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Contents

Perspective on *3-D*

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RICHARD C. HAWKINS has recently co-written and codirected *Claimed,* an experiment in the editing of dramatic stereoscopic film in color and sound. Mr. Hawkins has also written and directed other films including *Bird Hunt,* and he is currently completing *The Woodcutter's Willful Wife.* A former teacher in the Drama Department at Baylor University, Mr. Hawkins has more recently been a member of the faculty of the Motion Picture Division, Theater Arts Department, at the University of California at Los Angeles.

HOLLYWOOD is hopeful again. After four years of indecisive competition with television—four years during which the major studios were unable to beat television and were unwilling to join it—the industry has emerged with new courage and confidence, a confidence which seems to permeate the upper echelons of production and diffuse out over the country through the ranks of exhibition.

The entire motion-picture industry is in a state of revolution. It is in revolution as surely as it was following the appearance of *The Jazz Singer,* and, for better or worse, the myriad processes of the motion picture, from the earliest consideration of subject matter through the final presentation on the screen, are undergoing significant modification. It is on this modification that much of Hollywood pins its hopes for the future.

The magic word in the present uproar is *3-D.* The word is a newcomer to general use, but it has found acceptance far more rapidly than did its rival designation, TV. However, as it is splashed through the Hollywood trade papers today, *3-D* does not mean what it would seem to imply. It does not necessarily indicate stereoscopic motion pictures, nor even pictures with a strong illusion of a third dimension, although it may. Today in Hollywood, *3-D* simply means *change.*

Tired of competing with television on similar terms, the industry has set out to manufacture its own conditions for the fight. For the development of the new conditions there are a variety of tend-

encies and systems now in competition. All of them are aimed toward giving audiences an experience which, if not entirely new, is at least distinct from the standard motion picture to which they have become accustomed, and which will be extremely difficult for the television industry to duplicate.

The devices now being employed to impart the "new look" to films are not the latest products of the most advanced electronics laboratories. On the contrary, the techniques, and even the very instruments employed are, in most cases, ancient rejects which have been gathering dust on the studio shelves for at least fifteen to twenty years. All of them have had previous consideration by the studios, and each has had its share of fervent advocates and some trial by audience. Only the feeling of a desperate need for some new box-office lure could prompt their acceptance at this time.

In spite of the numbers of names of "new systems" announced by studios and promoters in the trade press, there are only two basic types of process being introduced at the moment. The first is the true stereoscopic system which gives the illusion of depth and controls the apparent position of the image in space by presenting the two individual eyes with two separate and slightly disparate images of the original scene. These correspond to the two different impressions received by the eyes in viewing an actual scene, and, as in normal vision, are combined by the brain to form a single three-dimensional impression of the subject. The requirements for such a system are that two separate simultaneous pictures must be made of the scene and that some means must be found for separating the two projected images, so that each eye sees its own, and only its own, corresponding image. To make the pictures it is necessary to have two individual cameras linked together, to have a compound camera with twin lenses simultaneously exposing twin strips of film, or to use a double-lensed camera incorporating the two slightly differing views on a single strip of film.

There are no great obstacles to making such stereoscopic films, although some groping and fumbling must be expected in the first attempts to apply stereoscopic techniques. The difficulty lies in their exhibition. The need for directing each separate image to its corresponding eye, while obscuring it from the alternate eye, gives rise to a technical problem which has never anywhere been solved to the complete satisfaction of the exhibitors. The solutions offered have been many and ingenious, but none combines the simplicity, economy, and ease which mark the exhibition of two-dimensional films.

The history of stereoscopic motion pictures and devices for their exhibition is a long one. It begins before the advent of true motion pictures with inventions such as that of Coleman Sellers, a Philadelphia engineer, who, in 1861, synthesized human motion by making a series of posed still photographs of the various stages of a movement using a stereoscopic camera, and then mounted them on a paddle-wheel device for rapid change of picture. He viewed the result through a stereoscopic viewer. The two views were separated by a physical wall between the two eyes, as in the old-fashioned parlor stereoscope, thus providing stereoscopic "movies" for a single viewer.

The first attempts to popularize stereoscopic films in America came in 1922 when there were three competing companies pushing their product in New York. Two of these used the *anaglyph* method for viewing, a method of separating the two images by providing the audience with spectacles, the lenses of which are made of complementary colors. Since the two images are projected in the same complementary colors, the opposite color transmissions of the left and right eye glasses provide the necessary separation of the left and right eye pictures. The third and most ambitious program was presented by the *Teleview* company, which used individual mechanical viewers fastened to each seat in the theater. Each viewer contained a small motor driving a rotating shutter which covered the right and left eyes alternately,

in synchronism with the alternating left and right eye images thrown on the screen by the projector. The program included stereoscopic animations, scenic shots, and a stereoscopic shadow dance performed by live actors, in addition to a silent feature concerning a fanciful trip to Mars. Critics praised the effect, if not the merit, of the picture. The *anaglyph* method of exhibition continued to find use occasionally, notably in a series called *Plastigrams* in the 1920's and later, in the MGM *Audioscopics* in the 1930's; and roller-coaster rides, onrushing locomotives, and flying baseballs shocked audiences periodically, as they peered through the red and green glasses.

Early in the 1930's a better method of exhibition presented itself, with the development of Polaroid viewing spectacles. This method relies on the ability of polarizing filters to transmit light waves oriented in one plane and block waves oriented in all others. The two pictures are projected through filters oriented at right angles to each other, and the right and left eye spectacle filters are oriented exactly as are the right and left eye projector filters. Therefore, each filter passes the proper image to its corresponding eye, while blocking the alternate image. This method makes it possible to project color films and eliminates some of the strain caused by the two-color system. Pictures made for the Chrysler Corporation and for the Pennsylvania Railroad were shown by this system at the 1939 World's Fair. These pictures delighted millions, but the system was not exploited commercially in this country until *Bwana Devil* appeared upon the screen.

Meanwhile, in the Soviet Union, a system which had been tried in France and elsewhere was developed more fully, and stereoscopic production was given great fanfare just after World War II. The system differs from those previously mentioned in that the image separation is accomplished at the screen, eliminating the need for glasses, but the complexity and severe limitations imposed by the method have condemned it for general commercial use. The Stereokino in Moscow is a small, specially constructed

theater of less than two hundred seats. Several shorts and one feature, *Robinson Crusoe,* have been produced, but recently, interest in such production appears to have waned.

The present impetus to stereoscopic production has come from two sources. The first is the work done for the Festival of Britain in 1951. As a glimpse into the future of the cinema the festival presented a series of stereoscopic shorts viewed by the Polaroid method. These included stereoscopic animations by Norman McLaren and a handsome Technicolor record of scenery along the upper Thames. This exhibition proved vastly intriguing to the public and highly profitable to the festival, but it did not spark American exhibitors until the stereo boom was already on its way.

The first real interest in stereo production and exhibition was generated in December of 1952 by the appearance of a stereoscopic feature, *Bwana Devil,* which was produced independently by Arch Oboler, a radio writer trying his hand at motion pictures, and employed a photographic apparatus and technique financed and promoted by Milton Gunzberg. According to critics and public alike the dramatic qualities were poor, and according to technicians the stereoscopic photography left much to be desired, but the industry was sold on the possibilities. The reason was simple—the film broke box-office records. Immediately following the release of *Bwana Devil* came the presentation of the Festival of Britain films in American theaters. The first reaction to the innovation was cautious. The studios had always contended that audiences would not submit to the necessity for wearing glasses; but when it became evident that customers would pour into the theater to see an indifferent film in the new technique, every major studio made plans for three-dimensional production, using the Polaroid method for exhibition. *Natural Vision, Tri-opticon Stereo-Cine, Metrovision, Paravision,* etc., came to be common words in the publicity releases, all of them house names for very similar Polaroid projection processes.

The illusion of the third dimension is generally believed to be

the factor upon which the motion-picture industry will rely most heavily in setting up its new conditions for competition with television. It is doubtful, however, that this will prove to be so. The three-dimensional systems may represent a significant portion of production, but when the real money has been spent, and a new pattern of exhibition begins to emerge, it may become evident that the major portion of attention and capital has been turned toward providing a great increase in *scale*. Stereoscopy is conceivably within the powers of home television, but parlor TV cannot duplicate tremendous theatrical scale. The remaining systems which are being pushed at the present time make their effects by a great enlargement of the screen and a widening of the proportions of the frame, in order to fill the cone of vision with picture, and in some instances by a curvature of the screen which tends to surround the audience with the scene.

The wide-screen approach is also an old one. In London, in 1924, Marcelle Carné's epic *Napoléon* was projected on the "triptych screen" consisting of a main central panel and two wings for auxiliary projections. The Magnascope, a device for opening out the screen to huge proportions for monumental scenes, was used successfully for battle sequences of *Old Ironsides* and *The Big Parade* in 1926, for the airplane sequence in *Wings,* and for the elephant stampede in *Chang* in 1927. The same technique was resurrected by David Selznick for the storm sequence in *Portrait of Jennie* in 1948.

Hard on the heels of sound came the movement in the industry for a uniform switch from the standard 35-mm. film and the old picture shape—three units high by four units wide—to a larger film of 65 or 70 millimeter width and a shape with proportions of approximately three by six or seven. The aim of this move was to take advantage of the superior quality of a larger picture on the film and to fill the angle of vision with the scene. One company called its process "Natural Vision"; another, "Grandeur" film; and another, "Magnafilm." The first collection of short subjects

made with the Fox Grandeur system was shown in New York in 1929 and was followed soon by the feature musical *Happy Days.* A rapid survey of the *Journal of the Society of Motion Picture Engineers* of that period reveals a consensus concerning the inevitability of a change-over to a wide-screen system. Only the choice of one of the contending systems was then at issue. One of the interesting arguments of 1930 concerned the relative merits of a process using a wider film for recording a larger image and one involving the compression of a wider image into the standard 35-mm. frame. The latter system, called *Anamorphoscope,* was offered to American producers in 1928. In February of 1953, Twentieth Century-Fox redubbed the system *CinemaScope* and offered to share it with the rest of the industry.

No doubt most of the interest in wide-screen presentation, revived after more than twenty years' neglect, can be attributed directly to *Cinerama,* a process which had been announced as practically ready for exhibition since 1946 and which finally made its appearance late in 1952 with spectacular success. This process features an extremely wide, deeply curved screen, which fills the visual angle with picture and stimulates the peripheral vision with objects and movements outside the cone of sharpest focus and concentration, thus duplicating to some extent the normal conditions of seeing. In order to cover the extremely wide concave screen with picture, a special camera using three lenses photographs the scene in three contiguous segments on three separate strips of film. These three films must then be projected simultaneously onto the screen so that their edges blend together to form a continuous picture. There is some precedent for such a procedure in the previously mentioned triptych screen of 1924 and particularly in the *Widescope* system of the late 1920's which combined two standard 35-mm. frames on the screen to form a single wide picture. In addition to surrounding the eye with picture, *Cinerama* also surrounds the ear with sound, in the manner of Walt Disney's *Fantasound,* by feeding six widely separated

speakers with six individual sound tracks for realistic sound direction and perspective.

Despite its undisputed effectiveness for certain types of subject matter, *Cinerama* has too many peculiar demands and limitations in both production and exhibition to recommend it as the norm for the entire industry. Therefore the industry as a whole seems much more willing to embrace other wide-screen systems. The most eagerly heralded of these is *CinemaScope,* the system whereby a special lens compresses a very wide angle of view for recording on a film of normal width, then reëxpands it in projection to give an image which is twice as wide in relation to its height as the image to which we are accustomed. This image is projected onto an extremely wide, slightly curved screen and combined with three sound tracks to complete the illusion. The appeal of this system to producers and exhibitors alike is that it allows the use of most of the present equipment. The chief expense is for the installation of the huge curved screens. *CinemaScope* will probably become the medium for the larger share of new production. For the exhibition of pictures already "in the can" the studios are pinning their hopes on wide-angle projection systems utilizing big screens and, in some cases, multiple sound tracks. For supercolossal sensations a combination of *CinemaScope* with Polaroid *3-D* may be the ultimate.

For America at least, the screen of the near future seems likely to be bigger than ever before. Screens of sixty-foot width and wider will not be uncommon, but the gain in width will not mean a proportional gain in height. Another likelihood is that the silver screen will be silver once more. This will ensure optimum use of the additional light needed for the larger image, and it will also fit the screens for the projection of stereoscopic pictures. Some sort of "surround" will no doubt be used to subdue consciousness of the picture frame. Theater sound systems will provide for the use of multiple sound tracks, and the conversion to magnetic reproduction will mean distinct gains in both fidelity and volume range.

When the novelty has passed and the new methods have settled to routine, what will we have gained and what may we have lost? The technical means will have been provided to give us a more complete external-theatrical experience. Sound will undoubtedly be better and more effective; the picture in its new proportions may be more compelling. In the realm of true stereoscopic films, a control of the depth relationships and of the position of the image in space may bring audiences into a new and intriguing relation with the picture. Indications at present are that the familiar techniques of cutting can still be used for the wide-screen processes, and for stereo also, if a few precautions are observed in the shooting. Filmic movement as well as movement of camera and actors is still possible. However, the extreme scope, size, and clarity of the picture may tempt some directors to ignore camera movement and cutting and to maneuver their actors upon the screen as they might within a proscenium arch. Although the technique of the film will probably become much more like that of the stage, it is not absolutely necessary that this be so. Nor is the film irrevocably linked to realism by the new processes. On the contrary, they offer a greater variety of possible effects for non-realistic expression.

Even though the removal of some of the classic limitations of the screen may not of necessity entail much loss, it is possible that the screen may lose. It is in the internal experience that comes from a juxtaposition of images and sounds and combinations of both to lead the mind, and in the use of the screen to convey idea rather than for shallow effect that the loss may come. This loss would result from a tendency toward the abandonment of cinematic techniques and from the types of film which seem most likely to be produced. Although the nature of the film of the future cannot be predicted with certainty, the present rush for size and sensation seems to indicate that there is little belief that mature and thoughtful stories are any answer to the box-office problem. Multimillion-dollar productions on a scale to match the

mammoth screens seem likely to become standard, and outdoor spectacle will probably fill a large segment of screen time. There is little probability that producers looking for a story to put in front of the Grand Canyon will come up with anything vastly better than when looking for a story to put behind Marilyn Monroe. A combination of the two natural phenomena seems not improbable. It is not impossible to put smaller, less pretentious, and more meaningful films on the larger screens, but it seems unlikely that we will see many of them. Perhaps they will be left to television.

Cinema sans Sense

GUY L. COTÉ

GUY L. COTÉ is a twenty-seven-year-old Canadian who spent five years studying at Oxford, England. While there, he directed the film-ballet *Between Two Worlds* and produced a documentary on skiing, *Sestrieres 1949*. He is at present directing films for the National Film Board of Canada.

A CHILD WHO has played with a new toy long enough to become tired of it will naturally want to destroy it or throw it away. Indeed, who hasn't tried to scratch the eyes out of an old teddy bear at least once in his life? The novelty has worn off, the house of cards is brushed aside gleefully. And this is exactly what the *avant-garde* movement is now trying to accomplish with our newest and most complicated art form: it seems that some Parisian intellectuals have vowed to destroy the cinema.

A new movement (or should we say a new cult?) has mushroomed in St. Germain-des-Prés. It has flourished because youth breeds eccentricity, and because eccentricity soon becomes an end in itself. It has flourished because the motion picture had, until this new movement appeared, been the only valid art form on which a concentrated destructive attack had not been launched within the last hundred years. Briefly, the movement wants to achieve a fourfold purpose: destroy the image by making it unbearably banal or completely unrecognizable; add a sound track bearing little or no relation to the picture; introduce a new screen of irregular shape and strewn with random objects; and finally, plant demonstrators in the audience in order to awaken the spectator into a more active participation not only with the film but with the producer, the manager of the theater, the projectionist, and the police. To illustrate their meaning, Jean Isodore Isou and his pupil, Maurice Lemaître, have each made a film—the first called *Traité de bave et d'éternité*—the second, *Le film est déjà commencé?* Members of the same group have also made a com-

mercial effort called *Désordre,* which has already been disowned by some adherents as a trifle of no consequence. For the author this film seems to possess a certain *verve;* it is amusing enough, although it seems to be no revolution in film making.

Le film est déjà commencé?, although it has not yet been shown under conditions entirely satisfactory to its maker, has been published in book form,[1] and, as such, it forms highly entertaining reading material. In it are separately described Sound, Image and "Spectator Manifestations." Before the showing itself, writes Lemaître, a 16-mm. projector in the lobby of the theater projects some of the old classics, such as *Intolerance.* At the same time paid stooges first throw buckets of water at the waiting audience and then try to convince them to go elsewhere (suggesting, for example, a hotel room to a young couple). Once inside, the audience meets charwomen busy with their work, the imprecations of the manager, and a long speech by Maurice Lemaître on the subject of his film.

After this performance, the film begins with seven negative shots taken from any old movie, while someone recites a fragment of a *lettrist* poem (a sort of French double talk). The rest of the film has no visual continuity whatsoever; but it has a sound track which speaks chiefly about Maurice Lemaître (who is not yet thirty years old), explains the ideas behind the film and its imaginary reception by the Press, and announces finally that the last reel has been lost—so the projection can't be finished and please, will everybody go home?

Pour un cinéma ailleurs! is today the message of St. Germain-des-Prés; its battle cry has been heard in Cannes and can be read on innumerable yellow posters near the Latin-Quarter Ciné-Clubs. The violence of the outcry could well be a reaction to our own excesses: writers on the cinema, when not abstracting themselves to the highest planes of specialist criticism, have hammered home to the populace that the film is VERY DEFINITELY an

[1] Maurice Lemaître, *Le film est déjà commencé?* (Paris: Editions André Bonne, 1952).

art. The theme was recently taken up by one Canadian Film Society that printed the motto "Film is an Art" hundreds of times, as background to their prospectus—somewhat like the "one dollar one dollar one" on the dollar bill. Excessive zeal may not necessarily be the correct approach to convert the cynical, but we do not think it is the overabundance of our enthusiasm which has prompted the Parisian intellectuals to revolt.

Neither can we dismiss the Isou-Lemaître movement as a spectacular stunt for the benefit of its animators. Although Lemaître has openly admitted to the author that noise and publicity should be associated with the projection of his film, hoaxes do not live long in St. Germain—and this one has been going on for the last three years.

The chaotic activities of the *lettrists,* for all their eccentricity, stem from much clear-cut Gallic logic. Given the original premise—"The cinema has this in common with the churches, that in either we are bored to tears," about which one can argue but scarcely dogmatize—Isou and Lemaître develop their theories with a precision of argument one could wish on some of our fuzzier film critics. Basing their contention on the general theory that any art form must first flourish but then inevitably degenerate, the *lettrists* divide the cinema's history into two phases: the first, *amplique,* is exemplified by the standard Hollywood product; the second, *ciselant,* will be the cinema of the future, the logical death of commercial film, rampaging through its sacrosanct tenets and financial superstructure.

The writer of this article once asked Lemaître if the presence of trained acrobats in front of the screen together with a philosophical lecture on the sound track about the principles of *lettrism* were not an attempted return to the *dada* movement of the 'thirties, which to us today represents the *derrière-garde* at its most stupefying. While agreeing to this viewpoint, Lemaître added: "The presentation of my film may *look* like a *dada* evening, but that's just in order to wake the audience from their

complacent stupor. I'm excited about my film because it is new. If someone had thought of *le cinéma ciselant* in 1930, my ideas would no longer be valid; neither would I have the slightest interest in them."

Certainly no other person has ever tried to make a feature film out of endless shots of himself wandering around the streets of St. Germain; nor has anyone ever dared to include in his film, under the pretext of "art," a few banal extracts from some American western or romantic film, daubed over with paint until nothing can be recognized any longer. Lemaître has incorporated in his release print old laboratory scraps, alternate black and white leader, randomly scratched emulsion, and negatives that have been soaked in hot sudsy water to make the gelatine run and reticulate. When Isou showed his film, *Traité de bave et d'éternité,* at the Cannes Festival a few years ago, before Jean Cocteau and the cream of the international critics, only the sound track had been completed. This he played for more than an hour, explaining away the black screen by saying that the images were not really important anyway. Quite possibly, at that time, the negatives were still being processed in a Bendix washing machine.

Such a thorough disregard for all that is sacred to the cinematographer may amuse the hard-boiled film magnate, but the activities of the *lettrist* group are just a little disturbing, and seem to us indicative of a strange malaise. Is this movement a sign that the vanguard of thinking people no longer consider the cinema a valid art form? Or is it a sign that commercialism is sapping the life blood of the cinema, and that the artist, by being forced to compromise at every step, will sooner or later become as anaemic an individual as the lifeless films he wishes to disown? Some of these artists think Isou may not have to wait long before the cinema dies—but of a natural death. Thorold Dickinson has said that the art of the film has not made any significant progress since Griffith and Eisenstein. Jean Vigo's shooting star, after an instant of burning glory, spent itself too soon; and the great French *avant-*

garde of the 1920's flickers only occasionally on the screens of isolated film libraries. Would that their creators could jump out of the reels, disrupt the complacency of the producer in his studio Cadillac, plant a few cobblestones in the way of those fluid-drive tracking shots.

