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Contents

The Second New York Television Survey

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DURING THE week of January 4 to January 10, 1952, Dr. Dallas Smythe, director of studies of the National Association of Broadcasters, conducted a second annual survey of television programming in New York City,[1] under a grant from the Fund for Adult Education established by the Ford Foundation. The release, early this spring, of preliminary results of the survey came within a few weeks of the announcement of the new NARTB television code and of the long-awaited lifting of the FCC's freeze on television stations. Significant as the survey would have been in any case, it now becomes a document of unusual interest. Television, limited currently to 108 stations, is on the verge of tremendous physical expansion; what it will make of itself when it has national rather than only cross-country coverage is hard to foretell. But we begin to see, in the early reports of the second New York survey, an emerging pattern of television broadcasting which will undoubtedly influence the programming of the new stations due to spring up around the country. A later report of the survey is to include an analysis of programs appraised favorably and unfavorably by TV critics and of programs standing high and low in audience acceptance, according to program rating services, plus a study of the amount, kind, and context of violence in television programming. This will give a fairly complete picture of what television is, as of 1952, in one city with seven operating stations and an audience estimated in millions. From this is certain to come mate-

[1] The first New York television survey was conducted by Dallas Smythe and Donald Horton in January, 1951. During the week of May 23 to May 29, 1951, Dallas Smythe and Angus Campbell conducted a similar survey of television in Los Angeles. A published report of this survey is reviewed in the "Bibliography for the Quarter."

rial for much discussion of the code, programming, and the future of television.

To accomplish the monumental task of watching every program broadcast on seven stations for a week, Dr. Smythe recruited and trained 35 monitors from among graduate students in psychology and sociology at Columbia University and New York University. The Zenith Radio Corporation's New York office provided nine 22-inch television receivers which were set up in the Biblical Seminary in New York. Headphones were attached to eight of the sets, one of which was used for supervision. The ninth set was used for independent double monitoring for reliability check purposes. Observers used stop watches to time programs and segments of programs.

The raw materials of observation results have been converted into a series of charts, four of which we reproduce in full, omitting those with reference only to New York stations. Table 1 classifies all the programs broadcast during the survey week, dividing them into 17 main classes and 51 subclasses. The amount of time, in minutes and in per cent of total program time, is given for each class and subclass for both 1951 and 1952. Study of table 1 indicates that there have been few major changes in New York television during the year between the two surveys. There is more television—11.3 per cent more—with the seven stations offering a little over 63 hours of additional program time. There is also more drama. In 1951, general drama programs took up 25.4 per cent of program time; in 1952, 35.7. Add to this the increases in subclasses of drama under children's programs, and the total increase is greater: all-drama programs in 1951 were 33.2 per cent of programs while in 1952 they were 42.4 per cent.

Children's programs show a decrease from 12.5 per cent to 11 per cent, though children's western drama programs increased from 2.5 to 4.1 per cent. Variety programs went down from 13.6 per cent in 1951 to 6.2 per cent in 1952; information programs from 3.3 to 2.9; sports from 10.1 to 8.4.

Table 2 shows the amounts and percentages of time given to the various classes of programs during broadcast periods defined as: (1) domestic hours (sign-on to 5 P.M., Monday–Friday); (2) children's hours (5–7 Monday–Friday; sign-on to 7, Saturday and Sunday); (3) adult hours (7–11 all days); and late night hours (after 11 P.M. all days). Again there are figures for 1951 and 1952. The chart reveals some interesting differences in program placement. In 1951, for example, 10.4 per cent of general drama programs and 2.8 per cent of crime drama programs were broadcast during domestic hours, the daytime period when the audience is usually assumed to be made up mostly of housewives. In 1952, 22.8 per cent of general drama programs and 9.5 per cent of crime programs were broadcast during these hours. General drama programs in late night hours jumped from 48.1 per cent to 74 per cent; it is safe to assume that most, if not all, of these drama programs were motion pictures. No general information programs were given during the late night hours in 1952, though the 1951 figure is 6.7 per cent. Some changes are shown for almost all the categories, indicating rather more adjustment of program schedules than of program types.

Table 3 shows the net program time by class of programs and the ratio of the net time to total program time. Table 4 analyses primary advertisements (advertisements which interrupt the flow of the program material) by stations and by days of the week, giving the number and the average length in seconds of primary advertisements on each station each day, as well as the per cent of total program time devoted to them. The total of 3,104 primary advertisements for 1952 occupied 51 hours and 31 minutes of broadcast time, representing 14 per cent more advertisements but 7 per cent less advertising time than for the comparable week in 1951. Primary advertisements in 1952 amounted to 8 per cent of total time on the air as compared with 10 per cent a year ago.

TABLE 1

NEW YORK TELEVISION, JANUARY 4–10, 1951 AND 1952: TOTAL PROGRAM TIME FOR THE WEEK, BY CLASS OF PROGRAMS
(Preliminary)

	Program classes	1952		1951	
		Minutes	Per cent	Minutes	Per cent
1	News	2,203	5.9	1,860	5.5
1(a)	News reports	2,143	5.7	1,860	5.5
1(b)	Special events and features	60	0.2	.....	....
2	Weather	144	0.4	147	0.4
3	Public issues	704	1.9	469	1.4
3(a)	Individual views	225	0.6	217	0.6
3(b)	Discussion and debate	479	1.3	252	0.7
4	Public events	545	1.4	321	0.9
5	Public institutional programs	600	1.6	386	1.1
5(a)	Expository	181	0.5	159	0.5
5(b)	Dramatization	419	1.1	227	0.7
6	Information (General)	1,103	2.9	1,104	3.3
6(a)	Science	106	0.3	85	0.3
6(b)	Travelogue	343	0.9	383	1.1
6(c)	Other	654	1.7	636	1.9
7	Religion	371	1.0	240	0.7
8	Drama	13,432	35.7	8,589	25.4
8(a)	Domestic	1,507	4.0	383	1.1
8(b)	Crime	5,514	14.6	3,379	10.0
8(c)	Western	1,563	4.2	1,803	5.3
8(d)	Action	871	2.3	695	2.1
8(e)	Comedy	1,160	3.1	1,103	3.3
8(f)	Romance	1,722	4.6	1,938	5.7
8(g)	Musical	286	0.8	90	0.3
8(h)	Classics	300	0.8	198	0.6
8(i)	Other	509	1.4	....	....
9	Dance	.....	....	36	0.1
10	Music	1,577	4.2	1,222	3.6
10(a)	Serious	202	0.5	77	0.2
10(b)	Light	.....	....	.....	....
10(c)	Popular	1,375	3.7	1,145	3.4

TABLE 1—*Continued*

	Program classes	1952		1951	
		Minutes	Per cent	Minutes	Per cent
11	Fine Arts	29	0.1	30	0.1
12	Variety	2,342	6.2	4,598	13.6
13	Personalities	889	2.4	1,432	4.2
14	Quiz, stunts, contests	2,353	6.3	2,335	6.9
14(a)	Experts, guests	729	1.9	362	1.1
14(b)	Studio audience	945	2.5	598	1.8
14(c)	Telephone	424	1.1	950	2.8
14(d)	Amateur	255	0.7	425	1.3
15	Sports	3,162	8.4	3,406	10.1
15(a)	News, interviews	457	1.2	228	0.7
15(b)	Spectator sports	2,551	6.8	3,110	9.2
15(c)	Participant sports and recreation	154	0.4	68	0.2
16	Domestic	4,064	10.8	3,447	10.2
16(a)	Cooking	754	2.0	981	2.9
16(b)	Arts and crafts, and hobbies	441	1.2	60	0.2
16(c)	Shopping and merchandise	1,335	3.5	1,101	3.3
16(d)	Personal care	180	0.5	120	0.4
16(e)	Personal relations	382	1.0	57	0.2
16(f)	Domestic variety	852	2.3	898	2.7
16(g)	Housewives' music	.....	....	.....	....
16(h)	Other	120	0.3	230	0.7
17	Children's programs	4,127	11.0	4,215	12.5
17(a)	Information and instruction	352	0.9	342	1.0
17(b)	Pre-school entertainment	29	0.1	389	1.1
17(c)	Drama	2,538	6.7	2,645	7.8
17(c)(1)	Crime	61	0.2	.....	....
17(c)(2)	Western	1,556	4.1	847	2.5
17(c)(3)	Comedy	543	1.2	691	2.0
17(c)(4)	Adventure and historical	254	0.7	225	0.7
17(c)(5)	Children's action	83	0.2	439	1.3
17(c)(6)	Fairy tales	41	0.1	255	0.8
17(c)(7)	Classics	.....	....	38	0.1
17(c)(8)	Other children's drama	.....	....	150	0.4
17(d)	Teen-age variety	30	0.1	165	0.5
17(e)	Other variety	879	2.3	544	1.6
17(f)	Quiz, stunts and contests	271	0.7	90	0.3
17(g)	Other children's programs	28	0.1	40	0.1
Total		37,645	100.0	33,837	100.0

TABLE 2

NEW YORK TELEVISION JANUARY 4–10, 1952 AND 1951: PROGRAMMING IN CHILDREN, ADULTS AND LATE NIGHT HOURS, ALL STATIONS COMBINED

(Preliminary)

	Program classes	Domestic hours[a]				Children hours[b]				Adult hours[c]				Late night hours[d]				Total			
		1952		1951		1952		1951		1952		1951		1952		1951		1952		1951	
		Min.	Per cent	Min.	Per cent	Min.	Per cent	Min.	Per cent	Min.	Per cent	Min.	Per cent	Min.	Per cent	Min.	Per cent	Min.	Per cent	Min.	Per cent
1	News	1,042	8.1	792	6.9	357	3.8	369	4.7	502	4.3	434	3.7	302	8.4	265	9.7	2,203	5.9	1,860	5.5
1(a)	News reports	1,042	8.1	.....	....	297	3.2	.....	....	502	4.3	.....	....	302	8.4	.....	....	2,143	5.7	.....	....
1(b)	Special events and features	.....	....	.....	....	60	0.6	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	60	0.2	.....	....
2	Weather	6		.....	....	94	1.0	82	1.0	20	0.2	36	0.3	24	0.7	29	1.1	144	0.4	147	0.4
3	Public issues	29	0.2	68	0.6	256	2.7	180	2.3	374	3.2	221	1.9	45	1.3	.....	....	704	1.9	469	1.4
3(a)	Individual views	29	0.2	68	0.6	76	0.8	90	1.1	75	0.6	59	0.5	45	1.3	.....	....	225	0.6	217	0.6
3(b)	Discussion and debate	.....	....	.....	....	180	1.9	90	1.1	299	2.6	162	1.4	.....	....	.....	....	479	1.3	252	0.7
4	Public events	358	2.8	321	2.8	157	1.7	.....	....	30	0.3	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	545	1.4	321	0.9
5	Public institutional programs	170	1.3	220	1.9	236	2.5	116	1.5	157	1.3	45	0.4	37	1.0	5	0.2	600	1.6	386	1.1
5(a)	Expository	68	0.5	75	0.7	25	0.3	39	0.5	51	0.4	45	0.4	37	1.0	.....	....	181	0.5	159	0.5
5(b)	Dramatization	102	0.8	145	1.3	211	2.2	77	1.0	106	0.9	.....	....	.....	....	5	0.2	419	1.1	227	0.7
6	Information (general)	391	3.0	332	2.9	275	2.9	229	2.9	437	3.7	359	3.1	.....	....	184	6.7	1,103	2.9	1,104	3.3
6(a)	Science	30	0.2	20	0.2	45	0.5	.....	....	31	0.3	30	0.3	.....	....	35	1.3	106	0.3	85	0.3
6(b)	Travelogue	113	0.9	172	1.5	51	0.5	46	0.6	179	1.5	130	1.1	.....	....	35	1.3	343	0.9	383	1.1
6(c)	Other	248	1.9	140	1.2	179	1.9	183	2.3	227	1.9	199	1.7	.....	....	114	4.2	654	1.7	636	1.9
7	Religion	75	0.6	75	0.7	176	1.9	105	1.3	90	0.8	60	0.5	30	0.8	.....	....	371	1.0	240	0.7
8	Drama	2,947	22.8	1,199	10.4	3,291	34.9	2,007	25.3	4,548	38.8	4,064	34.8	2,646	74.0	1,319	48.1	13,432	35.7	8,589	25.4
8(a)	Domestic	388	3.0	75	0.7	374	4.0	15	0.2	508	4.3	293	2.5	237	6.6	.....	....	1,507	4.0	383	1.1
8(b)	Crime	1,224	9.5	325	2.8	1,094	11.6	584	7.4	2,180	18.6	1,833	15.7	1,016	28.4	637	23.2	5,514	14.6	3,379	10.0
8(c)	Western	271	2.1	296	2.6	557	5.9	691	8.7	788	6.7	739	6.3	6	0.2	77	2.8	1,563	4.2	1,803	5.3
8(d)	Action	165	1.3	58	0.5	367	3.9	147	1.9	47	0.4	395	3.4	293	8.2	95	3.5	871	2.3	695	2.1
8(e)	Comedy	329	2.5	292	2.5	240	2.5	282	3.6	283	2.4	444	3.8	308	8.6	85	3.1	1,160	3.1	1,103	3.3
8(f)	Romance	420	3.2	153	1.3	449	4.8	288	3.6	405	3.5	180	1.5	388	10.8	317	11.6	1,722	4.6	938	2.8
8(g)	Musical	60	0.5	.....	....	60	0.6	.....	....	67	0.6	90	0.8	99	2.6	.....	....	286	0.8	90	0.3
8(h)	Classics	90	0.7	.....	....	60	0.6	.....	....	150	1.3	90	0.8	.....	....	108	3.9	300	0.8	198	0.6
8(i)	Other	.....	....	.....	....	90	1.0	.....	....	120	1.0	.....	....	299	2.8	.....	....	509	1.4	.....	....
9	Dance	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	12	0.2	.....	....	12	0.1	.....	....	12	0.4	.....	....	36	0.1
10	Music	743	5.7	222	1.9	137	1.5	334	4.2	667	5.7	615	5.3	30	0.8	50	1.8	1,577	4.2	1,222	3.6
10(a)	Serious	14	0.1	10	0.1	52	0.6	10	0.1	136	1.2	37	0.3	.....	....	20	0.7	202	0.5	77	0.2
10(b)	Light	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....
10(c)	Popular	729	5.6	212	1.8	85	0.9	324	4.1	531	4.5	579	5.0	30	0.8	30	1.1	1,375	3.7	1,145	3.4

11	Fine Arts	29	0.2	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	30	0.3	.....	....	.....	....	29	0.1	30	0.1
12	Variety	1,169	9.0	2,626	22.8	45	0.5	.....	....	1,108	9.5	1,440	12.3	20	0.6	532	19.4	2,342	6.2	4,598	13.6
13	Personalities	443	3.4	1,037	9.0	191	2.0	140	1.8	210	1.8	210	1.8	45	1.3	45	1.6	889	2.4	1,432	4.2
14	Quiz, stunts, contests	1,529	11.8	1,164	10.1	.....	....	115	1.5	824	7.0	995	8.5	.....	....	61	2.2	2,353	6.3	2,335	6.9
14(a)	Experts, guests	370	2.9	32	0.3	.....	....	30	0.4	359	3.1	300	2.6	.....	....	.....	....	729	1.9	362	1.1
14(b)	Studio audience	795	6.2	418	3.6	.....	....	.....	....	150	1.3	180	1.5	.....	....	.....	....	945	2.5	598	1.8
14(c)	Telephone	364	2.8	714	6.2	.....	....	25	0.3	60	0.5	150	1.3	.....	....	61	2.2	424	1.1	950	2.8
14(d)	Amateur	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	60	0.8	255	2.2	365	3.2	.....	....	.....	....	255	0.7	395	1.2
15	Sports	48	0.4	.....	....	562	6.0	378	4.8	2,251	19.2	2,795	24.0	301	8.4	233	8.5	3,162	8.4	3,406	10.1
15(a)	News, interviews	9	0.7	.....	....	167	1.8	130	1.6	200	1.7	98	0.8	81	2.3	.....	....	457	1.2	228	0.7
15(b)	Spectator sports	30	0.2	.....	....	365	3.9	248	3.1	2,011	17.2	2,629	22.5	160	4.5	233	8.5	2,551	6.8	3,110	9.2
15(c)	Participant sports and recreation	9	0.1	.....	....	30	0.3	.....	....	40	0.3	68	0.6	60	1.7	.....	....	154	0.4	68	0.2
16	Domestic	3,581	27.7	3,307	28.7	242	2.6	88	1.1	143	1.2	45	0.4	98	2.7	7	0.3	4,064	10.8	3,447	10.2
16(a)	Cooking	754	5.8	955	8.3	.....	....	26	0.3	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	754	2.0	981	2.9
16(b)	Arts and crafts, and hobbies	318	2.5	.....	....	62	0.7	15	0.2	61	0.5	45	0.4	.....	....	.....	....	441	1.2	60	0.2
16(c)	Shopping and merchandise	1,124	8.7	1,089	9.5	90	1.0	12	0.2	23	0.2	.....	....	98	2.7	.....	....	1,335	3.5	1,101	3.3
16(d)	Personal care	180	1.4	120	1.0	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	180	0.5	120	0.4
16(e)	Personal relations	263	2.0	30	0.3	60	0.6	20	0.3	59	0.5	.....	....	.....	....	7	0.3	382	1.0	57	0.2
16(f)	Domestic variety	852	6.6	898	7.8	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	852	2.3	898	2.7
16(g)	Housewives' music	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....
16(h)	Other	90	0.7	215	1.9	30	0.3	15	0.2	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	120	0.3	230	0.7
17	Children's programs	366	2.8	150	1.3	3,402	36.1	3,765	47.5	359	3.1	300	2.6	.....	....	.....	....	4,127	11.0	4,215	12.5
17(a)	Information and instruction	79	0.6	.....	....	273	2.9	342	4.3	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	352	0.9	342	1.0
17(b)	Pre-school entertainment	.....	....	150	1.3	29	0.3	239	3.0	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	29	0.1	389	1.1
17(c)	Drama	287	2.2	.....	....	1,982	21.0	2,405	30.4	269	2.3	240	2.1	.....	....	.....	....	2,538	6.7	2,645	7.8
17(c)(1)	Crime	.....	....	.....	....	31	0.3	.....	....	30	0.3	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	61	0.2	.....	....
17(c)(2)	Western	287	2.2	.....	....	1,180	12.5	817	10.3	89	0.8	30	0.3	.....	....	.....	....	1,556	4.1	847	2.5
17(c)(3)	Comedy	.....	....	.....	....	543	5.8	691	8.7	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	543	1.4	691	2.0
17(c)(4)	Adventure and historical	.....	....	.....	....	104	1.1	75	0.9	150	1.3	150	1.3	.....	....	.....	....	254	0.7	225	0.7
17(c)(5)	Children's action	.....	....	.....	....	83	0.9	379	4.8	.....	....	60	0.5	.....	....	.....	....	83	0.2	439	1.3
17(c)(6)	Fairy tales	.....	....	.....	....	41	0.4	255	3.2	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	41	0.1	255	0.8
17(c)(7)	Classics	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	38	0.5	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	38	0.1
17(c)(8)	Other children's drama	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	150	1.9	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	150	0.4
17(d)	Teen-age variety	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	105	1.3	30	0.3	60	0.5	.....	....	.....	....	30	0.1	165	0.5
17(e)	Other variety	.....	....	.....	....	879	9.3	544	6.9	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	879	2.3	544	1.6
17(f)	Quiz, stunts and contests	.....	....	.....	....	211	2.2	90	1.1	60	0.5	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	271	0.7	90	0.3
17(g)	Other children's programs	.....	....	.....	....	28	0.3	40	0.5	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	.....	....	28	0.1	40	0.1
Total		12,926	100.0	11,513	100.0	9,421	100.0	7,920	100.0	11,720	100.0	11,662	100.0	3,578	100.0	2,742	100.0	37,645	100.0	33,837	100.0

