which American private individuals and groups—busi-

ness, civic, religious, etc.—can coöperate in telling the "Atoms-for-Peace" story abroad.

In one way or another, we estimate over a billion persons this past year heard of the United States's proposal on the peaceful uses of atomic energy. Give us a little more time, and it will be "all peoples throughout the world."

The present U. S. Information Agency is just a little over two years old. It was created as of August 1, 1953, by President Eisenhower and was given independent status and complete responsibility for all United States nonmilitary overseas information programs. These included those previously handled by the Department of State and the Mutual Security Agency.

The new Agency has benefited, of course, by the experience of its predecessors. We are convinced that now we have an organization that can handle the job. In the increased venom of Communist attacks on the program, we see evidence that we are handling it. World-wide, the Communists have recently stepped up their efforts, have been reorganizing their propaganda apparatus and have been pouring in increased funds. They recognize that they have a fight on their hands. The Communists have made propaganda a major weapon in the campaign for the establishment of a Communist world order. In 1953, it has been estimated, they poured over three billion dollars into the fight. This estimate is undoubtedly conservative, and we know that they are spending more now.

We do not propose to try to match them in the volume of their effort, but we think we are superior in determination. President Eisenhower is very insistent that we stick to truth, and we agree with him. But, the fight isn't going to be won overnight. I have heard the figures 40 to 50 years used. It could be so.

Central American Radio

MARVIN ALISKY

MARVIN ALISKY is an assistant professor of Radio-TV and Journalism and news director of Radio-TV Service at Indiana University. He also does a news commentary on WTTV. Mr. Alisky has previously published on Latin-American broadcasting in various learned journals. The following article is a follow-up of his "Mexico's Rural Radio" (*Quarterly*, Summer, 1954) and is a continuation of his personal research into various aspects of Latin-American mass media.

THE LARGEST CENTRAL AMERICAN REPUBLIC, Nicaragua, is not quite as big as Florida; and the smallest, El Salvador, is about the size of New Hampshire. All five Central American nations have a common language, Spanish. And yet, broadcasting stations in Central America direct their programs almost exclusively to their own national audiences. Across-the-border listening is meager. Why do not geographic and linguistic factors combine to promote international broadcasting in Central America?

The answer lies in the location of both the broadcasting stations and the listeners, and in the wattage of the transmitters. In each Central American republic, radio stations are found primarily in the centrally located capital city. Radio receivers are not equally distributed among all of the people, and large population clusters are frequently some distance from the borders of neighboring nations. As for the wattage of Central American transmitters, the one powerful voice is YSDF in El Salvador, the only 50,000-watt radio station between Mexico and South America. Extremely mountainous terrain limits the effective coverage of the average Central American station—a 1,000- or 5,000-watt outlet—to smaller listening circles than our own smaller stations enjoy on the rolling plains that make up much of the United States.

Before examining radio in each Central American republic, we should clarify the extent of the region itself. Travel folders and tourist guides often include Panama as part of Central America, but politically and historically it is not. Until 1903, Panama was

the northernmost province of Colombia and thus politically part of South America proper. Furthermore, during three hundred years of colonial rule by Spain, the five present-day nations of Central America—Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Costa Rica—were administrative subdivisions of one political unit. The entire region was labeled the Captaincy-General of Guatemala, which joined the remainder of Latin America in throwing off the Spanish yoke in the 1820's. After a brief annexation to Mexico in 1822–23, the former captaincy-general proclaimed itself the United Provinces of Central America, with the new republic's capital at Guatemala City. Certainly each of the five provinces of the new nation benefited economically and in international prestige from the federation. But before long, the forces pulling the federation apart were stronger than those holding it together.[1]

When the Federation of Central America broke up into five independent nations in 1838, differences in the physical make-up of the populations were evidenced, and are still marked today. For example, a majority of the Costa Ricans are Caucasians, whereas Guatemala and Honduras have heavy concentrations of Indians, and Nicaragua has many *mestizos* (hybrid Indian-Spanish) and *zambos* (hybrid Indian-Negro). The Indians, *mestizos,* and *zambos* living in villages at an Indian-culture level have been somewhat outside the national socio-politico-economic main stream. Thus, the northernmost portions of Central America have population clusters that are not immediate prospective radio audiences. Tens of thousands of Indians speak their own dialects and know no Spanish.

By contrast, Costa Rica has been spared the need of trying to incorporate large numbers of non-Spanish-speaking citizens into its national way of life. Of the twenty republics of all of Latin America, only Argentina and Uruguay top Costa Rica's literacy rate of more than 80 per cent. On the other hand, Honduras has 80 per cent illiteracy, and Guatemala does not fare much better.

[1] See Salvador Mendieta, *Enfermedad de Centro-América* (Barcelona, Spain: Maucci Press, 1919) for a complete analysis of such forces.

Costa Rica also enjoys the largest distribution of radio receivers of any of the Central American republics.

Radio of the Ticos

Let us, therefore, take up first Costa Rican radio, or the broadcasting of *tico* land. Most Costa Ricans through the years have spoken of everything in small terms: "little" microphone, "little" telephone, "little" automobile, and even time has been divided into "little" moments. From this habit of using the Spanish diminutive ending *-ico* or *tico,* Costa Ricans earned the nickname of *Ticos.*

Small in area, Costa Rica is big in ideals of democracy. And, since this is a nation of small landowners, the democratic ideals of free speech and free press were carried over into broadcasting. Guatemala and Honduras had many Indians from the days of the Maya Empire, and Spaniards coming into northern Central America had been conquerors. They took gold, possessed the land, and the Indians became their serfs. But, as early as the sixteenth century, the Spaniards learned that the name Costa Rica or "Rich Coast" was misleading as far as gold was concerned. Thus Ticoland acquired not conquerors but colonists, hard-working settlers who found their wealth in the fertile soil. Coffee and banana crops still underwrite the national economy.

A republic of small landowners means a nation with a middle class, a land of potential customers for a radio advertiser. Native products vie with United States brands in the commercials heard on the two dozen radio stations in the capital city of San José and on the few scattered provincial stations. Spanish-language versions of the exaltations of soft drinks, toothpaste, and soap of North America and Mexico echo in Ticoland. During 1954, the most frequently heard commercials on Costa Rican stations involved the following United States products: Canada Dry, Esso gasoline, Colgate toothpaste, and Palmolive soap. None of the commercials advertising Costa Rican products were aired with anywhere near the same frequency.

Locally produced soap operas are like those transcribed serials that *tico* stations import from Mexico, Cuba, and Panama. Unlike certain United States soap operas, the Latin-American variety do not go on and on. After thirteen or twenty-six weeks, they end. If the sponsor renews his time purchase, the same group of actors are cast in a new serial by perhaps the same author. After a lapse of time, especially popular transcriptions are repeated. One all-time favorite in both Central America and Mexico, *El Derecho de Nacer* ("The Right to Be Born"), came from the pen of Cuban writer Félix B. Caignet. Caignet also wrote the popular *Los que No Deben Nacer* ("Those Who Should Never Have Been Born"), aired and re-aired from one end of the Caribbean to the other.[2]

The Caignet soap operas typify the serials heard in Costa Rica and in the other Central American republics too. The plots move rapidly from crisis to crisis, and rare is the episode that is not packed with action. United States radio dramas in the daytime may allow the talkative characters to usurp much of the story's allotted air time with mere conversation. But in Latin America, violent action provides the soap opera's foundation.

Costa Ricans are news conscious, and at least a few *tico* radio stations emphasize news, such as TIW—which is better known as "Radio City"—and rival outlets *Alma Tica, Voz de la Víctor,* and *Voz de América.* Throughout Latin America, most stations are known by a two- or three-word slogan rather than by their call letters.

Of noteworthy mention are the TIW newscasts, which include local news of the San José area and adjacent suburbs. If rain or an automobile accident keeps a peasant from returning to his *finca* ("plantation") after a trip to the capital, he can get a message back home through the 7:45 P.M. newscast over TIW. In September, 1954, this "Radio City" station became the first Costa Rican and first Central American radio station to contract for full-time service of a teletype machine in its newsroom. Other Central Amer-

[2] See W. K. Kingson and Rome Cowgill, "Radio in Puerto Rico," *The Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television,* VI (Winter, 1951), 154–56, for an analysis of one of Caignet's serials.

ican radio stations which purchase wire-news services get the news by means of telephone, telegraph, or carbons from a nearby newspaper office. The American station practice of keeping a news machine churning out stories around the clock proves too expensive for Central American outlets. TIW makes use of tape-recorded interviews, financial summaries, and bulletin announcements of extremely important news events. News bulletins are preceded by a few notes of a bugle from a transcription of reveille.

In addition to popular soap operas and noteworthy newscasts, TIW's programming includes a pair of comedians, Tranquilino and Masadonia. And although the *Víctor* station has the largest studio facilities in the republic, this pair draw large studio audiences and dozens of autograph fans to "Radio City."

Finally, there are the many folk tunes heard live on Costa Rican and other Central American outlets. Unfortunately, these are soon lost to stations. For—unlike Mexico where folk recordings are preserved and re-aired from Guatemala City to San José—Central America, as a whole, lacks adequate record manufacturing facilities.

Radio broadcasting was brought to Costa Rica in the 1920's by means of amateur short-wave clubs and pioneers like Amando Céspedes Marín. And, up to 1955, radio in this republic has continued to receive the coöperation and good will of businessmen and civic groups, such as Rotary.

Among Costa Rican broadcasters themselves, there is deep admiration for David Sarnoff of the N.B.C., Goar Mestre of Cuba, Fernando Eleta of Panama, and Emilio Azcárraga of Mexico. The transcribed dramas from the stations of Mestre and Eleta vie in popularity with those from the Azcárraga organization. And, although the techniques and equipment of Sarnoff's R.C.A. and N.B.C. are admired, it is the production philosophy of Azcárraga that is emulated, on occasion. The astute Don Emilio's XEW in Mexico City can be heard as far south as Costa Rica, for it has an authorized strength of 250,000 watts. And the showmanship formulae of XEW seem to achieve the happy medium between

American-style productions and those shows whose elements are attuned to Latin-American tastes and preferences. In other words, an XEW show will be technically suave (listenable announcing, clear engineering, bouncy scripting) but will still retain the mellow nostalgia vital to Mexicanism or Central Americanism.[3]

Salvador Stations

Next to Costa Rica, El Salvador is the communications bright spot, including broadcasting reporting, of Central America. El Salvador longs for the higher literacy rate and higher living standards of Costa Rica and likewise admires the social revolution being wrought in Mexico. In talking with political officials of varying ranks, I discovered their use of certain phrases and terminology from the Mexican and Costa Rican social-security and educational campaigns. In its struggle to integrate outlying population groups into the national way of life, El Salvador still has very far to go. For one thing, over half the nation is still illiterate. But the distribution picture of radio receivers, which has improved markedly since 1945, is encouraging the government to use radio as a means of reaching rank-and-file citizenry.

The government maintains YSS, the oldest radio station in the republic. This station began in March of 1926 with the original call letters of AQM, which came from Alfonso Quiñonez Molina who was president then. Ham short waving had preceded AQM, but the government actually inaugurated standard daily broadcasting. Yet the official midwifery for Salvadoran radio did not set a noncommercial course for broadcasting in the republic. On the contrary, all stations today other than YSS are privately owned commercial outlets. Broadcasting did not come to El Salvador until six years after it came to the United States and until three years after it came to Mexico and Costa Rica, and it might have been further delayed without assistance from the government. But once radio was established, the government was content to let commercial interests maintain the republic's radio industry.

[3] For a detailed critique of XEW programming, see Marvin Alisky "Mexico City's Competitive Radio Market," *Inter-American Economic Affairs,* VII (Winter, 1953), 24–26.