Now that television is with us, popular feeling also has it that the cinema's days may be numbered. Already we read of television drive-in theaters being jammed bumper to bumper, of rioting, of mass hysteria, of a box-office business that makes the Hollywood superlatives shrink to diminutives. And so the technicians are currently spending vast sums of money in an effort to perfect "panoramic cinemas." They are prepared for any solution except better movies. The discontent seems to lie deep within the industry itself. Film magnates fear that Technicolor and R.C.A. sound are passé, and that the audience of tomorrow will demand to be engulfed in stereoscopic image and stereophonic sounds—in fact Aldous Huxley's "feelies" may be a possibility for the next World's Fair.

And what of the sour-puss critics who see in every 1953 package the pale carbon copy of a 1925 cliché? Some of them believe that there is nothing new under the sun, and that it is useless to look for new and exciting patterns through any camera lens. Many are asking whether the practice of remaking an old film, or of providing a series of sequels to any successful new one, or even of buying foreign pictures with the avowed purpose of copying them more or less slavishly, does not reveal, to say the least, a distinct lack of originality.

Notwithstanding the qualms of artist, audience, and critic alike, the author thinks that Isou, his fellow "destructionists," and all those gloomy prophets are wrong—even if they are justified in feeling bored to tears by what they usually see on the screen. There are still many undiscovered alleyways in the labyrinth of film making, and the *lettrists,* stumbling among the slums and the dead ends, have forgotten that they might have looked elsewhere—

to places where the present is more alive than the past. New methods are being evolved, new talents discovered, new values found. A Dutchman has filmed his country through the rippled reflections in its canals. In Canada, a bespectacled artist is painting colored patterns directly onto a strip of film. A gray-haired Frenchman in a dirty raincoat has wedded his own images and the words of George Bernanos in a way no one has ever done before and has thus created a masterpiece, *Le journal d'un curé de campagne,* which is neither story-film nor story-novel but rather, an intense emotional experience whose formula breaks all the accepted rules. An American director has adapted *An American Tragedy* into a daring experiment of lingering dissolves and sustained close-ups, an experiment all the more unlikely since it has come straight out of one of Hollywood's major studios. Bert Haanstra, Norman McLaren, Robert Bresson, and George Stevens are the artists of today, and they are finding new riches in the land that the *lettrists* have declared stale and barren.

In fact, with the advent of television, much of the cinema's social responsibility in the field of education, information, and mass communication has been passed on to the television screen which is infinitely better adapted to this purpose. Far from being a death knell, television will free the cinema. At last, film will be able to concentrate on its real function, that of an artistic medium of expression, a medium that has scarcely been explored.

Subjective Cinema: And the Problem of Film in the First Person

JULIO L. MORENO

JULIO L. MORENO, a twenty-eight-year-old attorney and film critic, is also a member of the editorial board of *Film*, published by Cine Universitario in Montevideo, Uruguay. This article by Señor Moreno recently appeared in two issues of *Film*. It is reprinted here in a slightly abridged form with full permission. The translation is by RAY MORRISON, a teacher of Spanish at Marymount College, Los Angeles. Mr. Morrison is the author of *Angels Camp* and is presently working on a second novel.

The Influence of the Novel on Film and the Subjectivization of Film Narrative

The advent of sound brought about a much closer relationship between film and the novel. The French essayist Claude-Edmonde Magny has pointed out the close affinity of the two forms, based on the fact that both film and novel are narrative forms, with additional sociological and psychological resemblances.[1] The growing rapprochement of the two forms manifests itself in two distinct yet converging processes. On the one hand, an important current in the contemporary novel tends toward an increasingly objective, external presentation of the actions of the characters and, at the same time, toward de-personalization of the narrative, reducing it to a purely impersonal statement of the facts. (This tendency was initiated by the American novel and appears markedly in the most recent French fiction.[2]) Motion picture narration, on the other hand, is tending toward a greater personalization of the story, replacing impersonal presentation of the facts by narration by one of the characters or, going further, presenting the events subjectively, as seen and felt by one of the characters. André Malraux's affirmation that it is the privilege of the novel to be able

[1] *L'âge du romain américain* (1949), chap. 1.

[2] *Ibid.*, and Carlo Bo, "Il personaggio nel romanzo e nel film," *Bianco e Nero* (April, 1950).

to get inside a character[3] is much less true today than it was in 1941. Since that time, the film has been trying in various ways to take over the techniques of subjective narration of the novel. Magny points out the very real tendency of many recent films "deliberately to be narratives told in the first person and no longer a succession of objective images photographically reproduced."[4]

We must not conclude, from all this, that subjective narration is a recent motion-picture innovation. Its antecedents can be traced to the very beginnings of the motion picture, although no one thought, at that time, of speaking about "a story told in the first person" when referring to these narrative forms. We may state that what is new is the conscious purpose of creating a motion-picture narration technique modeled on the literary narrative in the first person. By thus personalizing the telling of a story, the film seeks to multiply its formal resources of construction and exposition. It proposes, as well, to gain another advantage of literary narration in the first person by increasing the identification between reader and protagonist. The film seeks to put the spectator in the position of a participant, involved in the world of the narrative, living as his own the experiences of the story. The techniques by which this is effected fall into two large groups.

Devices Based on the Subjectivization of the Movie Camera which is Put in the Place of the Protagonist.—This procedure may be systematically employed through an entire film. In this case the protagonist never appears on the screen, and the action is shown from his subjective perspective. Only his voice is heard, and some parts of his body may be seen (hands, feet, face in a mirror) as he himself might see them. The only film in which this procedure has been used with systematic rigidity is *Lady in the Lake,* directed by Robert Montgomery (1947).

Or, the device may be used in one or more sequences but not in the entire film. Examples of this application of the technique

[3] *Esquisse d'une psychologie du cinéma* (1941).
[4] Magny, *op. cit.*

are two films of 1947 which follow the technique of Montgomery for portions of the film: *Mine Own Executioner,* directed by Anthony Kimmins, which has a prolonged sequence presenting the narrative by Kieron Moore of his experiences in a Japanese concentration camp; and *Dark Passage,* directed by Delmer Daves, which opens with a first-person sequence of Humphrey Bogart's escape from San Quentin.

Again, the procedure may be used occasionally in sections shorter than a sequence, sometimes no more than a single shot or short succession of shots. This was frequent in the silent film, though the usage had a wholly different purpose, generally expressive, as in a shot made with a gyrating camera to convey the protagonist's sense of vertigo. On other occasions it might be explanatory, serving the continuity of the narration, as when, to illustrate, the camera shows, first, a man spying through a keyhole and, then, what he sees.

In addition, there are frequent moments in many films in which partial subjectivization is employed; these are shots in which the camera assumes the viewpoint of one of the characters who appears in the scene.

It is a general characteristic of these usages that they translate themselves naturally into narration in the present tense, although it is possible to combine them with the procedures described below, in the second group.

Subjective Narratives.—The word narrative is here used in a broad sense which includes reminiscence. Generally, it refers to narration attributed to one of the personages of a story, and, consequently, is in the past tense. At one extreme of this category are films which show events in the past which, it is presumed, are being told by the protagonist-narrator whose voice relates or comments on the events from off-screen, as they are being shown. At the other extreme are films in which oral narration is totally lacking and the flash back appears to be justified by the remembrance of the facts by one of the characters, as in *Le Jour se lève,* directed

by Marcel Carné (1939). In this film, the entire dramatic development alternates between past and present, following the oscillations of the remembrance of Jean Gabin. The common term for this device is "retrospect."

Between these extremes are the films in which oral narrative is neither wholly lacking nor continuous, where the oral narration serves merely to transport us to the past and is then silent. This use assures narrative continuity in more or less conventional form, and the narrative may be wholly without subjectivity, as when, for example, the facts shown could not be known to the narrator.

What criterion enables us to distinguish between these two technical approaches? Both propose to bring to the screen the literary procedure of narration in the first person. Both seem to reach for a means of personalizing the cinematic narrative, ridding it of its natural character of "a succession of objective images, photographically reproduced." But the path which each follows to reach this end is radically different.

The subjectivization of the camera implies a direct presentation of the inner experience of the character—the reflex operation which makes the narrative possible—conveyed with complete lack of distance. Here, there is neither narrator nor narrative but, rather, an actual experience presented without mediation. Here, as in the interior monologue of James Joyce, extreme subjectivism converts itself into second-grade objectivism; internal experience is presented to us from an abstract and impersonal viewpoint which is by now no one's viewpoint. "The reality which shows itself without intermediaries to the reader is no longer the thing itself, the ash tray or the tree, but rather the consciousness which sees the thing; the real thing is now no more than a representation, but the representation converts itself into an absolute reality from which it shows itself to us as an immediate datum."[5] These words of Sartre, apropos of the interior monologue, could be applied *in toto* to the narrative told by the subjective camera. This technique seeks to use methods which are purely cinematic.

[5] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Situations II*, p. 200.

On the other hand, the techniques of the second group introduce a new element into the cinematic narrative which is no more than an imitation of literary narration in the first person, a verbal version of the story, placed in the mouth of one of the characters. This is self-evident when the oral exposition accompanies the narrative images for their entire length; it is almost as true when oral narration is used only to indicate passage to the past. The personal character of the narrative images is taken for granted, although the sense of the past is less well defined and tends to disappear. Retrospect is likewise a personalized form of narrative, a story which the protagonist tells himself.

The Occasional Use of Subjective Camera—Its Use as a Means of Expression

There is occasional use of the subjective camera when the action is shown from the viewpoint of one of the narrative's characters whose place is occupied by the camera in the course of one or more successive cuts. There may be varying purposes in the use of this technique. It is often used to translate the images of a dream, hallucination, or drunkenness. Even more frequent is its use as an adjunct of continuity, helping to string the narrative together. This was the first form in which the usage appeared, and its earliest manifestations date from the very beginnings of motion pictures. For example, the camera showed a lookout observing the sea through a telescope; then, framed in the visual field of the instrument, a distant ship. In the second cut, the camera has been substituted for the person in order to show us the action from his viewpoint. From this merely formal aid to narrative inference there were later to stem other procedures which were greatly to amplify the media of expression of the silent film. Two German films of the middle 'twenties, Murnau's *The Last Laugh* (1924) and E. A. Dupont's *Variety* (1925), provide us with characteristic examples of this new utilization of the device. Both films show the realistic current of the German film in two moments of its development from psychological realism to social realism.

Psychological Realism and the Introverted Camera

In spite of its frequent utilization of the language of expressionism, *The Last Laugh* belongs to the realistic stream because of the nature of its theme—a conflict of daily life, whose protagonist is the common man. It treats of the minute drama of a porter (Emil Jannings) in love with an admiral's uniform which symbolizes the prestige of his job. Upon losing at the same time the uniform and the job, the porter discovers that he has no reason left for living. The resulting conflict is purely internal, and to translate it into visual terms, the camera had to convert itself into an instrument of psychological introspection. Thus, it shows the conflict from inside the person; it diligently gets drunk for him and presents directly the images of his delirium. The resources of expressionistic language gather about the subjective camera here to translate into visual terms the internal drama of a person. With this, the motion picture acquires a dimension in depth—the psychological dimension.

Extraversion of the Camera in Social Realism

Variety marks the transition from psychological realism to social realism. The film describes in full detail a precise social background which does not play a merely passive part in the dramatic development. The characters are situated in an atmosphere which defines them and conditions their relationships. Here the subjective camera serves the purpose of bringing this world closer to the spectator, of placing it within the reach of his hand. It is not a matter now of showing the visions of the sleeping person or of the drunk, but rather of showing the external world—this public and impersonal world which is the same for all. The subjective camera continues to be, however, an instrument of introspection. If it jumps with the trapeze artists, if it swings back and forth with them above the circus floor, it is in order to transmit the vertigo of their activities; if it follows the characters' eyes, it is to suggest

their thoughts. With this, psychological analysis dispenses with the resources of expressionism, and reaches an admirable economy of means. The scene which shows the decision of Boss (Emil Jannings) to abandon his girl friend for the ballerina Berta-María (Lya de Putti) is a clear example of the terseness of this purely visual language. The camera presents, alternately, the expression on the face of Boss and reality as seen through his eyes:

Scene 182: Berta-María seen from the back, dancing, moves her hips.
Scene 183: Boss watches pensively, taking the cigarette from his lips.
Scene 184: The girl friend of Boss seen from the back. Vertical pan down. The ill-shaped, ill-clad hips of the woman.
Scene 185: Same as 183. Boss thoughtful as before.
Scene 186: The graceful feet of the ballerina.
Scene 187: Same as 185. Boss looks away.
Scene 188: The feet of Boss's girl friend, wearing patched shoes and darned stockings, press the piano pedals.
Scene 189: Same as 187. Boss contemptuously throws away the cigarette.
Scene 190: Berta-María continues dancing.[6]

The Subjective Camera: The Symbol and the Metaphor

The evolution which precedes this development shows a growing tendency to associate with other expressive procedures and, especially, with the forms of indirect expression—visual metaphors and symbols—which were so frequently used during the classic period of the silent film. In a memorable fragment of *The Fall of the House of Usher (La Chûte de la Maison Usher,* Jean Epstein, 1928), Roderick Usher, consumed by anguish and fever, listens to the bell of a clock which breaks the silence of the immense castle. The sound itself and its effect on the spirit of the protagonist—sensitive as "a suspended lute"[7]—appears translated into purely visual terms by means of a great number of diverse elements which accumulate, are commented upon, are amplified, and in the end merge into a complex and expressive synthesis.

[6] Angel Zúñiga, *Una historia del cine.*

[7] "Son coeur est un luth suspendu; / Sitôt qu'on le touche il résonne." (De Béranger, cited by Poe at the beginning of *The Fall of the House of Usher.*) From these verses Epstein took the central idea of this episode.

The tolling of the bell is rendered indirectly by its visual correlations (the impact of the clapper against the dusty bell, the fall of dust shaken off by the vibration). Its resonance in the spirit of the protagonist is expressed by means of diverse elements: Usher's look of hallucination; his clenched hands; his vision of the objects around him which unfolds, with every stroke of the bell, in two trembling images, one superimposed on the other; and on the table the abandoned guitar whose strings begin to break. All these elements translate, in one indiscernible unity, the physical phenomenon of the sonorous vibration and its subjective echo in the protagonist, the idea of enclosure resonating like a violoncello, and the experience of Usher—his hypersensitivity, his anguished tension.

The Period of Sound

The arrival of the sound film did not imply in any way the disappearance of these techniques. But the attention of the motion-picture makers turned to the new field of experimentation which sound opened for cinematographic narration. Incentives were lacking to continue developing the visual means of expression which had reached such a high degree of complexity and refinement in the decade 1920–1930. The spoken word was to facilitate the saying of everything, or almost everything.

The subjective camera, nevertheless, has been employed with increasing frequency during the sound period. The methods of psychoanalysis gave rise to a series of films in which dreams and deliriums—visualized in a more or less surrealistic way—were presented in prolonged sequences. As examples, we may cite *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (Victor Fleming, 1941), *Murder, My Sweet* (Edward Dmytryk, 1944), *Spellbound* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1945), and *Los Olvidados* (Luis Buñuel, 1951). The artistic value of these fragments is very unequal. But all suffer from the same prosaism, from the lack of true inspiration. We would look into them in vain for the freshness or the impassioned inventiveness

so often found in the creations of the last makers of silent pictures. Today, a quarter of a century later, these creations continue to recall to us the existence of a vast field that the movies have not yet explored.

The Systematic and Occasional Use of the Subjective Camera

The occasional use of the subjective camera was not preceded by abstract theorizations on the cinematographic narrative. On the contrary, it appeared as an empirical means of solving the problems presented by a concrete narration. The needs of the narrative, which gave it birth, mark from that time the conditions and the limits of its legitimate use.

When systematic use is made of the subjective camera (that is to say, its use as a true *narrative convention*), no attention at all is paid to the necessities of the narrative. The only film which has used this technique rigorously tells an insipid anecdote that would not have required any innovation to be developed adequately. This divorce between form and content, which the procedure postulates, is explained by the ends sought through its use. It is a matter of imitating, in cinematographic terms, a *form* of literary narration that can function with almost complete disregard for the content of the story: this is first-person narration. Here, theory has preceded practice. The technical problems, instead of having been discovered in the process of the creative work, have been thought out abstractly, beforehand.

Orson Welles and the Literary "I"

The beginnings of the cinematographic career of the maker of *Citizen Kane* corroborates these assertions. Welles's predilection for narration in the first person had manifested itself before his arrival in Hollywood, or during the time when he directed the Mercury Theater radio program which was called, significantly, *First Person Singular.* In it versions of ancient and modern works transposed into the first person were presented. Welles thought—

and this was the principle he applied to the broadcasts—that the form of personal narration captures more surely than any other the listener's interest.

It is these same ideas which he tried to transpose to the screen in the beginnings of his career as a movie maker. In his book about Orson Welles, Roy Alexander Fowler refers to Welles's project to make a film of Joseph Conrad's story *Heart of Darkness*. To translate the form of the narrative (which is told in the first person) to motion-picture terms, Welles thought of putting the camera throughout the development of the action, in the place of the narrator. In his script, Marlow, the narrator, sails up a jungle river in an old steamboat in search of a mysterious person named Kurtz. But the camera was to occupy Marlow's place, the action to be seen as though through his eyes. In this way—says Fowler—Welles thought to introduce the literary "I" into the motion picture.

Robert Montgomery: The Lady in the Lake

Welles's film suffered the melancholy fate which most audacious projects meet in Hollywood: it was never carried out. Some five years later, Robert Montgomery succeeded in making a film conceived on the identical basis as that of Welles, though, it appears, Montgomery knew nothing of the earlier project. The story, by Raymond Chandler, was called *Lady in the Lake* (1946), and the protagonist, a detective named Philip Marlowe (played by Montgomery himself) was represented by the camera.

Montgomery encountered all sorts of difficulties in making a film with so unusual a technical approach. There was the problem of trying to reproduce with total realism the immediate experience of the protagonist with regard to the subjective peculiarities of his perception. To achieve this, the usual short, successive cuts were replaced by long, unbroken sequences. The usual smooth movement of the camera was replaced by a swaying movement suggesting the unevenness of walking as the protagonist moved from one place to another. The actors were required to violate one

of the first rules of their craft: they were made to face directly into the camera as they spoke their lines. The cameraman, in turn, found himself constantly interfered with by the nearness of the usually invisible detective when it became necessary for his hands or feet to appear on the screen in as natural a manner as possible. In the pursuit of realistic detail, even Montgomery's voice was recorded with a more muffled tone than his natural voice, since this is the way everybody hears his own voice.[8]

Attitudes of the Critics: Supporters and Opponents

A certain sector of moving-picture criticism accepted with enthusiasm the possibilities opened by Montgomery's film. There was talk of the "metaphysical film," of the "true Cine-Eye." Other critics,[9] more sparing in their enthusiasm, said, very wisely, that the use of the new technique would result in an impoverishment of expression in the film; that the long sequences practically without cuts would presuppose the renunciation of all of the advantages of montage; that the inflexible convention on which this procedure is founded would tie the camera to the protagonist, limiting almost totally the freedom of the movement of the camera. In the area of more general ideas, it was pointed out that there is created here a rigid convention, not too modified, and that this is precisely the opposite of style. Style presupposes selection of means, and therefore, liberty.

The Subjective Camera and Perception

One can go further and question the virtues that the partisans of this technique attribute to it, virtues which would compensate amply for the difficulties inherent in its utilization. One of these virtues is veracity. By means of the subjective camera—say its partisans—it would be possible to re-create the only reality which

[8] Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, "Naissance du véritable ciné-oeil," *Révue du Cinéma,* No. 4.

[9] Jean-Pierre Chartier, "Les 'films à la première personne' et l'illusion de réalité au cinéma," *Révue du Cinéma,* No. 4; Jean Desternes, "Lady in the Lake," *Révue du Cinéma,* No. 16; Claudio Varese, "Il linguaggio filmico e le ultime ricerche tecniche," *Bianco e Nero* (July, 1949); Jean Masarès, "Cinéma et psychologie," *Temps Modernes* (July, 1949).

is truly real: the living reality of perception. The dictatorship of impersonal vision—false because it is impersonal—which has been up to now the vision of the camera would be broken. Nevertheless, only by basing one's point of departure in a very coarse primary psychology can one affirm that reality, photographed from one viewpoint only, is identical with the reality of immediate perception. This overlooks, among other things, the mechanism of attention. The sector of reality taken in by the camera is rigidly determined by the distance which separates it from the photographed reality. The same is not true in the visual field. The free mechanism of attention narrows or widens the sector of reality perceived, without any resulting change in the distance between the subject who sees and the thing seen. For this reason, it could rightly be said that the fragmentary representation of diverse aspects of reality, made coherent by the logic of montage, is *psychologically* truer than the reproduction of reality in large continuous takes.[10]

The Subjective Camera and the Spectator-Actor

But the principal goal sought with this technique is to bring the spectator to identify himself with the protagonist to the point of feeling himself personally involved in the action. That is the most important virtue of the literary narrative in the first person which this procedure tries to imitate.