[a] Sign on to 5 P.M., Monday–Friday.
[b] 5–7, Monday–Friday; sign on to 7, Saturday and Sunday.
[c] 7–11 all days.
[d] After 11 P.M., all days.
* Less than 0.05 per cent.

TABLE 3

NEW YORK TELEVISION, JANUARY 4–10, 1952: NET PROGRAM TIME BY CLASS OF PROGRAM, AND RATIO OF NET TO TOTAL PROGRAM TIME

	Class of program	Net program time		Ratio of net to total program time (Per cent)
		Minutes	Per cent	
1	News	1,926	5.7	87.4
1(a)	News reports	1,874	5.6	87.4
1(b)	Special events and features	52	0.2	86.7
2	Weather	106	0.3	73.6
3	Public issues	632	1.9	89.8
3(a)	Individual views	201	0.6	89.3
3(b)	Discussion and debate	431	1.3	90.0
4	Public events	533	1.6	97.8
5	Public institutional programs	548	1.6	91.3
5(a)	Expository	170	0.5	93.9
5(b)	Dramatization	378	1.1	90.2
6	Information (General)	1,041	3.1	94.4
6(a)	Science	101	0.3	95.3
6(b)	Travelogue	325	1.0	94.8
6(c)	Other	586	1.7	89.6
7	Religion	353	1.1	95.1
8	Drama	12,295	36.7	91.5
8(a)	Domestic	1,318	3.9	87.5
8(b)	Crime	5,111	15.3	92.7
8(c)	Western	1,446	4.3	92.5
8(d)	Action	784	2.3	90.0
8(e)	Comedy	1,066	3.2	91.9
8(f)	Romance	1,574	4.7	91.4
8(g)	Musical	259	0.8	90.6
8(h)	Classics	265	0.8	88.3
8(i)	Other	472	1.4	92.7
9	Dance	.....	....	....
10	Music	1,347	4.0	85.4
10(a)	Serious	181	0.5	89.6
10(b)	Light	.....	....	....
10(c)	Popular	1,166	3.5	84.8
11	Fine Arts	20	0.1	69.0

TABLE 3—*Continued*

	Class of program	Net program time		Ratio of net to total program time (Per cent)
		Minutes	Per cent	
12	Variety	2,006	6.0	85.7
13	Personalities	733	2.2	82.5
14	Quiz, stunts, contests	2,064	6.2	87.7
14(a)	Experts, guests	633	1.9	86.8
14(b)	Studio audience	851	2.5	90.1
14(c)	Telephone	353	1.1	83.3
14(d)	Amateur	200	0.6	78.4
15	Sports	2,952	8.8	93.4
15(a)	News, interviews	406	1.2	88.8
15(b)	Spectator sports	2,403	7.2	94.2
15(c)	Participant sports and recreations	142	0.4	92.2
16	Domestic	3,282	9.8	80.8
16(a)	Cooking	623	1.9	82.6
16(b)	Arts and crafts, and hobbies	346	1.0	78.5
16(c)	Shopping and merchandise	943	2.8	70.6
16(d)	Personal care	180	0.5	100.0
16(e)	Personal relations	330	1.0	86.4
16(f)	Domestic variety	747	2.2	87.7
16(g)	Housewives' music	.....	....	....
16(h)	Other	95	0.3	79.2
17	Children's programs	3,659	10.9	88.7
17(a)	Information and instruction	327	1.0	92.9
17(b)	Pre-school entertainment	25	0.1	86.2
17(c)	Drama	2,276	6.8	89.7
17(c)(1)	Crime	52	0.2	85.2
17(c)(2)	Western	1,432	4.3	92.0
17(c)(3)	Comedy	483	1.4	89.0
17(c)(4)	Adventure and historical	208	0.6	81.9
17(c)(5)	Children's action	68	0.2	81.9
17(c)(6)	Fairy tales	33	0.1	80.5
17(c)(7)	Classics	.....	....	....
17(c)(8)	Other children's drama	.....	....	....
17(d)	Teen-age variety	24	0.1	80.0
17(e)	Other variety	739	2.2	84.1
17(f)	Quiz, stunts and contests	240	0.7	88.6
17(g)	Other children's programs	28	0.1	100.0
Total		33,497	100.0	89.0

TABLE 4

NEW YORK TELEVISION, JANUARY 4–10, 1952

NUMBER AND AVERAGE LENGTH IN SECONDS OF PRIMARY ADVERTISEMENTS AND PER CENT OF TOTAL PROGRAM TIME DEVOTED TO THEM, BY STATIONS, BY DAYS OF THE WEEK

(Preliminary)

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Total Weekdays	Saturday	Sunday	Total Week
NUMBER OF PRIMARY ADVERTISEMENTS									
WCBS-TV	101	78	98	137	92	506	63	50	619
WNBT	95	93	100	107	109	504	67	82	653
WABD	64	75	55	65	131	390	25	46	461
WJZ-TV	66	75	45	91	110	387	38	34	459
WOR-TV	34	27	40	32	78	211	33	34	278
WPIX	42	57	53	55	52	259	41	56	356
WATV	29	54	44	31	39	197	46	35	278
All stations	431	459	435	518	611	2,454	313	337	3,104
AVERAGE LENGTH (IN SECONDS) OF PRIMARY ADVERTISEMENTS									
WCBS-TV	54	69	45	43	53	51	48	55	51
WNBT	60	61	51	53	53	55	49	61	55
WABD	64	64	53	75	38	56	57	51	55
WJZ-TV	62	76	81	62	47	63	81	67	65
WOR-TV	67	59	49	50	42	51	119	109	66
WPIX	69	64	78	71	75	71	55	51	66
WATV	83	68	78	82	64	74	65	84	74
All stations	62	66	59	58	50	58	64	65	60
PER CENT OF TOTAL PROGRAM TIME DEVOTED TO PRIMARY ADVERTISEMENTS									
WCBS-TV	5.3	9.2	7.7	10.3	8.4	9.0	5.6	5.1	8.0
WNBT	4.0	10.3	9.1	10.3	12.9	10.5	6.7	9.3	9.8
WABD	13.2	14.9	9.0	14.6	15.0	13.3	4.7	7.1	11.3
WJZ-TV	8.0	11.0	6.7	11.0	10.1	9.3	8.1	5.3	8.7
WOR-TV	4.7	3.4	4.2	3.4	7.2	4.6	10.9	10.3	6.0
WPIX	6.6	8.7	10.0	9.8	8.6	8.4	5.7	5.8	7.6
WATV	5.4	8.1	7.8	5.9	5.7	6.6	6.9	6.6	6.6
All stations	8.0	9.2	7.6	9.2	9.5	8.7	6.9	7.0	8.2

A Score Sheet for Children's Television[1]

MAY V. SEAGOE

DR. MAY SEAGOE is professor of education at the University of California at Los Angeles. She is the author of more than forty articles and several research studies of greater length in her own field. Her interest in the field of children's entertainment dates back to one of her earliest studies, before the era of the Payne Fund studies, on "The Child's Reaction to the Movies." May Seagoe served as leader of the Workshop on Psychological Aspects of the Child Audience, of the Children's Theater Convention of the American Educational Theater Association held on the Los Angeles campus of the University of California in the summer of 1951.

WHEN THE WORDS "criteria for television for children" are spoken, gray specters rise. There is already continuity acceptance, built on all the taboos of radio and the Motion Picture Production Code. There are ratings. There are the ethical standards of the theater, which existed long before movies and radio came along. There are the standards that adults, especially parents, set up for children's shows, and a few attempts to bring together the thinking of adults and producers. With so many limitations already, there is chafing and even a limiting of realism or creativeness at times.

All the present criteria neglect the most basic point of view of all, however, that of the child and what he thinks of television. Adults too often impose their standards on children, but fail miserably in knowing what children think. We need the child's own point of view. We need to think in terms of what is important to him, for he reacts to a situation not as it is, nor as it is to an adult or even to another child, but as it is to him.

In order to find out how well the thinking of adults, such as

[1] The material presented here was gathered for and presented to the Workshop on Psychological Aspects of the Child Audience in Film and Television of the Seventh Annual Children's Theater Convention of the American Educational Theater Association at UCLA, July 30–August 1, 1951. Other articles in the series are: "Children's Television Habits and Preferences," *Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television*, VI (1951), 143–153; "Issues and Criteria for Children's Television," *Educational Theatre Journal*, Fall issue, 1952; and "What to Do About Children's Television," publication pending.

teachers and child psychologists, agrees with what children themselves say and with what producers think are good shows for children, an attempt was made during the early summer of 1951 to develop a rating scale by which it would be possible for any reasonably well-informed adult to judge how well children would like any given movie or television show. Fundamentally, the technique in each show was a variation on a standard form. Students in two courses on the Los Angeles campus of the University of California were used as assistants or "observers"; they were seniors or graduates who were either psychology majors or experienced teachers or professional theater people.[2] They worked in groups of six to twelve for the most part, arranging for the coöperation of theater managers or giving "television parties" or assisting in the screenings at the Workshop on Psychological Aspects of the Child Audience in Film and Television.

In each case essentially the same general procedure was followed. (1) A group of "observers" rated each film or kinescope recording on a scale consisting at first of twenty-six and later of twenty points[3] which psychologists thought should distinguish between shows which children like and those they dislike. (2) The same "observers" obtained a direct expression of opinion from the children who saw the shows by interview, or sometimes by applause or by group discussion. (3) The score sheets for each film or kinescope recording from all "observers" were summarized, and compared with a summary of what the children said. And (4) the score sheet was revised by dropping the items that failed to distinguish well-liked and little-liked shows as the children saw them.[4] Variations in the way in which each step was handled depended upon how coöperation of theater managers and child audiences could be obtained, by the time limits imposed by the

[2] The author is especially indebted to the following: Eleanor Bjornerud, Jeanne Cagney, Maureen Callahan, Isabel Chapin, June Drake, Loraine Gold, Joan Hamren, Adolph Hersh, Helen Jameson, Cassandra Hill, Marvin Silberman, Gloria Sugar, Paul Symons, and James Zeigler.

[3] The revised scale of twenty points is included at the close of this article.

[4] Statisticians call the technique "item analysis."

Workshop itself, and by the crudeness characteristic of pioneering. The results are intended only to illustrate some ways of going about investigating this important question, not as ultimate answers nor carefully refined research.

TABLE 1

THREE MOVIE PROGRAMS

Show, Type, Films Shown	Number of:		Score on Score Sheet	Children's Preferences	
	Observers	Children		Choice Score	Rank: Other
V. Matinee for children	8	90			
Pluto's Sweater	....	....	25.7	−3	4.5
Pluto's Housewarming	....	....	25.7	−7	4.5
Pluto and the Bubble Bee	....	....	25.6	20	1.0
Winter Storage (Donald Duck)	....	....	22.7	5	2.0
Cat Happy (Little Rocquefort)	....	....	18.7	−8	4.5
Sea Salty (Donald Duck)	....	....	0.5	−3	4.5
Poor Little Rich Girl	....	....	−7.6	8	...
P. Matinee:	7	97			
Bugs Bunny Cartoon	....	....	28.7	−3	...
Painted Hills (Lassie)	....	....	19.3	23	...
Lemon Drop Kid (Bob Hope)	....	....	−2.9	−24	...
U. Workshop screenings:	12	4			
Bird Hunt	....	....	26.8	..	1.0
Heidi (Shirley Temple)	....	....	21.2	..	3.5
Littlest Angel	....	....	20.3	..	3.5
Loon's Necklace	....	....	18.3	..	2.0

Now let us see what happened. Table 1 summarizes the movies that were rated in this way. At showing "V," a suburban theater in a high socioeconomic neighborhood, the theater manager offered full coöperation during a Saturday morning matinee for children. Eight "observers" checked items on a score sheet as they applied to each picture while it was being shown. They also squatted in aisles during breaks and stopped children in the lobby after the show, obtaining opinions from ninety children altogether. For each child was recorded age, sex, film liked best, and film liked least. One observer went to the stage and asked for applause for each of the six cartoons, and the other observers ranked the intensity of the applause.

Summarizing the score sheet was fairly easy. The first scale, used in these showings, consisted of twenty-six items, of which six items which did not survive the test of practice were later dropped in the score sheet reproduced in this article. To get a film's rating, it is necessary only to add all the negative numbers circled and subtract them from the sum of the positive numbers circled. Then the scores for the eight observers were averaged.

Summarizing the rating scale was fairly easy. The revised form of the scale, printed on page 335 in this issue, shows that, to get a film's rating, it is necessary only to add all the negative numbers circled and subtract them from the sum of the positive numbers circled. Using eight observers made it possible to use the average of the eight instead of a single person's rating.

Summarizing the interviews was a little harder. First of all, the incomplete forms and those from children over twelve were discarded. Then a tally was made of the number of times each film was mentioned as "best liked" and as "not liked at all." Since films were much more often mentioned as "liked" than "not liked," and since it seemed reasonable to assume that "likes" really equal "dislikes" though they are less readily expressed by children, the "likes" and "dislikes" were numerically equated by weighting each "dislike" by the ratio of "likes" to "dislikes" in the whole show, then subtracting it from the number of "likes." A popularity or "choice score" was thus obtained for each film within the show.

Now we are ready to see how well the score sheet agreed with what children said. Referring again to table 1, we see that *Pluto and the Bubble Bee* was the favorite of the children, both on "choice score" and in applause. It tied for highest score on the score sheet also. The agreement between children and score for the second choice, *Winter Storage,* is also reasonably clear. The feature, *Poor Little Rich Girl,* was dropped from comparison because it differed too much from the cartoons. For the rest of the cartoons there is no clear agreement between children's choices

and score sheet, perhaps because most cartoons are much alike in basic style. There were no clear age or sex differences affecting the preferences. A point by point comparison of ratings on the score sheet between the two best-liked and the two least-liked cartoons showed the importance of identification with a leading character, a clear-cut, developing, tight story line, a novel setting, and a light and free mood.

Show "P" was of a different type, a Saturday afternoon program for a general audience in a lower-middle socioeconomic suburban theater. The procedures were the same as those at show "V," except that there was no applause rating. The cartoon was not compared with the features because of its greatly different style. The seven observers and ninety-seven children showed clear agreement that *The Painted Hills* was better for the child audience than *The Lemon Drop Kid.* The high ratings for *The Painted Hills* seemed to come from familiarity of theme, clarity of theme and plot, action, identification with the dog, and adventure.

Show "U" was a group of screenings included in the Workshop,[5] and the procedure differed a little. After each film was shown, the audience discussed it. Workshop personnel, observers, and four children were all included in the audience, and discussion was directed to bringing out the reactions of the children, the "liking" rating being judged from that discussion. In these screenings the revised score sheet of only twenty points was used, and the scores are therefore not directly comparable with those from the two matinees. In the discussion, the children clearly showed their enthusiasm for *Bird Hunt,* the highest scoring film according to table 1. They liked *The Loon's Necklace,* failed to grasp much of the subtley and artistic value of *The Littlest Angel,* and characterized *Heidi* as "something you watch and enjoy and then forget

[5] The author is indebted to a number of members of the Department of Theater Arts at the University of California at Los Angeles for aid in planning the screenings and leading the discussions. They are Norman Dyhrenfurth, Ralph Freud, Richard Goggin, Kenneth Macgowan, and Jack Morrison.

about." In this group of showings, the children's desire for high professional standards and for realism was evident.