El Salvador's YSDF is Central America's only 50,000-watt transmitter, and this powerful voice can reach up into Mexico and down into Panama for at least a few non-Central American listeners. But YSDF has other claims to fame: popular comedy hours that draw standing room only in its studios, tape-recorded interviews of some note, and newscasts with ample balance of foreign and domestic news. Until recently, YSDF could also boast the services of one of Central America's most brilliant broadcasting engineers, Rafael Peralta. His death in January, 1955, meant a loss to the radio industry of his nation as well as his own station. Peralta had been a pioneer broadcasting engineer in his republic, and he could recall at will the various technical improvements as they came to El Salvador. In the summer of 1954, as I sat and listened to him recite the communications history of his country, with dramatic pauses to refer to dusty log books in his desk, I scarcely realized that this invaluable visit would be the last chance for North American social scientists to tap this rich source of data.

Another noteworthy Salvadoran radio station is YSU, which began operations in 1946. With 10,000 watts of power, YSU reaches all of the tiny Salvadoran republic, which is a little smaller than the state of Maryland. But El Salvador looms large as a coffee producer, with sixty-five coffee trees for each inhabitant. This coffee wealth has increased the number of middlemen and small businesses, and these potential sponsors have been solicited successfully by Raúl Trabanino by means of audience surveys. Trabanino studied the techniques used by Hooper and Nielsen in the United States and by Joe Belden in Mexico, and he decided El Salvador needed surveys based on stratified cross sections of the population. When he discovered that Salvadorans were eager for news, YSU proceeded to emphasize news programs. The ratings went up and so did the sponsor bookings and billings. YSU also airs "Voice of America" documentaries, taped interviews with newsworthy personages, and newscasts compiled from INS world news and from local items written by the two-man news staff.

Station YSEB (10,000 watts) also provides Salvadorans with

United Nations and local documentaries on various significant trends in world affairs and health. Like Trabanino, YSEB owner-manager Boris Esersky is on the board of directors of the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters and works closely with the IAAB president, Emilio Azcárraga—previously referred to in connection with XEW of Mexico City—for the over-all development of Latin-American broadcasting. Another Mexican, José Luis Fernández, the director general of the IAAB, has joined his countryman Azcárraga and Salvador's Esersky in promoting the cause of an uncensored, thriving commercial system of broadcasting throughout Central America. In January of 1954, Esersky joined YSEB to the Caribbean Networks Inc., a sales network stretching from Puerto Rico to Panama with headquarters in New York.

Like YSU and YSEB, YSAX has 10,000 watts, and is situated across the street from YSEB. YSAX also airs various background shows of both informational and entertaining quality. Manager Mendisabal, like YSU's Trambanino, is especially proud of the effort his staff has made to develop newscasts. In addition to straight news roundups, YSAX has a 45-minute science-news documentary, a review of items from American magazines translated into Spanish (each brief enough and paraphrased enough to satisfy international copyright laws), and a Sunday noontime book-review report that is truly educational. YSAX also takes pride in its extensive library of classical records.

As a part of the general effort to increase Salvadoran literacy, the government station, YSS, airs various educational programs too. Many of these are under the able direction of Roberto Mendoza, who formerly produced Spanish-language programs for the overseas service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Of special note are the reading-via-radio lessons, produced in coöperation with the Ministry of Education officials to carry out the national literacy campaign. This thrice-a-week series has proved so popular and successful that the programs are sent by the gov-

ernment station to a commercial station in the provincial city of Santa Ana for rebroadcasting. Francisco Medina Funes, program director of the commercial station YSDF, has helped this YSS series by encouraging his most valued producer-director to assist when needed. Salvadoran commercial broadcasters have caught a bit of the missionary spirit in regard to the literacy campaign.

An organization that promises to benefit all Salvadoran stations is ALORS, the *Asociación de Locutores y Operadores de Radio Salvadoreños* ("Association of Salvadoran Radio Announcers and Engineers"). In July of 1954, ALORS launched a monthly trade magazine, *Ondas,* as a clearing house for professional and trade ideas among Salvadoran broadcasters. *Ondas* may prove to be a valuable catalytic agent in generating professional pride among Salvadoran radiomen.

Radio in Guatemala

Guatemala too, like Costa Rica and El Salvador, has long admired the industrial and educational strides of the Mexican social revolution. Unfortunately, however, Guatemala did not overthrow the long-time dictatorship of Jorge Ubico until 1944, whereas Mexico ended the thirty-five-year dictatorship of General Díaz in 1910. Colonel Castillo Armas, the present president, earnestly hopes to evolve a middle path between all-out socialism and the ultra right-wing exploitation of the past. The economic problems he inherited are still with him; the social ills are clearly marked. But he has freed Guatemala's governmental radio stations from newscasts that sounded as if they were rewritten from *Pravda.*[4]

With a little under 80 per cent illiteracy plaguing its national integration, Guatemala finds its two dozen radio stations especially important in reaching as many of the republic's three million population as possible. There are 75,000 radio receivers in this nation, or one set for each forty inhabitants. Compared to Costa Rica, Guatemala is only half as well off in its ratio of radios

[4] Marvin Alisky, "Red Radio in Guatemala," *Radio Daily,* June 24, 1954, 6.

to citizens; but compared to neighboring Honduras, Guatemala appears to be on the road to communication progress.

Under the pro-Red Arbenz regime, governmental station TGW dominated Guatemalan broadcasting in certain ways. The President gave TGW the official news announcements ahead of private stations. In addition, TGW was allowed to compete with the private stations for advertising. With the power of the national government in back of it, TGW until very recently has been able to attract sponsors from privately owned stations. Thanks to insistent pleas by the Inter-American Association of Broadcasters, President Castillo Armas recently inaugurated a change: TGW will be a noncommercial outlet. Since Arbenz left Castillo Armas a fifty-million-dollar debt for the national treasury, action that voluntarily gives up a means of revenue for the sake of principle indeed begs attention. The IAAB calmly and consistently kept pointing out that the governmental broadcasting service could, through the power of the national government itself, eventually bankrupt smaller privately owned commercial outlets. The new president has agreed.

Not only illiteracy but the terrain and transportation situation of this republic complicate communications. Guatemala's mountainous surface impedes both road building and the creating of adequate public transportation facilities. For many Guatemalans, radio becomes the only link with the outside world. And this link may not be direct. If a village leader has a radio and hears a newscast from Guatemala City, he likely repeats the news to various people in the course of a day. Thus news is not only "reflected" but "refracted" in rural Guatemala. And Guatemala is a rural nation. More than two thirds of the population consist of Indians, and this introduces another hurdle in expanding communications and in incorporating more rural folk into the national political and economic way of life.

In Guatemala, the *mestizo* Spanish-Indian hybrids and everyone else not essentially an Indian in dress, speech, or way of life are called *ladinos*. Owners of radios are almost invariably *ladinos;*

radio listeners, however, sometimes are Indians.[5] Yet a substantial proportion of Guatemalan Indians speak their native tongues and know from few to no words in Spanish. The government's national literacy campaign is making inroads on such monolingualism among the non-Spanish speaking, but the gains are still small increments. The Indian villages in the high green mountains total up to the largest portion of the population and constitute one of the world's most colorful and exotically thrilling happy hunting grounds for tourists and social scientists. But these Indian communities do not yet provide vast audiences for Guatemalan transmitters.[6] Perhaps Guatemalan educators and broadcasters may some day combine efforts to distribute radios in public gathering places in villages and to air programs in Indian tongues. At present, no such effort exists.

One of the most hopeful items on the Guatemalan radio scene has the name Guatemalan Private Association of Broadcasters. Encouraged by the change in political regime for the republic, the group now includes more members than ever before: *Radio Exito, Radio Panamericana, Radio Capitol, Radio Central, Radio Universal, Voz de las Américas, Radiodifusora Telefunken, Radio Quetzal, Radio Ciros, Radio Continental, Estación ABC,* and *Radio Internacional.*

Honduran and Nicaraguan Radio

In Nicaragua and Honduras, as well as in El Salvador, many a struggling actor blesses broadcasting. No Little Theater movement, Broadway stage, or film colony stands near to invite his dramatic development. But soap operas and *novelas,* utilize his talent weekly.

As an example of how the *novela* has become the actor's friend,

[5] Sol Tax, *Penny Capitalism: A Guatemalan Indian Economy* (Smithsonian Institution, Institute of Social Anthropology Publication No. 16, 1953), 20. For supplementary reading on Guatemalan village life, Tax's study should be followed by Charles Wagley's *Social and Religious Life of a Guatemalan Village* (American Anthropologist Memoir 71, October, 1949).

[6] By contrast, rural Mexico to some extent has already developed both its rural listening audiences and provincial transmitters. See Marvin Alisky, "Mexico's Rural Radio," *The Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television,* VIII (Summer, 1954, 405–17.

let me tell you a bit about what I saw one August day in 1954. I sat in the control room of Studio A at HRLP, popularly known as "Radio America" and located not far from the center of town in Tegucigalpa, capital of the relatively isolated republic of Honduras. Although Honduras has railroads near its coastlines to serve the banana plantations, it has none into its chief city. Thus Tegucigalpa has the distinction of being the only national capital in the Western Hemisphere without a railroad. The actors who strolled into the studio were clerks and peasants with no opportunity to travel much. Even if they took the rickety bus over the hazardous ribbon of curves through the mountains, a long time would pass before they reached the nearest center of dramatic activity, San Salvador, in the neighboring republic of El Salvador. Only a plane could whisk them to such meccas of the theater arts as Mexico City or New York. And none of this group could afford such a trip.

The series in rehearsal was "Pasión Culpable" ("Guilty Passion," which refers to suffering as well as love). Singer Sewing Machine agencies sponsored; Emilio Díaz directed. The five actors, who went over and over their lines, spoke kindly of the station owner, not as an employer, but as a patron saint of Honduran dramatic arts. To be sure, each actor had his or her praise for the director and the sponsor; but he reserved his greatest plaudits for Silvio Peña, owner-manager of HRLP. He and his competitor down the street, José Rafael Ferrari of HRN, keep their studios busy with the rehearsals and productions of Honduran actors. During the rehearsal in question, the lady playing the part of Hortensia and the actor portraying Gustavo worked diligently. Even while the remaining personnel were resting, they continued to smooth out the climax of the episode in which Gustavo had to sustain a tense voice, whereas Hortensia had to punch her lines considerably off microphone, as if speaking from afar.

In addition to its broadcasting of drama, Honduras deserves at least a mention for effort in news coverage. But newscasting has

not received the time, money, and effort it warrants in terms of needed public service. Although the number of stations in the Honduran capital of Tegucigalpa have increased from three to seven since the end of World War II—with an equal number now in the provinces—the newer outlets stress transcribed music and drama.

Yet, "industrially backward" as Honduras is, in terms of free speech its radio fares better than does that of Nicaragua which, as a nation, has a higher literacy and per capita income. The Nicaraguan dictatorship of President Somoza does not make for a genuine free flow of news.

Hopeful Future

The future of Central American broadcasting seems bright. Each year finds each of the five republics with an increase in radios in daily use and with more variety in programming. Much remains to be accomplished in the realm of news, educational broadcasting, and scripting in general. But already existing is the base upon which to build. And although television stations are not yet on the air in Central America, plans call for video to join radio in 1956 to round out the broadcasting picture. Apparently, Guatemala will have the honor of launching the first television station in Central America. Plans are blueprinted in El Salvador and Costa Rica; but, in Guatemala City, a TV-transmitter already is under construction atop the Agua volcano, with programming planned for 1956. The other Central American republics also will have television if the enthusiastic plans of their broadcasters are any guide.

The Story Comes to the Screen—1896-1906

KENNETH MACGOWAN

KENNETH MACGOWAN, formerly a producer of plays and films, is on the faculty of the Department of Theater Arts at the University of California, Los Angeles, and has recently become editor-in-chief of the *Quarterly*. The following, like the two previous articles in the Fall and Winter, 1954, issues of the *Quarterly*, will be published next year in Mr. Macgowan's book *The Film of Yesterday and Tomorrow*.