One may affirm that, in the attempt of Montgomery, this goal was not achieved at all. The results obtained not only do not facilitate identification, but rather make it impossible. The spectator has to put up with a phantom-protagonist, who announces himself, like the spirits, by indirect means: the spectator must *infer him* continually from the conduct of the other characters, from the intermittent presence of a voice and hands wandering through the world of the narrative. This is also the experience of Jean Desternes, who records it in lively and sharp form in a chronicle

[10] Chartier, *op. cit.*

on the film.[11] The hands of the actor, which appear unexpectedly in the lower corners of the screen are, for him, a first cause of alarm:

> We are forced to look at those hands. They acquire an independent existence, while, on the other hand, we rarely "look at" the parts of our body within our visual field. Our hands function docilely.... There is no possible way to connect [those arms] to our shoulders. So also it is impossible to make the smoke which surges up into the lower part of the screen convince me that I, the hero, have a cigarette in my mouth.

His vexation is no less because of the eccentric behavior of the characters:

> There are people who come and go, approach, talk to us. They talk to *us?* No, no, it is not to us. It is someone situated between them and us, and who should materialize ... This is what gave me in the beginning that sensation of emptiness, of something lacking. It is also what disoriented a neighboring lady, who said in a low voice to her companion: "What a bother this picture is! One never knows to whom they are talking!"

As can be seen, the new technique did not make it easier for Desternes to lose himself in the narrative, but rather it *returned him continually to reality*. And this is the contrary of that which was sought.

Legitimacy of the Procedure

Results so opposed to those hoped for seem to demand an explanation. Nevertheless, no one has seen in the results a reason for doubting the legitimacy of this technique. It is said that the technique is, in itself, perfectly valid, and that the opposite results achieved by Montgomery can be explained by the inept manner with which it was used. That is the general attitude of the critics. Desternes himself—from whom certainly none of the defects of the system escaped notice—declares: "I would not want to con-

[11] "Le 'tulpa' de Marlowe," *Révue du Cinéma*, No. 16.

demn the procedures which are perfectly valid in themselves, but rather their cold utilization. . . . Let us hope that the next try at 'first-person visual' responds to the necessities of its theme . . ."

It is reasonable to take exception to this opinion, to doubt a priori the success of any "next try" of this technique, to maintain that it was not the defects of realization nor the poverty of the themes which explain its failure, and to demonstrate that this failure derives from a structural and procedural error which, in turn, derives from an insufficient analysis of the relations between the literary narrative and the screen narrative.

The Myth of the "First-Person Visual." The Theory It Presupposes

The search for the "first-person visual" is based on the idea that there exists a complete parallel between the narrative techniques of the motion picture and those of the novel. It is thought that with the visual means of expression of the cinema it is possible to achieve the equivalent of a form of literary narration (narration in the first person), even though literature uses *signs* (words) and not *images.*

Two techniques that use means which are so different could only resemble each other in their formal structure. This is what the supporters of "first-person visual" try to reproduce, reasoning more or less as follows: That which gives literary narrative in the first person its characteristic effect is the fact that in it the *narrator* and the *protagonist* are the same person. If film aspires to achieve this effect, it ought to seek the same coincidence between the two. But this already raises a difficulty, since in cinema it is not possible to speak, in the strict sense, of a *narrator.* The film does not narrate, but rather it places the spectator directly without intermediaries, *in the presence* of the facts narrated.

People argue, nevertheless, that the camera carries out in film a function identical with that of the narrator in the literary narrative. Both narrator and the camera present a viewpoint concern-

ing the action narrated, the only viewpoint open to the reader or spectator. If the identity of *narrator* and *protagonist,* in the literary narrative, translates itself into an identity of viewpoints toward the action, in order to achieve an identical result in the film, the *camera* and the *protagonist* ought to have coinciding viewpoints. For this, it would be enough *to put the camera in place of the protagonist.*

Errors of the Theory

The symmetry between both techniques seems perfect. Nevertheless, the circumstance—little appreciated in these arguments—that the film does not narrate facts, but rather presents them directly to the spectator, insures that the results obtained are different for each case.

It is true that narrator and protagonist are nominally identical in the case of narrative in the first person. But all verbal narrative presupposes *taking a position distant from the facts narrated.* It is for this reason the narrator, when he undertakes *to relate his own acts, takes distance with respect to himself,* and adopts concerning himself the viewpoint of a third person. It is thus that everyone recalls his past actions, or imagines his future actions, seeing himself in the act of realizing them.

This circumstance makes for the fact that in narrative in the first person the narrator and the protagonist function in fact as two distinct persons, perfectly discernible to the reader. In this sense, the personal narration is in no way different from narrative in the third person. The narrator-protagonist has to do with a third person (as a *third person*) to narrate his own acts. An example can help to clarify this. Let us suppose that Juan says: "It was ten years ago. I had gone out at dawn to ride to the village on horseback. By noon I became hungry but I still had a long way to go . . ." Juan-Actor and Juan-Narrator are, in this example, perfectly distinguishable. The actor is past (he is who he was ten years ago), the narrator is present. The actor travels on horseback, is

impatient, feels hunger; none of these things can be said of the narrator: the only thing we know about him is that he narrates. There is something more important: the viewpoint of Juan-Narrator does not coincide in any way with that of Juan-Actor; Juan-Actor *lives* the action *in the present,* Juan-Narrator *tells* it from the outside *in the past tense.* If these words are transposed into the third person ("It was ten years ago. Juan had gone out . . .", etc.) the result is the same. In both cases actor and narrator constitute two different centers around which the narrative is psychologically organized.

These two centers have disappeared in the "first-person visual." Here the coincidence between the view of the protagonist and that of the camera is absolute: there is no possibility of unfolding, nor, therefore, of narrative. The camera limits itself to presenting directly the present experience of the protagonist, at the same time that it participates in the action. The consciousness of the one who is immersed in the action is never a reflexive consciousness. It is a consciousness *of the world* and never explicitly a consciousness of oneself. Upon passing from the verbal narrative (which makes this unfolding necessary) to the narrative in images (in which this is not necessary) the protagonist has disappeared, being converted into a mere look.

The Phantom Protagonist, That Which Is Real and That Which Is Imaginary

Jean-Paul Sartre's most important contribution to the psychology of the imagination is the idea that the real and the imaginary are mutually exclusive. For the French philosopher, perception (consciousness of that which is real) and imagination (consciousness of that which is imaginary) are irreducible attitudes of the consciousness: the formation of a consciousness of image implies necessarily the annihilation of a perceptive consciousness. The perception of this table which is before me and the image of Pedro, my absent friend, exclude each other. If I look at the table I can

not see the image of Pedro. But if suddenly the image of Pedro surges before me, the table disappears, abandons the scene.[12] So, that the imaginary world may rise, the real world must recede, abandoning the scene. Reciprocally, the recuperation of the consciousness of what is real, the *return to reality,* causes the imaginary world to fall apart.

It is for this reason—Sartre has clearly demonstrated it[13]—that a real consciousness could not penetrate, as such, into an imaginary world. A particle of reality, introduced in this world, would provoke its immediate dissolution. In order that a consciousness might enter into an imaginary world it must first *make itself unreal.* To do this it would be enough *for it to identify itself with one of the unreal objects which make up this world.*[14]

When the question is one of entering into the unreal world of a narrative, the protagonist is the privileged object with which this identification is easiest. In the case of literary narrative in the first person, that identification is always possible: the unfolding, of which we have spoken above, enables the protagonist to conserve his objectivity, be that one thing more in the world of the narrative. But when it is a matter of film narrative in the "first-person visual," the spectator sees himself deprived of this object with which he could identify himself: the protagonist is now no more than a viewpoint, merely a look.

His disappearance leaves in its place an immense breach through which the narrative begins to flow. In effect, all the circumstances of the narration appear oriented in one direction only and point toward a real place which is the place occupied by the spectator in the theater. The owner of those hands which appear on the screen must be closer to the screen; the characters also face someone who is outside, closer to the world of the narrative. These indications converge upon a fixed point. If the spectator directs his attention upon that point he will find himself in the reality of

[12] Sartre: *L'imaginaire,* p. 156.
[13] *Ibid.,* pp. 205 ff.
[14] *Ibid.,* p. 221.

every day: the darkened theater, the audience around him. And this is the return to reality, the awakening. The enchantment is broken, the narrative falls apart like a card castle.

Conclusion

There is no "first-person visual." A film is not in the first person, or in the second or third for the very elementary reason that it is not a verbal narrative. This evident fact is the one the theoreticians of the "first-person camera" have ignored.

The failure of this technique can serve, at least, to point out a danger. Film, as an art form, must acquire a clear consciousness of its nature and of its means. Only then will it be able to borrow from the other arts whatever may conform with its essence. The "first-person visual" is an attempt to copy the mere externals of a literary technique, and the results obtained are precisely opposite to those desired. If what is sought is more complete identification between the spectator and the protagonist, film has its own means of achieving this, without the necessity of borrowing literary devices. The disconcerting results obtained demonstrate, at least, that the motion picture has its own principles, and that these have no reason to be identical with those of other narrative arts.

Hollywood and Television—Year of Decision

JACK HOWARD

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THE CLAMOR ABOUT three-dimensional movies tells us that Hollywood is on the offensive against the competition of television, but behind the headlines, in two Federal actions on opposite coasts of the nation, the real fight the movie industry is waging against television goes on hardly noticed. Movies that bring us one step closer to Huxley's "feelies" may attract more paid admissions, but the tactical gain is nothing compared to the strategic advantage the industry is fighting for. Given a certain combination of decisions, the major movie producers could well come out of the actions stripped of their preëminence in the mass-entertainment business, with television the undisputed master. At the other extreme, the opposite set of decisions could destroy permanently television's chance for developing into an independent communications medium with its own artistic standards and achievements and would curb the newest lively art for the convenience and financial well-being of the major film producers and distributors.

On the West Coast, the action is a Federal antitrust suit filed in Los Angeles last summer against twelve major film producers and distributors for the purpose of forcing them to make their products available for television use. Arguments in this trial will undoubtedly continue for months because, as the industry has admitted, this suit strikes at the very heart of the present relationship between the major producers and the television industry. A clear decision against the producers could seriously weaken their position, because since 1948 none of the majors has released

top-grade films to television; the backlog would be a juicy plum for television programming.

On the East Coast, the action is a series of hearings before the Federal Communications Commission that began last fall and are expected to continue well into this fall. These hearings are on the application of the motion picture industry for six closed ultra-high-frequency television channels for the establishment of a theater-television network across the United States. And here, in this action, will be made one of the historic decisions on television, for involved in the matter of a theater-TV network is the whole future of television as an independent communications medium.[1]

At the risk of oversimplification, the situation appears to indicate that the major producers have taken to heart the advice, "If you can't beat them, join them." Except that in the case of television, a partnership is not the desired relationship; instead, absorption of television into the existing economic hierarchy in Hollywood is the sought-after arrangement. Terms for the deal have been set down clearly: the major producers demand payment equal to production costs for any films released to television. In the present context of sponsorship, this is economically impossible. Television, on the other hand, demands from Hollywood films on a high artistic level but without the high costs resulting from excessive salaries and overhead. In the background are the weapons both parties have at hand: the major producers threaten a network of theater-TV houses across the nation, whereas television increasingly makes good its threat to produce its own films, low in costs and, many critics will say, in talent. Also in television's arsenal is a technological weapon in the form of subscription television that could be fully as effective as atom bombs, both financially and psychologically.

[1] On February 9, 1953, the FCC approved the merger of the American Broadcasting Company and United Paramount Theaters, Inc., on the grounds that it would provide additional competition for the other major TV networks. The more than 600 Paramount theaters are, of course, now separated from Paramount Pictures, Inc., and, under the terms of the merger, will also operate independently of ABC. However, at some time in the future the theaters might possibly become available for special telecasts.

Thus, there is involved in the FCC hearings not only the important question of allowing theater TV to be developed by the film industry but also the policy to be adopted toward subscription TV. An examination of the two processes and their implications for both media and for the public interest is the main subject here.

The context in which television and Hollywood are struggling is generally recognized. Television's competition has hurt movie attendance; thousands of closed theaters attest to that fact. It is of more than passing interest that it was television that made possible the holding of the Motion Picture Academy Awards this year by paying $100,000 for television rights. The lesson is bound not to be forgotten, nor the corollary which is that the producers need not have suffered this humiliation, if their own chain of theater-TV houses had been in operation. Television has its difficulties too, however; high production costs are making its product less and less attractive to sponsors, as shows become more expensively produced. The result is a resort to multiple sponsorship; the filming of shows for subsequent rebroadcasting, thus apportioning production costs over several showings; and shorter program schedules of less than weekly frequency. In spite of this, television has just finished a year during which it exceeded, for the first time, radio's take from program advertisers. Yet the pattern is clear: the present form of advertising sponsorship on television cannot buy the films Hollywood produces, nor can it support the development of television beyond the mediocre state to its full potential.

Since television is the child of radio—although a child now grown larger than its parents—the same theory of advertising sponsorship that prevailed for radio has been applied in this first decade of commercial television. But such an arrangement is unique in the mass-communications world. Every other medium makes a charge on the recipient as well as on the advertiser. Thus, as printing costs have risen, increased subscription rates to newspapers and magazines have helped keep publishing enterprises solvent. Tickets to movies generally cost more today—except

where severe television competition is being fought with low admission charges. Advertising, too, has become a commonplace in the theater in the form of short films on local businesses, including the lobby popcorn stand that, in some cases, pays the overhead.

But radio and television depend solely upon the advertiser for the money with which to produce programs. This not only has cost them independence in production but has made them aesthetically stunted media which can rise to their full potential only through the happy but rare coincidence when such a costly enterprise will also sell soap, automobiles, or gasoline. It was news recently when Robert Sherwood signed a contract giving him absolute freedom in the nine plays he is to write for a television network; but such freedom is an everyday occurrence in the newspaper and magazine world. The advertiser in these media is master of the space he buys and not of everything else that appears on the page with his advertisement. The question, then, is how to impose a charge upon the viewer so that more money will be available both to improve production and to loosen somewhat the tight controls now exercised by advertising agencies. The alternatives are theater TV, with the charge imposed at the box office; and subscription TV, with the customer utilizing some device attached to his home-television set to pay for programs he chooses. But looking at the interests involved, is it clear that theater TV will benefit the development of television?

In order to determine whether or not theater TV is likely to develop television in the public interest, it is necessary to look at the record of Hollywood's interest in the newest mass-communications medium. No matter what is asserted, Hollywood was not caught sleeping on the potentially competitive power of television. Paramount's Los Angeles television station was one of the earliest on the air and made test broadcasts long before the green light to commercial television was given after World War II. As early as 1946, a Paramount executive urged movie producers to apply for their own television channels. Paramount has invested

not only in theater-TV equipment and research but also in the Telemeter development for home subscription TV. It was a Hollywood promoter who bought up television rights for hundreds of films in 1945. He reputedly made between two and three million dollars in 1950 and probably more in the years since. Another Hollywood organization, Realart Pictures, Inc., reportedly has made more than eighteen million dollars on telecasting of old films since 1948.

The major producers did not ignore these events and the challenge they posed. Meeting the challenge meant, to the producers, getting control of what made television a better entertainment deal than movies and using that quality in turn to promote movies. This approach, rather than that of exploiting television for its own potential development, is dictated by the relationship that exists between the major film producers and their distributing organizations. Involved in the latter is real estate that was valued BT (Before Television) at between two and three billion dollars. This tremendous property was developed from the beginning of the film industry, when it seemed good business to own not only the production studios but the exhibition houses as well. The majors thus built up huge chains of theaters, either wholly owned or tied up by exclusive distribution arrangements.

In a move as revolutionary then as is the current antitrust action against the producers, the government in 1938 demanded that film production and exhibition be divorced. A consent decree was obtained after years of legal battle, but it is hardly a year since the last of the majors filed a plan for putting the separation into effect. In addition to the historical connection, there is a dollars-and-cents reason for the major producers' concern for theater property: it will be several years, at least, before subscription TV can pay for films anything approaching the amount theater chains can now pay. In spite of surveys that show high acceptability for home-paid viewing and corresponding high rejection of box-office paid viewing, there appears little readiness on the part of major pro-

ducers to alienate theater owners. Impressive sellouts for theater-televised sporting events, cited to show the effectiveness of the medium, are meaningless in the context of blacked-out home screens and in the absence of a competing subscription-TV system.

The result of this decision by the major producers to stick by the theater owners is a specialization of production: the major producers, for the most part, refuse to produce films for television. The minor producers, unencumbered by theater properties, high salaries, overheads, and distribution costs, produce films without end for the ever-increasing television demand. For Hollywood this means that there are plenty of jobs for the industry as a whole, and the situation is getting better all the time. Television shows are moving from the East, as the limited facilities in New York become increasingly inadequate. New television studios are being constructed by the networks in Hollywood, and old film studios are being taken over for the new medium.

At the same time, the major producers demonstrate clearly in word and deed what they consider to be the proper use of television. It will occupy the status of a come-on for topnotch Hollywood productions. As one Paramount executive has said, the main attraction in the theater-TV houses will still be Hollywood motion pictures. Thus, it would appear that Hollywood will remain the talent capital of the world no matter which way television goes—toward its ultimate potential through some form of subscription support, or toward permanent subordination through theater TV. There will be jobs for actors, directors, and the other wonder makers, no matter the outcome.

But the public interest is another question, and that interest will be adversely affected if the development of television is left in the hands of the major Hollywood producers. Free television, continued under the present financial arrangements, cannot hope to compete with topnotch Hollywood productions. But if topnotch television programs were spread through the week and made the practice rather than the rarity, competition would become a

reality. Public interest requires that television be considered an independent medium rather than an ancillary gimmick to be used by the motion-picture industry for advertising its own product.

It is of great value to the major motion-picture interests to establish the fiction that there is no difference between the two media, and that obviously the cinema, with its superior technical know-how and a half-century of experience, should take over the infant electronic version of movie projection. This is, of course, specious reasoning. Television is a unique medium, as many of the movie stars who have appeared on television are ready to attest. The key to this difference is the quality of intimacy. Television is projected into the home, into a family group that may include one or two persons, seldom more than a half dozen. This characteristic imposes both advantages and limitations on television in comparison with motion pictures. The opportunity for development of unique programs keyed to the intimate family approach is tremendous; it cannot be realized as long as television is considered merely a means of wringing the last cent out of theatrical movies, both old and new.

It is clear that television must have additional income in order to develop to its full potential; it is also clear what will eventuate if television goes to the box office for that income rather than to the home viewer. No one can say that it is impossible to have good radio or television programs under present practices; the list of excellent programs on the air today belies that. But the point is that good programs are few and far between. And this is to be expected, because the advertiser cannot throw his money away; he has to be able to account for it. Mass appeal, pitched to the lowest common denominator, apparently is the easiest way to achieve the desired response. With the cost of television production steadily climbing, it is no wonder that agencies resort to films and programs that are low on charges as well as ingenuity and originality. This could all be changed, however, if one or more of the several subscription-TV methods already developed

were to be approved by the FCC and promoted throughout the country.

Zenith Corporation was the first on the home-pay scene with its Phonevision, which was tested in Chicago early in 1951. Last year, Telemeter conducted tests in Palm Springs and Los Angeles with its coin-box attachment for home-television sets. Results of tests of both these systems have been brought to the FCC to buttress arguments for permission to begin commercial use of them.

But the important matter is not the mechanical question, but the public-interest implications of subscription TV. In brief, the implications are diametrically opposed to those implicit in the film industry's support of theater TV. Intensive development of theater TV to the detriment of subscription TV will inevitably mean that the quality of programming on home television cannot improve, and movies will face much less competition for the attention of the public. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's vice president, Dore Shary, told a meeting in Los Angeles last summer that ". . . television actually is having a salutary effect on the films. It is eliminating our potboilers, dreadful melodramas, and other junk . . ." Take away the major sports events, the top musical shows or concerts, and the most significant new events; siphon them into theaters equipped with large-screen television; and what will be left for home viewing? The answer is today's television fare minus the few programs that occasionally relieve an otherwise drab schedule. The home viewer will be in for rather slim leavings. Hundreds of theaters, linked by the movie industry's closed circuits, will be able through united bidding to buy exclusive television rights of any attraction, outbidding advertising sponsors. This has already occurred; it is not something that *may* happen.