Now let us see what happens when the same kind of score sheet is applied to television. Because the showings were less carefully

TABLE 2

FOUR TELEVISION SHOWS

Show	Number of:		Score on Score Sheet	Children's Preference: Rank
	Observers	Children		
A. Regular broadcasts:	2	7		
Crusader Rabbit	..	..	18	9
Lone Ranger	..	..	11	5
Time for Beany	..	..	11	1
Space Patrol	..	..	11	8
Hopalong Cassidy	..	..	8	6
Bob Steele	..	..	7	7
Charlie Chase	..	..	4	3
Cowboy Films	..	..	4	4
Wedding Bells	..	..	4	12
Howdy Doody	..	..	1	11
The Ruggles	..	..	0	10
Laurel and Hardy	..	..	−4	2
B. Regular broadcasts:	1	3		
Time for Beany	..	..	22	2
Crusader Rabbit	..	..	21	1
Comedy Club	..	..	−3	3
Howdy Doody	..	..	−20	4
C. Regular broadcasts:	1	4		
Mother's Meeting (Royal)	..	..	6	2
Comedy Time	..	..	6	3
Martin Kane	..	..	−3	1
U. Kinescope screenings:	12	4		
Zoo Parade	..	..	9.7	1
The Ruggles	..	..	9.5	2
Fantastik Studios Ink	..	..	−3.0	3

controlled, the results should not be given as much emphasis as those reported in table 1. They are, however, interesting in that the weight of evidence sometimes shows surprising agreement. Table 2 summarizes the television programs that were rated in the same way, by having a joint group of observers and children see a show, the observers filling out score sheets and getting the children to express their ideas about the shows.

Show "A" was a television party given by two observers for seven children. Within the shows seen, the average score of the two observers is compared with the children's ranking of the shows. There was little agreement between the rating scale and children's choices, perhaps because there were only two "observers" and perhaps because the twenty-six-item score sheet used was faulty. In show "B" the rating scale agreed almost completely

TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF TELEVISION SHOWS

Show	Average on Score Sheet	Average Child Preference Rank	Questionnaire Rank	
			"Seen Regularly"	"Liked Best"
Crusader Rabbit	19	5.6	3	4
Time for Beany	16	7.7	2	4
Lone Ranger	11	6.2	6	10
Space Patrol	11	4.0	1	8
Hopalong Cassidy	8	5.6	7	2
Charlie Chase	4	7.8	9	9
Comedy Time	1	3.7	10	5
The Ruggles	0	2.4	5	3
Laurel and Hardy	−4	8.6	4	1
Howdy Doody	−9	1.5	8	6

with the children's choices, but again the number of cases was very small. Show "C" included three deaf children, and for that reason in addition to the small number of children the results are open to question. Another group not reported in detail tried rating "Space Patrol" for seven consecutive showings, with the result that the ratings varied greatly from day to day. Show "U" was a group of screenings included in the Workshop. Scores are based on the revised rating scale, and reported to one decimal because of the greater number of ratings. Children's preferences were obtained through discussion, and showed complete agreement with the rating scale.

Perhaps all of this will make more sense if we combine the data from television shows "A" to "C," and compare with the ques-

tionnaire results on children's viewing habits.[6] Results are summarized in table 3. Because the comparison became a little complex, it seemed best to resort to coefficients of correlation to express the extent to which each criterion is related to the score sheet.[7] The correlation between the score sheet and the preferences of children in audiences seeing the shows was .30; the correlation between the score sheet and the proportion of children who see the show regularly is .46; and the correlation between the score sheet and the proportion of children who claim the show as a "favorite" is –.44. In ordinary language, the relationships are low, but on the basis of these figures the score sheet seems to agree a little with what children say they like and what shows they see regularly, though not with their estimates of favorites.

With the results of the theater film showings and of the television shows available, we turned again to the score sheet itself to see whether it could be made more valid. The "item analysis" consisted of analyzing the scoring of each of the twenty-six points by comparing shows children like and those they dislike on that item. The points which failed to discriminate between liked and disliked films or kinescope recordings were dropped.[8] If the score sheet failed to agree with what children said was "good," the score sheet was assumed to be wrong and it was corrected. In addition, the wording of a number of items was clarified, and in some cases items were combined or expanded. One new concept, that of social significance, was added. The "Score Sheet for Films and Television" on the following page was the end result of all these processes. It may be used by producers as a rough check on appeal in child audiences, by parents as a set of criteria for checking their own standards, and as a teaching device in schools.

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[6] See "Children's Television Habits and Preferences," *Quarterly of Film, Radio, and Television*, VI (1951), 143–153.

[7] Coefficients of correlation run from 0.00 or no relationship to 1.00 or perfect relationship. For figures as crude as these, coefficients are seldom very high.

[8] Points dropped in this way included "theme evolves—clear from beginning," "theme does not recur—recurs," "setting prosaic—novel," "setting elaborate—simple," "treatment serious—humorous," "treatment fear-producing—reassuring," "treatment chiefly entertaining—educational," "use of sound inadequate—adequate," and "visual appeal black-white—color."

Score Sheet for Films and Television

Film or program.....Date.....Score.....

Observer.....Estimated age of child audience.....

CIRCLE THE NUMBER IN EACH LINE THAT BEST DESCRIBES THE PROGRAM.
TRY TO RATE EACH ITEM.

The Story:

is drawn from adult life	−2	−1	0	1	2		is drawn from child life
is highly fanciful	−2	−1	0	1	2		is near reality
is complex or subtle	−2	−1	0	1	2		is simple and clearcut
is weak in conflict	−2	−1	0	1	2		is strong in conflict
is discontinuous	−2	−1	0	1	2		is continuous and complete
presents static situations	−2	−1	0	1	2		presents adventure
has little social meaning	−2	−1	0	1	2		is socially significant

The leading character:

produces little identification	−2	−1	0	1	2		produces strong identification
is an ordinary adult	−2	−1	0	1	2		is a child, animal, strong adult
is undifferentiated from a group	−2	−1	0	1	2		is an individual
is weak or ignored	−2	−1	0	1	2		is powerful or acclaimed
loses	−2	−1	0	1	2		wins

The treatment:

stresses dialogue	−2	−1	0	1	2		stresses action
uses unrelated action	−2	−1	0	1	2		uses motivated action
uses leisurely development	−2	−1	0	1	2		uses sudden solutions
presents little that is novel	−2	−1	0	1	2		uses novel devices
suggests control	−2	−1	0	1	2		releases aggression
is weak in forms for playing-out	−2	−1	0	1	2		stresses ritual, vocabulary, form
is artificial	−2	−1	0	1	2		is natural and straightforward
is played down or over	−2	−1	0	1	2		is direct and sincere

Comments:

A somewhat less technical statement may be helpful as well. Such a statement has been formulated elsewhere,[9] based on existing practices in the industry and on the Workshop as well. Briefly:

1. The child needs a leading character with whom he can identify, whether child, animal, puppet, or strong and active adult. There must be one identification character, not merely a group of children in the show.

2. There should be emotional involvement to provide for escape and for release of aggression, though it should not be too disturbing and should be resolved before the show ends.

3. The identification character must win, to build the ego-strength of the child through making him feel capable of handling his own problems.

4. The plot should be simple, clear-cut, straightforward, and continuous. One basic difference between the child and the adult is degree of complexity of thought processes.

5. Open, overt adventure appeals to the child; romance and subtle psychological situations are lost on him.

6. The show should be near enough reality for understanding and accurate in the "new" that it shows. The child's imagination is limited by his experience.

7. The show should present some thought of social or personal significance, implicit in the story line. Adults suggest this criterion, and children accept it.

8. There should be plenty of dramatic action, little dialogue, sudden and rapid solutions. It is the sudden solution rather than the humor that appeals to children.

9. The presentation should be direct and sincere, and of high professional standard. Children recognize those qualities as adults do.

10. Children like actually to participate in the show, whether through laughing and shouting or through playing-out and rituals

[9] "Issues and Criteria for Children's Television," *Educational Theatre Journal,* Fall issue, 1952.

and costumes later. Adults want the playing-out to teach acceptable social behavior rather than just any behavior.

It is important to think of such criteria as points on which a film or television program may be strong or weak, not as a set of points on which every program should excel. As many of the points should be above the minimum as possible.

The Lost Audience

GEOFFREY WAGNER

GEOFFREY WAGNER is a fellow at Columbia University. His second novel, *Venables,* was published in this country by Simon and Schuster this year, and a third novel is scheduled for 1953.

(The exceptional quality of a very considerable number of British motion pictures since the emergence of *The Private Life of Henry VIII* seems to justify some examination of the leading producers and their contributions to the fictional film. The articles by Geoffrey Wagner and Sir Michael Balcon and the supplementary comments by Hugh Gray in this issue provide a general, but not a definitive, survey of the more important British film makers.—THE EDITORS)

"Nothing will kill the movies except education."—WILL ROGERS.

NEVER BEFORE, in the history of the motion picture, has the role of producer been so important as it is today. At this crucial moment in its development, decisions are being taken on this level that may well fix the future career of the medium. Most countries today can claim some good actors, technicians, and directors; but, as the present state of England shows—where, at the time of writing, only seven hundred out of seven thousand A.C.T. members are employed—none of these can exhibit their talents unless a producer, or some agency fulfilling his role, makes it financially possible for them to do so. Moreover, few of these workers would agree with an actor-producer's recent statement in the New York *Times* that the producer's function is simply a bureaucratic one. They would, on the contrary, be the first to contend that there can be good and bad producers, that, in fact, a producer can make or mar a film.

What is the crisis in the film industry in America that the producer faces? The facts were briefly rehearsed in a recent article in *Life* magazine, where we learn that over the previous year one hundred theaters closed in Philadelphia, thirty-one in Cleveland, and one hundred and thirty-four in the state of California; in the

entire United States during this period, three thousand movie houses closed down; attendance figures have slipped back to those of twenty years ago, despite the increasing population.[1] Even the optimistic Sam Goldwyn has conceded a drop of between fifteen and twenty millions in movie audiences over the past year.[2] One might, in passing, supplement these findings by the actual figures; in 1944, ninety million tickets were sold per week in the United States (some estimates go as high as one hundred and ten millions), while at the time of writing only thirty-five million tickets are being sold per week, and this figure is currently dropping. Further substantiation of this industrial crisis, which it is not our purpose to explore here, is given in Gilbert Seldes' *The Great Audience*. "Except for the makers of baby foods, no industry in the United States has been so indifferent to the steady falling away of its customers as the movies have been."[3]

Seldes goes on to ask "whether the country can afford a movie industry which hardly ever functions in the service of the majority of its citizens,"[4] and concludes as follows:

> I confess to a sense of shock at the spectacle of an industry, financed by the shrewdest of bankers, contenting itself with a mere third, or, at most, a half, of its potential income. The actual figures have been worked out. If the 40,000,000 who have stopped going to the movies would be brought back for only one picture a week, the gain at the box office would be nearly half a billion dollars a year, after taxes; the share of the studios would be $150,000,000.[5]

First, let us look briefly at the usual answer given to such challenges, namely that television is responsible for syphoning off the so-called "lost audience" from the movies. Now the lost audience, it has been computed, is not made up of those hardy souls who buy television sets, and presumably, thereafter, summon the cour-

[1] Robert Coughlan, "Now It Is Trouble That Is Supercolossal in Hollywood," *Life*, August 13, 1951, p. 102.
[2] Samuel Goldwyn, "Is Hollywood Through?" in *Collier's*, September 29, 1951, p. 18.
[3] Gilbert Seldes, *The Great Audience* (New York: The Viking Press, 1950), p. 9.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 11.
[5] *Ibid.*, p. 13.

age to peer into them. The members of the lost audience, that influential portion of our population who are deserting the cinemas, have been analyzed as the more mature of us; their average age is thirty-five.[6] They are, that is, leaving the cinemas because of stereotyped entertainment. The present writer has examined this situation and found it is the immature, and those on the threshold of literacy, who like, at present, to view television: a count in Stamford, Connecticut, for instance, found the chief television viewers to be children, some of them watching it for as much as twenty-seven hours each week.[7] In the Italian *Corriere di Informazione* a very high Paramount official has recently committed himself to the extent of denying that television was affecting motion picture production in the United States at all.[8] Coughlan claims that movie makers themselves say that " 'TV's effects on attendance are overrated.' "[9] In other words, what is obvious is true; the cinema is not losing customers to television, since the lost audience is not, in the main, addicted to television. The lost audience consists of those who do not crave the stereotyped product, but who—and they are increasing with the higher literacy rates of this country—are interested in mature cinema. The Audience Research Institute has shown, moveover, that a falling off in cinema receipts began before the impact of television was felt. The point is perhaps finally clinched by glancing at a recent defense of the Hollywood industry along these lines (and possibly in reply to the *Life* critique) by Jack Sayers in *Look* magazine. Here, in this significantly short and therefore somewhat dogmatic article, we read of the vast sums of money to be poured into the industry next year, of plans for the improvement of cinemas ("hundreds of old, inadequate houses have been shut down!"), and of "the new enthusiasm in Hollywood."[10] Yet this feature was frontispieced by a

[6] Coughlan, p. 103.

[7] Geoffrey Wagner, "The Impact of Television on American Life," *Manchester Guardian*, August 21, 1951, p. 5.

[8] Documentation supplied on request. G.W.

[9] Coughlan, p. 104.

[10] Jack Sayers, "Who Says Hollywood Is Dying?" in *Look*, October 23, 1951, p. 144.

photograph of a crowd waiting to go into *The Great Caruso,* and the films illustrating that "movies are better than ever" included *David and Bathsheba, That's My Boy, Meet Me After the Show, Angels in the Outfield, Ten Tall Men, Quo Vadis,* and *Meet Danny Wilson.* Someone is apparently, as Henry Miller might say, out of whack. For the audience deserting the cinemas is not the three- or six-day circuit audience: it has been estimated that in the quick-circuit cinemas of this country, carrying the so-called "habit" film, only 20 per cent are over thirty years of age, whereas in the art, or little, cinemas, showing "nonhabit," or adult, films, 80 per cent are over thirty. It is in this group that the lost audience can be found; television and the "habit" film share, to a great extent, their mute and mutual audience. If, therefore, we are to recapture those citizens who are deserting the cinema, films must clearly be made better, in the sense of more adult. The cry of the crass producer, "We aren't making pictures for the critics," has rebounded with a vengeance: it now reads, "We aren't making pictures for the public," if, as has been estimated, a lost audience of fifty million people are abandoning the cinema because they are only interested in artistic films.

This, then, is the malady; in order to try to evolve some remedy, let us glance, first, at another patient who has suffered similarly, the British film industry. During the last war England virtually began a tradition of serious, adult cinema; there had been, it is true, sporadic instances of good English pictures previous to this, but in no sense could one say, before the war, as one may today, that one expects an exported British movie to be a "nonhabit," or more adult than average, article. It can be claimed that one man, striking with energy and imagination at this opportune moment, effectively created the British prestige cinema. This was Filippo del Giudice who, over a very few years, produced thirty-five films, including *In Which We Serve, The Way Ahead, The Way to the Stars, Odd Man Out, Man of Two Worlds, School for Secrets, Blithe Spirit, Tawny Pipit, Chance of a Lifetime, Henry V,* and

Hamlet, to mention a few that come immediately to mind. Including *Henry V,* all these films, constituting a remarkable record of quality, were made for an average of £200,000, about half the amount spent by most English producers operating at that time (one spending, contemporaneously, ten times as much as this on a single film). All these movies were powerful commercial successes; *Henry V* has grossed fifteen million dollars in its limited specialized release in the United States (thus, far exceeding the once optimistic estimate of Grad Sears, vice-president of United Artists, and this does not include general release, television, radio, or other contracts). Yet, at the time of production, Del Giudice was unable to obtain a "release contract" from the distributors who were controlling the capital for this film. Most of Del Giudice's movies have done exceptionally well in America, and all of them have considerable life expectancy. This is a quality not to be overlooked, incidentally, in these days when old films may come in very useful—*Ninotchka,* as Seldes acutely observes, currently demonstrating that Hollywood's heart was in the right place as far back as 1939.