HOPES WERE HIGH—and some of them fantastic—when, in April, 1896, Armat turned the crank of the Edison Vitascope and started the motion picture on its prodigious way. (See Fig. 1.) The prophecy of a newspaper critic ended with a phrase that was to echo down the years: "Edison is a mighty ingenious fellow—and electricity in its application to the arts is in its infancy." Edison, privy to his laboratory experiments with talking pictures, wrote that opera would be given at the Metropolitan "with artists and musicians long since dead." Charles Frohman, the "star-maker" of Broadway, said about the first Vitascope show:

> That settles scenery. Painted trees that do not move, waves that get up a few feet and stay there, everything in scenery we simulate on our stages will have to go. Now that art can make us believe that we see actual living nature the dead things of the stage must go. . . . the possibilities of the Vitascope as the successor of painted scenery are illimitable. [Frohman used no movie scenery in the remaining twenty years of his life, and after his death a motion-picture company bought Charles Frohman, Inc.]

Of all the prophets, Edison's bright young man W. K. L. Dickson saw the most effulgent future for his foster child, this "object of magical wonder." "What," he asked in a pamphlet of 1896, "is the future of the kinetograph? [Note that he spoke of Edison's camera, not Armat's projector.] Ask rather, from what conceivable phase of the future can it be debarred. . . . It is the crown and flower of nineteenth century magic, the crystalizations of eons of groping enchantments." His vision of the future was apocalyptic:

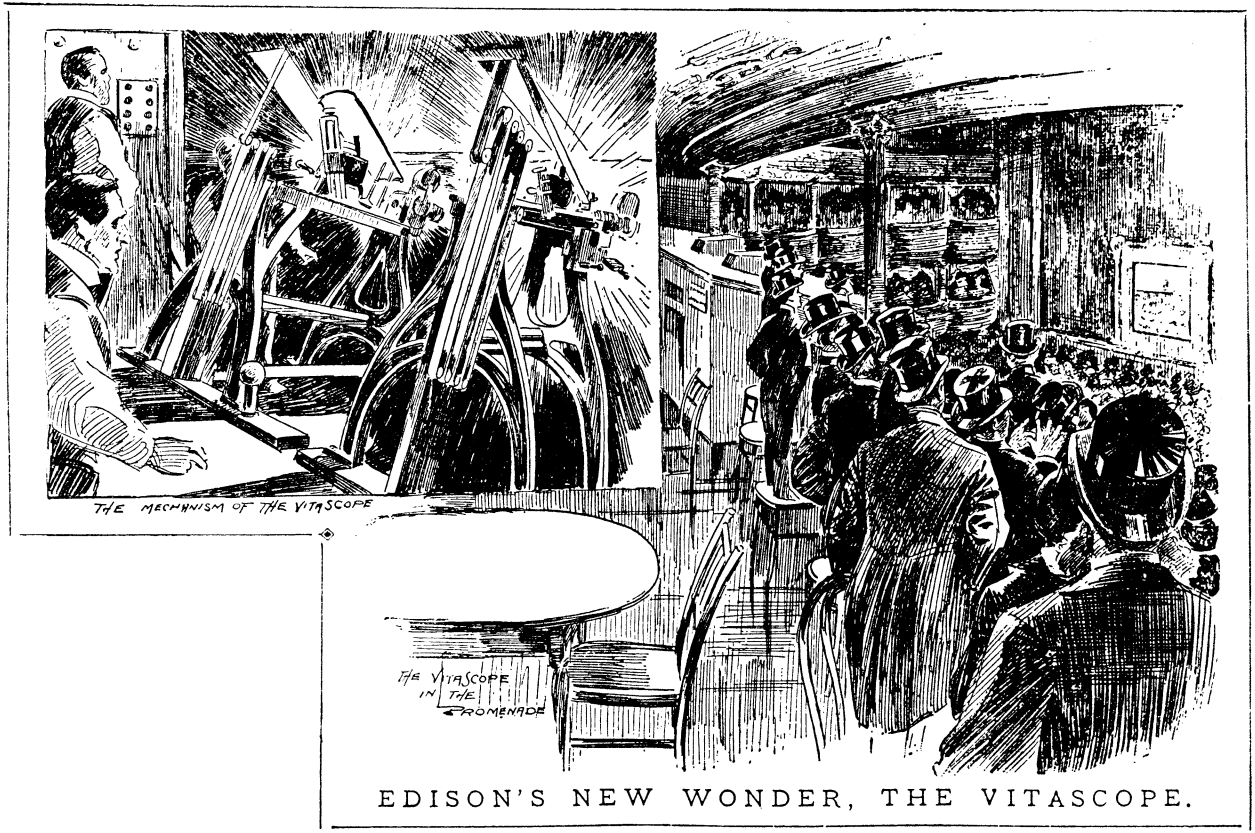


Fig. 1. The Vitascope at Koster & Bial's Music Hall as illustrated in the New York *Herald* of May 3, 1896. At the right, the screen and audience seen from the promenade. At the left, the two projectors in action, with 50-foot loops of film running over bobbins instead of from reel to reel.

The final development of the kinetographic stage, than which no more powerful factor for good exists, no limitations can possibly be affixed. The shadowy histrionics of the near future will yield nothing in realistic force and beauty to their material sisters. . . . Not only our own resources but those of the entire world will be at our command, nay, we may even anticipate the time when sociable relations will be established between ourselves and the planetary system, and when the latest doings in Mars, Saturn, and Venus will be recorded by enterprising kinetographic reporters.

The First Short Films

But, meantime, what were those reporters busy with? The first programs of Edison's Vitascope and the Lumières' Cinematographe tell the tale. Koster & Bial's Music Hall billed the following:

Umbrella Dance
The Barber Shop
Burlesque Boxing
Monroe Doctrine
A Boxing Bout
Venice, showing Gondolas
Kaiser Wilhelm, reviewing his troops
Skirt Dance
Butterfly Dance
The Bar Room
Cuba Libre

The newspapers reported that the umbrella dance was hand-colored, and that the program included part of a number from Charles Hoyt's Broadway success *A Milk White Flag*. The patrons of the Lumière brothers saw:

Workers Leaving the Lumière Factory
Quarreling Babies
The Tuileries Pool
The Train
The Regiment
The Blacksmith
A Game of Ecarte
Weeds
The Wall
The Sea

These were "short subjects" indeed. Not one ran more than a minute. Prize fights and the Lathams accounted for the first movies of greater length. The initial fight—staged by the Lathams on the roof of Madison Square Garden—lasted four minutes on the screen, and the audience that saw it on May 20, 1895, was the first that ever paid to see moving pictures. Two years later, the renowned "Latham loop" enabled its owners to use some 11,000 feet of film in recording the Corbett-Fitzsimmons cham-

pionship fight at Carson City. How many feet they showed the public in the summer of 1897 is not on record, but it must have run into the thousands.

Between 1896 and 1906, the subjects of the cinema grew in number, variety, and length. Vaudeville turns and railroad trains, ocean waves and card parties, soon disappeared. New events—foreshadowed by the shot of the German Emperor reviewing his troops—became more popular. Short travelogues and very short science films appeared. Cameramen made advertising pictures. Tricks of lens and shutter spawned fantasies. Short comic episodes grew into rudimentary story films of several scenes. The discovery of what the skills of editing and camera work could do led to ten-minute dramas as well as comedies.

Subjects ran in cycles—just as they still do in Hollywood—and this soon led to plagiarism. Audiences grew tired of rival versions of Niagara Falls, fire engines, and babies smearing their faces with porridge. So the producers turned to comic episodes and began to steal the nearest thing there was to a plot. For instance, Louis Lumière made a film called *L'Arroseur arrosé,* in which a boy stepped on a hose, and a gardener who looked into the nozzle to see what was wrong got a dousing as the boy walked away. An Englishman promptly reproduced the episode as *Watering the Gardener,* and eight more versions appeared. Thus it went on both sides of the Atlantic. It was some time before effective copyright was established for films; and, in America at least, producers stole prints as well as plots, made "dupes," and sold them as their own.

New Films, Genuine and Faked

Lumière's camera-projector seems to have been the best mechanism of his day. (The films that the Sklandowsky brothers made in Germany and showed in Berlin on November 1, 1895, appear to have been as unsatisfactory as the earlier products of the Lathams.) Certainly Lumière outdistanced for a time all other film makers and exhibitors. His showmen covered hundreds of cities

and towns in Middle Europe and Russia as well as France; they even penetrated North and South America and the Far East. Lumière's hand-cranked machine was light; and, because he knew that most towns had no electricity, he used an ether lamp. When one of his representatives reached a new district, he announced that he would take moving pictures of the place and the people, and add them to the show. This not only advertised the new wonder. When the local pictures flashed on the screen, even the most cynical peasant was convinced that here was no trickery.

Lumière's men also made it their business to send back to Paris coverage of news events as well as pictures of town and countryside. Occasionally they scored quite amazing scoops. A Lumière cameraman recorded the coronation of Nicholas of Russia in 1896, and was lucky enough to be shooting when twelve or fifteen hundred people were killed in the rush for imperial gifts.

Perhaps it was a Lumière man who began the business of faking news shots. One of them exploited the Jewish populace of Kiev through what purported to be a film on the persecution of Dreyfus. He spliced together out of his stock of old shots a French military parade headed by an officer whom he called Dreyfus, a public building for the scene of his trial, and some warships to take the condemned man to his exile on Devil's Island. There were no "titles" on films in those days; so, by word of mouth, the exhibitor told his audience what he wanted them to believe. News faking became a habit on both sides of the Atlantic in the late nineties. Cameramen staged bits of the Spanish-American War, the Boer War, and the Boxer Rebellion in China. They faked the eruption of Mt. Pelée, and one producer advertised *The Great Corbett-Fitzsimmons Fight* qualified by the words "(in counterpart)."

Charles Urban's Progress

Fakery continued into the new century, but there was more and more of genuine coverage of news events. Americans shot films of the Galveston disaster, as well as President McKinley's inaugu-

"THE UNSEEN WORLD'

(Copyright Title)

A Series of Microscopic Studies, Photographed by means of

The Urban-Duncan Micro-Bioscope.

The "UNSEEN WORLD" Series of Films are made to fit all Standard American Guage Projecting Machines.

The magnification of these Subjects as viewed from a Screen, with picture 20 by 25 feet in size. is 2,200,000 to 76,000,000 times, according to the extent of magnification on the Film which varies from 25 to 850 diameter.

Mr. F. MARTIN-DUNCAN, F.R.H.S.

MICROSCOPIC SUBJECTS.

2500 ... AMERICAN BLIGHT AND GREEN-FLY

The American Blight which has invaded so many English Orchards, and the Green-fly, the greatest pest of the Rose Garden, are shown greatly magnified, crawling about in search of food. The American Blight or Woolly Aphis presenting a very curious, untidy appearance, with bits of the woolly matter, which it has formed itself, stuck about its legs and body. *Magnified 25 diameters on film.* **Length 75 feet.**

F 2

Fig. 2. *Courtesy Museum of Modern Art Film Library.* Page 83 from Charles Urban's catalog of 1903, which included a number of scientific films made with the aid of a microscope.

ration and funeral. Englishmen covered all manner of happenings from ship launchings and the Derby to the funeral of Queen Victoria. Though the British faked episodes of the Boer War, they also had cameramen at the front, and one of them photographed the surrender of General Cronje to Lord Roberts. Another took shots of a rebellion in the Balkans, and a man named Joseph Rosenthan made his reputation by covering the Russo-Japanese War in 1905.