Subscription TV has radically different implications. With Phonevision the family consults the day's schedule of programs for which there is a charge and telephones a special operator, ordering the desired programs. At the scheduled time, the operator transmits a signal to a device attached to the set that clears an

otherwise badly scrambled image on the television screen. Charges are added to the monthly telephone bill. Telemeter, on the other hand, collects for its programs by means of a coin-box attachment to the home set. When the proper amount is placed in the coin box, the television signal is cleared. Either system could work with one station or a number of stations. Recording devices in the coin box or in the billing system would determine the apportionment of fees to the stations involved. No matter which system were used, an additional income would be made available to help pay for the television program; the charge would not lie entirely on the advertiser. Through this means, programs that might not have enough mass appeal to justify a heavy advertising expenditure would not be banned from the air but would be supported in part or entirely by the viewer. Another most significant factor is that subscription TV would enable local stations to do more of their own programming and would tend to liberate them from mediocre filmed programs and expensive network productions.

A concern for the public interest in the development of television dictates that, before any authorization for extensive theater-TV operations is granted, the full implications of subscription TV should be explored and weighed. It appears obvious that the FCC cannot grant exclusive authorization for theater TV; furthermore, it is clear that subscription TV is probably the device independent stations must have if they are to retain any degree of independence, let alone improve their product. Educational stations, too, might well benefit from an examination of what use they could make of subscription TV. But once a theater-TV network is established, and exclusive contracts for attractions and events are signed, it will be too late to talk of a competing subscription-TV system and of an independent television medium.

There is a logical specialization that theater TV and subscription TV each can make. There are events and shows that by their nature would appear to better advantage on large-screen theater TV. With the proper safeguards, so that theater TV would not

usurp the whole of the medium, it could well bring to every part of America the stage and operatic attractions that so far have been limited to the major cities and, too often, only to the East. The theater-TV production of *Carmen* from the stage of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York was seen by scores of thousands of persons throughout the United States, many of whom were probably seeing opera for the first time. Such a large-scale production was not as suitable for small home screens as was the highly successful "Omnibus" presentation of *Die Fledermaus,* in which the intimate and unique qualities of home television were fully taken advantage of.

Development of a strong subscription-TV system would work to the benefit of the major studios that produce, it must be remembered, an art form just as essential and unique as the television art which is in the process of developing. Theater TV, used judiciously, would legitimately further the major producers' own films; with income available from both theater TV and subscription TV, there should be no question but that major motion pictures could be produced and offered on both theater and home programs.

The potential is present in television; that it is not being realized is obvious. For example, one television-network executive stated publicly in 1949: "Make no mistake about it, television cannot be significantly different from the other mass media." Another source, a former movie maker now busy on television films, has stated that he aims his productions at an intelligence level lower than that aimed at by movie studios—and that it works.

Now that the freeze on the construction of very-high-frequency television stations has been lifted, and assignment of UHF (ultra-high-frequency) is beginning—including the educational stations—it is imperative that some sort of understanding on the future of television be worked out, and soon. The new UHF stations, especially those located in smaller population areas, may not be able to afford cable charges for topnotch network programs

and may not be able to buy better films produced especially for television. The alternative is mediocrity on a vast nation-wide scale. Hollywood knows too well what happens to mediocre films: the public stays away in droves. And quite the same fate may lie in store for television, unless the problem of additional financing is met and decided with a concern for the public interest.

Television can be the greatest mass media this country has ever known. But, just as surely, it can become a mediocre dispenser of low-grade radio plus sight. To avoid this latter possibility is one of the most challenging communications problems of this day.

Realism in the Film: A Philosopher's Viewpoint*

ABRAHAM KAPLAN

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BY AND LARGE, philosophy today no longer pretends to be able to announce profound truths hidden from science and from common sense. On the contrary, it has tended to hold that the so-called "philosophical" questions are unanswerable only because they pose artificial difficulties. They result, not from ignorance about the nature of "ultimate reality," but from confusion about the concepts that refer to the world of experience. The business of philosophy is now taken to be the replacement of vague and obscure notions by more precise and clear ones. In these reformulations of the traditional disputes, the old issues are resolved—or, rather, do not arise to start with.

In this lecture I wish to consider some problems associated with "realism" in art, and especially in the film. I shall first pose these problems in terms of a classic dilemma: is art to entertain or to instruct? If the former, "realism" must be sacrificed, for, runs the argument, contemplation of the real world is seldom entertaining; but if the latter, aesthetic quality must go by the board, for the appeal of form, color, texture—the whole bloom of beauty—is instructive only to another artist anxious to master technique. In modern terms, the dilemma is that between *propaganda art,* which is realistic but not aesthetic, and *escapist art,* which satisfies the aesthete but not the realist.

* This article was originally given as a classroom lecture in Social Aspects of Mass Communications, a freshman course at the University of California at Los Angeles. It was presented in conjunction with a showing of the film *The Long Voyage Home.*

Of course, the easy way out is to insist on both entertainment and instruction. Horace says in his *Ars Poetica,*

> Poets would either profit or delight;
> Or mixing sweet and fit, teach life the right.

But this "mixing" is as hard for the layman to understand as it is for the artist to achieve. Is the formula: "Enough realism to instruct, but not so much as to interfere with entertainment"? It it: "Realism throughout, but entertaining realism"? It it: "A little propaganda, and a little escape to make the propaganda palatable"? Plainly, the terms in which the question is put require a great deal of clarification. The problem needs to be redefined. I suggest that when the dilemma is reformulated it disappears—not because we make an uneasy compromise between the conflicting claims, but because the conflict is only apparent and dependent on confusions in both alternatives.

Let me first present in their own terms the two warring conceptions of art, especially as they relate to the issue of "realism" in films.

A work of art considered as an object in its own right is plainly in some sense an illusion. It is not in fact what it appears to be, but some kind of representation—"imitation" the ancients used to say. At any rate, it is some kind of signification of reality, which is not to be confused with the reality itself any more than language is to be confused with that which the language is about.

As soon as we recognize that art has this sign character, the questions naturally arise: What relation between sign and signified are we to demand of the arts? What function are we to ask that this sign perform for us? Of course, it cannot perform all the functions of the reality itself. But it can perform some of them; or, it can at least perform certain functions stemming from a close relation to the reality signified.

Now, the conception of art as propaganda runs something like this: The function of the aesthetic sign is definitely *not* to present

us with illusions, myths, or misrepresentations of reality. It ought not to lull us into a false sense of security, crying "Peace!" when there is no peace. On the contrary, the arts should signify reality as it is. They should orient us in the real world, and strengthen our motivations for dealing with reality in ways called for by the actual problems reality poses.

Historically, the arts have often shown themselves to be powerful weapons in the struggles of various social groups with one another. More generally, they have proved valuable aids in the resolution of problems for both groups and individuals by signifying certain aspects of reality and by signifying them in ways which motivate us to take appropriate action. We need not turn only to literature with its Ibsens and Zolas to find convincing instances. In various media we can discern the effectiveness of the arts to this end; the film, even in its comparatively short history, has already shown itself to be perhaps the most powerful instrument of this kind that the arts have as yet developed. From this standpoint, then, a specific work of art is to be appraised by the adequacy with which it performs this function—by the degree, that is to say, of its "social realism."

Now let me make this conception concrete by reference to a specific film, *The Long Voyage Home*. What are the realities signified in this film? What are the problems to which it directs attention? What motivations does it arouse to deal with these problems?

From the propagandistic standpoint, the fundamental theme of the film is the heroic selflessness of the characters portrayed. Here is the merchant marine providing an essential service for society. It can perform its function only because every man in that service is prepared to do his duty regardless of the frustration, misery, and, in fact, death, which it involves. You will recall that in the first part of the movie, when the men learn that the ship is going to carry munitions, they are strongly inclined to abandon it; but a very brief and not particularly eloquent appeal by the captain

induces them to recognize their duty and to resolve to perform it. The munitions are needed, and would be missed if they didn't arrive; the men are not needed, and would not be missed. When social needs run counter to individual desires, every decent man sees his duty, and does it.

The movie then goes on in various ways to reënforce another familiar propaganda theme: *dulce et decorum est pro patria mori.* Here is Smitty who has been dismissed in disgrace from the British navy; but when the ship is under attack by the enemy, he resumes his role as an officer, even at the cost of his life. The film gives you, to make the point perfectly clear and explicit, a montage of the British flag as Smitty is falling back dead into the lifeboat: his death was not a meaningless accident but an act of heroism, of service to his country.

Again, propagandistically, there is an important pacifistic content in the movie. It is by no means a glorification of war, but faces realistically the misery and suffering that war produces, even on its periphery, as it were. The voyage and the longed-for shore leave are equally empty, equally frustrating—everywhere, as Axel says, people are stumbling in the dark. The idea is quite clearly conveyed that a world in which war is part of the natural course of events is a wholly unsatisfying one. In so far as we share, as we all certainly do, the human, all-too-human desires of the men on the ship, we are made to share also their desperate hope for a world in which men need not walk in darkness.

Social realism in *The Long Voyage Home* can be found also—if we are looking for it—in its treatment of authority as an agency of repression. The opening sequence is of harbor police, with guns prominently displayed, lining up on the pier where the boat is docked; and near the end they close the action by escorting the purser back to the ship. Throughout, the captain and his officers are also symbols of authority, and their function is by and large repressive. In a longer version of the film, there is an episode in which the ship is anchored somewhere in the Caribbean. The men

have not had leave for a very long time and are extremely anxious to go ashore. They manage to have some kind of entertainment on board ship, but the captain's presence is felt through it all as a repressive force. He is the father sternly prohibiting the child from reaching out for the goodies so desperately wanted; he is also the authoritarian state, interfering with the individual's pursuit of happiness, replacing that pursuit by its own goals.

This—or something like it—is the line along which the conception of art as propaganda, as social realism, would be elaborated and applied to a specific instance. How good the film is, how valuable—not in personal but in social terms—would then be judged on the basis of how well it instructs its audience. The criteria would be: How real is the situation which it depicts? How important is that reality? How adequate are the measures suggested to deal with the situation? How effectively is the suggestion transmitted?

Now, by contrast, the conception of art as escape insists that it is just because the work of art departs from reality that it is distinctly valuable. The propagandist holds that the arts are to be prized only in the degree to which they present the world as it actually is (or as he would have it thought really to be); the aesthete urges, on the contrary, that we look to art precisely "to see the world as the world's not." Just because our real problems are so pressing, we need relief from reality. Just because the real world presents us with so few gratifications, we turn to the arts for enjoyment. Art can thus compensate us for what is lacking in our real lives; and, in so doing, it allows us to regroup our forces, psychologically speaking, so that we can once more cope with the problems of our real-life situations.

From this standpoint, then, art is appraised on the basis of the degree to which it provides us with vicarious satisfactions. These are real enough in a psychological sense, but they are not realistic in the sense of accurately mirroring the kinds of gratifications that reality outside the aesthetic situation affords.

What is interesting—and what should make us very suspicious of both formulations, if we are not suspicious of them already—is that it is just as easy to interpret a film like *The Long Voyage Home* from this standpoint as from the preceding one. It can be argued that it is not a realistic film but, on the contrary, a splendid example of the way in which the arts can provide us with an "escape."

To start with, it is, after all, a romance of the sea, and presents us with all the thrills and adventures of life on the sea. The housewife, factory worker, or farmer who goes through his daily routine does not find in his everyday life the excitement, the sense of being swept away by events that he can experience in almost every episode of the movie. On board ship, he is confronted with the vast forces of nature and the treachery and hostility of man: the ship is carrying munitions that might explode at any moment, and there is fear of espionage and betrayal; storms break out, the anchor tears loose, the side of the ship is almost stove in, and a member of the crew is killed; they are bombed by a plane, there is another death, but the cargo miraculously does not explode, and the plane inexplicably leaves; and so on, and so on. This is all very exciting and satisfying—somehow we survive each episode and go on to live through and enjoy the next.

What's more, the movie is rich in opportunities to identify ourselves with various heroes, to experience as our own all sorts of noble moral virtues. We are shown the heroism of Yank in saving the ship during a storm, at the cost of his life; the heroism of Smitty in fearlessly assuming command of the situation when they are attacked, again at the cost of his life; the heroism of Drisc in rescuing Ole from the "death ship" *Amindra,* and again, as it turns out, at the cost of his own life. It seems that everyone on board ship is prepared at a moment's notice to lay down his life for his friend. This is something that we find wholly admirable, and we enjoy enormous gratification in being able to do it ourselves, as it were—and yet to live through the experience.

Even the antagonists of the plot, it is interesting to observe, are not dyed-in-the-wool villains. They are like the pirates of Penzance, only outwardly wicked, or like the redskins whose business it is to bite the dust periodically, though we feel no personal rancor against them. As in a children's game—or fantasy—every actor, underneath it all, is really a splendid fellow, with virtues and qualities of his own. The prostitute who seduces Ole in the plot to shanghai him has, it is plain to see, a heart of gold. She is not acting viciously, but is simply doing her job, which she finds wholly repugnant, as any decent woman would. If there is a villain at all, it should be the captain. It is he who gets the men into the mess to start with—not telling them they were signing up to sail with munitions, to be subjected to enemy attack; denying them shore leave; insisting on Smitty's coming back on board ship, and thus to his death. Yet he is no Captain Bligh of the *Bounty*. He is neither vicious nor sadistic but a man of high principle. If he appears to be villainous, it is only because he is adhering to principle. Thus he, too, is admirable and invites identification.

And, after all, the movie does have in its own way a happy ending. Smitty wipes out his disgrace and dies a hero's death; Ole does in fact manage to get home; and the captain finally delivers the load of munitions. Desires are fulfilled, duties performed, and virtue rewarded. The enjoyment of the audience derives from the vicarious satisfaction of this outcome.

But now, there is something profoundly wrong about both these conceptions of the content of *The Long Voyage Home* and of the arts in general. For, fundamentally, both of them derogate the arts and cheapen the particular work of art appraised in their terms.

Propagandist realism, in insisting on how useful the arts can be in helping us to cope with our real problems, in fact depreciates them. For, measured by *that* yardstick, they fall sadly short of the superlative value and importance we know the arts to have. Although there are notable exceptions, by and large what the arts

produce is a *catharsis* of our emotions rather than their canalization into action. "If you have tears," the artist tells us, "prepare to shed them now." And if his work moves us, when we leave the theater we no longer feel impelled to express our feelings in action. We have already given our all, as it were; we have been purged, as Aristotle put it, of our pity and fear. What we do subsequently is not significantly dependent on the aesthetic experience itself. William James in one of his essays (I think the one on habit) insists on the importance of immediately following resolves with concrete action, since, otherwise, they dissipate themselves in emotions which have no impact on the real world. To illustrate this point, he refers to the Russian noblewoman who weeps in the theater over the miseries of the characters on the stage, while the coachman whom she has ordered to wait for her outside is freezing to death. This has become the paradigmatic situation, the symbol, of emotionality in the aesthetic situation which is not automatically translated into action in other contexts.

There are, in fact, other devices far more effective than the arts for inducing people to act in particular ways. If this is to be the ground of our valuing the arts, we shall have to assign them a very subsidiary place—somewhere between political oratory and singing commercials.

But the conception of aestheticism, in valuing the arts mainly as an escape from the pain and boredom of our everyday lives, equally derogates them. When a work of art is regarded as "an idle song for an idle hour," only snobbishness distinguishes its worth from that of a wrestling match or gin rummy. As a distraction for the tired businessman or bored housewife, the Muses must definitely yield to Venus, Bacchus, and Fortuna.

Moreover, in viewing the arts primarily as ways of getting away from it all, of losing ourselves, aestheticism derogates also the selves in question. For it implies that the audience is not maturely concerned with the real world, but prefers the infantilism of creating a fantasy world within which it can temporarily be happy.

The arts are thus construed as an indulgence of such infantilism; only a minor role is left for them to play in a fully mature life. But surely, prizing the arts does not presuppose rejection of the real world in which we live and move and have our being. Any conception of the arts which holds that they are valuable only in the degree to which they provide us with the gratifications of fantasy implies that they will be valued only by those who prefer the substitute to the real thing, the illusion of perfection to an imperfect actuality.

Now, I say that both these views are untenable. They have, to be sure, been widely held: both are to be found as early as Plato, who alternately condemns and praises the arts according as he views them as fostering illusion or as giving insight into reality. Each view has its supporters today, in Hollywood and Moscow (respectively, we may suppose). But we are not concerned here with sheer matters of fact. The question is not whether the one view or the other is the *true* one, but whether either of them is clear and intelligible. I submit that both conceptions are unacceptable, because both rest on a confused notion of "reality" and of its relation to the aesthetic sign.

This notion is that of a realm of "fact," completely determinate in character, to which the artistic representation does or does not accurately correspond. The work of art is being thought of in analogy to a photograph. One side, then, insists that it must picture the person as he is in fact, and the other side that it must portray him as we would like him to look; show the blemishes, or glamorize. But both are agreed that one and only one appearance is the actual one, and that the artist must choose either this one or some other. They disagree only on which choice is to be made.

But "reality" is not something which can be uniquely pictured, and a work of art is not, metaphorically speaking, a photograph.

If the term "reality" is to be used at all, it must mean the world as disclosed to experience, not a mysterious ultimate behind or beyond experience. And experience occurs always in particular

contexts and perspectives—specific situations seen from specific points of view. Each is equally valid when its limitations are taken into account. There is no absolute perspective revealing what the world really is rather than what it appears to be in limited perspectives. The "real" *is* the set of appearances, in their relations. Even the mirage is as real as the oasis: it is as wrong to mistake the oasis for a mirage as the other way around.

This does not in any way impugn the objectivity of matters of fact. It insists only that they are objective *relative* to a specified perspective. The earth is objectively large relative to man, objectively small relative to the stars. The wax apple really has the appearance of an apply, to sight but not to taste. Dr. Jekyll was as really a part of that character as Mr. Hyde—everything depended on whether we knew him by day or by night.

This conception, elaborated in technical detail by the pragmatists, is sometimes called *objective relativism*. What it comes to is that what we call "real" is what is significant in the light of some interest and purpose. There are no "bare" facts, wholly external to human meanings.

Realism in art is thus not, as it purports to be, a matter of the artist confronting a fixed and determinate world, of which he proceeds to render an accurate representation. The artist helps make the reality, as we all do. Not that meanings can be arbitrarily imposed on the world—relativism does not destroy objectivity. But meanings must be interpreted to be manifest, and interpretation requires an interpreter.

The world presented in a work of art has the character it does in the perspective selected—or better, created—by the artist. The sentimentality of Saroyan's world may be no less "real" than the brutality of Hemingway's, or Housman's "woe, woe, et cetera!" (in Pound's parody) no more than Pound's own "sing we for love and idleness!" Critical appraisal of content hinges, not on fidelity to a "reality" presumed to be external to any perspective, but on significance for the enduring human purposes which enter into all our experiences, aesthetic and nonaesthetic alike.

And if there is no antecedently determinate reality for the artist to represent, his task cannot be representation, either of the allegedly "real" world or of a superior one of fantasy. The aesthetic sign is not essentially representational, like a map or police photograph, but expressive. The representational element provides—to use the terms of John Dewey's *Art as Experience*—the matter *for* the work of art, not the matter *in* it: the subject, rather than the aesthetic substance. Rembrandt can paint a flayed ox as greatly as a crucifixion.

For every artist, "realist" or not, transforms the subject—more literally, "forms" it. Every painting, whether or not it be "nonobjective," is abstract—the product of selection, distortion, and elaboration in ways determined by requirements of form, regardless of the initial attributes of the subject. For only as formed does the subject have expressive quality; and only as expressive can the resultant work function aesthetically. For the propaganda realist, form is the coating of sugar that induces us to swallow the pill. For the aesthete, content is the necessary evil, serving only as substratum for form. Neither of them sees form as itself the carrier of expressive content, making manifest the perspective which the artist invites us to share.

No conception of art as representation, whether of the real world or one of fantasy, can do justice to either form or expression. What the artist, sharing in the divine work of creation, has joined together, no man can put asunder.

Once expression replaces representation, the realist's emphasis on the social function of art can be reassessed. For the performance of that function is seen to be no longer a matter of accuracy of representation. Picasso's *Guernica* is as effective in communicating certain attitudes as Goya's supremely "realistic" war drawings. The social content of a work of art does not lie in a "message" isolable from the form of its presentation, but in the expressive substance of the form itself.

But the matter does not end here. For such a substance does

not have the specificity of the particular subject transformed. The expressive content is not confined to the concrete problematic situation the artist has selected, nor does the impact of the work consist essentially in motivating concrete action to deal with that situation. This may be true of a movie short intended, say, to make blood-bank collections. But such a "directive film" can scarcely be taken as a model for everything done in the medium.