In short, Del Giudice effected a *coup d'état* in the British film industry and it was not for nothing that he was called, by the historiographer of the cinema of the period, "a man with a genius for intuitive decisions of a type all too rare in the British film industry."[11] The challenge he made was primarily twofold; he gave talented directors a chance to make the sort of films they themselves wanted to make (divorcing themselves from the "star" system, etc.), and he proved, at what we have seen to be a crucial moment, that he could capture wide, international audiences with adult pictures. In fact, the film industry in England today is not living off the "habit" film, the so-called "safe" Sidney Box picture at all; it survives—what is left of it—on the earnings of adult films

[11] Basil Wright, "The Director: Carol Reed," *Films in 1951* (Festival of Britian Publication of the British Film Institute), p. 12; this was reprinted from Wright's *The Year's Work in the Film (1949)* (London: Longmans Green, 1950), which contains a notable tribute to Del Giudice from this point of view.

made either by Del Giudice or his followers. Because of his special situation at that time, Del Giudice was sensitive to the coming crisis and anticipated it in published and uttered work. In his *Principles and Policies* (a "house organ," as it were, put out chiefly for bankers), for instance, he tells us that Noel Coward and Laurence Olivier, both of whom Del Giudice wished to support as directors, were considered "box-office poison" by the Wardour Street moguls when he wished to produce films by them, and he was refused capital for *In Which We Serve* on these grounds. Actually, *In Which We Serve* made more than three times its cost in England and was the highest grossing English picture in the United States up to that time. Again, in the case of *Tawny Pipit,* Del Giudice has written: "Bernard Miles can bear witness to all the accusation and vituperation I had from the merchants when I was responsible for a film entitled *Tawny Pipit*. . . . I was told by the merchants that the film could never be a success. . . ."[12]

Yet Del Giudice refused to compromise, and this quiet, unpretentious picture was a commercial and critical success in England, America, and the Continent. Why, then, was Del Giudice refused money by the National Film Finance Corporation in England after such results, and "even though" (as he put it in his unanswered letter to the president of the Board of Trade in August, 1949, published in Del Giudice's *Cri du Coeur* of 1949) "my bank was prepared to continue the help which they have generously given me, provided that the Film Finance Corporation, formed for the purpose of supporting British films, would take some share of the risk"? Why, when his *Chance of a Lifetime* was recently released in this country, anticipating in subject matter and quality *The Whistle Blows At Eaton Falls,* was Del Giudice's name deleted from the copy, the film not advertised, and only exhibited for two weeks in an out-of-the-way New York theater? Despite this, some critics got to see the film and praised it highly, Richard

[12] *Kinematograph Weekly,* September 18, 1947.

Holden writing that it was "one of the most important human documents filmed anywhere since the war . . . true-to-life proportions hitherto seldom achieved except by Italy's Rossellini and France's Marcel Pagnol."[13]

Why, when the present writer submitted an article on Del Giudice's aims to *Sight and Sound,* a periodical to which he had previously contributed and the organ of the British Film Institute, was it returned with the editor's comment, "*Many* apologies about this: a question of policy is involved—I wanted to use the piece, but there were complications"?

The answer is that the British film industry is today facing such disaster that it is in the interests of concerned bodies to try to prove independent production, such as Del Giudice's, uneconomic. The only three functioning figures of consequence on this level in England now are Rank, Korda, and Balcon, all largely supported by the National Provincial Bank, which again supports the major distributors in a sealed monopoly. Indeed, the Alice-in-Wonderland nature of this monopoly is well illustrated by revealing that Eagle Star Insurance, an important subsidiary of this financial ring, employs as its receiver of debts the same man who is actually Rank's personal financial adviser, the fortunate Mr. John Davis, who thus enjoys the best of both possible worlds with a vengeance. In other words, the interests of distributors, including the huge theater combines like Odeon and Associated British, are so intimately connected with the producers that all are united, as common gamblers, in the failure of the whole system. The fact of the matter is that it is too late in England to put things right; the National Provincial has got in too deep, and the ghastly gamble of the N.F.F.C. with public funds can only be exposed in the specialist pages of the *Financial Times.* This paper, however, has done admirable service in the cause of the sincere producer; in its pages for Friday, January 26, 1951, it charted a decline in cinema audiences similar to that which has taken place

[13] Review, *Saturday Review of Literature,* March 10, 1951.

in the United States, and substantiated what inadequate producers hate to admit, namely that today, in England, with the widening of education, bad pictures by and large lose money, good ones gain it. More recently, Nicholas Davenport has been able to expose the situation without restraint. Discussing the increase in seat prices in English cinemas, Davenport writes:

When a Minister of the Crown is congratulated on both sides of the house on the successful conclusion of a trade negotiation it is pretty certain that the long-suffering British public is being made to pay for it . . . it is difficult to say whether the higher seat prices will bring in the estimated increase in revenue. Will the customer meet the 3d. increase by taking a lower-priced seat? Not, perhaps, if it is a good film, but if it is a bad or indifferent film his "sales" resistance may well be stiffened. . . . This happily allows the National Film Finance Corporation to fade away. It has about £500,000 left of its £6 m. and it has proved in three years (what was clear at the outset) that a public money-lending Board, chosen by the Treasury for its professional eminence in the City and its ignorance of films, was not the right body for bringing succour and sense to British film production. Moreover, it made the ghastly mistake of lending public money in its last phase to assist the two monopolistic theatre combines, Odeon and Associated British, to finance the production of their quota films. Having proved independent production to be uneconomic it sold the survivors into slavery.[14]

In brief, the British film industry is financially bankrupt; it is not, it will be objected, culturally so. Good films are still made there. But this itself is in effect a concession to Del Giudice, who showed that the prestige film paid, especially in America. Further, the chief English directors now working began—and, some say, completed—their best work under his aegis. Yet does it remain an industry at all, when only 10 per cent of the union force is employed? A chief production executive of Two Cities is currently reported selling ice cream in Brighton.

[14] Nicholas Davenport, "The New Deal for Films," the *Financial Times*, July 28, 1951.

If this, then, is the fate of British film, what lesson can we in America learn, in order to avoid a similar conclusion for the great dream factory itself? Seldes answers as follows:

> For their own prosperity the movies have to invent a system of making and marketing two kinds of picture simultaneously. . . . At the moment the chief propagandist for a supplementary system of distribution is Filippo del Giudice. . . . He begins with the revolutionary principle that management must not interfere with the making of a picture once the talents have been engaged; his second principle is that production must be independent of distribution. Temperamentally incapable of making the established formula picture, which he calls the "habit film". . . he has seen a picture do well in a medium-sized theater for four weeks, drop below the profit line for two or three weeks thereafter, and pick up from that moment to run for six months; during the critical period the exhibitor was prevented by contract from taking the picture off.[15]

Let us examine these two principles. First, that management must not interfere with the making of a film; here Del Giudice was one of the first producers to give his directors full artistic freedom, of a kind unknown in the British film industry before. Sir Laurence Olivier, David Lean, Carol Reed, Roy Boulting, Noel Coward, and others all testified to this in their speeches at the B.F.A. Prize Ceremony of 1949.[16] Sir Laurence especially stressed his debt in this respect, saying, on another occasion, that Del Giudice gave his directors and artists "the freedom they ask. I know of no one else in British films so kind, generous, imaginative and courageous."[17] The record of directors such as Carol Reed and Bernard Miles, originally encouraged by Del Giudice, shows that they developed very quickly under him. At the same time an objection must, in fairness, be voiced. In an article, generally favorable to Del Giudice, Mr. Peter Price writes that "he gave the film makers such a heady draught of self-importance that they were soon understandably giddy. . . . Interference is a real

[15] Seldes, p. 45.
[16] Reported in the *Cinema*, June 1, 1949.
[17] Quoted, *Leader Magazine*, June 21, 1947, p. 17.

enough danger, and so is a vacuum."[18] Is it? One wonders. Which would you rather have, the "vacuum" of *Henry V,* the "giddiness" of *Hamlet,* or the fussy denigrating interference of the kind of producer Dr. Powdermaker has made immortal in the shape of Mr. Schizo?

Finally, the second principle, the segregation of production and distribution: on this Del Giudice insists. For this is, in large measure, the organizational crisis behind the motion picture industry in America today. A producer, working within the present monetary systen, is coerced into obtaining capital at the pistol point of the "release contract," or, as it is sometimes known, the "distribution guarantee." Bankers, that is, will supply the money if distributors (whom, as is the case in England, they may also be behind) will supply the release contract. Thus distributors, and/or their executives, will only grant these to films they approve for circulation, and it is naturally in their interest to propagate the "habit" film and to demote the prestige film (accompanying it with the usual smears of "extravagance,"[19] etc.). This is what is alienating the lost audience; for a producer who cannot make good films must show, or try to show, that only bad films pay—which is swiftly becoming the reverse of the case. Del Giudice, in company with Seldes it appears, finds this situation intolerable, especially inasmuch as it interferes with the artistic side of production, since scripts will be read, rushes seen, and both possibly vetoed, by the agents of distributors who, history has shown, are hardly judges

[18] Peter Price, "The Impressario Urge," *Sight and Sound,* November, 1950.

[19] This charge was recently and characteristically reiterated in the third installment of a series of articles adapted by Ronald Hilborne from Alan Wood's forthcoming book, *Mr. Rank,* and entitled "The Best Films of Our Lives?" in *Everybody's Weekly,* March 8, 1952. While tribute was paid to Del Giudice in this article ("the main architect of the British film renaissance"), the old story that he spent "lavishly" was hinted at. The facts are different; Del Giudice's article in the *Kinematograph Weekly,* September 18, 1947, goes on record as proving that his average expenditure per picture, including *Henry V,* was as above stated, £200,000. It is worth turning up the *Everybody's* article, however, since it shows in anecdotal form the sort of atmosphere in which Del Giudice had to work and which he has done so much to fight. Thus we read: "Rank inquired curiously if anyone had heard how *Hamlet* was getting on. One executive spoke up with justifiable pride. 'Yes, Mr. Rank. Larry let me see half an hour's rushes the other night.' 'And what's it like?' 'Mr. Rank, it's wonderful. You wouldn't even know it was Shakespeare.' "

of taste. *Henry V,* which we have seen to be a commercial success, was not at first granted a release contract, although it was made with Rank capital and thus in the interests of the Rank-controlled circuit. The opposition to the making of this lovely film was enormous and has been codified by the biographer of the Oliviers, Mr. Felix Barker, who recently wrote, "During those first months of 1943, everyone said that Del Giudice was mad to contemplate it and Olivier madder still to take it on."[20] *Henry V* is an excellent instance for our argument here, since it showed that the big organizations cannot be anything but inimical to the experimental in cinema; the film was made *in spite of,* not *because of* Rank. That is to say, *Henry V* could not actually get a distribution guarantee although it was going on a Rank circuit; the two main reasons for this were because it was not considered a money-maker by the merchants, and because, as David Chancellor, Rank's press officer, has admitted, Rank at that time had over nine million pounds invested in unshown products. Such is the danger of a close production-distribution system.

Del Giudice's view of this problem is, however, optimistic. He believes that higher education in America is making for more discriminating audiences, already numbering the lost audience—those refusing to see stereotyped pictures—as fifty millions. The films to be made for this group must be handled in the way Sam Goldwyn so successfully dealt with *The Best Years of Our Lives,* another film which, as Seldes has shown, met immense opposition in the production stage, especially on account of its adverse characterization of a banker. Goldwyn rented small cinemas for an extended run; the result was that, showing for a time in only eight cinemas in the United States, the film grossed Goldwyn eleven million dollars, at last reports, and this does not include, of course, the inevitable longevity of this quality picture. The showing, also, of recent French and Italian successes, all beginning in small art cinemas, where credit was built up over a long period, has

[20] Felix Barker, "Sir Laurence Olivier," *Evening News,* June 7, 1951.

confirmed the method. Thus Del Giudice, in his forthcoming American program, intends to avoid the circuits and to contact independent theaters, with a guaranteed showing of not less than six weeks. The owners of such theaters, uncommitted to the circuit system, will be encouraged to participate on a percentage of country-wide profits, and by other contractual advantages. This simple answer to the suicidal distributive system may well dismantle in time the existent machinery and put emphasis, at the fount of the industry, on the right type of film to be produced. The huge overheads of the present system will be avoided; at present, with slight variants in states, a picture prospecting a boon of twenty million dollars, as a well-known release is now said to be, will lose three million dollars at the production end, under the present arrangement of 40 per cent tax on the gross of theaters, 50 per cent to theater owners, 40 per cent to distributors, and 60 per cent of the balance of overhead expenses to pay the top executives, or so-called front-office men, those men of whom John Davenport has recently written: "these men, haunted by fear, living in a ghastly dream world, jealous and resentful of the artists and creative people who make their fortunes, often illiterate and usually corrupt, who are the rulers of the Hollywood film industry."[21]

Del Giudice aims to shortcut the present wasteful distributive procedures. With the cheap production he has shown he can use, there is not the pressure for the huge return. Moreover, after showing a success in a number of small theaters all over the country, the producer can later impose conditions on the big circuit systems, whereas, previously, the producer was at the mercy of the distributors. Other sources of revenue, such as the exploitation of the 16-mm. film business, are also open to the independent producer, making "nonhabit," or adult, vehicles.

"Business inefficiency, deep frustration in human relations, and a high number of unentertaining second- and third-rate movies"—

[21] John Davenport, "Uneasy Dreams," *Observer*, September 23, 1951, p. 7.

such is the indictment of Hollywood by a leading British critic today.[22] What is quite clear is that this waste can go on no longer. As Coughlan writes, in *Life,* "Amid all the uncertainties, one thing is clear: the kind of movies that in the past have hitchhiked their way to a profit because of national habit and a slick distribution system can do so no longer. They and the people who make them are finished."[23]

Samuel Goldwyn, in his recent article in *Collier's,* where he admits that "there must be approximately 130,000,000 Americans who do *not* see any given picture which Hollywood produces,"[24] makes virtually the same conclusion as Del Giudice, if we substitute for Goldwyn's "Hollywood" in the following paragraph the words "sincere producers."

> People leave their television sets and flock to buy tickets for a kind and quality of entertainment that only Hollywood can turn out. But because of the poor pictures, which mass production tends to bring about, the public has been inclined to stay away . . . the motion-picture industry must devote itself to making *better* pictures instead of to making *more* pictures.[25]

The lifeblood of American culture springs from the genius and spontaneity of individual effort; it would be more than tragic if the independent producer—independent in the full sense of the word—should be steam-rollered out of existence here, as has happened in England. At the opening of *Henry V* at the City Center in New York, Sir Laurence Olivier concluded his speech of indebtedness to Del Giudice with the words: "I think his name means 'judge' in Italian—time alone will show whether his name has any symbolical significance or not."

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[22] Dilys Powell, "The Dream Factory," *Sunday Times,* October 7, 1951, p. 2.
[23] Coughlan, p. 114.
[24] Goldwyn, p. 92.
[25] *Ibid.,* p. 93.

The Feature Carries on the Documentary Tradition

SIR MICHAEL BALCON

SIR MICHAEL BALCON has had some twenty years of experience in English films, being production head of Gainsborough Pictures, which he founded, later of Gaumont-British, and now of Ealing Studios. Among his productions have been *A Yank at Oxford, The Overlanders, Tight Little Island, I Know Where I'm Going, Kind Hearts and Coronets,* and *The Amazing Mr. Beecham.* This article is reprinted with the kind permission of UNESCO's *Courier.*

IN THE British cinema, there is one outstanding success story: not the story of an individual, but of an approach, a point of view. With the reservations that any generalization requires, it can be said to have started with the documentary movement in the late '20's and early '30's. Documentary, said Paul Rotha, "has an important purpose to fulfill in bringing to life familiar things and people, so that their place in the scheme of things which we call society may be honestly assessed." And John Grierson declared that "it promised us the power of making drama from our daily events and poetry of our problems."

I need hardly say that the documentary film makers succeeded magnificently. Not only did they say things that, as everyone with the least spark of social consciousness realized, needed saying badly, but they developed new film techniques and trained new personnel, in spite of frequent lack of support and difficulties. In the period between the wars, when the British feature-film industry had too often to concentrate on mere survival, it was the quality of the documentaries that kept the reputation of the industry as a whole alive abroad. That is the great compliment that I, as a feature-film producer, can pay them.

Then came the war, and the industry's forces combined, regardless of whether they came from documentary or feature, to wield what was soon realized to be a major weapon of war: the result was naturally called feature-documentary, and, equally naturally, its

quality profited by this new liaison: the British wartime output as a whole was far in advance of what had gone before. This is not altogether surprising, since a national emergency always seems to act as a tremendous stimulus. What is rather surprising is that the general feeling after such an emergency—to return to the conditions that existed before as quickly as possible—did not arise in the British film industry. The feature film had learned a great lesson: its responsibility as an influence on the public, its possibilities as an informative and didactic force. The aims were now similar to those propounded by the documentaries of the '30's.

If I say, therefore, that the feature film has largely taken over from the documentary, I do not in any way mean to belittle the latter. On the contrary, this state of affairs means that their propaganda has achieved its purpose: the beliefs of the few of the '30's are now widely held, their aims have become generally accepted as being worthwhile, their approach to the screen has been vindicated. Of course, at the moment, this is only the beginning of a new trend in the British industry, and is not yet completely established. But I am convinced that it is spreading, and that we are on the right lines: already a number of the better-known documentarists are working in feature films: under John Grierson, the executive producer of one of the news groups organized by the National Film Finance Corporation, are John Eldridge and Terry Bishop, on loan from Ealing Studios, Pat Jackson and Paul Rotha have both just directed their first feature film, and I think it significant that in the program on *Future trends* in a documentary series organized by the British Film Institute, *Seven Days to Noon* should be shown in extract.

Let us examine, then, a little more closely, how the feature film today is carrying on the documentary tradition. More and more it is using for its backgrounds parts of the contemporary scene such as made the subject matter of the past documentary: farm, slum, factory. More and more it makes use of characters and action arising out of contemporary problems, such as were handled by

the documentarists: labor problems, class problems, problems of psychology. More and more it is prepared to break away from the studio and its hothouse plots, to use real places and real people. Of course, there are disadvantages: the problem that makes a background in a feature film can often not be examined as carefully as might be desirable, as profoundly as could be done in a documentary concentrating only on the one subject. But on the other hand, the potential influence of the feature film is much greater: not only does it reach a wider audience, but since feature films by their nature must treat all problems in terms of individual human beings, they avoid the slightly impersonal application to "the people" that often mars documentaries, and, therefore, bring home to the individual human beings that make up the audience the problems in a much more personal and impressive way.