Charles Urban—an American who became a leading English producer and distributor—was largely responsible for the improvement in nonfiction films. Beginning in 1903, he sent cameramen to the Alps, Canada, the Near East, and even Borneo to make the first of what we now call travelogues. He turned out advertising films on whiskey, soap, cigarettes, and custard; but he also distributed the first science films—more than a score of short pictures taken by F. Martin Duncan with the aid of a microscope and called *The Unseen World.* (See Fig. 2.) Beginning in 1903, some of these played the music halls with great success. The climax of Urban's career came in 1911 when he produced with G. A. Smith's Kinemacolor—the first effective color process—a record of the crowning of George V as Emperor of India at the Delhi Durbar.

From One Scene to Many

I have stressed the faking of news events because, in a sense, they brought storytelling to the screen; the Dreyfus film of about 1896 might be seen as the forerunner of Warner's *The Life of Émile Zola* of 1937. We are much nearer fiction in *Attack on a Chinese Mission,* a sort of reënactment of an event that may have happened during the Boxer Rebellion of 1900, when more than 200 Europeans were murdered. This film, made on English soil in 1901, used at that early date some of the elements of continuity and cutting that are essential to screen fiction.

It is as hard to say who first told a story on the moving-picture screen as it is to identify any one inventor of the camera and the

projector. There was a shred of fiction in *Watering the Gardener;* it was only an episode, yet it had suspense and climax. What it lacked was fluidity. Like *The Burglar on the Roof* (1899)—made in forty-five feet by J. Stuart Blackton and Albert E. Smith—*Watering the Gardener* was shot in a single setting and with a frozen camera. So was Paul's *Deserter* (1898), as well as American comedies like *Happy Hooligan and the Summer Girls* (c. 1901), based on a character in the Sunday "comics," and *Why Mr. Nation Wants a Divorce* (c. 1901), which satirized Carrie Nation, the saloon smasher.

The next step was to photograph successive scenes, each in a new setting but each with only one camera setup. It isn't easy to guess who first did this. Very few of the old films still exist. The catalogues of some of the makers and distributors provide synopses, but are these much more accurate than current film advertising? We may guess, however, that James Williamson's *Attack on a Chinese Mission* (1901) was one of the earliest films that told a continuous story in a number of scenes. It began with the forcing of the compound gate. Next, inside the compound, the missionary fought the Chinese while his wife and child and a young lady fled to the protection of the house. As the husband died at the hands of a Boxer, the film cut to a balcony from which the wife signaled for help and then to a party of sailors who advanced into the compound, where they rescued the women and the child. Besides the continuity of action through a number of scenes, Williamson's 230-foot picture used a thoroughly filmic device in the cut to the wife signaling to the bluejackets.

America's First Notable Film

Four pictures dealing with rescues from burning houses chart the development from one scene to a continuity of scenes. They were made between about 1898 and 1903. The first three were English; and the last, American. Paul's *Plucked from the Burning* (1898?) showed a fireman rescuing mother and child from a blazing room. The next, Williamson's *Fire!* (1901–02), started with

a policeman discovering a fire; then showed the man calling out the fire company, the fire trucks racing to the house, the interior of the burning building with a fireman saving a man through the window, and more rescues as seen from outside. Cecil Hepworth made a similar picture in 1903, but it may have been earlier in that year or even in 1902 that an Edison director, Edwin S. Porter, produced a still more elaborate film in his 380-foot *The Life of an American Fireman.*

Porter is generally credited with a new step forward in story-telling through editing. He began his film with the fire chief asleep and dreaming of his wife and child, who were irised into an upper corner of the scene. Then Porter daringly introduced a close shot of a fire-alarm box with a hand opening it to ring the alarm. Next, he dissolved to the dormitory of the fire fighters, showed them wake up and, hurriedly dressing, slide down the pole to the ground floor. Below, Porter's camera caught them dropping from the pole, hitching the horses that came charging out of their stalls, and climbing on the engines. Then came the outside of the firehouse and the rushing out of the machines. A number of shots showed the horses pounding to the fire; and, in one of these, while following the engine, the camera panned—for the first time in a fiction film?—stopped to show us the burning house, and then tilted up. Next, Porter cut inside to a blazing room with a mother and child.

At this point, some confusion arises as to how Porter edited the rest of the story. An existing print shows intercut scenes between the interior and the exterior, with a fireman carrying first the woman and then child to safety. This would seem to be the first use of such editing. But a paper print of *The Life of an American Fireman,* filed for copyright, shows the scenes in the room as continuous action, with the fireman entering and carrying the people out the window one by one; and this is followed by a continuous scene outside with the fireman coming down the ladder with the mother, then going up again, and reappearing with the child. In any event, it is obvious that Porter shot interior and exterior

scenes that should have alternated. The copyright print may have been made before the final cutting was complete.

Film historians have provided another problem about *The Life of an American Fireman.* Porter is supposed to have made a large portion of the picture out of stock shots; yet the action in the firehouse seems much too well timed, and the pan shot carries us to the burning house that then became the center of the action.

The Screen in 1900

Apparently until 1900, we have very few of what Hepworth later called "made up" films—stories planned and rehearsed before shooting began. Yet by the turn of the century, when the motion picture is only five years old, it has achieved a number of technical advances. The screen has been made to speak, though haltingly. The motion-picture camera—partnered with the phonograph and other noisemakers—has recorded the acting of Sarah Bernhardt in the duel scene from *Hamlet* and of the elder Coquelin in the ballade-duel from *Cyrano.* There is color, applied by hand. Cameramen have learned to make double exposures, stop motion, and slow motion and to use them in trick films. The close-up has been discovered, though not used properly for story purposes. In the Hall of Machinery at the Paris Exposition of 1900, Lumière shows films on a giant screen to an audience of some 20,000 persons; and, elsewhere on the grounds, there is a film show called Cinéorama that anticipates and outdistances the modern Cinerama by completely surrounding the spectators with pictures projected by ten machines.

Méliès—France's First Storyteller

The trick film and perhaps screen fiction might have come earlier if Paul had been able to finance a production of H. G. Wells's *The Time Machine.* When the book appeared in 1894, Paul had been fascinated by this story of a man's journey forward and backward through time. In October, 1895, he filed a patent on a very elaborate arrangement of swaying and wind-blown plat-

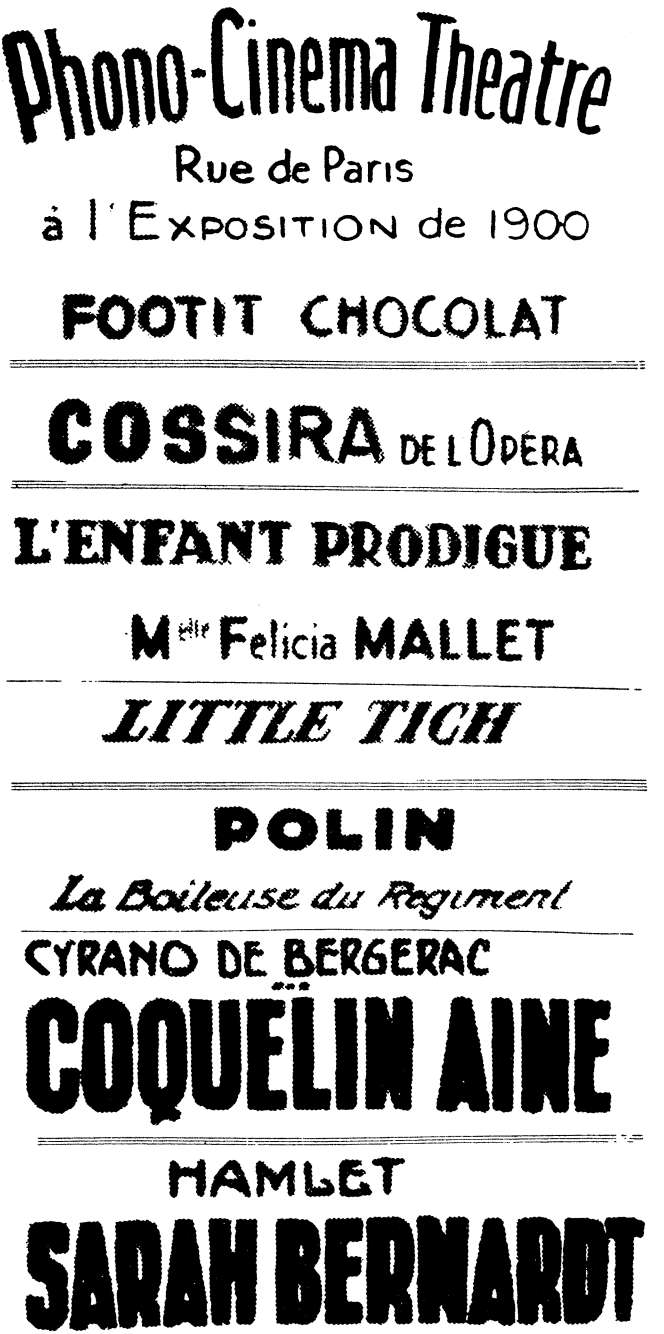


Fig. 3. A poster of one of the two theaters that showed talking pictures at the Paris Exposition of 1900.

forms upon which the spectators would sit as if within the "time machine," while they viewed films and slides that would seem to carry them into the past and back again.

Paul later made many trick films, and G. A. Smith used double exposure to provide ghosts in dramatic and comedy scenes of 1898; but it was a Frenchman who first developed bizarre screen

Fig. 4. Méliès, who called his producing company Star Film, used this trade-mark on the main title of his motion pictures.

fantasies. He was Gaston Méliès, caricaturist, prestidigitator, and proprietor of a theater devoted to magic and magic spectacles that the famous Robert-Houdin had founded many years before.

Lumière's motion pictures fascinated Méliès. When Lumière refused an offer of 50,000 francs for a camera, Méliès bought one from Paul. By April, 1896—when the Armat-*cum*-Edison Vitascope came to New York—Méliès was showing pictures of his own at the Théâtre Robert-Houdin. (See Fig. 4.) At first, the mere reproducing of the things of daily life was magical enough. He had

his *Game of Cards* and *A Gardener Burning Weeds*. But, before 1896 was over, he was making his film do tricks. According to legend, he discovered quite accidentally that the camera could make transformations far more startling than those of the stage. Méliès had set up his tripod in the Place de l'Opéra, and was photographing traffic when his film jammed and his camera stopped taking pictures. He corrected the trouble and went on shooting. When he developed and printed the scene, he saw an omnibus disappear and a hearse take its place. The registry of the two vehicles couldn't have been perfect, but the film told Méliès all he needed to know. Before the year was out, he had made two trick films in the garden of his house—*The Vanishing Lady* and *The Haunted Castle*. In May, 1897—partly to avoid bad weather, but mainly to add theatrical tricks to those of the camera—he constructed the first glassed-in studio. At one end of the conservatory-like structure, he built a stage equipped with traps, chutes, rigging, and capstans. Thus to the tricks of the camera, he added the tricks of theatrical production.

But Méliès didn't give up the "realistic" film. He faked battles of the Græco-Turkish War and the eruption of Mt. Pelée. His first long film—presented in ten parts—was a reënactment, in 1898, of the Dreyfus trial and exile. It totaled 715 feet, whereas 90 per cent of his earlier pictures had been only 65 feet long and none over 200.

The Trick Films of Méliès

By 1900, Méliès was well launched on a program of fairy tales and comic spectacles. The most celebrated were *Cinderella* (1899), *A Trip to the Moon* (1902), and *An Impossible Voyage* (1904). In a sense, Méliès was the first producer to make extensive use of what we now call science fiction, but in films of this sort he emphasized the humorous and the fantastic. His scientists could have come out of the *Commedia dell'arte*. The men who helped launch the rocket ship in *A Trip to the Moon* were chorus girls in tights, straight from the Paris revues. On the other hand, he treated the

story of *Joan of Arc* with proper seriousness. It was, as the catalogue said, "A grand spectacular production in twelve scenes. About 500 persons enacting the scenes, all superbly costumed. Running time about 15 minutes." Méliès made more than 1,500 films between 1896 and 1913. Only 75 were longer than five minutes, but these did a very great deal to turn the screen toward fiction.