On the contrary, the social significance of art is far more profound than the propaganda realist recognizes. The artist presents, not a social situation limited in its particularity to a specific time and place, but *through* that situation as subject the substance of the human condition. He makes an appeal, not to the special interests of a particular group, but to the universal concerns of our shared humanity. His impact, if he succeeds, is to be measured, not by what we subsequently do in the world, but by the degree to which he has molded the perspectives which make up the world in which each of us acts.

Of course, the artist cannot wholly free himself from the limitations of his time and circumstances, any more than the audience can. Since they both speak a particular language, as it were (and not always the same language!), the meanings conveyed in it can be only as universal as the language allows. Cultural boundaries inevitably make themselves felt. Nevertheless, art aspires to universality, as broad as the culture and even transcending, where it can, cultural differences. The *pattern* of feeling—aspiration and its fulfillment or defeat—and the experiences on which our deepest feelings are focused—birth, love, and death—these are widely, if not universally shared. And it is these that make up the substance of "realistic" art, not preoccupation with specific social problems as such.

Let us return now to our example of *The Long Voyage Home* to make concrete how this conception differs from the two previously considered. From this standpoint, it is neither a war movie nor an adventure sea story. It belongs, rather, to that great class

of works of art which deal with the eternal human quest—the *Odyssey,* the Holy Grail romances, *Moby Dick,* Kafka's *Castle,* perhaps *The Old Man and the Sea.* In all of them man is presented as traveling some long, weary road in order to attain a supremely desired objective. The various specific elements in the film are interpretable as expressive of this theme. They delineate the human condition—not just in the merchant marine, or in a century of war and revolution, or in any other particular social circumstances. The symbol, to be sure, is specific, but not what it symbolizes: man's situation in this world and in relation to other men.

The film begins with the explicit statement that it is a saga of the changing sea and the unchanging men upon it. In aesthetic substance, the sea is the whole external world, the forces of nature with which man must cope; just as the authority of the police and the captain is expressive of all the social constraints within which man's life moves, regardless of the particular features of his society.

Smitty is not permitted to jump ship, and shore leave is denied to every one. Does this not have the expressive content of the "no discharge in war" of Ecclesiastes—no escape from our humanity, from the constraints which the external world inevitably imposes on our private ones? And when the cargo is safely landed, the men find that they have nowhere to go but back to the ship, to sign up again. Is this not poignantly moving, not in the petty "realism" of how empty the satisfactions society allows men of their class and station, but in the more profoundly realistic sense that there is no other life than the present one, no place to live it but where we are? "Earth's the right place for love," the poet says: "I don't know where it's likely to go better." There *is* only the ship and the voyage.

And at the end of the film you know that although some of the men have gone home at last—Yank, Drisc, Smitty, and Ole—there is nothing for the others to do but resume the voyage, and it is the same voyage, and the voyage will go on and on, always with differ-

ent men; perhaps the ship itself will change, but nothing essential in the situation will change. There will still be the struggle with the external world, there will still be the constraints imposed by authority, and there will still be the heartaches, frustrations, and also the recurrent gratifications which are just enough to give man the strength and courage to go forward.

This is not to say that every work of art is an allegory, that *The Long Voyage Home* is a kind of secular *Pilgrim's Progress*. It is not a question of allegory, or even of conscious and explicit symbolism. It is a matter only of expressiveness rather than restrictive representation, of giving to the arts the full richness of their meaning.

Such a conception, therefore, is not just a compromise between the political doctrinaire and the petty aesthete. It does not hold that the arts must present us with objective reality, but that since this might be too harsh, we must temper objective reality with a little subjective illusion, and in this way come to terms with both conflicting parties. That is not the standpoint. Insight into the human condition is objective enough, if you like, in the sense of really concerning man's condition; but it is also subjective in the sense that it is *man's* condition with which it deals. And that condition is determined, not merely by what we choose to call the "objective facts" but also by what the facts mean to us.

But we are equally rejecting the aesthete's "unrealism." What is involved here is not an escape from the pressures of reality but rather an enrichment of the resources with which we can face reality. The work of the imagination is to make us more vividly aware of what we are. In great art we are not getting away from ourselves; we are coming face to face with ourselves. In the long run this can only have the effect of making it easier for us to live with ourselves and in the world. In terms of this function we can understand why the aesthetes have so much insisted on art as a relief from sober reality.

In short, if we pose the question whether art is realistic or not,

we can answer as we choose, yes or no. One answer will be no worse and, also, no better than the other, as long as we leave unanalyzed what is involved in our notions of reality and the aesthetic signs signifying it. The arts *are* realistic, if you like, in the sense that they deal with the objective world, with man's actual circumstances, needs, and desires. They are *not* realistic, if you like, in the sense that they are not concerned with these facts as bare of meaning, but only as the carriers of some humanly significant content. What the great work of art does is to make us more vividly aware of this human significance.

Films on Art: An Attempt at Classification

LAURO VENTURI

LAURO VENTURI, after graduating from Harvard University, studied Italian cinema in Rome where he was assistant to Mario Soldati in the production of *Fuga in Francia*. He has also codirected with Luciano Emmer several films on art including *Leonardo da Vinci* (1952).

MR. BOSLEY CROWTHER has hinted recently at the confusion that exists among the public as well as among the film makers themselves about the terminology of "art films" and "films on art."[1] As far back as 1939 someone wrote: "Movies are now officially art. A gouache from Walt Disney's *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* hangs in the Metropolitan Museum."[2] Although this may have been stated with tongue in cheek, I believe it summarizes nicely the fine state of confusion that still prevails behind the smoke screen of that omnipotent word: *art*.

To complicate further the situation is the common denomination of "art houses" for those theaters which show foreign or otherwise commercially dangerous films that the big distributors do not want to handle. That the films may be works of art (film art) is one thing; but this does not necessarily imply that the content of the film deals with art (fine art).

There are ambiguous but handy words such as *avant-garde* or "experimental" to describe the Hans Richter or Fernand Léger type of films. And yet, the recent *Abstract in Concrete* was presented at the Second International Art Film Festival which purported to show "new films on art and artists of many countries." This film, which is a montage of patterns of light and movement photographed on rainy days in Times Square, may be a work of

[1] Bosley Crowther, "About 'Art Films,'" New York *Times* (December 8, 1952).

[2] Margaret Thorp, *America at the Movies* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1939).

art, but with the best of intentions one cannot define as "art" light reflections in rain puddles.

Films on art should, therefore, come to mean: motion pictures which deal with the fine arts—paintings, engravings, drawings, sculpture, architecture, and all of their derivatives. Once a definition of contents is reached, the recent avalanche of art films and films on art can be channeled and analyzed with some hope of classification.

It is, then, only with films on art that I shall deal in these notes; and I shall attempt to subdivide them into four broad categories, hoping by doing so to clarify certain problems of making films on art. For each subdivision I shall give examples from the best known or most publicized among films on art, without in any way attempting to distinguish between them for quality or artistry.

The categories are: Films for which works of art are made expressly. Films which deal primarily or exclusively with the narrative contents of one or more already existing works of art. Films which deal with the historical, critical, or technical aspects of art and artists. Films in which the works of art are pretexts for something else. Obviously these categories are not airtight, and one may be hard put to fit many of the current films on art into any one of these. Yet, I believe that the more successful films on art are those that belong squarely to one type; they do not attempt to overstep their boundaries or manage to resist the temptation to do so.

Films for which works of art are made expressly.—In this type of films on art, stop-motion photography and other animation devices are used predominantly to impart motion to painted, drawn, or modeled material. The directing and the photography are usually done by the artist himself. The film itself is the final result, and not the work of art which may be modified in the course of shooting and even no longer exist once the filming is completed.

Animated cartoons and puppet films are to be included in this category. In addition to these two established types, the great

majority of such films on art consist of animations of abstract color patterns, such as those made by Fischinger or Whitney; the McLaren animations, either photographed frame by frame or painted directly on the film; animated globs of plasticine, such as the Tragillus-Luce films; cut paper silhouettes, etc.

Recently, the British Film Institute produced a series called *Poet and Painter,* for which leading British cartoonists have expressly drawn illustrations of well-known poems. I gather that the method used to carry these drawings to the screen was not frame by frame animation, but rather the technique of the next category.[3]

Films which deal primarily or exclusively with the narrative contents of one or more already existing works of art.—This type of films on art was invented by Luciano Emmer and Enrico Gras. They commented upon the making of their *Lost Paradise* as follows.

The film on the "Garden of Delights" of Hieronymous Bosch is not and must not be a cinematographic translation of the pictorial work. It would have been an absolutely pretentious and arbitrary experience to attempt to violate an autonomous artistic reality. Bosch's painting is harmony in space. The makers of the film have taken those painted images, freed them from their pictorial bonds, and used them as new objects, and would have been even more honest to themselves and to Bosch had they succeeded in forgetting Bosch completely.[4]

In other words, their purpose was to make a short subject by using (for financial reasons) painted images instead of humans, dogs, or landscapes. They were hopefully taking a gamble: the gamble that the particular

human contents of the painting, its linear drama, might "re-live" in the film. It was not a necessity, but an unknown factor. But if it

[3] Roger Manvell, ed., *The Cinema 1952* (Penguin Books, 1952), plates 11 to 13. I cannot help thinking, from the maker's viewpoint, how wonderful it must be, should the need arise for a visual transition not previously foreseen, to telephone the artist and have him draw a few more shots, rather than be obliged to curse helplessly Carpaccio, Goya, or Botticelli for not having thought of providing them.

[4] "For a New Avant-Garde," *Le Cinéma d'Aujourd'hui* (Geneva: Cahier de Traits, 1945).

worked, then the short would have fulfilled its unforeseen purpose of serving as a link between the spectator and the original work, the painting.

It worked, with tremendous effectiveness.

The films in this group, then, narrate the legends, fables, or events that the painter himself has illustrated in his paintings, by using camera movements to point out details, by using editing rhythm to impart action to the static actors, and by working very closely with the musical score and the commentary, to create an emotional atmosphere in which the unique qualities of the work of art may come to the surface.

Theoretically, the filmic storytelling is done through the painter's own eyes, inasmuch as it is the painter himself who has established a priori what to show and what not to show, and in what setting to place it. The maker of this type of films has to understand the intentions and purposes of the painter and remain faithful to him as he breaks down the storytelling canvasses into their narrative elements; he then reorganizes these elements to tell the story cinematographically. Theoretically again, he should give to each element a "duration in time" corresponding to the "duration in space" given to that same element by the painter, who might have made it bigger or smaller than other elements, or placed it in the background or foreground of the painting, thus establishing an "editing" relationship between these elements.

In practice, however, it is impossible to respect pictorial composition and space determination because of the need for all elements to be seen on the screen in a narrative sequence. For instance, the composition in the first of Carpaccio's "Saint Ursula" paintings is such that the eye is led immediately to both the sleeping princess and the angel entering the room, thus establishing pictorially the mood of the entire series of paintings. In the film *The Legend of Saint Ursula,* it was necessary to concentrate first on Ursula and establish her in the setting before discovering the angel. His appearance being unsuspected, the scene gained in the

film an element of suspense that is purely cinematographic and antipictorial. If we had shown the total of the painting and then moved in for close-ups (as so many museum people have criticized us for not doing), the whole cinematographic relationship would have been destroyed. Our purpose was to tell the legend of St. Ursula as seen by Carpaccio, and not to make a short about Carpaccio's paintings. The latter would have been an entirely different film.

There are many examples of this type of films on art, and they are usually typified by their close adherence to the original canvas and to the inner spirit and meaning of both the paintings and the painter. Among the best-known examples are *The World of Paul Delvaux, Ballet by Degas, The Loon's Necklace* (using masks).

Films which deal with the historical, critical, or technical aspects of art and artists.—This category may best be introduced by quoting Arthur Knight.

> Ten years ago, only the art specialist knew anything about art films [*sic*]. And what little he knew was seldom to their credit. Cheaply produced, intended primarily for classroom instruction, they were concerned with such intriguing "how to do it" subjects as painting murals or making silk-screen prints. And pottery. It is simply incredible how many of those early films gave complete directions for making pots.[5]

Besides the "how to" class, I propose to put in this group the film biographies of individual artists, all filmed lectures on art, and critical essays dealing with art. *The Titan* and *Leonardo da Vinci* come in here, as well as *De Renoir à Picasso, Van Gogh, Braque, Matisse.*

Several French makers of films on art, believing in the adage that a painter cannot help putting himself into his canvasses, have narrated the lives of artists by seeking, and sometimes even finding, in their canvasses illustrations of the events in the painter's life (Van Gogh's ear, Gauguin's trip to Tahiti, etc.). Others have interviewed with their camera living painters and incidentally

[5] "Art Films, USA," *Harper's Bazaar* (March, 1952).

have shown some of their works; still others have used works of art to expound their own theories about the history of painting.

The use of works of art to tell a dramatic life has been brought to an ultimate point in *The Titan,* which uses a subjective camera technique and a jungle of monuments, buildings, portraits, paintings, sculpture, and props to give the sensation that Michelangelo is "moving just beyond camera range and that is tremendously exciting," according to Bosley Crowther.[6] But to Miss Iris Barry "the kittenish fashion in which the camera pretends to be trotting at the heels of the artist and . . . the coy manner in which it, at the same time, recoils from details of sculpture . . . considerably diminishes the visual pleasure afforded."[7]

For *Leonardo da Vinci,* Luciano Emmer and I realized that we had to put aside our narrative-type theories and give a panoramic view of the Florentine's mind rather than of his life, of the amazingly varied fields of learning in which he achieved greatness rather than of the anecdotes regarding his private deeds. This we did by adhering as much as we could to his sketches, graphs, notations, drawings, and paintings. While putting these thousands of sketches in order, we felt at times that Leonardo's straightforwardness and logic in scientific investigation came through, and this we tried to translate on film, while maintaining in the feature the same approximate proportions that we found among the drawings in his notebooks. In that sense we tried to be subjective, as well as through the short biographical preface in which we showed only buildings and locations that we knew Leonardo had seen in his wanderings through Europe.

Films in which the works of art are pretexts for something else.—In this type of films on art, the works of art photographed are used merely as raw material to expound an idea, explain a theory, or narrate a story which is foreign to the works of art themselves.

[6] Crowther, *op. cit.*

[7] Iris Barry, "Pioneering in Films on Art," *Films on Art 1952* (New York: American Federation of Art, 1952).

Using works of art simply as iconographic material, films have been made to depict revolutions, modes of life, and cultures of days gone by. Four good examples follow. *Il Demoniaco nell'Arte* shows gruesome, awesome, and "demoniac" fifteenth- and sixteenth-century Flemish paintings in order to explain the personal philosophic views of the film maker about the religious crisis in that era. There is no doubt that the works of art are well chosen to reflect this crisis, but the crisis itself is outside the realm of art. *The Charm of Life,* on the other hand, takes a quantity of nineteenth-century French academic paintings and, with humorous intent, re-creates that sublimely ridiculous world of nymphs, canaries, betrayed husbands, and emperors, which was in those days the only world deemed worthy to be portrayed by Official Art. A third example is *1848* which uses paintings, etchings, and engravings by Daumier, Gavarni, and others to narrate the revolution that took place in France in that year. *Guernica,* on the other hand, is a personal reconstruction of the events that occurred in that town during the Spanish Civil War. It uses, almost exclusively, works by Picasso—works from 1912, as well as 1945—and although the film is dramatic and effective, the only reason Picasso's painting and sculpture were used as graphic material stems from the fact that the artist himself was moved by the fate of that town to paint his famous canvas bearing the same name.

As must be obvious by now, the quality of the films on art depends on their makers and on the honesty and skill with which they approach their subject. In all the various categories, motion pictures can be of great value to the arts: in teaching, in bringing to large audiences little-known works of art, or in acquainting the public with the fact that fine arts are not an obscure, esoteric, and unapproachable subject, but on the contrary, a subject very worthy to be investigated, for the personal, sensory, and intellectual satisfaction it gives.

Luis Buñuel's *Los Olvidados*

J. RUBIA BARCIA

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Los Olvidados, shown in the United States as *The Young and the Damned,* won for Luis Buñuel first prize for direction at the Cannes Film Festival in 1951. This distinction and the subsequent exhibition of the film in America brought Buñuel world-wide recognition, though he had already won a place in the history of film. His very first venture in the medium, a four-reel film called *Un Chien Andalou* (*An Andalusian Dog*) was the center of a violent controversy, as were his next two films. It is these three early works that identified Buñuel as an original and important film artist and laid the foundation for his present-day achievements and critical recognition.

Luis Buñuel was born on February 22, 1900, in the little town of Calanda in Aragon, the Spanish region where Goya also was born. The son of a well-to-do family, he was educated as a scientist at the University of Madrid, for a time assisted the internationally famous Spanish neurologist Santiago Ramon y Cajal, and was sent by the Spanish government in the mid-twenties as a scientific attaché to the League of Nations. He took up residence in Paris. There his interest shifted from science to art, and he began to associate himself with young poets and painters. He met among them his fellow countryman, Salvador Dali, and convinced him to try their hands at the comparatively new medium of film. Together they wrote and Buñuel directed *Un Chien Andalou,* the first surrealistic film, a vision of the human soul deprived of every kind of conventionalism in a mixture of horror and fantasy. Its

opening scene set the keynote to what appears to be a strong impulse toward arousing in the spectators a feeling of nakedness and brutality. To quote from the scenario:

A balcony at night. A man [Buñuel] sharpens his razor near the balcony. The man looks at the sky through the window panes and sees. . . . A light cloud moving toward the moon which is at the full. Then the head of a young girl, her eyes wide opened. The blade of the razor moves toward one of her eyes. Now the light cloud passes over the moon. The blade of the razor passes over the girl's eye, cutting it.[1]

Following this prologue, the film is like a close-up of the subconscious in a succession of symbolic and violent actions that brings out the baser aspects of the human being. Apropos of *Un Chien Andalou,* Buñuel spoke of—although this does not mean that we must take him *ad pedem litterae*—"the imbecile crowd which has found beautiful or poetic what is, in the main, nothing but a desperate, a passionate appeal to murder."

When the film was shown in Paris in 1928 and later in other parts of the world, it provoked a double reaction. To *avant-gardists,* it was something to be loved and enjoyed; for others, a thing to be hated. But it was generally agreed that in Buñuel the film medium had found a poet. From that time forward, the public was to react to Buñuel's work in much the same way—with enthusiasm or hostility but never with indifference.

Two years later, in 1930, Buñuel completed his second picture, *L'Age d'Or,* again written in collaboration with Dali. The new work was longer than its predecessor, running between six and seven reels, and employed sound. It was also surrealist in approach and dealt with the eternal problem of love in opposition to the outside world and its moral and social pressures. These were represented in large part by the Roman Catholic Church. In one shot a bishop was thrown from a window. Even the figure of Jesus was treated with disrespect. Thus, since the picture was both anti-Catholic and surrealist, and since surrealism had been labeled as

[1] Marcel Lapierre, *Les cent visages du Cinéma* (Paris: Edition Bernard Grasset, 1948).

a Jewish deviation, the *Ligue de Patriotes* of Paris took matters into their own hands and on December 3, 1930, raided Studio 28, where the picture had been showing for the past month, shouting "Mort aux juifs!" The hall was ransacked, all its furniture wrecked and a collection of surrealist paintings on exhibit in the foyer was destroyed. A week later, after a furious campaign by the most reactionary and anti-Semitic sector of the Parisian press, French authorities forbade the further showing of the film. Years later, Franco, the present dictator of Spain and at that time military governor of the Canary Islands, banned the exhibition of *L'Age d'Or* in Santa Cruz de Tenerife. Nevertheless, in spite of attacks on the film because of its content, it was recognized and still is, from the artistic viewpoint, as a cinematographic poem of the first order.

In 1932, Luis Buñuel, accompanied by a cameraman named Pierre Unik, went to the miserable region of Las Hurdes in Spain and there photographed his documentary short, *Terre sans Pain (Land without Bread)*. In this film, Buñuel abandoned for the time the surrealist mingling of dreams and symbols and seemed to make a conscious search for the most gruesome and repellant aspects that reality can offer. In it appear the most impressive poverty, idiocy, and sickness that one can imagine in a dry and schematic approach without even a suggestion of elaboration. The result is an excursion into pure, human cruelty, more social than personal, with Buñuel merely pointing the camera like an accusing finger toward whatever he wanted to underline. The picture has always reminded me, in all the horror of its beauty, of a painting I once saw in a church in Seville by the eighteenth-century painter Valdes Leal, in which the already decomposed body of a bishop, attired in all his glory, appears covered with voracious, living worms. In *Terre sans Pain,* one sees the carcass of an ass being devoured by bees; in *Un Chien Andalou,* the body of an ass is dragged over two magnificent pianos; in *Los Olvidados,* the ass carries Pedrito's body to the rubbish heap. This recurring

symbol of the ass indicates a continuity of evaluation and emphasis so often attached by Spanish artists to lower categories of life. And Buñuel, like Picasso, in spite of having lived for so many years in Paris, has never ceased to be profoundly and thoroughly Spanish.