That, I think, is the road we should continue to travel, but it still requires a new approach from many people. Above all, it means that all concerned with the creation of script and film must become careful students of the contemporary world; they must know and feel their people and their country, the difficulties and joys that are the stuff of ordinary life, so that they can re-create it on the screen. If the film industries of all countries did this honestly and consistently, each bringing their own people to the screens of the world, then indeed we should have made documentary unnecessary, we should be making drama from our daily events and poetry of our problems! In the meantime, the film we are at present producing at Ealing deals with the clash between old and new in colonial administration, and the next will be about the probation system.

The Eternal Problem

HUGH GRAY

HUGH GRAY has written films for British motion picture studios as well as documentaries for the British government, and has worked for the British Broadcasting Corporation. He was introduced to the United States through the RAF Film Unit and is currently writing for the American screen.

"Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!" What could be truer of the history of show business, unless it is perhaps the statement that the more we have of the same thing, the more we feel the need of a change? Certainly from Aeschylus to Zanuck has been one long "crucial moment," in some form or another.

Think, for example, of the nervous strain on the poor playwrights as they waited for the announcement of the Athenian "Oscars." That it was altogether too much for Aristophanes is obvious from the painfully embarrassing pleadings that interrupt, say, a brilliant attack on the Athenian war party or a less successful satirizing of Socrates and the philosophers. By comparison, the wording of the space taken in our trade papers by prospective candidates for academy honors is a model of restraint and dignity. It is possible that the Roman *avant-garde* that wanted to put on serious stuff like Seneca was convinced that Nero, with his supercolossal follies in which he insisted on starring, was killing the theater stone-dead. I do not know what crises and problems the producers of medieval miracle plays and mysteries faced, but I am sure that such existed. The quality of Shakespeare's comic relief can only be explained away on the grounds that, as a showman, he had a definite box-office problem. I seem to remember that Farquhar of *Beaux Stratagem* fame—surely a "good play"—somewhere insisted that theatrical success is to be judged by the number of people in the pit and the stalls, not by how far your play follows the rules of Aristotle's *Poetics*. The few who wrote about the English theater in the late 17th, 18th, and early 19th centuries—among them Lamb and Hazlitt—tell us of its woes and tribulations.

In our own century we all know how grossly exaggerated have been the repeated announcements by journalist Cassandras of the death of the theater. The movie, among other things, was sure to kill it. It has not, of course. Instead, practically as soon as it passed beyond the nickelodeon stage, the movie began to suffer from almost identically the same problems as the theater.

So, when Mr. Wagner in his article "The Lost Audience" tells me that at "this crucial moment" in the development of the motion picture "decisions are being taken on (the producer) level that may well fix the future career of the medium" my flesh does not exactly creep.

When he tells me horrible stories about corrupt producers and bankers with their wicked plans, I remember, among other things, the stories of theatrical producers of my boyhood, with their curling mustachios, their large watch chains, and their top hats, and I do not smell death in the air, unless this is the same thing as the smell of fertilizer that goes with the eternal transition of things according to their seasons.

He has a point, however, a point that many have long had: better pictures will stop the rot at the box office by stopping it on the screen. He records a solution from the experience of Mr. Filippo del Giudice—an exile, temporarily, I hope from a profession he once adorned.

Nothing, presumably, will change the existing set-up in Hollywood and England. Therefore the only hope for better pictures lies with the independent producer. Let him make pictures on an economical budget for independent theaters where they can be kept running long enough to sell themselves. The mature public, dissatisfied with routine trash, is large enough to ensure not only this return but, ultimately, a handsome profit.

The implications must be that the wicked and intransigent moguls, being confounded in their arguments, will ultimately follow suit and make better films. All will then be well.

In his anxiety to establish his point, Mr. Wagner has been, it seems to me, a little less than accurate in estimating all the causes

for the recent decline in box-office receipts and a little less than fair, both by name and implication, to a number of people both in Hollywood and in England. As a result, he has given a somewhat distorted picture of the movie "scene" in both places.

I have not gone into the statistics of the extent to which TV is keeping people—albeit only on the threshold of literacy—away from the movies, so I can only record my impressions. From all I have overheard or heard in actual conversation during the past year, TV is keeping people at home who could otherwise go to the movies.

Indeed, it has been said by people of experience, that TV will ultimately impose on movies the very thing that Mr. Wagner is looking for—better movies to draw people away from their "sets."

There is again another explanation, at least in the United States, for a percentage of the failing box-office receipts. In the past two years the cost of living has risen so high that people simply cannot afford to go to movies anymore, or, at least, so frequently. This has been said to me over and over again. It is particularly applicable to the man and woman of thirty-five and over. By that time they have mostly reached the limit of their families and expenses are crowding in on them.

However, these are points I am not concerned to magnify here. I am more concerned over the impression that Mr. Wagner gives of the lack of serious development in movies over the past years, except for the activities of Mr. del Giudice.

Let me be the first to salute Mr. del Giudice—an old friend, with whom I once had the pleasure of working—for his splendid achievements. I sincerely hope that he will soon find new opportunities for his remarkable abilities. However, I feel that he would be the first to be embarrassed by the statement that he "effectively created the British prestige cinema."

Sir Michael Balcon elsewhere in this issue writes of his recent activities. But this is only one part of the story. It began a very long while ago—in the postwar years of the 'twenties.

No one desired more consistently or more sincerely to bring British movies out of the terrible slump into which they were thrown by World War I than Sir Michael Balcon, first at the Gainsborough Studios and then at Shepherd's Bush. Those of us who were there when the new studios were opened at Shepherd's Bush in 1932 vividly remember the enthusiasm, the ideals, the drive of Balcon. We felt that the British film industry was on its feet again!

In view of all that has subsequently happened—the widening of the scope, the great pictures that have since been made in England—to recall *Rome Express, The Good Companions,* and the countless other films of those days may seem merely sentimental; but, in relation to their time and to the existing conditions of the industry at the moment of their making, they were great strides along the path. They were foundation stones.

It was at Shepherd's Bush that Hitchcock recaptured his old magic with such pictures as *Thirty-Nine Steps.* Balcon it was who backed Flaherty in the making of *Man of Aran.* In those studios, too, were assembled young men who subsequently became the solid technicians of a rejuvenated industry. It was at Ealing Studios during the dark and early days of World War II that the light of the British movies was kept burning, before Del Giudice lit his torch at Denham.

In the middle 'thirties there came the miracle of *The Private Life of Henry VIII* performed by Sir Alexander Korda. Suddenly the United States was vividly aware of the British film industry. Was this not prestige? There followed *The Scarlet Pimpernel* with Leslie Howard. Then *The Shape of Things to Come, The Ghost Goes West, Rembrandt, Saunders of the River, Drums, Four Feathers.* There was nothing wrong with these films by all entertainment standards. On the strength of Korda's prestige, the British industry acquired a new home at Denham built in consultation with skilled American advisers.

Hollywood was indeed aware of British films. The trickle into

British studios of American actors and directors who were satisfied that by associating themselves with British production they would lose nothing of their box-office standing, which started at Shepherd's Bush, became a stream at Denham.

It was Korda, then, who built upon the prestige of British pictures the studios in which Del Giudice rose to such heights. Mr. Wagner has adequately recorded what Del Giudice did there. I am merely concerned, for the sake of keeping the record straight, to recall that he had worthy predecessors who still survive.

Now let us turn for a moment to the American scene. On this subject I can quote no keener observer, no closer critic than Mr. Bosley Crowther of the New York *Times*. In a recent article in the UNESCO *Courier* he seems to me to answer some, at least, of the criticisms quoted by Mr. Wagner from the pen of Mr. Seldes and others:

> There was a time when it was standard—among the sharper observers at least—to take a dim view of the social and intellectual contributions of American films, particularly with respect to the picture of American life which they presented to the world. Fair and responsible critics, both at home and abroad, could find little more in Hollywood movies than glorification of sex and gold, of Cinderella and gangsters, of romance and opulence, as though these were solely representative of the culture and interest of our land. . . .
>
> Hollywood still makes lots of cheap films which follow the hackneyed formulas. It also grinds out some costly epics which gild human nature with bright romance . . . and yet a close observation of American films over the past six years—that is to say of our feature pictures released since World War II—has conveyed the gratifying realization that American producers have become more sharply aware of the responsibility of the motion picture medium as a cultural force for social good than ever before. . . .

He then goes on to cite the films that have dealt with these various problems, among them the racial problems: *Crossfire, Gentlemen's Agreement, Home of the Brave, Pinky, Lost Boundaries,*

No Way Out, Intruder in the Dust, Go for Broke. He draws attention again to *The Best Years of Our Lives* which

. . . not only understood in universal terms the emotions of servicemen returning home after the war, but it fairly expressed the veteran's yearning for a fuller democracy and opportunity for all in the post-war world.

The American scene—in its light and its dark sides—has also been authentically displayed in such fine and flavorsome pictures as *Sitting Pretty, Father of the Bride, Father's Little Dividend, The Jackpot, Miracle on Thirty-Fourth Street, Born Yesterday,* and *All About Eve,* which are only a few of the many rich American post-war comedies; and in *The Asphalt Jungle, The Snake Pit, The Quiet One, Sunset Boulevard, Ace in the Hole,* and *Treasure of Sierra Madre* [he might have added *Place in the Sun* and *Streetcar Named Desire*] which have been dramas of the darker side.

To be sure, the American Film industry should not be credited with a paramount aim to make pictures that will be ambassadors of culture and enlightenment in the world. Its desire is to turn out pictures that will attract and absorb an audience. But in catering to the public's interest in the really pertinent dramas of our times, the American producers may be said to be contributing much more constructively than ever before to the good of man.

Much still remains to be done, of course. The way to do it may be that suggested by Mr. Wagner after Del Giudice. Are not independent producers like Mr. Stanley Kramer already in the field?

And now to return, by way of conclusion, to the British scene. I would not be so foolish, having given honor where honor is due, as to deny that the over-all picture for the moment is an unhappy one. Mr. Roger Manvell in his admirable "Pelican" entitled *Film* already summed up the situation two years ago.

British film production reached the climax of its dilemma in 1948. Production costs for a first feature film averaged £220,000 [over $1,000,000]. Cinema attendances were down on the immediate post-war peak of over 30 millions a week, the loose money in the public pocket had been drained off. An order went out for retrenchment: films had got to cost less and earn more. Retrenchment of costs might

not do much harm; but retrenchment in taste, which was what the "earn more" clause meant was surely in the long run false economy. There will always be, it is true, a basic audience of many millions for competent films made to formula, but it is the little extra value, if only on grounds of mere novelty, that increases the cinema queue. A quarter of the people in Britain virtually never go to the pictures. Only an increased quality in values can convert a reasonable proportion of these people into film goers.

Now, Mr. Wagner, reaffirming this unhappy situation, adds a touch of mystery to it, of behind the scenes shennanigans by bankers and producers. He further titillates, without satisfying, our curiosity by dark hints. I, for one, am dying to know what precisely lay behind the refusal of *Sight and Sound* on grounds of "policy" to publish his article on Mr. del Giudice.

Is it really the end? What lies ahead for the eternally storm-tossed show business? Today, for example, the news is of a movement toward making films in England by producers of the caliber of William Wyler and John Huston. What would attract them to the home of a lost cause? Again, what are the future plans of the Boulting brothers? Of the Woolf brothers? Is it not the old, old story of show business? What is grim today may be glorious tomorrow.

Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.

The Appeal of the Moving Picture

JAY HALEY

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NOT LONG AGO the *New Yorker* revealed why people go to the movies. According to the "Talk of the Town" department:

A professional woman who is having a new drainboard built on her kitchen sink came home the other evening to find the following note from the officiating carpenter:

"Casing too wide, has to be trimmed. Nothing standard any longer! May be able to finish this week, but will not be in tomorrow. Must take a movie in, otherwise go batty."

Here is the reason for the popularity of moving pictures: they help keep people from going batty.

Most popular and professional writers on the mass media of communication say that people go to the movies or listen to radio dramas to "get away from their problems." This is the idea of "escape," and it is the most common explanation for movie attendance. People want to be transported into "another world" according to this theory, and because this "other world" *has no relation to their own world* people feel emotional relief when they observe it. The theory is worth more discussion than it has received. If people want from the mass media a "world" which has no relation to their own, the content presented is relatively unimportant. If the audience goes to the movies to find something there that *is* related to their own lives, then it's a different matter altogether. A survey of the opinions of social scientists on this subject was given by Joseph T. Klapper in *The Effects of Mass Media: A Report to the Director of the Public Library Inquiry*.[1] In a chapter with the imposing title, "The Functions and Effects of Escapistic

[1] Columbia University, Bureau of Applied Social Research, August, 1949.

Communication," Klapper writes that there is "some difference of opinion among social scientists and critics" as to what "escapistic communication" is. He tries "to build up a kind of common denominator definition . . . with which the concensus of opinion would not disagree." He finally decides that escapistic communication is *"that communication which provides emotional release by diverting the reader from his own problems or anxieties."* By the word "diverting," Klapper means that the attention of the audience is drawn away from their problems and anxieties because they are presented with content which has no relation to them. He reaches this through two research studies on reading and two on the soap opera, and he says:

> Quotation and analysis might be carried on for volumes, but the four definitions or connotative Gestalts we have examined will perhaps suffice. All four agree on two points: (1) that to be called escapistic, communication must provide emotional release, and (2) that to provide such release, content must deal with situations and problems unlike those of the reader or listener.

Some research studies are based on the preconceived idea that the audience wants to "escape into another world," and Klapper can find support for his point of view. However, there are studies which directly contradict the theory that entertainment in the mass media consists in the presentation of problems "unlike those of the reader or listener." Because Klapper happens to use the latter kind of study to build up his definition, he is forced to distort its findings. By taking a look at this distortion we can illustrate our own point of view and our contention that many social scientists are not objective on this matter.

Klapper uses the results of a study called "The World of the Daytime Serial," by Rudolf Arnheim.[2] He says of Arnheim's study:

> His major finding is that the "world of the daytime serial" is very different from the world of the listener's living. He notes, for example,

[2] In Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Frank N. Stanton, eds., *Radio Research, 1942–1943* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944).

that no unskilled laborers, miners, or factory workers played an important role in a single serial; that the disproportionately frequent wealthy characters pay courtship to the attractiveness or efficiency, or both, of the middle class people; that the characters are continually beset by gigantic problems, 47% of which involve personal relations, and only 15% of which are caused by non-personal forces; that poetic justice almost always obtains, largely through *deus ex machina.*

This is a good expression of popular belief about the soap opera, but it is hardly an accurate comment on Arnheim's study. It is true that Arnheim found no unskilled laborer, miner, or factory worker playing an important role in a single serial. However, he found that the second most common character was the housewife. It is the world of housewives that these serials are concerned with, not the world of working men. Arnheim gave as a reason for this finding, "The frequent appearance of housewives can be explained by their predominance in the audience." The most common character in the soap opera is the professional, and Arnheim finds his appearance "less easy to explain." However, he says: "Society people, high officials, and big businessmen do not appear more frequently than small business people and employees whose status can be supposed to correspond most closely to the average listener's."

Klapper says Arnheim's major finding is "that the 'world of the daytime serial' is very different from the world of the listener's actual living." If anyone wishes to prove that the audience wants "escape to another world" he is forced to make this his major point. Arnheim actually says that the most common setting for the soap opera is the middle-sized or small town, and he suggests:

The preference for middle towns may reflect an intention of catering to listeners who belong to just that social setting. In this case, we would have to note that these listeners are believed to prefer plays which, at least outwardly, reproduce the framework of their own life rather than permitting access to the higher sphere of metropolitan life.

But whether a large or a small place is chosen as a setting, there is certainly no tendency toward fleeing regular life in a community.

And he adds later, "Radio serials . . . do their best to create the impression that they present 'real life.' "

Arnheim's study shows that in the crudest form of drama, the soap opera, the setting, and the social status of the characters can be the same as that of members of the audience. If this is true, the audience is not trying to escape into a different world, but is seeking a world which is similar in certain ways to its own. More sophisticated audiences may not require a similar physical setting. A movie can be in any number of settings, and an artistic Broadway play may have a background of sheer fantasy. However, the audience for more sophisticated drama also seeks a world which is similar to its own, although the similarity may be less obvious to the observer.

As for the content of the soap opera, Arnheim suggests:

> Radio serials attract the listener by offering her a portrait of her own shortcomings, which lead to constant trouble, and of her inability to help herself. In spite of the unpleasantness of this picture, resonance can be enjoyed because identification is drawn away from it and transferred to an ideal type of the perfect, efficient woman who possesses power and prestige and who has to suffer not by her own fault but by the fault of others. This enables the listener to view (and to criticize) her own personal shortcomings, which lead to trouble, as occurring in 'other,' less perfect creatures. Still these shortcomings, being her own after all, are presented as springing from mere weakness of character; reform is possible and often achieved. No such tolerance is needed for the outside-causes of the listener's suffering. Her resentment against them is confirmed and nourished by the introduction of the villain-type, who also personifies and assumes responsibility for any detrimental effects of nonpersonal forces (in whose immunity the listener is interested), such as the institutions of society.