The films of Méliès had to be carefully worked out in advance of shooting, and so he may be called the first man to write a scenario. He was also the first to use artificial lighting when he made films of a noted singer, which were to be shown to the accompaniment of phonograph records. In spite of the success of Méliès' pioneering, after 1906 his sales fell off as his costs increased; and his career was ended by the coming of World War I. In 1928, a journalist discovered that Méliès was running a candy and toy shop in a railroad station. Fame came to him again when he was decorated with the Legion of Honor.

Enter Close-ups, Cuts, and Pan Shots

Méliès was resourceful in the use of dissolves and close-ups, but he photographed what he called his "artificially arranged scenes" from the point of view of a single spectator in a theater. They were indeed, as he said, "moving tableaux." Much more was needed before a story on the screen could be truly filmic. Characters had to move toward the spectator and away from him, instead of sidewise. The camera had to learn to pan. Action in one scene had to be continued into another. But, above all, the cameraman-director had to break up a single scene into two or more shots. Méliès did little of this, and only after men in other countries had shown the way. As late as 1901, when he should have shown an insert of a bloody key in *Bluebeard,* the villain's wife held out a foot-long prop spattered with red.

Most of the pioneering came from the so-called "Brighton school." These were men like Williamson and Smith who, dependent on the sun, set up a kind of Hollywood in southern Eng-

land. One of these film makers may have taken the first forward step toward filmic storytelling when he cut close-ups into a scene.

As a scene in itself, the close-up came early. Marey and his disciple Georges Demeny made shots of single heads in the early nineties. There was Dickson's movie of Ott's sneeze. In 1896, the fifty-foot film of the players May Irwin and John C. Rice, repeating the kissing scene in a Broadway play *The Widow Jones,* was really a two shot from a little above the waist. (It caused a moral furor.) In 1898, Smith of Brighton made close shots of an old man drinking beer and a woman taking snuff. Some time in 1901 or 1902, Williamson produced a film, *The Big Swallow,* in which the head of a man who doesn't want to be photographed grows larger and larger until it fills the screen; and, according to the catalogue, "first the camera, then the operator disappear inside." Here, incidentally, was forward movement by the camera rather than the actor.

The introduction of close-ups into a medium shot came a little earlier than *The Big Swallow.* In Smith's film *Grandma's Reading Glass* (1900), a child took up his grandmother's magnifying glass and focused it on such things as a watch, a newspaper, a canary, and the woman's blinking eye. The next year, in *The Little Doctor,* Smith showed a close-up of a kitten's head while two children give it medicine. Smith's *Mary Jane's Mishap* (1901 or 1902) may have had two camera angles in one set, in addition to a close-up, and three exterior shots.

A German cameraman may have anticipated both the French and the English in cutting to different parts of the same scene, though not in a fiction film. Perhaps as early as 1896, Oskar Messter's short German film *Excursion* showed a long shot and a closer shot of a row of cyclists, then cut to some of their faces and to their pedaling legs, and back to a long shot. Though there was no story in *Excursion,* its varied camera angles were a far more important departure than the close-up that English catalogues called "a short telescopic view."

Moving the camera without moving its tripod developed, in one

sense, accidentally. In 1896, a Lumière camera moved on a gondola through Venice. Two years later, Paul photographed some ships at sea; and the catalogue said, "This is a panoramic picture taken from a tug which moves entirely round the vessels." The first mention of panning comes about 1901 or 1902, when an Edison catalogue advertises a blizzard scene in New York with the camera "revolving from right to left."

The First Outstanding American Director

Porter, it is said, turned to reel-long fiction films because he had seen and admired the work of Méliès. Yet he waited till 1906 to make a trick film, *The Dream of a Rarebit Fiend,* which used many of the devices of the French master but outdid him in the skillful fluency of camera and editing. Some of this ability appeared in Porter's *Life of an American Fireman;* it became clearer in his *Great Train Robbery* (1903). This film—750 feet long—has a number of distinctions besides the fact that it uses even more effectively the kind of pan shot that he introduced in *The Life of an American Fireman.* With this justly celebrated production, the rise of the American film begins. Some of the picture—our first "Western"—is quite ordinary. The interior scenes are shot in conventional stage fashion. The actors move right to left or left to right. Their gestures are always theatrical. But once Porter is out-of-doors, we are almost in a modern picture. People move toward the camera and away from it. The camera itself rides on the top of a train as the bandits fight for control of the engine. When the train is stopped, and the passengers pile out and line up to be robbed, one man makes a break—directly toward the camera—and is shot dead. Through the open door of the baggage car, Porter used a kind of double exposure to create the illusion of a moving landscape. In two pan shots, Porter carried his bandits down off the locomotive and across the woods. After the last scene of the story, Porter added a close-up of a bandit who aimed and shot a pistol at the camera. The catalogue explains that this scene "can be used to begin or end the picture."

The most important point about *The Great Train Robbery* is that Porter seems to have been the first director to build a skillful continuity of action through a dozen scenes. He didn't use two camera angles in any *one* scene. He didn't literally cut back and forth between two different actions in two different sets. But he achieved fluidity and something like the effect of intercutting in his climactic chase.

Chase Sequences Make Filmic Drama

The chase—which because of its very nature can't help being essentially filmic—appeared earlier in English films. Among others, there was Williamson's *Stop Thief!* (1900 or 1901) and another director's *A Daring Daylight Burglary* (about 1903). *The Robbery of the Mail Coach,* a period picture, seems to have been made after Porter's film. An 870-foot production, *The Life of Charles Peace, The Nortorious Burglar,* followed in 1905.

The best picture—and probably the most skillfully conceived and edited film before the coming of D. W. Griffith—is Cecil Hepworth's *Rescued by Rover,* 425-feet long, which he made in 1905. The story is a bit preposterous: a child is stolen by a beggar woman, the father's collie dog listens to the story of bereavement, jumps out a window, tracks down the child without the aid of scent, and leads the father to the room where the child is hidden. What makes the film so notable—aside from the fact that the dog was the first film character that didn't overact—is the continuity of the chase. The dog runs down a street, swims a stream, runs down another street, and finds the house where the begger lives. Then Hepworth carefully reverses the action to get the dog back home. Just as carefully, he brings the dog and the father through the same settings. There is not the slightest error in direction of movement, not the slightest jar in the editing. At the end, there is even a cut from a long shot of the reunited family to a closer angle.

Although *The Great Train Robbery* and *Rescued by Rover* were uncommonly successful over a number of years, the chase

film was slow in reaching France. This was because of the influence of Méliès, who made his exteriors, as well as his interiors, in his studio. His rival and imitator, Ferdinand Zecca, also avoided the out-of-doors for a time, but he soon deserted trick films for melodramas like *The Story of a Crime* (1901). At last, in 1905, André Heuzé produced an exterior chase film for Pathé, and, as the Brighton school began to decline, there seemed some promise that the French industry would grow in originality and effectiveness.

The Blight of Highbrow Film d'Art

Unfortunately, the film makers of France let the Americans Smith, Blackton, Porter, and Griffith outdistance them. This was partly because a group of outstanding theater folk took up the screen with more enthusiasm than imagination. It was 1908, and they could see the beginnings of swift and fluid action in hundreds of British and American films, and even in a few French ones. But the stage directors, actors, and writers who formed Film d'Art thought only of photographing a stage play in a stage set. They won the immediate acclaim of Paris critics and a highbrow public with the short historical film *The Assassination of the Duc de Guise* (1908), which Charles Le Bargy of the Comédie-Française directed in a single stagey scene. For four years, Film d'Art applied its flat, stiff, unfilmic technique to such subjects as *La Tosca* (1911), *Camille* (1912), and *Queen Elizabeth* (1912), all three with Bernhardt; to *Madame Sans-Gêne* (1911) with the distinguished comedienne Rejane; and to *Oedipus Rex* (1912) with the great tragedian Mounet-Sully. Denmark followed suit with its noted players, and an Italian company succeeded in making Duse, the greatest of modern actresses, completely absurd in a film called *Cenere* (1916).

These films of famous players in famous plays—a phrase to be adopted by Adolph Zukor in a few years—were made for an audience of educated playgoers. The artificial but ingenious works of Méliès, like Disney's cartoons, appealed to both high-

brow and low-brow. They were successful across the English Channel and across the Atlantic. In America, Méliès pictures were unscrupulously duped; and on one occasion, it is said, 300 prints were stolen from his New York office. Producers in England and the United States and, to some extent, in France and Italy deliberately shot for the huge market of the undereducated. These people delighted in swift and obvious comedy and in melodramatic chases. Fortunately, such material gave directors the widest chance to explore the innate possibilities of the camera. And films of this sort, with many outdoor scenes, were cheap to make.

Films of "Social Significance"

Since Porter and his contemporaries—and, of course, Griffith a little later—were thoroughly commercial even while they experimented in filmic technique, it may seem odd that so many pictures made between 1905 and 1915 had what might be called social significance. Typical examples were Porter's *The Ex-convict* (1904) and *The Kleptomaniac* (1905). Both contrasted the plight of the poor with that of the rich. In many of Griffith's pictures between his early *A Corner in Wheat* (1909) and the story that began as *The Mother and the Law* and grew into the modern tale in the four-storied *Intolerance* (1916), he attacked the rich and championed the poor. It is tempting to say that Griffith, as well as Porter, turned out these propaganda films to flatter the great audience of what we now call the underprivileged. We must remember, however, that, if the people who spent their nickels and dimes to see *The Ex-convict* or *A Corner in Wheat* enjoyed attacks on social inequities, so did the more educated public that read magazines and books. In the first decade of the twentieth century, the celebrated novelist Frank Norris pilloried capitalists and wheat speculators in *The Octopus* and *The Pit*. Upton Sinclair exposed slaughter-house conditions in his novel *The Jungle*. O. Henry sympathized with the shop girl, the convict, and even what he called "the gentle grafter." And Lincoln

Steffens led a group of muckrakers through three national magazines.

The Early Showmen and Their Methods

All manner of men made films, showed them, and finally sold them. Paul, Hepworth, and Porter had a scientific turn of mind. They were not, perhaps, as resourceful as Dickson; but Paul could make his own cameras, Hepworth improved arclights and invented the take-up reel and the developing tank, and Porter was an electrician. Some, like G. A. Smith, had been portrait photographers. Méliès and Blackton were draughtsmen as well as entertainers. Others had come out of vaudeville and the circus, where they had juggled, walked the tightrope, operated spirit cabinets, or run minstrel shows. The furriers and garment spongers were to come later.

Most of the early film makers were also projectionists or showmen. At first, they installed their projectors in American vaudeville houses or British music halls in the large cities. Some "bicycled" the machine and reels from one theater to another in the same town. Eventually, the cameraman had a traveling show that moved from fair to fair. In England, if he had a family, they were apt to go with him and help him make new films. (The cast of *Rescued by Rover,* including the dog, all belonged to the Hepworth family.) Those were the days when men were proudly installing electricity in their homes, and a woman could wear an "electric corset." So, naturally enough, fairground shows in England and America were "electric theaters"—"where you see all the latest life size moving pictures. Moral and refined. Pleasing to ladies, gentlemen, and children."

Fiction Films Give the Movies Their Own Theaters

The days and nights of the movies in vaudeville were numbered. At first, the motion picture was the headliner—or almost the headliner—on the bill. It was spotted climactically two or three turns before the end. But by 1900, the film was the last thing

on the program—the "chaser" that was supposed to clear out the audience before the next show. In that year, the strike of the American vaudeville performers' union, the White Rats, drove a number of theaters to rely entirely on motion pictures; but a whole evening of the usual short films merely demonstrated that the public had lost interest in this kind of entertainment. The motion-picture industry faced its first crisis. It was saved by the coming of more adroit fiction films. First Méliès, then the Brighton school, and finally Porter and his American followers supplied entertainment bills that kept the movies alive in the fairground shows and—far, far more important—created the downtown motion-picture theater.