Not long after the completion of *Terre sans Pain,* at the suggestion of Charles Chaplin, Buñuel was placed under contract by a major Hollywood studio. He soon discovered that he was to have no freedom in doing whatever he wanted to do in his own way and bought up his contract and returned to Spain. There he produced a number of commercial films without his name appearing as director. With the beginning of the Spanish Civil War, he entered the service of the Loyalist government and spent the war years at the Spanish embassy in Paris. When the republic fell to Franco, Buñuel returned to the United States and found employment at the Museum of Modern Art which operated a film program under contract to the Coördinator of Inter-American Affairs. The report has been confirmed that he was asked to resign his position when, belatedly, it was discovered that he had directed the controversial *L'Age d'Or.* Later, he worked for a time at Warner Brothers, dubbing American films in Spanish. In 1947, he went to Mexico where he still lives and works.

From 1932 until 1950, Buñuel seemed to have lost his way or his desire to make pictures. There are some who say that he had been refused the opportunity to make them. But, to find a better reason for his silence, it will be enough to remember the happenings of those years. Nothing Buñuel might have said during that period could match in eloquence the Ethiopian War, the appearance and meaning of Hitler, the Spanish conflict, World War II, and the years immediately after. In competition with Buñuel's nightmares, the whole world, during those years, seemed to be a putrid tumor.

But now comes *Los Olvidados* as proof that Buñuel has once more found his voice. The plot could not be simpler or more commonplace. The whole story revolves around a gang of youngsters

in the slums of Mexico City. Among them we find Pedrito, the good one, and Jaibo (the Crab), the bad one. Jaibo has just escaped from a boys' reformatory and is looking for an ex-friend he believes to have been responsible for his capture and imprisonment. He finds him and, in the presence of Pedrito, clubs him to death. Lest Pedrito betray him, Jaibo forces Pedrito to become his accomplice. Later on, Jaibo will burglarize the shop where Pedrito works and Pedrito will be found guilty of the robbery and sent to the same reformatory in which Jaibo had been confined. The director of the reformatory likes Pedrito and, after a time, to test the boy's reformation, sends him out to buy something for him. Pedrito encounters Jaibo who forcibly takes the director's money from him. Pedrito feels that he cannot go back to the reformatory; angered at Jaibo, he accuses him of having murdered his ex-friend. The police are now hunting both boys and both, unknown to each other, hide in the same place. When they meet, Jaibo, after a violent fight, kills Pedrito and, moments later, is himself killed by the police.

This is the only line of continuity one is able to follow in the entire picture. But, with such flimsy elements, the spectators find themselves forced to undergo one of the most painful film experiences of our time. As the critic of the *New Statesman and Nation* of London puts it: This film "looks for and finds a lowest common multiple of horror and suffering."

What Luis Buñuel has done in *Los Olvidados* is hardly related to ordinary or even extraordinary cinematography. It resembles no other director's picture and only slightly Buñuel's own earlier work. *Un Chien Andalou, L'Age d'Or,* and even *Terre sans Pain,* though they may have more depth, lack the power and directness of approach of this new film. These three films had in common a certain amount of optimistic violence, poetic means, and a kind of playful feeling—tragic perhaps, but nevertheless playful.

This is not the case here. The whole of *Los Olvidados* is permeated with anguish and despair with no glance toward even an

unknown future save, possibly, in the tender and delicate figure of little Ojitos (Kind Eyes), who becomes the child guide of the cruel blind man and refuses to believe that his father has intentionally abandoned him in the streets of Mexico City, and, at the end, disappears to continue his search for him. I do not know whether Buñuel intended this child as a symbol of Mexico, searching for its deepest roots and indifferent to its present surroundings. But the effect is the same. In fact, this child is the one thing purely Mexican in the entire film. The rest is European.

Knowing Buñuel's previous work makes it possible to say that he could not, even if he wanted to, treat his subject lightly, following the postwar trend toward a seemingly natural and moving realism. His "realism" is of pure Spanish ancestry and has to be written between quotation marks to differentiate it from the sort that circulates in the international market with a French label or in the new Italian samples. The "realism" of *Los Olvidados* is more far-reaching and less close to apparent reality. It is clearly related to that conception of art which, in the past produced the picaresque novel, Goya, the "Guernica" of Picasso, or Lorca's *Poeta en Nueva York*.

Only Chaplin has an approach to film making comparable to Buñuel's. But Chaplin's emphasis is on feeling while the Spanish director is a wholly cerebral creator. Nevertheless, both consistently use film as a medium to express themselves in the same way that the poet uses words, the sculptor stone, or the painter colors to create their own worlds. In commercial movie making, directors usually and inescapably become entangled with other hands and other interests.

All the "types" appearing in *Los Olvidados* have a reality that emanates from themselves, that makes them "real" for our feelings, as real as the "Celestina," "Don Juan," "Sancho," or any of the *caballeros* of El Greco; but in a deeper sense all of them are creatures of Buñuel's fantasy at the service of a very defined purpose external to them. That is the reason for their transcendency

and their importance. The appearance of reality given to every one of the characters corresponds, on a higher level, to the true reality of the author's goal to which their actions are subordinate. This goal can be felt or guessed by the public but is never clearly stated. Buñuel, in drawing his characters, has consciously eliminated any traits that might make them incompatible with what he wanted them to be; he has chosen a demiurgical approach instead of an easier portraiture. Life gives us more complex creatures, though less interesting ones. But Buñuel's puppets are unforgettable.

Jaibo, the hero, could be a hoodlum boy of the streets of Rome, Paris, Madrid, or London, and also, naturally, of Mexico City by importation. He is conceived with a total negation of any kindness, making him follow from beginning to end a monochord and hateful pattern of implacable bestiality. At his side, we find Cacarizo (the Pockmarked), repugnantly despicable with his cowardly and admiring attitude toward Jaibo. Even Cacarizo's sister is more like a plant than a human being, vegetating on a manure's soil under the sun and rain and, sharing with the rest of the family, the promiscuity of the beasts in their stable-house. She is a young tree at the mercy of every gust of wind. A little further removed, the rigid, unmoved figure of Pedrito's mother endures the presence of a herd of children born to her by different fathers—a figure of mere instinct without any notion of love, devoid of emotions. To the adolescent, sexual urge of Jaibo, Pedrito's mother, in a kind of dream, offers the dark voice of her female blood. And even poor Pedrito, apparently a victim of the tragic hand of destiny, is really Buñuel's victim, because, at this stage of the plot, Buñuel cannot save him, *insists* on not saving him, prompted by the demoniac fury of cruelty that has again, as in earlier works, seized his soul. So he has to kill him, probably in spite of himself, and dispose of his body on that desolated rubbish heap at the end. The blind man, too, was conceived with no more sympathy. He is a creature of twisted and persistent selfishness, an older brother of

that other one who appears in the picaresque novel *Lazarillo de Tormes,* save that Buñuel's character is more mature, more devoid of conscience, more of our time. And all those incidents throughout the picture, denying the spectator any relief, are like stings keeping the anguish awake—the murder of the good boy; the incurable drunkenness of the father with his ulterior obsession of revenge; the negative coincidences of Pedrito's life; that apparently disembodied hand of Jaibo appearing in Pedrito's dream—anguish upon anguish; the last look of the mother at the bundle on the donkey which is carrying the body of her son.

But, above all and more noticeable than anything else, is the absolute absence from the film of reason, of moral feeling, of true religion, as if the two thousand years of Christianity had not existed at all, even in its formal aspects. There is not a single religious image nor a prayer in the whole film, nor even a single, intimate doubt in the characters' souls. These creatures are not anti-Christian; it is not a matter of polemic attitudes. Christianity is absent, that is all, as if the doctrine and example of Christ had evaporated from the earth. Every one lives outside time, outside history. They are simple people, angelic and demoniac at the same time, living under the shadow of a civilization which has no meaning for them. It is a primitive world, antedating original sin. Hence, from their impotent innocence comes forth the condemnation of the guilty ones, the ones who, endowed with a conscience and the capacity for doing right, have instead abandoned the poor ones or have even helped them to sink still lower.

Superstition appears in a continuous and systematic way, filling the place left empty by religion, and expressed in a sort of lay poetry: the scene of the cure with the dove, the wearing of the dead man's tooth, etc. There are also subconscious elements, vestiges of Buñuel's former surrealism: the appearance of the rooster, the beating of the chickens, the noise of wings, the dream in slow motion of the young boy longing for meat and love.

It is difficult to put on paper everything that this film suggests

in the sustained and rapid rhythm of its sequences. It would be necessary to see it many times to realize how it was developed technically. At first impression, the only things that seem to be obvious concessions to common society are some of the scenes in the reformatory.

The excellent photography of Figueroa has, in this case, been subordinated to the other predominant values of the film and avoids the artificiality and static quality he too frequently cultivates.

One must mention the excellent musical score composed by Gustavo Pittaluga, like Buñuel a Spanish refugee living in Mexico. He follows closely the exact meaning of characters and situations with hardly any use of melody.

Los Olvidados is without a doubt the best of Buñuel's pictures and only the future can say whether or not it is also one of the best of our time. For the general public, to see it once will be more than enough. The catharsis in this film can hardly be endured; it will remain a long time in the memory, like a nightmare.

After *Los Olvidados,* Buñuel directed a number of successful commercial films in Mexico, including a *Robinson Crusoe* in both Spanish and English versions. He has also made *Subida el Cielo* (*Climbing to Heaven*), based on a scenario by the well-known Spanish poet Manuel Altolaguirre, also living in exile in Mexico. This picture, not yet shown in the United States, was awarded the Prize of the International Critics at Cannes in 1952 and, in Paris, the *Grand Prix du Film d'avant-garde.* Claude Mauriac, in *Le Figaro Litteraire,* August 29, 1952, seems to reflect the opinion of the European press when he ends his review of the film with these words: "Quoi qu'il en soit, *Montée au Ciel* est un film qui, d'un bout à l'autre, nous enchante." Apparently this new film by Buñuel follows a totally different pattern from his others and moves toward a different goal. All its critics agree that it lacks bitterness, cruelty, or "realism," a trilogy of nouns that have, until now, constituted Buñuel's trade-mark.

To add a final touch to the growing appreciation of this Spanish director, I want to end by saying that, in a recent poll conducted among international film critics to discover which in their opinion are the best ten pictures ever made, they selected among them two of Buñuel's pictures, *L'Age d'Or* and *Los Olvidados*.

Films from Abroad: First-Rate and Cut-Rate

RICHARD ROWLAND

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THE NEW YORK film critics have decided that *Jeux Interdits,* René Clement's touching and hilarious picture of a small girl's world, is the best foreign film they have seen in the past year, and it is easier than usual to agree with them. This is a film which can only be misrepresented in summary; it sounds macabre, violent, bizarre. And so its incidents are, but the total film is tender and comic. The story takes place in 1940; a small girl, fleeing with her parents and her dog from Paris and the Germans, sees all three of her companions machine-gunned on the road. She is still clutching the stiff body of the dog when a farm boy finds her and persuades his family to take her in. Between the two children springs up a love of the most touching and genuine sort; the rest of the family is kind in its horny-handed way, but only the boy can understand her feelings, and it is he who consoles her at night when she is afraid of the dark. Together they bury the dog and set up a crude cross above him; the lugubrious beauty of this memorial goes to their heads, and soon they find themselves creating a whole cemetery menagerie, stealing the crosses from the village graveyard to memorialize beetles, mice, and murdered chicks. The adults, unaware of the identity of the culprits, are, of course, outraged by the thefts; and their squabbles in an effort to solve the mystery provide the film's more farcical moments. But once the terrible opening episode is past, the whole film is shot through with comedy—tough and understanding comedy which does not blink at realities and which neither condescends to the

children nor sentimentalizes about them. Nor does it vulgarize or mock the peasants.

An American critic has said that these peasants make *Tobacco Road* look mild; a French critic has complained that the children are pure and the adults abominable. Both judgments seem to me a misunderstanding. The children are pure only in the sense that Richard Hughes's alarming family in *A High Wind in Jamaica* was pure—preoccupied, not concerned with the moral issues of the grown-ups. The boy, in fact, is something of a young rascal, though his devotion to the girl redeems him. The adults are not abominable; they are matter-of-fact, not very clean, and given to squabbling; but there is inarticulate warmth and love beneath the surface. The rough tenderness with which the peasant wife offers the bewildered child a dirty cup of milk, and the anguished debate at the grown son's deathbed as to whether or not the spoonful of medicine in the mother's hand might have saved him—these are loving comedy, far more subtle than we are used to. Even at the end, when the parents break the two childrens' hearts by letting the girl go off to an orphanage, we feel that they do so in the honest belief that this will be better for her.

The two really triumphant things about this film are the handling of the children and the power of the implied condemnation of war. We are used to the fact that the French know how to write about and direct children without the sentimentality which frequently curdles the Anglo-Saxon broth. *Le grand Meaulnes* and *Proust* are literary cases in point; *Poil de Carotte, La Maternelle, La Mort du Cygne,* and *Generals without Buttons* stick in the memory as film examples. But one still marvels at how Clement has drawn from five-year-old Brigitte Fossey and, to a lesser extent, Georges Poujouly such wholly natural behavior in such strikingly bizarre situations. Brigitte is a bewitching child, blonde and heart-breakingly lovely, and apparently wholly unaware of the camera. To the spectator this must seem a simple miracle.

As for the case against war, it is made by ignoring it. The horror of the first few minutes is never reverted to. The peasant family living beneath the shadow of the German bombers simply do not talk about the obscenity which is so close to them. And this determined conspiracy of silence against the outrage of war makes the film one of the strongest of antiwar films. After the catastrophe on the road no comment was necessary; although one had laughed throughout the film, the memory of the first moments fills one with rage at war's stupidity for days after one has seen it. *Jeux Interdits* is a beautiful film in a specifically French tradition.

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From England have come two films in familiar English traditions which hold out a hope far greater than either film could justify alone. These are both products of the producing unit called Group Three, an outfit organized more than a year ago by, among others, John Grierson, to shoot a series of low-cost productions using new talent; it was to serve as a training ground for directors and technicians who had not had experience in full-length fiction films. Most of these recruits came from documentary films, and both of the Group Three productions so far seen in the United States have traces of their documentary ancestry.

The first, *Brandy for the Parson,* was directed by John Eldredge, and is a low-keyed, amiable tale of a young couple who find themselves smugglers by accident. It is shot mostly outdoors, and the camera dwells lovingly on the soft contours of the English countryside. The plot rambles on more aimlessly than the circus ponies who carry the brandy to the parson, but it serves to introduce a series of British eccentrics who have no memorable dialogue to speak but are played with such good-natured relish that the film remains delightful from beginning to end.

The other film is *The Brave Don't Cry*—appalling title—a story of a mining disaster, closely modeled on the real events of the Knockshinnoch disaster, acted by the Glasgow Citizens' The-

atre, and directed by Philip Leacock. Here the documentary technique is more dominant, with the result that the few concessions to fiction's conventions obtrude rather badly. The matter-of-fact presentation of the mine mouth with its silent, waiting women is impressive and moving; we strain our eyes, too, as we wait for something to emerge from its yawning black hole. When the camera moves in to underline a half-developed and singularly powerless love story, the film is less telling.

Neither of these films has major importance in itself, but both are so good that one becomes angry at the thought of the mountains of money squandered by movie makers throughout the world on inflated nonsense, when for mere pin money such human and enjoyable films as these two can be produced. At a time when high costs and waning audiences threaten the whole industry, these films are a real ray of light from abroad.

England in a more opulent mood provides *The Importance of Being Earnest.* Wisely, Anthony Asquith has not attempted to make this a "film" in any very real sense. We are in an Edwardian theater; the curtain goes up; we see Oscar Wilde's famous play (with a few of the best lines unaccountably lost in the shuffle) performed on the whole brilliantly. Edith Evans' Lady Bracknell is triumphantly in the grand style, Joan Greenwood's odd, suggestive voice finds at last the feline lines it has always seemed to be searching for, and Miles Malleson's oily canon is perfection in caricature. The ladies wear gowns of flamboyant elegance, and Canon Chasuble's snuggery and the other sets are full of the detailed comedy of the more complicated drawings in *Punch.* It is, as I said, not a film at all; it is only Oscar Wilde's play; it is only the most perfect farce in the English language, a masterpiece of the inconsequent.

The Group Three productions were fiction influenced by documentary; *La Vie Commence Demain* is documentary sabotaged by

fiction. Here Nicole Vedrès, a French lady who had some success with a nostalgic documentary called *Paris 1900,* has produced a film which is neither fish nor fowl, one of the most intellectually pretentious films in years and one of the most empty. She has assembled a great many distinguished people—the late André Gide, Picasso, Corbusier, assorted journalists, psychologists, biologists, and has set them frantically to work playing themselves in a framework of the wanderings of Jean Everyman, a rather dim-witted young Frenchman gawking around Paris. One would like to hear these people talk, but they are allowed only a few platitudes which sound as if they were written for the *Reader's Digest.* Picasso does not even talk; he cavorts on the beach with his wife. We do not see his pictures, only his torso. We do not see Corbusier's buildings, only his wonderful face. Part of the trouble is in the device of the young man who visits all the great men. As played by Jean-Pierre Aumont he is incurably addicted to changing the subject; when, for instance, the biologist suggests that reproduction may be possible in the future by the unaided male, our hero asks a question about something quite different. The psychologist assumes a lofty attitude toward the laity's misunderstanding of psychology and then clears the air by analyzing a dream in terms which any Hollywood script writer might have—and probably has—imagined again and again.

There is a vague undertone of anti-Americanism throughout this film; yet its final message seems to be an optimism so vacuous, a materialism so absolute, and a faith in science so naïvely empty of any moral concern, that one feels that this is the final evidence of the Cocacolanization of France. It is a vulgar and hucksterish film; if the participants in these dialogues are great men—and some of them undoubtedly are—then let us see them engaged in activities characteristic of their greatness, not playing little charades with Mistah Interlocutah. Only Picasso was allowed to be himself; the rest of the cast speak stagy lines with the staginess usually displayed by amateur actors. There are a few shots in this

film worth seeing, such as a surgical operation, which might be fascinating if it were properly explained to us, and a few distant views of Corbusier's exciting and controversial housing development in Marseilles which suggest that this might be worth looking into. But most of the film is aggressively nonpictorial, determinedly empty-headed like its young hero. It is designed to awe without enlightening, and consequently insults its audience throughout.

The unknows of Group Three in their unassuming way have come closer to saying something of interest than all Mlle Vedrès' assemblage of talents; Oscar Wilde's epigrams are more seriously concerned with humanity than this film is; *Jeux Interdits* towers above it as a work of depth, humanity, and originality which has much to say about war and faith and love.

A Definition of Motion-Picture Research

WILLIAM B. ADAMS

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IN THE motion-picture trade, the term *research* has been used for years, but with more than one meaning. To the major studios, research means one thing; to the smaller commercial studios, which produce nonfiction films, research means something else. From an academic point of view, motion-picture research has to be considered as meaning more than fictional or commercial research. Today, in the universities, there are students representing many different approaches: some are interested in the motion picture as history; some, applying the research methodologies of the social sciences, are interested in the study of the content and social impact of film; some want ultimately to make films on psychology, sociology, science, or education; and a few others want to write or produce fictional motion pictures in the major industry. The university, then, must consider motion-picture research as combining the methods and materials of many fields. Because of this diversity, I shall attempt to make a brief definition of motion-picture research as it relates to both the industry and the university. For the purposes of this discussion, I have arranged motion-picture research into four categories: theatrical, nontheatrical, social science, and historical.

Theatrical

Theatrical motion-picture research means research that is conducted in the major industry in an attempt to authenticate all aspects of the social, cultural, and political scene for the period to

be depicted in a given fictional motion picture. This means that every detail in a screenplay has to be verified as to what its verbal and pictorial representation should be.

The job of the motion-picture researcher is a part of motion-picture production, and it begins when the research department is first advised that the studio has decided to make a particular picture. This decision may occur sometimes as much as a year or two before the script has been written. In this event, the research department immediately proceeds to work from whatever original source the picture may be based on—a novel, a play, or a short story. The researcher reads the source carefully and begins to reconstruct the culture of the historical period in which the story is set. She—the researcher is usually a woman—begins to search for materials wherever they may be and to set up a clipping file and bibliography. From periodicals she clips pictures or articles treating of the period. From books, both contemporary and current, she finds pictures and descriptive material which she reproduces photographically for the clipping file. Slowly, then, there begins to grow a body of material, mostly pictorial, relating to the period of the story.