Despite the complexity of this paragraph Arnheim shows an intimate relationship between the content of the soap opera and the personal lives of the listeners. The listener is not attempting to "get away" from her problems; she is seeking a solution for them.

Klapper's error is not an uncommon one. It happens that con-

tent analysis is compiling enough evidence to prove just the opposite of his thesis. People are seeking help, not escape. Although not expressed in the jargon of social science, this seems to be the idea expressed by the carpenter who "must take a movie in, otherwise go batty."

A more formal statement of this idea would run somewhat as follows. As contemporary man experiences life it is not ordered; it is often chaotic, confusing, and bewildering. There is no apparent sequence of events, and people have a disconcerting way of seeming to act without motivation. In the face of this, people seek the comparative safety of a more orderly world. A psychologist made this point when, addressing professional writers for the mass media of communication, he said:

> The order may be real or fictitious; from the point of view of the individual, good or bad. The process may be easy or difficult, but he carries it on at all costs and with whatever skill and intellectual equipment he possesses. . . . We may assume a fundamental need for order in the experience of the individual. This need is a primary condition of his survival as an integrated personality. It may be generalized as a *need for meaning*. Its significance for us lies in this; it is the social function of creative writing to satisfy this need. . . .[3]

The fiction writer selects aspects of life and arranges the material in a meaningful manner. In a drama there is a logical sequence of events, there are understandable people, and there is motivation for every action. Life, instead of being chaotic, seems to fall beautifully into place, and the audience enjoys participating in it.

A number of things become clearer when we see that the moving picture appeals to the "need for meaning" in people. In our industrial society forces operate which produce constant social conflict and change. There are ideological differences from one generation to the next. The family group and the circle of friends tend to lose their cohesiveness and their stabilizing influence. As a result, people are constantly searching for some degree of cer-

[3] Franklin Fearing, "The Interpretive Process," *Proceedings of the Writers' Congress, Los Angeles, 1943* (University of California Press, 1944).

tainty. The moving picture fulfills, on a grander scale, the same function as the legend did in more tranquil times. According to Gordon W. Allport and Leo Postman in *The Psychology of Rumor,*

> . . . legends persist because they embody undying states of mind. They provide answers to the persistent riddles of life, or, with fine or only metaphorical precision, deep human feelings . . . legends were interpretive tools for use during man's brief and confusing existence on earth. . . . The themes dealt with by myths are among the most *important* man ever has to face.

Movies grow less out of the experience of a people than legends do; they are calculatedly manufactured. But, within the limitations set by and upon the manufacturers, they also contain important themes that man has to face. This applies to what are apparently "pure entertainment" films (if they are popular) as well as the most serious social drama.

By looking upon the moving picture as an "interpretive tool" which people unconsciously use, we begin to see the function of the mass media in modern society. The best way to illustrate this function is to use a concept that Walter Lippman presented many years ago in *Public Opinion.* He pointed out that between man and his environment there is inserted a pseudo environment.

> To that pseudo-environment his behavior is a response. . . . For certainly at the level of social life, what is called the adjustment of man to his environment takes place through the medium of fictions.
>
> By fictions I do not mean lies. I mean a representation of the environment which is in lesser or greater degree made by man himself.

Man requires this pseudo environment because

> . . . the real environment is altogether too big, too complex, and too fleeting for direct acquaintance . . . although we have to act in that environment, we have to reconstruct it on a simpler model before we can manage with it. To traverse the world men must have maps of the world. Their persistent difficulty is to secure maps on which their own need, or someone else's need, has not sketched in the coast of Bohemia.

The "persistent difficulty" today is that the mass media make the most important contribution to the pseudo environment of the nation. (Whether they are sketching in the coast of Bohemia is a matter of personal opinion.) It is more than possible that the response of people in their real environment is to a controlled "picture of the world" which they have been exposed to constantly all their lives. Many social scientists recognize the importance of the "news" or "factual" material presented by these media, but they tend to underestimate dramatic content. There must be a powerful appeal involved when seventy million Americans go to the movies every week, when the average citizen listens to the radio about three hours a day, and when people put themselves into debt to buy television sets. Where there is such an appeal there are important needs being satisfied. One of the reasons the dramatic programs tend to be underestimated is because of the lack of recognition or understanding of the power of dramatic content to influence people's attitudes. Pressure groups are apparently quicker to recognize this than are social scientists.

It is the nature of drama that it must deal with characterizations of human beings—or animals with human characteristics in cartoons—operating in specific situations with specific attitude patterns. The "person" on the screen is not a real human being, although the deceptive fact that it is an actual photograph leads the audience to forget it. He is a symbol of a person, and he is performing a symbolic action.[4] The action may not be literally taken from the experience of the audience. Members of the audience may not have been pursued by the police, for example, but they may feel that they are pursued by other forces and they can therefore identify themselves with the action on the screen. If the movie is popular, it means that great numbers of people have been able to identify themselves with, and therefore find meaning in, the characterization, or symbol, presented.

[4] Morris in *Sign Language and Behavior* defines iconic symbols as symbols which resemble in some respects what they stand for. These include rituals, dance, acting, etc., which Morris calls the "iconic performance of action."

This doesn't imply that they all find the same meanings. Just as men of opposing points of view may be united behind a single broad political symbol, so can people of different temperaments find different meanings in the same symbol in a drama.

The members of the audience attend movies to "observe" the actions and attitude patterns presented there. This is a learning situation, but one in which the learning process takes place through the mechanism of identification and is entirely unconscious.[5]

When people are confused by their environment they don't usually turn to the learned journals for understanding. People need to participate in learning, and drama and literature are the result (as is the "fictionalizing" of stories by the press). A man must experience something if he is to learn and use it. He may experience it in actuality, or vicariously through the movies. The little boy on a broomstick pretending he is Hopalong Cassidy is playing, but he is also learning. For that moment he *is* Hopalong Cassidy, just as he is on Saturday afternoon at the movies, and he gains a necessary understanding of his world by playing a different role.

However, if the boy, or the adult, is invited to an academic lecture, or a movie with an admitted "message," he will immediately avoid it. There seems to be something in people which resists objective learning. A housewife faced with the possibility of war, an irritating husband, or prices going up doesn't head for a lecture on international relations, psychology, or economics. She says, "I have to go to a movie tonight or I'll go batty!" What the movie offers her could only be found by a content analysis of the particular film. It probably gives her reassurance by providing an "insight" into human motivations, a reaffirmation of the impor-

[5] A survey which would actually determine what people "liked" in a particular movie, or rather what the movie meant to them, would probably have to be based on the respondent's associations. As unscientific as this may sound it may be the only way, and it is feasible. The writer has worked on surveys for the Survey Research Center of the University of Michigan. These include intensive probing and the recording of every word of the respondents. In the results primary and secondary associations can plainly be seen, and might possibly be coded.

tance of her status, and the comforting feeling that no matter what her life is like something will happen and all will come out well in the end. This is not the only reason why she and millions of others enjoy the mass media, but it is the basic, though often unrecognized, one.

It is apparent that many complex processes are involved when a member of the audience "enjoys" a film. We don't by any means understand all of them yet. Identification, the primary mechanism, is too involved to be objectively measured at this time. We *do* know that the audience is not passive merely because it is sitting quietly. It is dynamically participating in the action of the film. Two things occur to the viewer simultaneously: there is an increase and then a release of emotional tension; and a relief is felt because of an adjustment, perhaps a reaffirmation, of his viewpoint toward life. How this process takes place is a subject for future research. An understanding of the process lies in accepting the idea that there is an intimate relationship between movie content and the personal worlds of the audience.

However, as soon as one suggests that there is an intimate relationship between the content of a movie and the world of the audience, he is confronted with a question. Why are there popular movies which are set on South Sea islands, or in far-off Africa, and which bear no relation to the life of the average American in the audience? Why do people flock to such movies as *King Solomon's Mines,* a movie set in a world unfamiliar to the audience?

If it were true that exotic settings, that is, settings remote from the environment of the audience, were a requirement if a movie is to be popular, then it would seem that the best way to create popular movies would be to set them in such places as Africa. However, there have been quite popular movies with the setting of the small town, or large city, in America—the environment of the audience. And there have been movies with exotic settings which were failures at the box office. The setting varies, and therefore it may be a contributing cause to the popularity of a movie,

but it is not a determining cause. Nor does there seem to be any other one factor which is common to all popular films. The presence of major stars, for example, does not guarantee popularity; movies have succeeded without them and failed with them.

We must logically believe one of two things. Either there is nothing in common between one popular movie and another popular movie, and therefore it is impossible for us to discover why movies are popular. Or we must believe that popular movies *do* have something in common which has yet to be revealed. The contention here is that they do have something in common. Popular movies always present, in an acceptable form, the basic emotional problems facing the audience. An "acceptable form" means that the problems must be disguised enough to be palatable.

This is, of course, a hypothesis. It can only be tested by extensive research. It will seem a logical hypothesis if we discover certain problems present in popular movies and simultaneously present in the lives of the audience.

Perhaps this could be made clearer by briefly discussing *King Solomon's Mines,* a movie set in far-off Africa which seems to have no relation to the life of the average American, and yet was quite popular with him. In order to discuss this as it should be discussed, it would be necessary to do an intensive content analysis of the film and reveal in great detail its basic ideological and psychological themes. Without going into it so deeply perhaps a few suggestions can be made to show that this movie is indeed related to the average American's life.

The story, briefly, concerns a man and woman who make a hazardous trip through the African jungle to find a diamond mine. The woman is seeking her husband who has previously gone into the jungle to find the mine and has never returned. The man is her guide, and though at first he objects to a woman going into the jungle, finally he agrees to accompany her. A love affair develops between them, and ultimately they locate the mine and find the woman's husband dead.

Even in as brief a synopsis as this the basic theme of the movie can be seen, and with it at least one of the subsidiary themes. A thorough analysis would reveal much more. The themes presented in the movie deal with emotional problems faced by the average American, and they are found in other popular moving pictures.

If we briefly take up the basic theme, and divide it into its ideological and psychological aspects, we find the following.

The ideological theme of the movie can be seen in the goal of the man and woman, the two leads with whom the members of the audience identify themselves. They are a couple setting out in quest of a fortune in the face of great obstacles, and by self-sacrifice and determination they meet with success. This is a theme which is popular in America, and as old as Horatio Alger. It is also commonly found in popular movies.

The psychological aspect of the theme becomes apparent when we have a look at the relationship between the man and the woman and the obstacle which lies between them. As the story develops we see that the couple is falling in love, but the possibility that the woman's husband is alive keeps them apart. As their love increases it is implied that they wish to find the husband dead. In other words, their love can be consummated only on the death of the man to whom the woman belongs. The actors are performing a symbolic drama. They are acting out an Oedipal wish fulfillment in which the parent of the opposite sex can be possessed only when the other parent is put out of the way. The woman's husband, in this case, would seem to be playing the role of a parental image. The Oedipal problem is present, if we agree with the psychoanalists, in the unconscious minds of the individuals in the audience, and it can be seen in other popular movies. This theme may seem highly unlikely to many people, particularly to those who believe that the techniques of dream interpretation cannot be applied to the products of the "dream factory." However, it appears so consistently in the movies that we must believe there is

something in it.[6] This Oedipal situation has many variations in the movies. Sometimes it is directly and crudely presented. For example, a young man may wish to possess a woman and actually murder her husband, an older man, as in *The Postman Always Rings Twice.* (He is, of course, severely punished for it.) At other times the theme appears in a more modified, and even lighthearted form. The young man may wish to win a woman from an older man, be threatened with violence by the older man, but still win the lady and humiliate his rival, as in *Born Yesterday,* a comedy.

A subsidiary, and more apparent, theme presented in this African film is one which should prove popular with the women in the audience. A great deal is made in the movie of the fact that the woman enters the jungle over the objections of the man. That is, the woman attempts to win entry to, and equal status in, a man's world, and she succeeds. She succeeds in gaining some degree of equality, but not superiority, which would be unacceptable to the men in the audience, and possibly to the women too. This is a common theme in other movies, and it reflects the problem the average American faces with the changing status of women in our society.

The themes which contain these emotional problems are oversimplified here. However, perhaps they are clear enough to suggest that the basic problems faced by the average American are expressed in most popular films. The setting might be Africa, Nicaragua, or Main Street. The exotic setting is merely a device—because it is to some degree a disguise—for presenting these problems.[7] The setting is a contributing factor to the popularity of the film, just as is the skill and originality with which the theme is developed in the screen play, and the quality of the directing, acting, and camera work.

[6] Cf. Martha Wolfenstein and Nathan Leites, *Movies; a Psychological Study* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1950).

[7] A current disguise which is proving popular is the distortion of space and time as a background in science-fiction literature.

This interpretation of the appeal of the movies may explain some of the questions raised by the composition of the movie audience. As we know, people attend movies more often, and in larger numbers, during economic crises and wars. In these periods of doubt and tension people are stirred into uneasiness. Since this uneasiness is diffuse and cannot be focused on any specific cause without meeting contradictions, there is no direction in which to take action; the result is anxiety. This anxiety must be relieved by some interpretation or form of reassurance. The stock market crashed in the autumn of 1929 and movie attendance reached 110 million admissions per week through the following year (an increase from 48 millions in 1925).[8] Attendance declined and then rose again with the war years to 97 million admissions per week in 1944.[9] Movie attendance could be said to act as a thermometer of the tensions in society. During times of crisis people will flood the movie theaters seeking "an interpretive tool," and they will be less selective in their choice of films than at any other time. In more quiet periods Hollywood must touch upon deeper problems and deal with them more skillfully to keep up attendance. The film industry groped in this direction during the slack period right after the war when it touched upon the problem of racial prejudice.

The relationship between age and movie attendance, which Lazarsfeld calls "probably one of the most spectacular findings in the whole field of communications behavior," needs to be explained. He suggests that the reason more young people than old people go to the movies is that young people have more "free evenings," and movie-going is a social activity through which they make social contacts. If we recognize the equally spectacular finding that each generation in our rapidly changing culture has a

[8] Part of this increase was undoubtedly due to the advent of sound, however.

[9] "This year the spring season, which is normally good, was very bad. Exhibitors looked forward to the traditionally dull summer with little hope of relining their pockets. But then Korea broke—and for some unexplained reason unloosed a rush at the box office. Summer business was way ahead of what had been expected." *Business Week,* November 25, 1950.

tendency to become more detached from the preceding one, we see that young people must seek elsewhere for the orientation which family advice and example provided in the past. As Margaret Mead, Geoffrey Gorer, the Lynds, and others have pointed out, the family structure seems to be disintegrating. The movies must help provide an interpretation which was once the province of family and cultural traditions. The young people of the last few generations have probably been exposed to a greater variety of choices, contradictions, and social norms than any other generation in history. They have been reared in a world where every belief has been questioned, every institution made the subject of debate and controversy. Along with these objective effects of the rapid social changes in the last few decades, there are the resulting emotional problems with which each person must deal if he is to be a functioning individual. It is no wonder that young people turn in excessively large numbers to the moving picture as they reach the age when they must step out as independent persons in this uneasy society, choose a way to make a living, and select a mate.

Whether in moving pictures, radio, or television, dramatic programs appeal to people not because they take them into some other world, but because they make their own world more bearable. They are an up-to-the-minute guide which people use to find their way in an increasingly complicated environment. By creating order for the individual they help maintain order in society, just as religion did when society was much simpler many long wars and economic crises ago.

Cineplastics: The Fine Art of Motion Painting

ROBERT BRUCE ROGERS

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A motion painting may be described as the expression of an artist's intention in the form of an organized "river" of light and form—more or less abstract, more or less independent of or integrated with other elements and arts. The relative values and qualities of a motion composition, as a work of art in its own right, are determined by the type of its organization, type of impact in creatively plastic terms, response-capacity of the audience and, above all, by the stamina of the work in the tests of time.

In a moment of anger or impatience, Michelangelo is said to have branded the art of painting as "child's play" in comparison with the art of sculpture.

In our own century and here on the American continent in large part, out of the union of painter and film, the art form of "motion-painting" is born, and there are some who have heard a promise that it will eventually greatly enhance, absorb, or make small fry of its great ancestral arts of sculpture, painting, photography, and cinema in the forms by which these are familiar to us. From the viewpoints of higher education and aesthetics, this promise takes on the aspects of practicable certainty.

Like most newborn things, the struggling youngster has but a few admiring relatives or devoted nurses, with little as yet in the way of official identity, welcome, or terms of reference. Art critics ignore it as beyond their bailiwick or ken. Entrepreneurs neglect or use it patronizingly for nominal prestige. Film critics seem to know little about it.

The great French art historian, Elie Faure, is now known to have been a leading prophet of the art. In a few paragraphs of an obscurely published article,[1] he invented the word *"cineplastics"* in a keen projection of his own experience into the future.

The record now begins to indicate more clearly, among the main currents of the art of painting, a little-noticed stream, motion-oriented, running through the sequence of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, Cubism, Expressionism, and Plastic Abstractionism, flowing directly into a new area—the composition of cinematic paintings or works of art in plastically organized motion and time.

While finding its realization largely in film form, this new territory of visual creativity is brought forward by an evolutionary line and necessity entirely distinct from those of narrative cinema and photoplay.

When used for its own values primarily in sound-tracked film the art of motion painting reaches its highest developments at those points, moments, and areas in which, out of the counterpointing and junctures of qualities visual and aural, a distinctly new third quality is attained. The mere addition or sum, the "interpretation" or accompaniment of one art form by or to another, does not attain to the synthesis sought in motion painting. That its specialized principles of composition have auxiliary value in application to conventional cinema is clear.