The first show places in the cities were devoted only partly to motion pictures. Just as the Kinetoscope and the Mutoscope had invaded, cuckoo-like, the converted stores where the slot-machine phonograph flourished, so the motion picture elbowed its way into these "penny arcades," and shoved the peep shows out. In Los Angeles, in 1896, an ex-cowboy named Thomas L. Talley opened up an amusement parlor with a new kind of peep show at the back. The rear of the place was divided off by a black curtain for the projection of films. Because Talley's public was either skeptical or else nervous about going into a darkened room, he let them sample the screen entertainment through peepholes for fifteen cents, which sum could also take them back of the curtain. In 1902, Talley banished all the slot machines and opened his Electric Theater with "An hour's amusement and genuine fun for 10 CENTS ADMISSION." Besides news shots and comedy turns, he had Méliès' *Trip to the Moon, Gulliver's Travels,* and *Kingdom of the Fairies.* Whether or not he showed *The Great Train Robbery* at his Electric Theater, he certainly took it on a triumphal tour of the West.

It is a risky business to try to say just when and where American theaters first began to show movie bills—and nothing but movie bills—steadily and successfully, or when and where empty stores were first made into movie houses. Some claim that "Pop" Rock—

who was to become a partner with Smith and Blackton in Vitagraph—had a store-theater in New Orleans as early as 1896. In June, 1905, John P. Harris and Harry Davis of Pittsburgh gave a popular name to this kind of theater when they redecorated an empty storeroom and called it the Nickelodeon. ("This happy linking of the admission price with the Greek word for a hall of music is said to go back to the 1880's when a Bostonian used the term for one of those strange exhibitions of oddities that had been called "dime museums.") Before 1905 was over, hundreds of stores in the larger cities were converted into movie houses and named Nickelodeons—or, for a change, Nickelettes—and by 1908, there were more than 8,000 in the United States. Men who were to become tycoons of the feature film—Adolph Zukor, William Fox, Carl Laemmle, Marcus Loew—made their first fortunes with nickelodeons. London got its first movie house in 1904, and soon a rash of store-theaters spread across Europe.

A curious and special form of early show place recalls *The Time Machine* project of Paul and Wells. A former fire chief from Kansas City opened at the St. Louis world's fair of 1904 a show that he called *Hale's Tours and Scenes of the World.* The spectator boarded what looked like a railroad coach with a conductor taking tickets. Seated inside, the "passenger" heard and felt the train start. As it rocked on its way to the rattle of wheels and the toot of the engine, he saw rush past him the scenic beauties of America and Europe. Hale's tours soon appeared in other American cities and even invaded England.

Early Economics

In the years between 1900 and 1910, story films grew longer and costlier, more popular and more profitable. From fifty feet they grew to five hundred and a thousand. *Rescued by Rover* cost seven pounds, thirteen shillings, and nine pence to produce. When it proved a success, Hepworth sold each print for ten pounds, twelve shillings, and six pence. As the negative wore out, he made two more versions and finally disposed of almost 400

Fig. 5. *The Century Magazine, 1894.* The interior of Edison's studio in East Orange, New Jersey, built in 1892. Here most of his films of the nineties were shot. In this contemporary drawing, we see the photographing and recording of a talkie made before 1894.

prints. Porter's *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* cost considerably more to make—$350—and brought in $30,000.

At first and for a number of years, producers sold prints of their films instead of renting them. Black-and-white prints brought from twelve cents a foot to twenty. Hand-colored by a production line of fifty women, each dabbing on a single hue, some French films went up to as much as thirty cents a foot. When theaters discovered that they had a stock of old films on hand, they began trading with one another, and the word "exchange"—and the economic idea—was born.

Financial changes also touched the camera and the projector. At first, men like Edison and Lumière wouldn't sell or lease the means of making pictures. Lumière refused to sell a camera to Méliès, even for fifty thousand francs, because he said, "It is just a scientific novelty of the moment; there is no future in it." It's more likely that he didn't want to part with a golden-egged goose. Paul and others, however, were ready enough to sell their cameras; and soon all manufacturers fell in line. The men who made projectors tried to keep control of them by leasing their use on a sort of States' rights basis. By the time Edison got around to making his own Projecting Kinetoscope, he began to sell the machine outright. The present-day pattern slowly established itself.

Glass-roofed Studios

Studios grew in number and elaborateness as the movie began to make fortunes. They all depended on the sun. Some were merely the rooftops of city buildings—in New York, in London, and even in Los Angeles. Blackton and Smith turned out Vitagraph films on a rooftop stage that could turn with the sun. The English liked to work in natural setting; but, by 1898, they were beginning to build raised stages, about fifteen by thirty feet in area, with glass roofs, changeable rear and side walls, and doors at the front against inclement weather. One studio had a track to move the camera in and out for trick shots. And one, enclosed in

detachable glass walls, revolved on a central ball-and-socket and on outer wheels; when the wheels were removed, its floor could rock like a ship.

By 1906—when Edison built a ten-thousand dollar, glassed-in studio in the Bronx—the motion picture had found its salva-

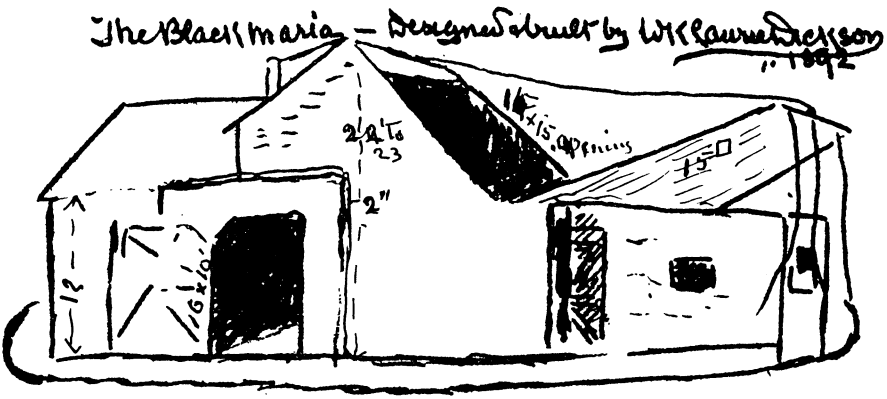


Fig. 6. *Courtesy Earl Theisen Collection.* The exterior of Edison's 1892 studio as sketched in 1933 by W. K. L. Dickson, his collaborator in the development of motion-picture photography, who designed the building. Because its wooden frame was covered with tar paper, his employees called it the Black Maria. Part of the roof could be opened to admit sunlight, and the whole structure turned to suit the position of the sun.

tion in the fiction film. In the previous ten years, it had developed its primary tools—cameras, projectors, and studios—and it had learned a few of the essential secrets of directing and editing. It was waiting for the advent of the man who would bring the silent film to perfection within another decade—David Wark Griffith.

Rotha and the World

HERBERT G. LUFT

HERBERT G. LUFT, a frequent contributor to the *Quarterly,* is co-writer of *The Secret of the Gift* and *What Price Freedom,* semidocumentary pictures produced this year by Paul F. Heard for the Broadcasting and Film Commission of the National Council of Churches. Currently, he is preplanning *Springtime in Copenhagen,* written in collaboration with producer Heard, which will be shot in Denmark and England early next year. Vitally interested in the cinema, Mr. Luft has been in correspondence with Paul Rotha for several years; the following article is the result of discussions between the author and Mr. Rotha during the former's recent visit in Europe.

PAUL ROTHA'S films mirror his outlook on life—a common understanding of mankind and a belief in the basic goodness of the individual. He has preferred to make documentary rather than entertainment motion pictures because he sees the medium as a powerful instrument for social progress. Even the humblest person, he believes, can be made aware of messages of enlightenment—and, ultimately, of universal education—through the emotional appeal of the screen. Today, Rotha recognizes that these goals can be most effectively achieved by the world's largest motion-picture distributor—television.

The creative work of Paul Rotha stretches over a period of a quarter of a century, and the world at large is his field of endeavor. His love for people compels him to persuade his audiences to work toward world peace and for the progress of civilization. Consequently, many of his films, such as *World of Plenty, World Is Rich,* and *World without End* (made in collaboration with Basil Wright), speak a common language about one world—a huge world of commerce and industry, agriculture, public services, hygiene, and housing. What are some of the roots of this man whose mind conceives the world as a whole? What gave impetus to his becoming a renowned film maker of real life?

The son of a physician by the name of Dr. Thompson, Paul Rotha (pen name) was born in London in June of 1907. He was graduated from London University and the Slade School of Art and was awarded First Student Prize at the Paris International

Exhibition of Design in 1925. But, even earlier, as a child, he had observed with increasing interest the magnetic power of the motion-picture screen over audiences. As his interest grew, he also became fascinated with the film's capacity for architectural form. In the expressionistic and baroque *décor* of such German films as *Caligari, Tartuffe, Faust,* and *Destiny,* Rotha saw a wonderful opportunity to satisfy his sense of beauty. During World War I, while waiting to grow up, he began collecting stills from the classic productions of the silent screen.[1]

Although films continued to be his primary interest, Rotha's first attempts at livelihood were in the fields of theater designing, book illustrating, and journalism. Finally in 1928, his aspirations were temporarily fulfilled by his first job in the film industry, as an assistant property man at British International Pictures Limited, Elstree. While employed on the feature *After the Verdict,* directed by Henrik Galeen, he learned with amazement that he was the only one on the set who had seen or even heard of Galeen's classic *The Student of Prague.* During that same year, advancement made him an assistant set designer for an early Hitchcock film. Then his article lampooning the low standards of British art direction appeared in the London *Film Weekly* (November 12, 1928), and he was promptly fired from the studio.

In those days, the industry had its own worries. The first Hollywood talkies were sweeping the world market, and film production was gradually stopping in almost every European studio. Like so many of his fellow-workers, Rotha remained unemployed for many months; so he went to Paris to try his luck. There, he met such *avant-garde* film directors as Cavalcanti, Lacome, and René Clair.

Upon his return to England, Rotha was determined to sum up the experience of seeing films on the continent, to write a book on the history and social significance of the cinema. Turned down by scores of publishers, he finally persuaded Jonathan Cape to commission *The Film Till Now*—a work which has since become

[1] The British Film Institute acquired this collection in 1951.

the foremost reference book of the entire industry. Only twenty-two years old, Rotha presented to his publisher a voluminous manuscript of some 300,000 words, which was cut down to 120,000 words for the first edition of September, 1930. This work, a history of the movies over a period of forty years, had excellent press notices in the United Kingdom, but was severely criticized by London's trade papers. Meanwhile, the heads of "Wardour Street" decided to stifle the ambitions of this overzealous young man by refusing him a second chance. Too much devotion was considered a handicap in an industry designed for healthy money investment and not as a playground for idealistic fools.

While jobless early in 1931, he had the good fortune to meet John Grierson, Britain's great pioneer of documentary films, who invited him to join the newly formed Empire Marketing Board Film Unit. Contrary to general belief, he actually stayed with the EMB less than six months. Upon completion of a series of three-minute abstract films, Rotha was again unemployed.

But this brief period of his first practical experience in documentary film making resulted in Rotha's complete break with his concept of "studio-theatricalism." Three years earlier, he had seen such great realistic pictures of that period as Eisenstein's *Potemkin* and Pudovkin's *Mother*. And he had been touched by *Turksib* and by the poetical lyricism of Alexander Dovjenko's *Arsenal* and *Earth,* by the Russians' cinematic representation of nature. As this new attitude toward birth, life, and death had become a part of Rotha, he had begun to feel the weaknesses of the theatrical German approach. Then came the brief but important contact with the documentary field, and Rotha realized more fully the potentials of the motion-picture camera to capture the real world at large. Henceforth, he was to devote all of his filmic efforts to real life, real people.