In motion-picture research, the period may be historical or modern. Reconstruction of earlier historical periods has been given a great deal of publicity because of its popularly glamorous nature; but modern settings often require intensive investigation. Miss Dorothy Jones in a vocational survey has clarified the distinction between historical and present-day research.

> The historical film . . . usually is neither the most frequent nor the most difficult assignment. The contemporary story, as a rule, occupies by far the greater part of the time of the research staff. The film with a modern setting also presents many more demands upon the imagination and resourcefulness of research assistants, since fewer documentary and pictorial records are available. Strange as it may seem, it is much easier to describe the morning routine of Marie Antoinette than to determine whether horse-drawn milk trucks are still in use in New York City.[1]

[1] *Motion Picture Research . . .* (Pasadena: Western Personnel Service, 1941).

By the time the research department receives a script or screenplay, much of the spade work may have been completed, and the researcher can begin relating materials directly to the production requirements.

The researcher's first task is to make a breakdown of the script; that is, she isolates every scene as written and analyzes it as to the exact number and types of things which must eventually be represented in the finished film. The scene descriptions in a script do not ordinarily describe in detail what is to go into the setting; they merely indicate the location; for example: "Sc. 23. *Long Shot—Interior—Castle dining hall.*" The script writer may have had a good conception of what a castle dining hall looked like in the early sixteenth century; but he does not concern himself with such details as the kind of wood then used in the construction of dining tables, the exact nature and extent of floor coverings, the costumes of the guests and of the servants, the types of utensils and cutlery used, and all the other items which would have actually been present at such a scene of that period. It is the researcher's job to make a list of everything that might conceivably be included.

After breaking down the script, the researcher continues her hunt for pictures—contemporary, if possible—of all the items on her list. She may begin by compiling a formal bibliography of the period, or she may immediately turn to materials which she already has in mind. Whatever pictorial materials she finds or already has, she reproduces photographically and either binds them up into a research book or puts them into appropriately classified folders to be kept on file for the use of the production staff—art director, prop man, writer, producer, director, costume designer.

In gathering her materials, the researcher is relatively nonselective; that is, she collects any and all pictorial material which is pertinent unless it is a ridiculously obvious misrepresentation. For example, in the research files for the Twentieth Century-Fox

production of *Captain from Castile*,[2] there is included a clipping of a present-day drawing of Cortez and the Aztec girl who was purportedly in love with him. The drawing originally appeared in a popular weekly supplement of the sensational sort and, quite clearly, would be considered useless to a historical scholar. The motion-picture researcher included it in the files, fully aware that the picture is a highly imaginative, current conception of a possibly spurious situation and completely inadmissable as historical evidence. Practically, the drawing may suggest to the art director a style of design; it may suggest to the director a possible method of staging; or it may give the director of photography an idea for a particular kind of lighting effect. Research files not only serve as examples of authenticated history, but they serve to stimulate the creative thinking that goes into the making of a picture.

Although the motion-picture researcher is interested primarily in pictorial material, there are certain subject areas which cannot be adequately explained through pictures alone—the art of fencing, say, in the sixteenth century. Abundant contemporary drawings showing fencing scenes are extant, but no drawing or group of drawings can show a director exactly how a duel would be conducted throughout. To supply the continuity not inherent in the drawings, the researcher might reproduce appropriate portions of the text of a work such as *Schools and Masters of the Fence from the Middle Ages to the End of the 18th Century*.[3] Similarly, pictures alone would not supply the director with full information for the scene in *The Private Life of Henry VIII* where Charles Laughton removes his robes and wrestles with one of the professional entertainers at the court banquet. For a description of the formalities of wrestling at that period, some sort of textual material must be resorted to.[4]

[2] *Captain From Castile.* Unpublished research book in the Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corporation research library.

[3] Egerton Castle (London: G. Bell and Sons, 1885).

[4] The decision whether or not it is necessary or desirable to reproduce accurately the trappings of a period represented in a motion picture lies completely outside the realm of the motion-picture researcher. She is hired to compile facts for people who often confuse historical authenticity with aesthetic significance.

For a film based upon a historical novel, there usually exists a bibliography originally compiled by the author in his work preliminary to writing his book. Such bibliographies are generally useless to the motion-picture researcher because they are not primarily aimed at isolating pictorial material. The bibliography published in the limited edition of *Northwest Passage*[5] represents a portion of Kenneth Roberts' specialized reading; it consists mainly of books and documents treating of the events occurring during the period covered in the novel. Some of the works undoubtedly contain descriptive material on uniforms, firearms, Indian customs, and so on; but the function of the bibliography is a verbal one, not a pictorial one. The motion-picture researcher may conceivably refer to titles in the author's bibliography, but she must ultimately go to different types of sources for the material she wants.

In its use of materials, motion-picture research parallels, up to a certain point, formal historical research. The motion-picture researcher uses both the studio library and outside libraries. She goes to general catalogues, bibliographies, periodical and newspaper indexes, and all the other standard materials to compile, in many cases, quite formal and thorough bibliographies. But, unlike the formal scholar, when her material is gathered together, her work is done. She is never called upon to analyze her material in terms of its historical significance or to make conclusions or appropriate generalizations. The finished work of the fictional motion-picture researcher is the preliminary work of the scholar.

Nontheatrical

Nontheatrical is the trade term used to designate motion pictures which are destined for a release outside the entertainment movie theaters. Nontheatrical films are most often made in 16-mm., and the greatest bulk of them may be said to be *documentary* or *educational* films.

[5] (2 vols.; New York: Doubleday, Doran and Co., 1937.)

Documentary and educational motion-picture research includes the gathering of material to be used in films which have to do with current, nonfictional matter—films whose purposes generally are propaganda, public relations, or orientation. Films having any one of these three purposes are often classified as "documentaries," but I am not here attempting by inference to define them as documentary films.

The documentary has never really been defined, and those who have attempted to discuss it seriously, as Mortimer Adler points out,[6] have done so from a mistakenly exaggerated sense of its importance. Referring to the considerable schools of documentary thinking which have appeared, John Gassner suggests that the undue importance of the documentary arises from a dissatisfaction with the never-ending stream of insipid fiction films produced by the major industry.[7]

The significant difference between major-studio research and documentary research is that in the latter it is seldom necessary to reconstruct a historical period in such exacting detail. Pare Lorentz, in his propaganda film *The River*[8] (which is generally classified as a documentary), reconstructs a particular historical period in order to explain the devastation that followed the complete exploitation of our country's natural resources and to show what the New Deal did to make conditions better. His historical reconstructions were, pictorially, relatively simple, consisting, for the most part, of mid-nineteenth-century scenes of river boats, docks, and plantation Negroes. Such scenes were undoubtedly preceded by considerable period research, but historical material of this type is not a general characteristic of documentary films. As for the Negro stevedores and impoverished Negro farmers, their costumes and working conditions probably needed little historical authentication. For motion-picture purposes, what they wear

[6] *Art and Prudence: A Study in Practical Philosophy* (New York: Longmans, Green and Co., 1937), p. 457.

[7] "Expressionism and Realism in Films," *The Penguin Film Review*, no. 3 (1947), p. 21.

[8] Written and directed by Pare Lorentz. Produced by Farm Security Administration, U. S. Department of Agriculture, 1937.

today is much the same as what they wore a hundred years ago. Lorentz's main task was that of observing and analyzing the actual locales and of pulling together the findings and reports of engineers and experts. Most of his period research for *The River* served mainly as an aid to Lorentz in building his story. It was writer's research rather than pictorial research.

Research for documentary pictures is, as I have said, mainly concerned with current, nonfictional materials. The sources vary, depending upon the purpose. For a public-relations film produced by a business firm, the sources might consist of company policies, the nature of the product, the extent of the company's public service, and an analysis of the firm's inherent altruism. For an orientation film explaining the relation of the individual to public health, the sources might consist of public-health legislation, the organization of existing agencies, plans for future developments, and other current pertinent material.

Educational research encompasses the gathering of material for use in teaching films. Such films are used in schools, factories, business concerns, the armed forces, and multifarious organizations. Educational research, like that of the documentary, involves current, nonfictional materials with the exception that it is aimed at teaching a particular sort of thing to a special group of people.

In doing research for the educational film, the researcher is faced more with the writer's problem than with pictorial authentication as we have seen it in the theatrical motion picture. Research becomes an integral part of script writing; and, unlike the fiction writer, the educational script writer does not create a story that may be independent of the pictorial details. Such details must necessarily be immediately at hand and are an essential part of the genesis of the script itself.

Nontheatrical research, then, has little use for the older historical materials except as the writer needs them for general background to his own thinking.

Social Science

Probably the largest and, in some ways, the most significent type of research is the application of social-science methodologies to the study of content and social impact of motion pictures.

Such activity is a part of the whole field of communications research, which is conventionally considered as encompassing four areas: the nature of the communication industries; the analysis of content; the analysis of the audience; the effect of the mass mediums upon people and social organization.[9] It is clear that the motion picture is only one of several mass mediums which must be examined in the light of these four areas, and I shall not here be concerned with reviewing the present position of communications research. My aim is to indicate that investigations are being made by social scientists concerning film.

Although the kind of research undertaken here is mainly carried on by those outside the motion-picture industry, both producers and students of the film are interested in many of the collected data. For years the major motion-picture industry has been concerned with audience research in the attempt to find out what effect its pictures have upon paying audiences. This sort of research must be distinguished from that of the social scientist in the field of communications. The social scientist is, as Franklin Fearing indicates, ". . . concerned with the methods and results of testing hypotheses regarding communications content, effects, situations, or communicators rather than researches of the so-called market or administrative type."[10] The producer wants to know what audiences like so that he can make more money. The social scientist goes further and wants to know what the effect of mass communications is upon our culture.[11]

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[9] Paul F. Lazarsfeld, "Audience Research in the Movie Field," *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* Vol. 254 (1947), p. 160.

[10] "A Selected and Annotated Bibliography in Communications Research," the *Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television,* VI (1952), p. 284.

[11] Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton, *Communications Research, 1948–1949* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1949), p. xiv.

Although there are many studies of the motion picture in the communications field, I will mention only a few of the more familiar ones merely to illustrate the kind of work being done.

A fairly good picture of the nature of the major motion-picture industry may be gained from four works. The first, Howard Lewis' *The Motion Picture Industry,*[12] details the economic structure of the industry from the beginning up to the early 1930's. It contains a particularly good résumé of the government's attempt in the 1920's to make the industry refrain from undesirable trade practices, particularly block booking.

Supplementing Lewis, Mae D. Huettig, in *Economic Control of the Motion Picture Industry,*[13] shows how the eight major companies, beginning as independent producers, achieved a monopoly through the integration of production, distribution, and exhibition. Miss Huettig carries this development to the eve of the divorcement proceedings in the early 1940's.

With a slightly different approach to the economics of the industry, Ruth Inglis, in *The Freedom of the Movies,*[14] traces the history of motion-picture censorship and shows how the industry is economically tied in with censorship and self-regulation.

Finally, a symposium on the economic and social aspects of the motion-picture industry was published by the American Academy of Political and Social Science in 1947.[15] Here, twenty-five specialists from the industry and from communications contributed sections related to the four areas of concern in mass communications.

Since the early 1900's, the content, the audience, and the effect of motion pictures have been the concern of many groups, particularly reformers; but no systematic approach was made until the Payne Fund Studies.[16] After Edgar Dale's *Content of Motion Pictures,*[17] one of the Payne Fund studies, investigations by social

[12] (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1933.)
[13] (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1944.)
[14] (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1947.)
[15] "The Motion Picture Industry," *Annals,* Vol. 254 (1947).
[16] "The Child's Reaction to the Movies," 12 monographs (1933).
[17] (New York: Macmillan, 1933.)

scientists became more numerous. In 1947, Siegfried Kracauer[18] analyzed the content of German films up to 1933 to show the "secret history" of the German people which led to their support of the Nazi regime. In 1949, Lester Asheim[19] compared twenty-four films with the novels from which they were made, in an attempt to discover what changes occurred. And in 1950, Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites[20] analyzed the content of a representative group of Hollywood pictures. This last work is quite entertaining, especially to anyone who is a little tired of the Hollywood melodramatic formula.

The investigations of social scientists in the motion picture would appear to be completely unrelated to production, but it is conceivable that their findings ultimately will provide indexes useful in maintaining a desirable social pattern.

Historical

In the academic approach to motion pictures, the researcher looks upon the history of the motion picture. Actually, in this case, the motion picture is pure history, with the historian using whatever sources he can find to reconstruct a period. The first considerable work in this category was Terry Ramsaye's *A Million and One Nights,*[21] a two-volume attempt to give a rather complete economic and artistic history of the American film from the beginnings up to 1926. It is a considerable and seriously intentioned work, but as a sound history it has shortcomings; it should be classified as memoirs, rather than the product of sound historical research. We can only guess at the sources Ramsaye used, for he provides no bibliography and gives but occasional indications where his material comes from. This is a serious fault. We can only believe that a great deal of Ramsaye's material derives from hear-

[18] *From Caligari to Hitler* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947).

[19] *From Book to Film* (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1949). Reprinted in part in *Hollywood Quarterly,* V (1951), 289–304 and V (1951), 334–349, and in the *Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television,* VI (1951), 54–68.

[20] *Movies, a Psychological Study* (Glencoe: The Free Press, 1950).

[21] (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1926.)

say evidence. Any use of Ramsaye demands a careful reëvaluation of what he has to say.

We find it necessary to evaluate carefully most of the material offered by the so-called historians of the motion picture. Too often they have allowed themselves the luxury of assuming that the material they use is so familiar to their readers that they need not resort to documentation. Since historical research in the motion picture extends back only to the time that motion pictures began in the 1890's, it is still possible to determine the validity of most of the statements on motion-picture history. A trained historical scholar could today do a definitive history of the motion picture with relative ease: primary materials are abundant, and many of the people who figured in the early development of the motion picture are still alive; it would be necessary to resort to few secondary materials; and there would be few, if any, textual problems.

After Ramsaye, the next large history was that of Maurice Bardèche and Robert Brasillach, *The History of Motion Pictures.*[22] These two French writers, going beyond Ramsaye, try to survey both European and American motion pictures. They follow Ramsaye in omitting bibliographies or references. Two more-recent works, also by French authors, are Georges Sadoul's *Histoire générale du Cinéma*[23] and Marcel Lapierre's *Les cent visages du Cinéma.*[24] Sadoul differs from the other historians in that he puts a greater emphasis on the technical development of the motion picture. The documentation in both Sadoul and Lapierre is good.

In 1939, Lewis Jacobs published *The Rise of the American Film,*[25] which is the first really dependable work from the viewpoint of scholarship. It is a sound, well-documented work and has a bibliography by historical periods that is, at present, definitive

[22] (New York: W. W. Norton and Co. and the Museum of Modern Art, 1938.)
[23] (2 vols.; Paris: Denoël, 1946–1947.)
[24] (Paris: Edition Bernard Grasset, 1948.)
[25] (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1939.)

for any serious study of the motion picture. Jacobs's book is a good model for future histories.

Since Jacobs, motion-picture scholarship has been getting more dependable; but at the same time, the amount of untrustworthy material has increased correspondingly owing to the motion picture's large following of dilettante critics and historians who persist in turning out esoteric pap with particular emphasis upon Chaplin, Griffith, and the great German directors.

Another body of questionable material is the works, mostly biographical, paid for by people in the motion-picture industry. An example is that of William Fox who hired Upton Sinclair to write Fox's side of the story in his battle with the large financial interests.[26] Plausible as Sinclair may make Fox's case sound, the mere fact that it was subsidized would lead one to doubt its objectivity. The book's validity might be supported by pointing to the integrity of Upton Sinclair; but, because of the book's particular approach, it cannot be used without a thorough examination of its source material.

The nature of the motion-picture business—the ballyhoo, the large profits, the development of "geniuses"—quite naturally made many of its leaders conscious of their importance and induced them to write autobiographies or to have them ghost-written. Works by William de Mille[27] and Abe J. (Barney) Balaban,[28] are examples, but it is of little value to mention others of this type.

Typical of the encomiastic biographies of motion-picture personalities is Peter Noble's *Hollywood Scapegoat,*[29] a biography of Eric von Stroheim. Noble's thesis is that Stroheim is the motion picture's greatest director, but that he was "done-in" by those Hollywood Philistines, the producers. The material is derived from books, periodicals, motion pictures, and memory. Noble had

[26] *Upton Sinclair Presents William Fox* (Los Angeles: Upton Sinclair, 1933).
[27] *Hollywood Saga* (New York: E. P. Dutton and Co., 1939).
[28] *Continuous Performance* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1942).
[29] (London: Fortune Press, 1950.)

never been to Hollywood, and he did not talk to von Stroheim at any time during the preliminary research of the writing. The book derives from some painstaking research, but the viewpoint is not altogether objective.

Another step in the progress of motion-picture scholarship is Nicholas Vardac's *Stage to Screen*.[30] It is as soundly done as Jacobs's work, but it is different in that it is narrower in scope and is the work of a scholar who has never been in close contact with the motion-picture business. It represents the purely academic point of view. Vardac examines the early motion picture and the nineteenth-century melodrama and advances the thesis that the motion picture superseded the melodrama because of the social pressure for pictorial realism.

Siegfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* (mentioned earlier under the social science category) is a history of German film from 1895 to 1933. He claims that films reflect the German nation's mentality. It is a twofold history—that of the German film, and that of the German mentality up to Hitler. The factual material is well documented, the thirteen-page bibliography is excellent, but the conclusions based on this material are open to further examination by social scientists.

Finally, in the aesthetics of the motion picture, there are many thoroughly bad works and a few good ones. The first serious attempt to define the motion picture in terms of the nature of its technique was made by Vsevolod Pudovkin[31] in the late 1920's. Following Pudovkin's attempt, Gilbert Seldes,[32] Rudolf Arnheim,[33] and Allardyce Nicoll,[34] respectively, tried to construct a more or less formal aesthetic for the motion picture. Of the three, Nicoll's work is the most soundly developed and contains an extensive bibliography. In 1937, Adler's *Art and Prudence* (see nontheatri-

[30] (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1949.)

[31] *Film Technique* . . . , transl., Ivor Montagu (London: Newnes Ltd., 1933).

[32] *An Hour with the Movies and the Talkies* (Philadelphia and London: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1929).

[33] *Film* (London: Faber and Faber, 1933).

[34] *Film and Theatre* (New York: Thos. Y. Crowell Co., 1936).

cal category) provided what is probably the most definitive work to date on motion-picture aesthetics; it is a work which is not likely to be superseded by anyone without Adler's wide background in philosophy.

I have tried to define motion-picture research by showing the diversity of its nature and how it has been applied in the past. Also, I hope I have implied that a serious approach in the universities to the study of motion pictures as a cultural force will ultimately raise the level of motion-picture historical and critical writing as well as production.

A Bibliography for the Quarter

Book Editor, FRANKLIN FEARING

BOOKS

WHAT IS THE shape of the world as revealed through the windows of television? A series of studies sponsored by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters (Gregory Hall, Urbana, Illinois) are designed to answer this question. To date four have appeared in which are reported the results of monitoring 2,104 hours of TV programs on nineteen stations, seven in New York, eight on the Pacific Coast (seven in Los Angeles), and four in Chicago. Studies Numbers One and Two were concerned with what the windows revealed in New York and Los Angeles during specified weeks in January and May, 1951, and have been previously reviewed in these pages. Study Number Three, *Chicago Summer Television* by Donald Horton, Hans O. Mauksch, and Kurt Lang of the National Opinion Research Center covers the week of July 30 to August 5, 1951; and Study Number Four covers the week of January 4 to 10, 1952, in New York, and is by Professor Dallas Smythe of the Institute of Communications Research, University of Illinois, with an introduction by Professor Robert Merton of Columbia University. These studies were made possible by grants from the Fund for Adult Education, established by the Ford Foundation.

These surveys all have the same general design. A crew of trained monitors views and classifies in predetermined categories the content of all the programs telecast from all the stations in the specified city for the indicated week. There is no attempt to evaluate the programs morally, aesthetically, or educationally, or to estimate possible audience effects. The categories in which the programs are placed are, so to speak, neutral. The intent is to give an objective answer to the question: What are television programs about?

The following table shows how the total program time for the study weeks in the three cities was distributed among the seventeen major categories used in the studies:

TELEVISION PROGRAMMING IN NEW YORK, LOS ANGELES, AND CHICAGO[1]

Program categories	Per cent of total time			
	New York		Los Angeles, 1951	Chicago, 1951
	1952	1951		
News	5.9	5.5	12.2	5.0
Weather	0.4	0.4	0.6	0.7
Public issues	1.9	1.4	1.1	1.8
Public events	1.4	0.9	0.1	0.0
Public institutional	1.6	1.1	1.6	1.6
Information (general)	2.9	3.3	2.6	2.0
Religion	1.0	0.7	0.6	0.1
Drama (general)	35.7	25.4	25.6	26.2
Dance	0.0	0.1	0.0	0.0
Music	4.2	3.6	6.1	3.0
Fine arts	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.3
Variety (general)	6.2	13.6	9.7	8.8
Personalities	2.3	4.2	2.0	7.6
Quiz, stunts, and contests	6.3	6.9	6.2	6.6
Sports	8.4	10.1	5.4	20.9
Domestic	10.9	10.2	16.4	7.2
Children's programs[2]	11.0	12.5	10.3	8.3
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

[1] Taken from Table 1, Appendix A, *New York Television, Monitoring Study No. 4*, p. 98.
[2] In this category are included children's drama, children's variety, and children's quiz, stunt, and contest programs.