In the form itself a few movie audiences have found sudden refreshment, reacting with generally thrilled applause to the very few examples available to 35-mm. screenings, coming into some independent cinetheaters as "shorts," often by way of the back door. A far larger audience in the 16-mm., "nontheatrical" field of schools, libraries, museums, and film societies are glimpsing, admiring, and studying these nonnarrative motion compositions, produced over the past three decades.

[1] Series in "The Freeman," New York, 1918–1919. Republished 1923 by Four Seas Press, Boston, under title *The Art of Cineplastics.* Excerpts in *Art in Cinema,* San Francisco Museum, 1948.

But what, exactly, is motion painting? How does it differ from a photoplay, documentary, or other "movie" in the usual sense? What does the viewer see when he watches a motion painting?

The term "painting" is used here, of course, for descriptive rather than literal meaning since, in any motion picture, it is actually a projected image of film which is seen. In motion painting, the film has been so modulated in translucency or color as to project a composition in terms of *directly expressive motion.* Any one or several of many available methods are used, ranging from normal photography to specialized animating arrangements and handwork directly on the film.

The hand-painting method consists of drawing, painting, or etching directly on film, using color dyes and inks. Pens, brushes, needles, knives, water, alcohol, solvents, and detergents serve as tools. The original is preserved, as in conventional film for release duplication. A less direct method requiring laboratory coöperation or facilities (used by McLaren for abstract cartoons such as *Dots and Loops* and *Hen Hop*) is to draw in opaque black ink on the film as a black-and-white original. By photomechanical means, color is then added as flat tones replacing the black and white in a new "original" several steps removed. (Another noncamera method, confined as yet to experimental phases, involves the principle of photogram, exposing photographic film to controlled light, shade, or color under darkroom conditions.)

Other established motion-painting technics are: (1) Normal-speed photography of natural or mobile forms by control or selection, as in Steiner's H_2O. (2) Camera animation; that is, the controlled generation of significant motion or plastically shifting impact by methods integral to the camera itself, such as: fade-out and fade-in; lap dissolves (superimposed fades); scanning selected or prepared paths; "zooms" toward, away, or angled on forms; superimposition (multiple exposure); slowed or accelerated motion. (3) Single-frame and conventional animation; the successive single-frame photography of slightly differing images. (4)

"Building" or transforming a composition in single strokes or layers, successively photographed. (5) Single frame and lap dissolves, using a readily changed material such as wet or nonhardening paint, pastel (*"Poulette Grise"*), charcoal, paper cuttings, plastilene, or clay. Also the use of objects or three-dimensional forms, moving the forms or the camera more or less slightly for each frame according to the speed desired.

What the spectator sees in motion painting, as in any art, depends jointly on his own capacity to see and on the characteristics of the particular work presented, In general, just as music may be regarded as an organized stream of sound, a motion painting is, in one sense, an organized continuity of light and form. So, we might say, is almost any "movie." Some of the elementary factors of cineplastics are indeed to be found in all motion pictures, as in nature itself, in accidental, incidental, or very limited form. Similarly a few elements of music are to be found in anarchic natural sounds or nonselective recordings.

The analogy should be clear: the stream of sound as a whole may be more or less well organized, more or less abstract and expressive of the total mood, state of being, or intent of the composer—reflecting these as of more or less universal appeal or value, more or less well "heard" by the listener.

The listener's role may be played in a variety of ways, ranging from false expectancies or various degrees of indifference right up to the verge of a creativity very near to or exceeding that of the composer's awareness. So it is with all arts.

In cineplastics, the expressive media are: the over-all *picture plane* itself, *light, form, color, pattern, space, depth, time, pace, interval, movement-types* (continuity, opposition, or multiple), *sequential durations,* and over-all *length.*

The motion painter seeks, according to his capacities and equipment, to organize all his elements in expressive motion-plastic terms, for a primarily visual impact upon the more or less developed aesthetic senses of the viewer. In cineplastic composition,

as in nonprogrammatic statements in music, the directly visual takes precedence, preferably, over programmatic, narrative, or representative elements.

The motion painter or visual composer proceeds to develop the use of the camera or film further, or solely, in the direction of producing rather than reproducing—of creating directly with the film (with or without camera) rather than using film or camera primarily as a tool to record other fine arts such as story, drama, dance, painting, sculpture, or illustration.

Cineplastic production utilizes controlled agitations of the entire screen plane and a strong retention of the picture plane as an integral element of the motion-spatial organization.

One of the unique and tangible characteristics of the motion painting is that, commensurate with its cineplastic qualities, it can be screened more repeatedly than other film forms—"played" as often as a musical recording, seen as often as a painting, with, indeed, similar possibilities for increasing enjoyment or value on such repeated occasions. It is, in fact, precisely the increase of plastically expressive content and the corresponding reduction of habitual narrative or decorative thinking in the film medium which brings about this quality of durability.

Contrariwise, the degree in which the more naturalistic or conventional film forms contain, by one means or another, the qualities of cineplastics determines their repeatability in an overwhelming degree. (Random cases in point are: portions of *The Scarlet Empress, Carnival in Flanders,* and sequences in Chaplin's work such as the boxing match and the store-window-art-lover bits in *City Lights.*)

As a logical progression from advanced stages of the "abstract" or directly expressive forms of modern painting, the art of cineplastics is perhaps best enjoyed when the spectator has either a primary knowledge of modern painting or, better, that faculty which we can term the occasional "innocent eye"—an uninhibited plastic response to the field of vision in over-all, generalized, or

abstract terms. (Recent psychological studies point incidentally to the factor of individual capacity for abstract thinking as one way of indexing intelligence.)

What are some of these factors of modern painting, leading toward cineplastics? The entire picture plane is regarded as an effective object and not entirely as a "window on nature" or hole in the wall in which illusions of other forms are represented. Lines, forms, or colors can be used to express directly a thought, mood, or constellation of aesthetic feeling, often (as in music) in terms of the general, the essence, and the abstract rather than the specific. There need be no story, and what we call "recognizable" forms may often be eliminated as distracting from a direct statement. Most effective results are obtained when the painter generates a sense of continuous plastic movement in a well-retained picture plane. This spatially compacted pictorial movement, not to be confused with mere illusions of motion such as stroboscopic repetitions, breeze-blowings, "nonobjective" toys, etc., can hardly take a more logical next step than into cineplastics and the actual free play of plastic forces *in a similarly controlled integrity* of the picture plane.

A writer is naturally inclined to approach the visual medium of film with a primarily literary viewpoint, an illustrator with a representative or demonstrating viewpoint, an actor with the drama-character-exhibiting view. It is otherwise with the painter.

The cineplastic artist is first a painter—either literally or by highly special interest, insight, and study, a composer or organizer in visually plastic terms. He comes to and uses film alone, or camera and film together as a means to make motion paintings—to create directly in terms of the visual impact.

The number of bonafide motion paintings extant in the world today, available to print distribution and public screening, totals scarcely more than a baker's dozen. With expected growth of interest on the part of more painters, students, and critics, with the extensions of television into color and theater screens to three-

dimensional viewing, a powerful new development in the plastic arts is foreseen. The importance and general application of cineplastic principles will be vastly increased rather than diminished by three-dimensional cinema.

Only two or three of the world's entire complement of less than a dozen specialists in motion composition have had the good fortune of limited financial backing and facilities of standard grade. Substantial developments of the art have been limited to independent one-man productions, in garrets, on shoestring materials and starvation budgets. Color film costs confine release prints in most cases to 16-mm. and extremely limited numbers for rental screenings,. The easy amusements of trickery, quick commercialism, conventional storytelling, or fascination with the mere novelty of motion as such, are among the many temptations of cinema being avoided or overcome by a dedicated few of these pioneering maestros on a new frontier of creative territory.

There follows here a list of names and brief descriptions of the cineplastic work of all film makers making or having made reasonably strong contributions directly in this field. The list is limited, of course, to the best knowledge and awareness of this observer. A detailed survey indicates that fortuitous omissions of any importance will be very few in any case and may be a matter for further review or critical discussion.

HANS RICHTER. *Rhythm 21* (1921) is probably the earliest example of motion composition consciously undertaken in plastic terms. Rectangular forms occupy, modulate tonally, and animate the entire screen plane in terms of a controlled middle depth. *Rhythm 21* has practically no emotional content beyond that inherent in its great value as an exercise in plastic or over-all seeing. Animated by photographic means, the strength of this important motion painting is hampered by the flickery effects of all camera work of the period. Richter's subsequent work, culminating in *Dreams That Money Can Buy,* diverged sharply in the direction of narrative, naturalistic, and surrealist content at the expense of the earlier interest in directly visual expression.

RALPH STEINER. *H_2O* (1929) is a silent film using normal motion photography of natural forms in a highly selective and composed way, and is perhaps the world's first full-fledged motion painting. Except for a few early frames in which a faucet and soil are included, the camera and editing are focused and framed entirely upon water in various motions and light. Purely visual in expression, frames, sequences, and counterpointing of elements of calm, rhythm, harmony, and conflict are constructed upward through an increasingly abstract statement to a broad, intensely dramatic climax. Produced from a master painter's viewpoint, *H_2O* is, on the whole, neither painting, photography, nor movie in any accepted sense. It is a work of cineplastics—motion painting par excellence. (Two single frame "stills" are included in the group of illustrations.)

LEN LYE. *Colour Box, Rainbow Dances,* and *Musical Poster* (1934–1936) are products of the cinematic artist who first initiated the technics of handwork directly on film. Painted and dyed colors, lines, and abstract forms synchronized to light music, dance over the screen in all dimensions. Emotional content is lighthearted, attractive, and entertaining, used in this case to accompany and point up informational and propaganda material of the British government of the period. Lye appears to have discontinued this type of work in favor of private employment in New York in other film fields. Norman McLaren, pupil and assistant of Lye, carried on and expanded the handworking method from a more cartooning and storytelling viewpoint in a similar capacity for the Canadian government. Lye's work was painterly. McLaren, with much more charm and humor, was for a long period inclined to a less plastic attitude toward this direct method.

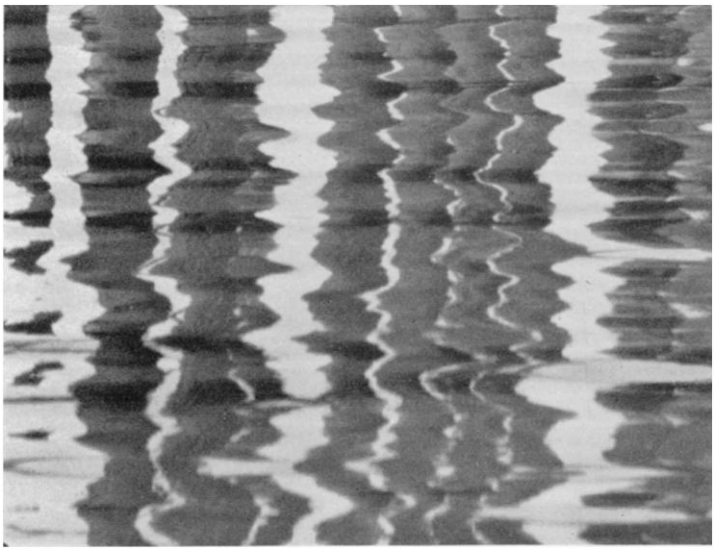
OSKAR FISCHINGER. Probably the eldest of our list in terms of consistency of effort in the field of animation, Fischinger's work can best be epitomized by pointing to his sequences in the Bach portion of Disney's *Fantasia.* Too numerous to list here, his own works are similarly of the so-called "nonobjective" or "absolute"

type, relying heavily upon the music. Animated geometric forms simply accompany or represent the music in close synchrony. The attitude appears to be that of replacing the window-on-nature approach with a window on geometric forms moving with a similar anarchic disregard for the screen plane. There is little or no plastic awareness or content beyond that already in the sound track, although the illustrative effects and colors are highly impressive and enjoyable.

NORMAN MCLAREN. *Poulette Grise, Fiddle-De-Dee, Begone Dull Care* (1947–1949). *Poulette Grise,* essentially a song-story illustration, is also a fine motion painting. It is an outstanding example of the strength which can be added to narrative sequences by subsidiary integrated use of the more enduring cineplastic factors. Form, color, and movement evolve here in continuous metamorphosis of overlapping dissolves and slight changes on pastel board illustration. On repeated viewing, the spectator finds that, long after the song-story is made completely familiar, the plastic factors continue giving satisfaction. *Poulette Grise* is one of the most charming and gratifying experiences in cinema. *Fiddle-De-Dee* and *Begone Dull Care* are handworked directly on 35-mm. film by means of inks and dyes, synchronized to light music with occasional strongly plastic impact. McLaren's work is done under the aegis and facilities of the National Film Board of Canada. The wide distribution given this highly entertaining product by the Canadian government, in both the 35-mm. and 16-mm. print sizes, has stimulated the general interest and demand for creative film.

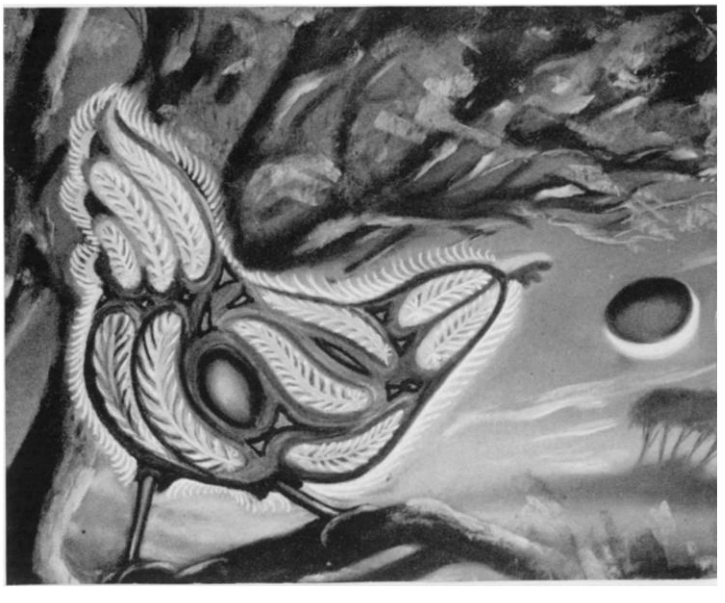
JOHN and JAMES WHITNEY. A series of abstract *Film Exercises* uses mechanical animating effects (optical printer) related to accompaniments of synthetic sound. Geometrical shapes advance, recede, and change form in succession and multiple. The work is of considerable technical interest, though tending in an experimentally "nonobjective" rather than a cineplastic direction. Audiences experience optical fatigue.

Of my own work, released in 16 mm. only, *Toccata Manhatta* and *Rhapsody* will suffice in this listing. *Toccata Manhatta* initiates technics of handworking directly on 16-mm. film by means of inks, dyes, dry point, and solvent etching. Narrow width of the 16-mm. frame increases the concentration and use of both the lengthwise dimension of the tape and the single-frame rectangle as the working limitations. In *Toccata,* some lengths of previously exposed color emulsion film as well as nonphotographic film were used as bases for handwork throughout. The thematic sources are principally those of a pedestrian citizen's states of mind in New York City stated in abstract terms. Emotional intent and impact are satirical, with certain "blues" elements. The film was first released as a silent, to rely on visual factors in line with my main interest, the extension of visual language. It continues in distribution in silent form while I remake the original to sound. *Rhapsody* is a motion composition in space-form-color-sound terms, based on the timing and structure of a familiar Liszt piano work. The animation method utilizes a three-dimensional space contrivance of my own, the field of operations being a foreshortened replica of the ultimate projection beam—a pyramidal field, roughly 23 inches by 32 inches at the base or background limit, 38 inches from camera aperture as apex. Animation action and exact relationship to screen plane of distance, size, and angle are evident at any point in this spatial pyramid. Shooting is completely preedited and scripted on a frame-count of the separate sound track. Forms in *Rhapsody* are abstract, movement semi-abstract (retreat-like, wandering, march-like, etc.). Screen plane is retained laterally and in depth by various means of opposition and compacting. The emotional content sought is the integrity of a third quality out of the aural-visual oppositions and synthesis. This is partially realized in the length dimension by means of graduated organization of isolated mood elements toward integration and resolution on common ground.



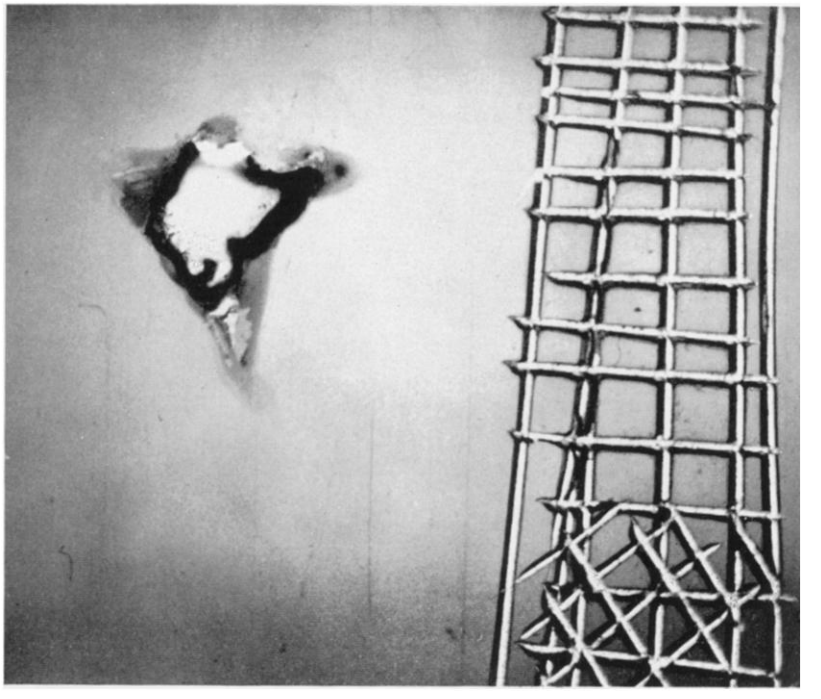
H_2O (1929), Ralph Steiner. Normal motion picture photography used with cineplastic effect.