Rotha spent most of 1931 writing a second book *Celluloid: The Film Today* and hack-writing on feature scripts—*The Lodger, Mystery of the Marie Celeste, Fascination, etc.,* mostly in collaboration with Miles Mander, British film director and actor. Also

at this time, Rotha started exchanging letters with such people as Richard Griffith—now curator of the Museum of Modern Art Film Library—and the late Eric Knight—then motion-picture critic of the Philadelphia *Public Ledger*. Various future relationships were to result from the former correspondence. From the latter, came the book *Portrait of a Flying Yorkshireman* (1952).

In 1932, Jack Beddington—then publicity manager to Shell-Mex, later to become head of the Films Division of the British Ministry of Information—commissioned Rotha to shoot a four-reel film about the British air-routes as operated by Imperial Airways to India and South Africa. *Contact* took three months travel by air over 35,000 miles and was six months in the cutting room. A commercial firm, British Instructional Films, provided the facilities, but Rotha was sole writer, producer, director, and editor of the picture. Produced as a silent film with synchronized sound, *Contact* was to have had original music; but money ran out, and stock music had to be added. The picture opened in London before the World Economic Conference in 1933 and had an enthusiastic press. Later, it was shown at the Venice Festival, followed by a wide commercial showing. *Contact* cost about £2,500!

With the completion of *Contact,* Rotha noted that the commercial-film situation was as bleak as ever and decided to explore further the future of sponsored documentaries. British Instructional Film had become submerged in Gaumont-British; and, using their facilities, Rotha made several sponsored films—*Rising Tide* (1933), *Shipyard* (1934), *The Face of Britain* (1935). Next came the formation, with Donald Taylor and Ralph Keene, of the Strand Film Company to continue the production of documentaries sponsored by outside sources. As producer-in-chief of the new unit, Rotha not only was responsible for a number of interesting films—such as *Cover to Cover, Today We Live,* and *The Future's in the Air*—but also for training many new directors and cameramen. Frequently, he edited and co-wrote scripts with fresh talent.

Rotha's free-lance writings of this same period included articles

for *Cinema Quarterly* and *Sight and Sound.* During 1934–35, he wrote a guidebook *Documentary Film* (1936); and 1936 brought his compilation and publication of *Movie Parade,* a pictorial history of the film.

In September of 1937, at the joint invitation of the Library and the General Education Board of the Rockefeller Foundation, Rotha came to the United States to lecture at the Museum of Modern Art Film Library in New York. During his six-months stay in the States, he wrote a script on the art of film making, showed representative British documentaries in New York and Washington, and took on Richard Griffith as his assistant. As other young American motion-picture enthusiasts joined the "films-from-life" group, the beginnings were laid for the Anglo-American documentary relationship that later flourished during World War II, when Eric Knight joined the Frank Capra unit.

Back in England in 1938, Rotha wrote and made *New Worlds for Old* at Realistic Film Unit. In this, he explored in filmic terms the "Living Newspaper" technique of the American Federal Theater—an approach he was to develop further during World War II with *World of Plenty.* Then, with Grierson, Basil Wright, and Arthur Elton, Rotha joined in Film Centre to promote sponsorship for films. He also wrote, directed, and edited *The Fourth Estate,*[2] a six-reel film, for the London *Times.* Unfortunately, this film, with its peace-time impression of Britain as seen through the pages of the *Times,* was in the cutting stage when war broke out. Although *The Fourth Estate* was finished in March of 1940, its untimely theme prevented general public showings.

Manifold are Rotha's wartime activities. Always and foremost, his concern was—as it still is—with the common man. Throughout 1940, he worked in London's East End running mobile canteens for "blitzed" workers. In January of 1941, he formed Paul Rotha Productions Limited to make films for the British Ministry of Information; and during the following three war years,

[2] See Herbert G. Luft, "Notes on the World and Work of Carl Mayer," *The Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television,* VIII (Summer, 1954), 389–390.

his unit produced some 100 films for the government. In 1944, he set up Films of Fact to make fewer and more personally directed films—*Land of Promise* (1945), *Total War in Britain* (1946), *A City Speaks* (1946, for the City of Manchester), and the British Film Academy Award winning documentary *The World Is Rich* (1947). In 1946, the British Ministry of Information was dissolved and the Central Office of Information created in its place. According to Rotha, the new COI's inefficiency and lack of policy forced Films of Fact to close down production in 1947.

In addition to film making during the war years, Rotha helped to found and publish *Documentary News Letter* (December, 1939) and was instrumental in establishing the Federation of Documentary Film Units in Britain (1944) of which he remained chairman for three years. He became president of the new London Film Society; and, in 1946, he was appointed official adviser of the British government at the inaugural meeting of UNESCO in Paris.

With the war over, there was no let-up in Rotha's diversified activities. In collaboration with Richard Griffith, he began revising *The Film Till Now* in 1947. In 1948, he joined Roberto Rossellini on some film ventures in Italy, but they were never completed. When Rotha returned to England, he was determined that henceforth he would make feature films on actual location, as he had done with so many of his documentaries. Although he was fully convinced that real and creative thought must be about real existing things instead of the synthetic fabrication of the studio, he was unable to set up such a feature production. Thwarted, he turned to screenplay writing—*The Tongue-Tied Canary* for Rank and *Phantom Lobster* for Ealing Studio—but the sudden decline of the British film industry prevented either of his stories from being produced.

Finally, in 1950, Rotha achieved his most cherished aspiration: the making of a feature film without the use of studio facilities. *No Resting Place*—based on a novel by Ian Niall, co-written with Michael Orrom, and directed by Rotha for independent producer

Colin Lesslie—was shot wholly in the Wicklow Hills of Ireland, with a cast of little-known but professional actors from the famous Dublin theaters (with the exception of Michael Gough, who played the lead). Although given wide acclaim in the British press and sent as one of four English films to the Venice Festival, the picture failed to receive a fair theater distribution in the United Kingdom, and was almost ignored in America.[3]

The plot of *No Resting Place* is contrived, but it shows Rotha's concern for humanity. Here again, as in his earlier documentaries, he deals with the plight of the illiterate, underprivileged, and dispossessed. But this time the setting is far removed from the focal point of world attention. It is a gypsy-type community of tinkers, nomads in the hills of Ireland, who approach life with the simple naïveté of their forefathers. They live in the past, in pitiful poverty with a few pleasures, and are constantly at war with the world around them. They are entangled in the machinery of modern civilization without even comprehending the rules they resent. Like Rotha's films from life, this one fiction yarn has all the textures and the smell of reality. A pictorial composition of rare beauty, it approaches the realism of the masterpieces of the Italian screen in its bold unyielding concept of an infinite doom. To this day, *No Resting Place* has remained Rotha's only dramatic feature. However, he recently confessed to me that he desires to make a full-length motion picture around the life of Vincent Van Gogh, using actors against the reality of the Flemish landscape.

In 1952, UNESCO commissioned Basil Wright and Paul Rotha to make one picture simultaneously on separate locations in Mexico and Thailand. According to Rotha,

> Our job was to make a vivid film, showing how the UN and its agencies are trying to tackle the world-wide problems of poverty, malnutrition, ignorance, and disease. We wanted to show how, by providing expert advice and materials, it is possible to help people to help themselves.

Thailand and Mexico were chosen because they are on opposite sides of the globe—some 10,000 miles apart—and because in these

[3] A print of *No Resting Place* is now at the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, New York.

countries, as in many other underdeveloped countries, the main human problems—food, health, education, and work—are exactly the same, regardless of differences in the customs, habits, and traditions of the people.

Rotha and Wright set off for Mexico City and Bangkok, respectively, in October of 1952. They had no shooting script; and neither had previously been to Mexico or Thailand. All they could do ahead of production was jot down some general ideas to be followed in carrying out the purpose of the venture. For the location period of four months, the film makers had at their disposal the postal and cable services between the two countries. Week by week, the number of communications increased as Wright and Rotha exchanged their findings and endeavored to film similar subjects.

In February of 1953, exactly one year after the assignment was handed to them, both were back in England and full of praise for their film units—the Thais and Mexicans who had worked so loyally for this new UN idea. Their 60,000 feet of film had to be cut down to 6,000. And a way had to be found of weaving the Siamese and Mexican material into one well-composed pattern which would put across the main idea of the picture.

Today, UNESCO has the completed film *World without End*—as well as thousands of feet of left-over material for other films which will show, in greater detail, special aspects of the work being done by the people of Mexico and Thailand. *World without End* was successfully presented at the Edinburgh Film Festival of 1953 and was transmitted over all the B.B.C. television stations to an audience of some seven-million people. The picture has had a good press in England, with the exception of the Beaverbrook papers which have not been favoring the educational program of UN. It won the British Film Academy Award, and is now in circulation in five languages.

In May of 1953, Rotha was appointed head of the B.B.S.'s new Documentary Film Department. Under his direction, 75 pro-

grams were produced, including *Special Inquiry*—a journalistic series covering aspects of contemporary British life and *The World Is Ours*—a series dealing with world economics, health, social and educational problems, and the work of scientists being tackled by agencies of the United Nations.

Within the latter series, a group of programs, partly film and partly live TV, each 45 minutes in length, have already been presented throughout the United Kingdom. Launched on the eve of World Health Day (April 6, 1954), the first, *World Nurse,* was a combination of live TV and film which showed the work of nurses from the World Health Organization in Burma, Syria, Turkey, Greece, and El Salvador. The filmed sequences were taken by the B.B.C. in Geneva, Athens, and London.

Similarly, two other programs, also part-film and part-live action, were transmitted by the B.B.C., and are therefore not repeatable. One, *Hope for the Hungry,* presented a general survey of the world's food problem, based on the relationship between the relative increases of population and food supplies; it indicated the measures that were being taken with the help of the United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization in the underdeveloped areas of the world. *The Wealth of the Waters* was a direct follow-up to the second program; its theme showed the increase in food supplies by greater exploitation of the world's fish resources, against the locale of Thailand where a film sequence was photographed.

Others in the series are now being presented on 35-mm. film. *The Waiting People* is the story of the refugees of the world—with particular reference to those in Europe and the Middle East. For this picture, the UN High Commissioner for Refugees was interviewed on the work of his agency. *No Other Way* shows the development of the International Labor Organization since 1919, using Libya as a detailed example of the work of ILO Technical assistance. Released during April of this year, *The Virus Story* contains an account of the World Health Organization's attack on the main virus diseases—yellow fever, polio, etc.—links social

evils of diseases to the efforts of medical experts to conquer them, and reports scientific progress to date.

Scheduled for July, 1955, television distribution is *Wealth from the Wasteland*—a companion film, like *The Wealth of the Waters,* to *Hope for the Hungry*—the story of man's struggle to tame the desert and make it fertile. The bulk of this film was shot on actual location in Israel as an example of a land that is fighting this battle with considerable success. *Village to Village,* planned for October, 1955, release over the B.B.C. TV, covers UNESCO's adoption projects. Additional subjects under consideration by Rotha for *The World Is Ours* series include: *The World's Weather,* the story of the World Meteorological Organization, for January, 1956; *World Airways,* for April, 1956; *One Man's Story,* dealing with ILO, UNESCO, and the World Health Organization in Bolivia, for July, 1956; *The World's Bank,* for October, 1956. To finish the series of *The World Is Ours,* a general recapitulation of the problems is planned by Rotha and his associates.

When the news broke last February that the B.B.C. was breaking up its Television Documentary Unit,[4] William Salter wrote in *The New Statesman and Nation* (February 26, 1955):

> According to a release by the British Broadcasting Corporation, the abolishment of the television film unit will make no difference in the provision of forthcoming programs. [Rotha confirms that the TV film series *The World Is Ours,* as devised, developed, and scheduled by him, will be continued according to his original plans.] But since British television has attained its appeal and world recognition solely through its documentaries, it seems a poor way to award those who have achieved so much, by disbanding them as a group and disperse them. One had felt that our documentary program has become safely vested in the Television Service's Documentary Unit with such series as *Special Inquiry* and *World Is Ours.* One can only hope it remains in as safe keeping in other hands as it has been in those of Paul Rotha.