In order to obtain a broader view, the categories in the 1952 New York study (Number Four in the series) were combined in three major groups: entertainment, information, and orientation. Seventy-four per cent of the total time for the study week was devoted to programs in the entertainment category, 19 per cent in

the information category, and 7 per cent in the orientation category. With certain seasonal and regional variation these proportions hold for all the studies.

Since something called "entertainment" accounts for roughly three fourths of the total program time in New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles, it seems desirable to look at it a little closer. In all cities drama in all its guises is the largest single category in this group. In the second New York study it accounted for 42 per cent of the program time, and in Chicago and Los Angeles for 26 per cent of the time. Moreover, this category appears to be increasing—in the first New York study it accounted for only 33 per cent of the total time. Two subcategories of drama—crime and western—increased from 18 per cent in 1951 to 23 per cent in 1952. Further, more than half of the "children-hour" time is given over to drama, mostly western and crime. Variety programs are a poor second in the entertainment group with 11 per cent. Sports and quiz, as well as stunt and contest programs are next with 7 per cent each. Music (popular and serious) trails with 4 per cent. The information group of programs includes news (general and sports), 7 per cent; domestic information (shopping, merchandising, cooking, arts, and crafts), 8 per cent; general information (science, travel, and nature), 3 per cent. In the orientation category are public issues, public institutions, and public events, with approximately 2 per cent each; religion, 1 per cent and personal relations, 1 per cent.

What about advertising? As in the previous reports, it is found necessary to distinguish between advertising which interrupted the program or could be clearly separated from it ("primary" advertising) and advertising which in visual or other form accompanies or *is* the program ("secondary" advertising). In the Chicago study primary advertising occupied 14 per cent, and secondary advertising 27 per cent of the program time. In the second New York survey primary advertising occupied 8 and secondary advertising 10 per cent of the time. These percentages are not strictly

comparable because of certain technical differences in monitoring. However, when the 1951 and 1952 New York surveys are compared some interesting shifts are discovered. In 1951, 10 per cent of the total time was occupied with primary advertising. This had decreased to 8 per cent in 1952, but secondary advertising has increased from 4 to 10 per cent.

In the 1952 New York report Professor Smythe has introduced a new category of analysis—the amount, kind, and context of violence. "Violence," as monitored, is any physical or psychological injury, hurt, or death addressed to living things. An "act" of violence consists of an episode of any duration which concerns the same agent and the same receiver—a "chase" scene, a battle, or a posse pursuing a man are all recorded as single acts. Two thousand nine hundred and seventy such acts were recorded, or one act (or threat) of violence for every ten minutes of program time. Twenty-eight hundred of these were in the entertainment-type program, of which twenty-six hundred were in the dramas. In the children's-drama category, acts and threats of violence occurred at the average rate of seventeen per hour. Much violence as seen on TV is apparently humorous. One fourth of the acts and threats were committed in humorous contexts. About one sixth of the acts were committed in the interest of "law and order." Man is represented as his own worst enemy, since violent acts were committed by human agents nine times out of ten.

It is important to remember, as Professor Smythe is careful to point out, that this arithmetic of violence tells us nothing about how it is received by the audience. And Professor Merton states in his introduction to the report that it cannot be taken for granted that exposure to violence on the TV screen is emotionally damaging to the spectator. There is an excessive preoccupation with this subject by that very vocal portion of the lay public who is worried about the presumed "effects" of TV, radio, comic strips, and the like on immature minds. It is interesting to speculate on the extent to which this may reflect unconscious guilt feelings

regarding the amount of violence in the real world. Actually, there is remarkably little evidence that demonstrates an unequivocal relationship between exposure to screen violence and subsequent antisocial behavior.

Another interesting analysis in the second New York study endeavors to get at the problem of program *quality* by comparing the twenty programs rated best and the twenty rated worst by five leading TV critics (Saul Carson, *New Republic;* John Crosby, New York *Herald Tribune;* Jack Gould, New York *Times;* Philip Hamburger, the *New Yorker;* and Robert Lewis Shayon, *Saturday Review of Literature*) with the twenty programs reported in the *Pulse* to be the most popular with the TV audience. Only three programs appear on both the "critics' best" list and the audience popularity list. On the other hand, none of the programs on the "critics' worst" list appears on the list of the most popular programs. It is interesting to examine the "best," the "worst," and the "most popular" programs with respect to the distribution of acts of violence.

ACTS OF VIOLENCE ON THREE TYPES OF PROGRAMS[3]

Type of program	Number	Number per hour
Critics' best	112	5.3
Critics' worst	42	2.2
Most popular	176	8.6
Total, all programs		6.8

[3] Taken from table in *New York Television, Monitoring Study No. 4,* p. 41.

It appears that the programs most liked by the public have relatively more violence than TV programs as a whole. It is apparent that the "critics' best" programs have less violence than those liked by the public. But violence in itself does not appear to damage a program in the estimation of the critics.

Within the limits of this review, it has been possible to present

only the sketchiest outline of the material in these reports. The 1952 study of New York television is especially important and interesting, since it attempts to go beyond the mere categorizing of program content. Whether the shape of the world as revealed through the windows of television is judged to be true or false will depend on considerations outside the scope of the reports themselves. The exact significance of the fact that approximately 75 per cent of the total television time is given to the types of program labeled, somewhat ambiguously perhaps, "entertainment" will also have to be determined in the light of considerations, also ambiguously labeled by the FCC, the "public interest, convenience, and necessity." However, one thing is certain: such evaluations must await program audits made as carefully and objectively as those reported in these studies are done.

* * *

As noted above, 2,970 acts or threats of violence occurred on New York TV screens during the week of January 4, 1952. This statistic may be contemplated with dismay, amusement, or indifference depending on one's temperament, one's social orientation, or the state of one's digestion. But it takes on another dimension if we become aware that these acts of violence were first *premeditated* and projected by a group of professionals called writers who fabricated them with the hypothetical needs and interests of hypothetical audiences in mind. Gilbert Seldes has written for these professionals an extraordinarily interesting guidebook (*Writing for Television,* Doubleday and Company, Garden City, N.Y., 1952, $3.00), the basic orienting principle of which is that the first and constant obligation of the writer is to the audience. Mr. Seldes skillfully re-creates the picture of that audience when, addressing the writers, he says in the first chapter: "The actors speaking the words you write will be seen and heard in the living room of an average American home, by a small group, members of a family and a friend or two. This is the over-mastering fact, this underlies every sound principle, every good practice, in television; this is

what you must never forget." Providing entertainment, by which Mr. Seldes means anything which interests people, is the primary business of TV—and hence of the writer—and this, if we are to follow the NAEB reports, means providing a large measure of violence.

Mr. Seldes, of course, does not recommend any type of program content to the writer. His purpose is to tell the writer how to write for TV, not what to write. This he does in a highly concrete and specific manner. The six parts of the book are concerned with (1) the orientation of the writer in the whole field of TV, (2) the machinery of TV, (3) dramatic writing, (4) types of TV drama, (5) writing nondramatic programs, and (6) professional problems which include writing for special audiences, marketing scripts, the operation of the TV code, writing commercials, etc. There is the usual glossary of terms. The author manages to discuss all these problems with a disarming air of simplicity which makes it all seem not only a fascinating business, but *easy*. One gets the impression that the points chosen for discussion are precisely those on which both the beginner and the old hand need help. But, best of all, the book is interesting. Even the nonprofessional who never has or will write a TV script will find in Mr. Seldes' book a wonderful way to discover what this extraordinary phenomenon called television is about.

* * *

John Crosby says he has turned out more than one million words on radio and TV in the last six years. In case you don't know it, he is a professional radio and TV critic—some people think he is the best in the business. Considering the general aridity of this field, this is not extravagant praise. Anyway, he was one of the five critics whose reviews were used in the NAEB 1952 New York television study in selecting the "critics' best" and "critics' worst" programs for comparison with the programs most popular with the audience. *Out of the Blue* (Simon and Schuster, New York, 1952, $3.00) is a collection of the best of Crosby. There are Crosby

columns on almost every topic under the sun. He approaches them all with zest, irreverance, and a considerable amount of joyful malice. The result is wonderful reading in spite of a slight tendency to cuteness. It is clear that Mr. Crosby loves radio and TV, especially the bad programs. These, he admits, make the best copy. This reviewer thought—rashly, as it turned out—that he would run through the book and select the "best" items. It's impossible. They are all good. Right at the beginning of the book there are two, however, that are—but our superlatives seem to be in short supply. One is in two parts: *Bikini: The Build-Up* and *Bikini: The Let-Down*. It tells about the broadcasting of a remarkable event, and it achieves its effects by saying so much that it doesn't say. The other is a hilarious bit called "Old-Fashioned Boyhood" which describes the radio-infested Christmas of modern "kiddies" with Ben Grauer, Lionel Barrymore, H. V. Kaltenborn, Louella Parsons, and sound effects by NBC. This book will make you feel better about radio and TV. If we could afford it, we would certainly ask John Crosby to do a piece for the *Quarterly*.

* * *

The Film of Murder in the Cathedral (Harcourt, Brace, New York, 1952, $6.00) contains the complete script of the film play made from T. S. Eliot's poem and brief prefaces by the poet and George Hoellering who produced the film. There are many pictures of the leading characters and handsome plates in color showing the beautifully carved details of the cathedral doors, the chessmen used in the chess game between the Archbishop and the First Tempter, the hand-woven costumes, jewelry, etc., etc. Altogether it is a handsome book and should be a wonderful memento for anyone who has seen the film.

However, as a book on the production of an interesting and novel film, it doesn't come off. The two prefaces from which much might have been expected were, to this reviewer, extremely disappointing. Mr. Eliot's remarks reveal a truly remarkable naïveté regarding the nature of films and film making. He discovers, for

example, that films appeal directly to the eye, and that, through various devices, especially through the movement of the camera, the audience is brought much more intimately in contact with the action than in the theater. One wonders if Mr. Eliot had ever gone to the movies and seen a close-up. Mr. Hoellering also discusses the close-up as a device that makes the film a more realistic medium than the stage. In spite of this greater realism, he notes, somewhat wonderingly, that everything seen on the screen is "in a sense, an optical illusion." Throughout the production there seems to have been an excessive preoccupation with a certain kind of realism. The dust cover tells us, as do the captions under the color plates, that the costumes were *hand* woven, and the cathedral door and chessmen *hand* carved for this production. If this kind of "realism" has significance as a conveyor of meaning, it escapes this reviewer. To repeat, this book should be a wonderful memento.

* * *

In the introduction to *Films on Art* (American Federation of Arts, 1083 Fifth Ave., New York 28, no price given) Francis Henry Taylor, director, Metropolitan Museum of Art, states that it is the first comprehensive directory of this kind to be made. Four hundred and fifty-three "films on art" are listed with a brief note about the content of each, its length, who made it, where it can be obtained, and its cost. Apparently the phrase "films on art" covers an extraordinary range of topics. There are included, for example, films on the importance of the child's creative art expression; the United Fruit Company's restoration of Guatemalan and Mayan ruins; the arts and ceremonial dances of Africa; making tile, pewter, and bronze; a magazine-cover artist at work; Fra Angelico; Norman McLaren's *Fiddle-De-Dee;* etc. This confusion is not cleared up by the several introductory chapters by such authorities as Burton Cuming, Iris Barry, Arthur Knight, and Patrick Malone. Arthur Knight in a chapter entitled "A Short History of Art Films" notes that the term "art film" covers a "multitude of sins,"

and that there is "confusion" in terminology. Apparently the book is intended primarily for teachers, museum directors, and all those who in any way are concerned with planning film programs "on art." The introductory chapters cover such topics as creative programing, the art and craft film in general education, college use of films on art, and films on art in the art museum. The book is edited by William Mck. Chapman.

* * *

The film called *The Red Badge of Courage* was Production No. 1512, the fifteen-hundred-and-twelfth picture made by Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. In the beginning, it was estimated to cost $1,434,789 and actually cost $1,642,071.33. It lost money. These naked and perhaps not very important facts constitute a framework of a grim, fantastic story which Lillian Ross tells with cool, remorseless detachment. *Picture: A Story about Hollywood* (Rinehart and Company, New York, 1952, $3.50), which first appeared as a series of articles in the *New Yorker,* is probably the most unglamorous picture ever painted of glamorous Hollywood. In immense and macabre detail the account tells the story of the film *The Red Badge of Courage* from the time that it was first mentioned in the Hollywood gossip columns until the MGM stockholders were informed at a meeting in New York that the film was a prestige picture, but hadn't made any money. At this meeting, incidentally, a stockholder named Mrs. Wentig probably made history and certainly filled her colleagues with dismay by insisting that she was *glad* they had made the picture even if it hadn't made money. It is an account of the struggle of power-haunted, insecure people of great talent endeavoring to create excellence and, at the same time, to satisfy the tastes of those who fill out cards at studio "previews." The almost superstitious awe with which a handful of these cards are regarded is astounding considering their almost total lack of validity. Miss Ross accumulated an amazing amount of detail about every aspect of picture making which is effortlessly presented. It is intriguing to learn, for example, that the ten Con-

federate flags cost $65, that six dummy horse carcasses cost $275 each, that scenes 65 and 66 in which "soldiers slide down bank, cross stream and climb hill" cost $2,850 for extras, and that the cost for extras and bit players in scenes 43 and 47 in which "soldiers side with farm girl as she berates fat soldier for attempting to snatch pig" breaks down as follows: fat soldier, $150; girl, $150; ad-libs (4) at $55, $220; extras, $2,431. Someone has called this book the funniest tragedy ever written, which isn't a bad characterization.

* * *

There are three interesting additions to the list of thirty-five-cent Mentor Books (New American Library of World Literature, 501 Madison Ave., New York 22): *American Diplomacy, 1900–1950* by George F. Kennan, *What to Listen For in Music* by Aaron Copland, and *The Wonderful World of Books,* edited by Alfred Stefferud. The first is an evaluation of the U. S. foreign policy in the twentieth century and covers the war with Spain, the "open door," America and the Orient, World Wars I and II, and American-Soviet relations. Mr. Copland's book is a fascinating presentation of what the layman wants to know about music—all kinds of music—before listening to it. *The Wonderful World of Books* is by a large number of specialists and tells practically everything anyone would want to know about books, their manufacture, the libraries in which they are found, how to read them, their typology, and their use for pleasure and profit. Although the authors are a bit breathless about it, there is no doubt that they make a remarkably persuasive case that books *are* wonderful.

* * *

Vision in Television by Hazel Cooley (Channel Press, 1440 Broadway, New York 18, 1952, $2.50) is a slim little book devoted to the thesis that the educational potentialities of television are such that a system supplementary to commercial broadcasting must be developed for it. The author is not satisfied with the present allocations of the FCC since they do not properly recognize the essential

distinctions between the educational and commercial services of the medium. The book is written with great enthusiasm, but contains little that is new on the subject.

JOURNALS, RESEARCH, PAMPHLETS, ETC.

The third annual edition of the *Jewish Audio-Visual Review* (American Association for Jewish Education, 1776 Broadway, New York 19, 35 cents) lists films and filmstrips dealing with all aspects of Jewish culture, history, intercultural relations, and religion. Full information is given for each listing including cost, length, source, summary of content, and an evaluation.

* * *

The American Department of State has issued a report of the *Sixth International Edinburgh Film Festival, 1952*. In addition to describing the organization of the festival and the criteria used in judging and listing the films submitted in the various categories, a section is devoted to a statement of the character and purposes of the U. S. participation.

* * *

New York University has just issued its catalogue of 16-mm. films, *1953 Film Library*. The classified index indicates a wide range of subjects. These include the American scene, anthropology, child care and development, economics, human relations, family life and marriage, international relations, mental health, intercultural relations, sports, and youth problems. The listings are arranged alphabetically by title and contain the usual information regarding the films.

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A Communication: A Letter about Billy Wilder

STUART SCHULBERG

STUART SCHULBERG is currently producing films in Germany for Trans-Rhein Film, G.M.B.H., with headquarters at the Afifa Studios in Wiesbaden.

THE EDITORS have received considerable correspondence since "Two Views of a Director—Billy Wilder" by Herbert Luft and Charles Brackett appeared in Volume VII, Number 1, of the *Quarterly*. This letter has been accepted as an on-the-scene comment, particularly of Mr. Wilder's *A Foreign Affair*. Mr. Schulberg's remarks seem to the editors both more objective than those of Mr. Luft and more informed than Mr. Brackett's.

Dear Sirs:

The Luft-Brackett controversy over Billy Wilder ("Two Views of a Director") in your Fall issue turned my memory back to the days of Military Government when I served a hitch in Eric Pommer's Film Section. That was the era of ruins, reorientation—and wrangling with the Motion Picture Export Association over the selection of American features for Germany. Rightly or wrongly, depending on which side of Pommer's desk you sat, U. S. film imports were evaluated strictly as "good orientation" or "bad orientation." For some reason or other (perhaps because his films were always so provocative), Billy Wilder's pictures became our special concern.

The Germans were intrigued by Wilder for two reasons: first, his American success seemed to shed some glory on those who had emigrated in spirit only; second, his short spell as a Military Government film officer, followed by fairly rambunctious trips back to Germany, focussed some Hollywood attention on this troublesome, troubled country. Berlin was already in the headlines throughout America, but Wilder put the city on the front page of *Variety,* and Berliners in the entertainment industry were pleased and proud.

Thus, every Wilder picture which came to Germany in those days was scrutinized by the Germans, and therefore by Military Govern-

ment. *Lost Weekend*—first shown privately by Wilder in an MG projection room to an audience of selected Berlin writers, actors, directors, and critics—was one of the first solid American *succès d'estime* after the war. Meanwhile, the Film Section was striving to bring about the release of *Ninotchka.* The Soviet blockade was not yet clamped on Berlin, but already General Clay had launched his famous "Operation Back-talk." Eric Pommer was anxious to talk back to the Russians with a stunning piece of film satire. But MPEA, still dreaming of Eastern European markets, not to mention the long-pending package sale to Moscow, was reluctant to offend the communists with *Ninotchka.* (It was many months before the picture opened to wildly receptive audiences in Berlin and Western Germany.)

Then, along came *A Foreign Affair.* I remember the night we ran it for the MG Screening Committee in Berlin. If it passed muster, from the reorientation point of view, MPEA would be authorized to release it in Germany. (On the face of it, this picture seemed to have everything: Wilder, Dietrich, and Berlin. One almost expected to see the old UFA trade-mark in the main title.) And I also remember how, as the reels rolled by, our disappointment turned into resentment and our resentment into disgust. Perhaps we were all too close to the situation; we certainly lacked Wilder's happy-go-lucky perspective. But straining our objectivity to the breaking point, we could not excuse a director who played the ruins for laughs, cast Millitary Government officers as comics, and rang in the Nazis for an extra boff.

Don't get us wrong: we did not (to use Mr. Brackett's phrase) "detest a joke." We *did* detest a picture which treated a most crucial issue—the rehabilitation of Germany—*as nothing but a joke.* In the case of *A Foreign Affair,* we considered Wilder not decadent, Mr. Luft, nor humorous, Mr. Brackett, but simply irresponsible. At a time when sober American understanding of German problems seemed essential to our foreign policy, Wilder's slap-stick version of Berlin affairs struck us as an international disservice.

After the disastrous MG screening of *A Foreign Affair,* Pommer continued to press for the release of *Ninotchka* and MPEA itself distributed (always successfully) other Wilder efforts. Today, for the Germans, Billy Wilder is still one of the best-known and most respected writer-directors in or outside of Hollywood. If *A Foreign Affair* had been released in Germany, chances are he would have become even better known, if less respected.

Therefore, it seems to me the truth about Wilder lies somewhere between the dead-pan rejection of Mr. Luft and the whole-hearted embrace of Mr. Brackett. Billy Wilder can be very funny (*The Major and the Minor*); he can be very clever (*Sunset Boulevard*); sometimes he can be very brilliant (*Lost Weekend*). *A Foreign Affair* proves he can also be very crude, superficial, and insensible to certain responsibilities which the world situation, like it or not, has thrust on "America's Ambassador of good will"—the movies. Berlin's trials and tribulations are not the stuff of cheap comedy, and rubble makes lousy custard pies.

Yours respectfully,

STUART SCHULBERG