Today, Rotha at 47 is still in his prime and, it is hoped, only half-way through his film career. This devotee to real cinema is

[4] This occurred after a controversy had arisen in regard to the *Special Inquiry* program which attempted to take its cameras into such nationalized industry as the British Railways in order to focus on weaknesses, to facilitate improvements and health regulations.

convinced that great art is undying simply because its human interest is of permanent value. He still believes in the cultural mission of motion pictures; yet he has become quite skeptical about the present status of the British, or even perhaps of the world, cinema. Recently, Rotha stated:

> The motion-picture industry has come into the hands of the accountants. The freedom to make a film that you believe in just isn't there any longer. It takes a film person to look at a script to know how it will turn out on the screen. But the businessman who runs the studios wants a successful play or novel to begin with, and at least two top-star names to assure his investment. Today in Britain, production is way down. If it weren't for television, our employment situation would be terrifying. But that's hardly the concern of the accountants.

A Bibliography for the Quarter

Book Editor, FRANKLIN FEARING

THE MOST INTERESTING PARTS of *Television Plays by Paddy Chayefsky* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1955, $3.75) are the remarkable little essays which introduce each of the six plays. In these, we learn the author's theory of the uniqueness of TV as a medium, how TV drama differs from film drama and the theater, what kinds of subjects are good TV drama, what the author thinks of his own writing (sometimes he thinks it pretty good), why he writes the way he does, and some of his views on love and life in middle-class America. More remarkable still, these essays are neither pompous nor pretentious. Simply written in pungent prose that pulls no punches, they reveal a highly perceptive, sophisticated mind. Some examples—on the limitations of the TV screen and on some of the effects of these restrictions—will give their flavor:

> In television . . . you cannot handle comfortably more than four people on the screen at the same time. This means you cannot write mob scenes or capture expansive crowd moods like the nervous freneticism of a packed New Year's party. If you have a story about a lynching or a political convention, forget it. . . . Television is essentially an advertising and not an entertainment medium. The advertising agencies are interested only in selling their clients' products, and they do not want dramas that will disturb potential customers. This limits the choice of material markedly. You cannot write about adultery, abortion, the social values of our times, or almost anything that relates to adult reality. Compounding this fearful restriction is the ever-prevalent illusion that the audience only wants to see light drama, gay comedies about beautiful young people in love.
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> [The first television writers] can hardly be blamed for the incredible trash they wrote. The limitations are still with us, and much of the trash is; but, in the desperate search to adjust, new areas of writing are being opened up, areas that are peculiar to their limitations. Television drama cannot expand in breadth, so it must expand in depth. In the last year or so, television writers have learned that they can write intimate drama—

"intimate" meaning minutely detailed studies of small moments of life. . . . Now, the word for television drama is depth, the digging under the surface of life for the more profound truths of human relationships. This is an area that no other dramatic medium has handled or can adequately handle. It is an area that sooner or later will run head-on into the taboos, not only of television, but of our entire way of life.

. . . . . .

Television is a strange medium, limited by a thousand technical problems, hemmed in by taboos and advertising policies, cheapened by the innumerable untalented and officious people you will always find in a billion-dollar industry. Nevertheless, for the writer there is still an area for deep and unprobed work. I am just now becoming aware of this area, this marvelous world of the ordinary. This is an age of savage introspection, and television is the dramatic medium through which to expose our new insights into ourselves. The stage is too weighty, and the movies too intense, to deal with the mundane and all its obscured ramifications. More and more, the television writers are turning away from the slapdash activity of the violence show and turning to the needlelike perception of human relationships.

And, of course, *The Television Plays of Paddy Chayefsky* contains six TV plays: *The Bachelor Party, Printer's Measure, Holiday Song, The Big Deal, The Mother,* and *Marty*. Unfortunately, I have not seen any of these on the TV screen, but as plays-to-be-read they are extraordinarily good, and brilliantly exemplify the author's belief that TV writing should concern itself with "small moments" in the "marvelous world of the ordinary." Altogether, Mr. Chayefsky's book is about the most exciting piece of writing about TV that has come to my attention. It becomes possible to understand *Variety*'s statement: "Paddy Chayefsky makes a habit of writing for television as if he had invented the medium."

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An interesting general agreement about the requirements of TV drama exists between Mr. Chayefsky and the writers of *Broadcasting Television and Radio* (Prentice-Hall, New York, 1955, $5.35). Both stress the intimate character of the TV medium and the importance of presenting the actions and emotions of ordinary people in situations which give "this could have happened to me" feeling. The authors of this latter text are Walter

Kingson, Associate Professor of Radio, University of California (Los Angeles); Rome Cowgill, free-lance writer; and Ralph Levy, producer-director of the C.B.S. Their stated intention to write a realistic text about TV and radio for people who have a career-interest in these fields seems fully realized. Of the book's three sections, one deals with performance—speech, acting, announcing. A second is concerned with writing and directing; and the third, with broadcasting. This last is an interesting departure from most texts in these fields. The contents include a brief history of the development of radio and TV, a description of the FCC and how it works, a description of the stations and networks, a (believe it or not) brief but adequate description of audience-measurement techniques, and an excellent bibliography and index. It occurs to me that this text and Paddy Chayefsky's TV plays and essays would be an unbeatable combination in the classroom.

* * *

If the dealer who sold you your new TV set hasn't explained everything and hasn't anticipated all your difficulties in operating it, *Operation TV* by Stephen A. Madas (Vantage Press, New York, 1955, $2.50) will, presumably, take care of the situation—at least until the service man comes. There are four chapters: "How a TV Receiver Works," "How to Use the Controls," "General Information," and "Color TV." This book is clearly written, and should prove useful; although the inclusion of some diagrams, especially in the first chapter, would have helped.

* * *

Jean Mitry in *John Ford* (Classiques du Cinéma, Editions Universitaires, 72, Boulevard Saint-Germain, Paris, 1954, no price given) gives us a concise analysis of the artistic development and contributions of a distinguished practitioner of the art of making motion pictures. Its 150 pages present Ford's early adventures in Westerns with Harry Carey, Hobart Bosworth, Tom Mix, and others; the emergence of the John Ford "style" in such films as *Men Without Women* (1930) and *Arrowsmith* (1931); and finally,

the Ford of such classics as *The Informer* (1935), *Prisoner of Shark Island* (1936), *Mary of Scotland* (1936), *Grapes of Wrath,* and *The Long Voyage Home* (1940). Not the least of the contributions of this little book is the chronological listing of Ford's entire output from 1917 to 1954, with critical examinations. Also available in this series are studies on Eisenstein, Eric von Stroheim, Vittorio de Sica, Charles Chaplin, F. W. Murnau, Mack Sennett, and Abel Gance. Others are announced as in preparation on such well-known figures as Pudovkin, Fritz Lang, Orson Welles, W. Wyler, King Vidor, Lubitsch, Buñuel, and René Clair.

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In *Garbo* (Doubleday & Co., Garden City, New York, 1955, $4.00), John Bainbridge seems to have assembled all available knowledge about this great and (if I may be forgiven the overworked adjective as applied to this subject) enigmatic star. Greta Gustafsson's life is set forth from her birth on September 8, 1905, in Stockholm until she became the legend she now is. She is both a legend and a symbol, perhaps one of the most important symbols in our time. Like all social symbols, she is ambiguous. Above all others, as Bainbridge notes, she is the classic symbol of feminine beauty. In addition, she is a screen actress concerning whom such eminent and discriminating critics as Lionel Barrymore and Clarence Brown have been fairly unrestrained in their praise. Who is the person behind all this? No one, including Mr. Bainbridge, is quite certain. His biography is written at a distance. He has apparently examined the available data and screened the rumor and gossip from the facts—no easy task in the case of a legend—and the result is a very readable book. Beautifully illustrated, this is a book that all Garbo fans will want to own.

* * *

According to the Foreword, *Preface to Film* (Film Drama, Ltd., 35 Great Pulteny St., London, W.I., 1954, 8*s.* 6*d.*) presents a new approach to film making. Although concerned with theory, it is not, say the authors, a textbook of film theory. Rather, "it is intended as a starting point for actual production, and may be re-

garded, in this sense, as a manifesto." The book contains two essays: "Film and the Dramatic Tradition" by Raymond Williams and "Film and Its Dramatic Techniques" by Michael Orrom. In the first, Mr. Williams supports the general thesis that film theorists and film makers have allowed their commitment to the doctrine of the uniqueness of film as an artistic medium to obscure its deep organic relationships with drama as a whole. In exploring these relationships, he gives full recognition to certain unique features of film but sees them in the context of the whole dramatic tradition. This tradition is examined in some detail. There are penetrating analyses of the essential characteristics of drama—the key terms here are "performance" and "representation"—and the problems of realism, naturalism, dramatic conventions, and especially "total performance." By this last is meant the characteristic that is peculiar but not limited to the film by virtue of which the performance is recorded and final. This means, he believes, that the relation between the initial conception and the final product is very close, a fact which makes possible a control of his material by the creator in a way not easily achievable in other dramatic forms.

The second essay is concerned with technical problems of film production. These are discussed in the light of the general theoretical orientation of the first essay. There are ample references to the works of Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Griffith, and other masters as well as contemporaries.

These essays are closely reasoned and reflect a deep concern with the present and future status of the film as a medium of expression and communication. They are scholarly without being pedantic, and will repay careful study by all those interested theoretically or practically in motion pictures.

Film Drama Limited, according to the dust cover, is an organization brought into being to associate creative workers in a number of artistic fields in the production of films of a "new and distinctive kind." In addition to producing films, it will encourage

criticism and theoretical discussion of the film. We shall look forward to other publications of which *Preface to Film* is the first.

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If this bibliographical note had a title, I suppose it would be the not very original one "It All Depends on the Point of View." In this case, the points of view arrived on my desk on the same day. One is encased in a handsomely embossed and illustrated brochure entitled "Report to the Stockholders of the Columbia Broadcasting System" for 1954. The other, entitled "Mediocrity Reigns at CBS," is an analysis of this same important institution by the distinguished radio and TV critic, John Crosby. The view of the C.B.S. by the C.B.S., in addition to a report of its financial condition (it appears to be doing very well—gross revenues and sales were 18.9 per cent higher than in 1953), shows us a glowing picture of achievement in radio and TV. The eminence of its popular comedy programs—Jack Benny, Arthur Godfrey, Amos and Andy—is noted, and the report points with pride to the distinguished character of its various cultural, musical, and informational programs on both radio and TV.

How does Mr. Crosby see the C.B.S.? He begins his article by asking, "What has happened to CBS?" "Nine years ago," he says, "CBS was the most exciting, most imaginative, the most daring network. The place teemed with ideas and with youth and with integrity. Today it teems with money and advertising men." With the exception of its public-affairs department which he finds "superb" and particular programs like "The Search," "Adventure," and "See It Now," he thinks the C.B.S. presents a pretty depressing picture. "Every CBS executive," he says, "ought to be condemned for a week to looking at their own shows."

Well, as we said, it all depends on the point of view.

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The *Dictionary of American Literature* (Philosophical Library, New York, 1955, $5.00), edited by Robert Richards, is another in what appears to be a never ending series. Although I am cer-

tainly no specialist in this area, this book appears to be an adequate though perhaps limited job. It is mainly devoted to biographies, although there are a few articles on general topics. The answer to the question of inclusion in a work of this sort will depend on one's definition of "literature." In the present case apparently, the editor did not include screenwriting. At any rate of the thirty odd screenwriters who, individually or in collaboration, wrote screen plays good enough to be included in Gassner and Nichols' *Twenty Best Film Plays,* only five are given a place in the *Dictionary,* and these are included for reasons other than their contributions to the screen.