H_2O (1929), Ralph Steiner. This and the shot above show water in motion and were used in a silent nonnarrative "motion painting."

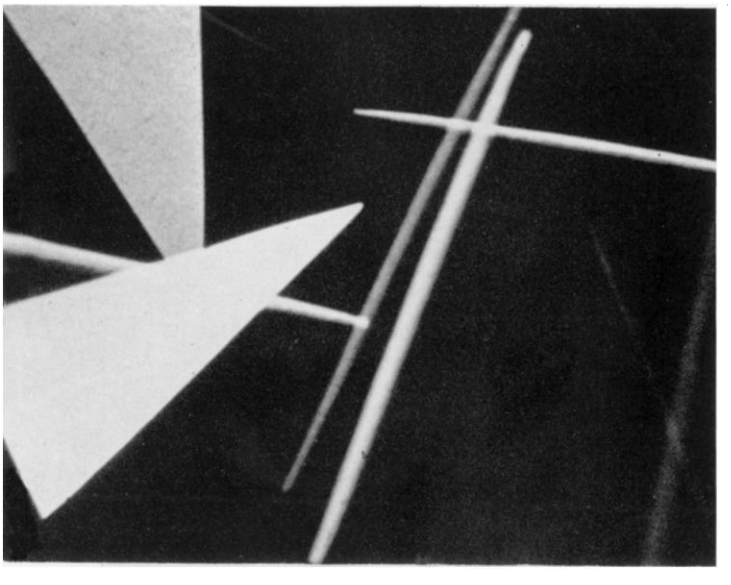


Poulette Grise (1947), Norman McLaren. Seminarrative cineplastic production using camera and pastel-animating methods.

Begone, Dull Care (1949), Norman McLaren. Handwork in color painted directly on 35-mm. film by McLaren and his associates at the National Board of Review of Canada. Synchronized to jazz music.



Toccata Manhatta (1949), Robert Bruce Rogers. Handwork in color directly on 16-mm. film stock.



Motion Painting III—Rhapsody (1951), Roger Bruce Rogers. Camera-animated drawings synchronized with a sound track of familiar music.

The small group of "stills" to which we are limited here for space considerations were chosen impersonally from a more fairly representative number for introductory value in this essay. They are reproduced by courtesy of the individuals indicated, as well as the Museum of Modern Art of New York and the National Film Board of Canada.

It would be an error to regard these strips and "stills" as pictorial compositions in themselves. Differing sharply from the disparate creative-formal approaches of easel painting, photoplay "stills," movie camera set-ups, and salon photography respectively, single frames pulled from an expressive arrangement of thousands in actual motion are the merest fragments of the content and form of works in which motion is as integral as sound is in music.

My own step into motion composition in film form came rather suddenly as the inevitable next step in painting, after twenty-four years in the areas of easel painting, teaching, and philosophy.

There had been a long-standing interest in the enormous plastic and abstract possibilities so apparent in the cinema's conventional "lap dissolve" as well as in the screen effect of accidental scratches on film, the latter pointing clearly to directly hand-working possibilities.

There had been, more decisively, a long struggle in ideas for unit and scale systems for easel and mural composition and other efforts toward the furtherance of the abstract visual "language." These efforts had involved continual comparison and study of the sister art of music, which, in the sense of abstract range and comprehensibility, had far outstripped the art of painting.

This latter fact became a catalytic element in the realization that since music was a river of abstract sound, with time and change as the integrally decisive elements, painting would have to step likewise into the dimensions of time-change to become the

river of visual form as defined here if it was to make the substantial abstract developments so clearly needed.

With each piece of work in this field, spectacular avenues opened in many new directions. Old technical and aesthetic problems fell away and new, knotty, or promising ones arose. Among these is the probability that man will very soon evolve complete practical methods of "writing" visual compositions for visual instruments and orchestration in the same sense and degree that music is "written."

It was a surprise to learn that there had been so very few others, of various backgrounds and widely scattered, actually working along similar lines. There had been and are, of course, a far larger number working in "experimental," *avant-garde,* and documentary film, advancing the cinema in general. It would be, however, a distinct error and disservice to confuse the fine art of cineplastics with ill-defined "experimental film" generally, on one hand, or to bury it at this point in the legions of souvenir and commercial productions on the other.

Unnecessary and indiscriminate applications of the term "experiment" to any art form as a whole tend to reflect and perpetuate ignorant and reactionary attitudes. History invariably reveals the fact that valid terms of judgment, classification, and criteria necessarily follow upon, never precede, the creative works and advances of mankind. A work of art is a *result,* not a beginning, so far as tests and tentative labors are concerned.

Individual students, art lovers, and collectors, as well as film professionals and amateurs, are often unaware of the fact that motion paintings can today be rented at nominal fees or purchased outright at rates from, roughly, $25 upwards, in the form of 16-mm. reels for home-movie, school, library, museum, video, and theater screenings. Projection equipment of the normal type is, of course, required in the same sense that a phonograph is required by the collector of musical recordings, since motion paintings are, in this form, visual "recordings" of a preserved original. Such

equipment ranges in cost from used items or children's models at $25 upwards to standard, portable, and theatrical types, all of which may also be rented nominally.

There is no wider new horizon than that opening before the visual artists and exhibitors of our time. The cineplastic art, while not a spectacular mass production item, has arrived in its own right. Its viewpoint is deeply based, its outlook broad. The film industry and the theater, architects, educators, artists, museums, critics, manufacturers, and television executives alike, will do well to note its cultural impact; in particular, the interesting ratio between that impact and the present astonishingly limited number and facilities of the working practitioners of the art.

Revivals, Reissues, Remakes, and "A Place in the Sun"

IRVING PICHEL

IRVING PICHEL, one of the *Quarterly* editors, played the part of the district attorney in the 1931 film of *The American Tragedy*.

BY THE odd illogic of many polls, the recent vote by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences determined that George Stevens was the best director of the year and that the Michael Wilson–Harry Brown screenplay, *A Place In The Sun,* was the best screenplay of the year, but that the best director directing the best screenplay did not produce the best picture of the year. This anomolous situation merits no further comment, but it is noteworthy that Stevens won his award with a new version of a story that had been filmed before. It is impossible to recall any other instance of a film so made which was more successful than the earlier version. This is the more noteworthy in the light of the fact that the first version was not a particularly successful film. Remakes are ordinarily made in the hope of recapturing an earlier success. It may be that only Stevens wanted to make the picture and that only he believed a successful film could be made from a story which had been a comparative failure. And it is common knowledge that Paramount believed it had another failure on its hands and withheld the release of the picture for some time.

It is no discredit to the film industry that it does not know what to do about its failures but it is generally unresourceful about what to do with its successes. Its common practice is to saturate the country and squeeze the revenue out of a successful film in as short a period as possible. Second, it imitates its own successes, creating cycles which are forcing-beds for failures. And, third, it "remakes" earlier successes without quite knowing how to better them. Superficially, it would appear that if Stevens' example is a guide, old failures should provide the material for current successes, pro-

vided, of course, that writer and director know what they are doing as well as Stevens does, and that the values they find in a story are those which were overlooked in the first telling. If the understressed values happened to be the enduring ones rather than those of contemporary interest, there is a good chance of rescue. But, in effect, this will be making the film for the first time, not remaking it. To a large degree, this is what Stevens has done.

A sound work of literature—or any other representative art—becomes a fixed point of reference of any survey of the time in which it was produced. The best of today's films will be of exceptional value to future students who seek to visualize mid-twentieth-century society and its value concepts, its preoccupations, and its mores. But we have no assurance that any one of such films, projected to an audience a hundred years from now, will have more than historical interest or will receive an emotional response comparable to that received from an audience of today. The few works in the theater that retain this magic power after the passage of a century or twenty centuries are, of course, classics. They are little suns in the center of the odd orrery called theater, the fixed point about which revolve in eccentric motion the planets—the audience, the players, the production. These planetary bodies are not only nonconstant by reason of their motion; they have the same mortality that besets the minds and bodies of men. Film is able to endow two of them, the players and the production (but not the audience), with a kind of semipermanence. But films have been in existence too short a time for us to know whether the actors of today and the manner of presentation of today will, along with our stories, have more than a curiosity value for the audience of the far-off future.

In the short span of film history, only a handful of films achieve revival, mostly by film societies and other nontheatrical interests. The comedies of Chaplin alone have shown theatrical survival value and remain comic although the society they lampoon has greatly altered. Over and above everything in them that is of a

time and place there is something universally and eternally humorous and touching.

During the recent period of production dearth, the film industry has reissued a considerable number of films, too recent to be remade with new casts and not old enough to be regarded as revivals. Many of these are costume pieces, set in a remote period, and so relieved of any obligation to fashion in dress or timeliness of custom. Such reissues do not often get bookings comparable in number to those of the original release, but since the cost of reissue involves only new prints and press material they commonly show some profit.

More often the industry tries to recapture former success by remaking stories with new casts, new productions, and such story changes as the producers feel will make them more acceptable to the new audiences they are to entertain. A current example is *I'll Never Forget You,* a drearily emotional retelling of John Balderston's *Berkeley Square.* This will be remembered as a charming and diverting fantasy on the theme of time. It juggled past and present so that hindsight became foresight with a resultant play of anachronism from which the late Leslie Howard extracted delightful comedy and a rueful romance. The current version abjures humor so that the anachronistic vision of the hero becomes merely the basis for peril from which he can escape only into the present, his own time. The film seems to have been made for no other reason than to correct the reaction of an audience which Howard, were he living today, might mislead into finding something wryly amusing in the plight of a man who revisits a past time.

A Place in the Sun is a different matter. As a remake of *An American Tragedy,* it is not only exceptional in being more successful than the first film, it is also the first remake of which I have knowledge which is made as though for the first time. It tells essentially the same story as the earlier film but with a totally different emphasis and perspective. It moves organically and gives no sense of being managed by writers or director. Its characters

have an immediate reality that all but absorbs the recognized personalities that play them. Its events sum up to a tragic irony which provides all the theme and thesis the story needs. This is the more remarkable since Theodore Dreiser wrote his novel to prove a case. He had read newspaper accounts of a story that supported his analysis of certain social conditions of the period during which the events took place. The characters were, in his view, pawns moved by rules of a game they did not understand and were powerless to alter. He wrote *An American Tragedy* not merely as a tragic tale which happened in America but as one which could happen only in America or in a country which like America presented great contrasts of wealth and poverty, inherent in its economic system and its social structure. He predicated a villain outside his cast of characters, impersonal and implacable. He asked forgiveness for Clyde Griffith's guilt, which he found, at worst, technical and irresponsible.

We may be certain that none of Dreiser's sociology interested Paramount when it bought the screen rights to the novel and to the successful play which had been made from it.[1] We may be equally certain that it was exactly this that interested the late Sergei Eisenstein when, brought to Hollywood by Paramount in 1930, he selected it from among the studio's story properties and made a treatment in collaboration with Ivor Montagu. We may understand as readily the studio's rejection of the script, just as it had rejected an earlier script he had prepared telling the story of Johan Sutter and the discovery of gold in California. The studio was not looking for allegorical diagnoses of the ills of capitalistic society but for solid melodramas and, whatever else it might be, *An American Tragedy* was a story of crime, its detection and punishment. Eisenstein's contract was terminated and the story was handed to Joseph von Sternberg. The screen play was written by the late Samuel Hoffenstein and held with fidelity to Dreiser's story.

[1] *An American Tragedy* was published in 1925 and Patrick Kearney's dramatization was produced in October, 1926.

Von Sternberg was at the time Paramount's outstanding director. He had already made *Blue Angel* and *Morocco* and so had thus begun the association with Marlene Dietrich which was to occupy him for several years to come. But he had also directed a series of films with George Bancroft, at the end of the silent era, including *The Docks of New York* and *Underworld*. This latter film was to remain, until the appearance of *Scarface,* the best film of its genre. Von Sternberg had qualified as an expert not only in the formalized sensuality which was to make Dietrich into a legendary symbol of sex but also as a master of the crime story. And *An American Tragedy,* as he presented it, was above all a story of crime, detection, and retribution. The story of Clyde and Roberta was treated fully and sympathetically, but Sondra, the wealthy girl, intervened as a virginal seductress, a plot complication which precipitated the planned murder and led Clyde to the courtroom. Here the real drama was enacted and everything which preceded it was a long exposition, the spinning of a web of circumstance from which the hero was unable to extricate himself. The story became that of a boy who had planned a crime so well that, although he did not carry out his plan and accident took over, his plan convicted him. The courtroom sequence, following the catatonic actions that led up to it, had suspense and vitality, but Clyde Griffith seemed more the helpless victim of a vengeful and self-righteous prosecutor than of a society which had made his predicament inevitable.

Twenty years later, when George Stevens looked at the story, Dreiser's thesis had lost much of its validity. More than that, the social climate has so altered that even a moderately doctrinaire rationalization of Clyde Griffith's downfall would be, to put it mildly, unwelcome. Stevens may have asked himself whether such a story, having happened nearly thirty years ago, might still happen today and whether, having happened because of conditions Dreiser described, it might still happen when those conditions no longer apply with the same force. If we can feel that we know any-

thing of a director's mind from his work, we know of Stevens that he sees people as individuals and that he is interested in character as it is found, not as it is determined or conditioned. People as he sees them act from root motives and drives, however these motives may be complicated by circumstance. In other words, he is now a determinist but simply an observer. He may not be the most objective of observers since he sees through the lens of his own humor, his sentiment, his sincere but often somewhat ingenuous warmth, but he does observe closely and sympathetically. He may not see the economic and social pressures which, in Dreiser's view, bear down upon a Clyde Griffith, but he does see Griffith, his loneliness, his need for love, his feckless lack of guile which make him the victim of his desires and aspirations.

A Place in the Sun, as Stevens tells the story, is not a tale, then, of crime and detection and retribution. The trial is not the climax of the story but a coda, a conclusion to a series of events for which there is no other end. His characters are not victims of some particular system but of their own common humanity and their fates are determined by their inherent needs as they seek to fulfill themselves in a world of chance.

This may not be the story Dreiser wrote, but it is what remains today of the novel. *An American Tragedy,* by Dreiser, is a point of reference in a consideration of the America of 1925 as seen by Dreiser. The film made in 1951 may be less completely a view of what might have happened in 1951, but it may also be more completely a view of what might have happened in that year or in any other year and, perhaps, in any other country. It extracts from its events that which *may* be permanent, which *may* be universal, which *may* be the kind of constant to give the film and its story survival value and elicit from future audiences the kind of response it has found today.

Stevens remarked once, in a talk to his colleagues, that the weakness of the film industry lies in the fact that it makes film for markets and not for people. This is an error he has not fallen into in making *A Place in the Sun.*

Broadcast Poetry: A Lost Art?

FLORA RHETA SCHREIBER

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EXPRESSIONS of the hope for poetry in broadcasting seem curiously distant, like the echo of an echo of an echo. Yet the days when Archibald MacLeish, Stephen Vincent Benet, and other poets were voicing such a hope—days when on such a hope Norman Corwin built an entire career—are not remote in time or memory.

The 'thirties and 'forties were troubled times but this particular hope was then everywhere present. It was, in fact, the very turbulence of the times that excited feelings to overflowing and provided the coalescence of emotion and purpose which acted as a spur to the poetic drama on the air.

Today, when the times are no less troubled, little poetic drama is broadcast. Why?

Let it be said at the outset that the decline in broadcast poetry is part of a general trend that applies to publishing as well as to broadcasting. In the late 'thirties and the early 'forties a book by a new poet, according to Herbert Weinstock of Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., could sell from 1,500 to 2,000 copies; today it would sell only from 500 to 750 copies. Mr. Weinstock is unable, however, to gauge the actual size of the poetry-reading public. "The spread," he says "between the sales of T. S. Eliot or Yeats and a new young poet is too wide to make an answer possible. On our own list we have a volume of verse that has sold in six figures; *First Poems,* an excellent volume of verse by James Merrill, published last year, has not yet sold 600 copies."

In broadcasting, too, it is impossible to estimate the size of the poetry public. But one thing is certain: in the heyday of poetic

drama on radio, an audience for it did exist. Poetic drama did not achieve a high Hooper or Crosley rating; of course not; but it did appeal to an audience which was ardent and which gave it constant support.

Today poetry is not absent from broadcasting. Poetry is heard, from time to time, by the comparatively small audiences that listen to the programs of the educational stations affiliated with the National Association of Educational Broadcasters. WNYC, New York, which carries NAEB programs, has offered a good deal of Shakespeare. WNYC, moreover, carries programs of the British Broadcasting Corporation and so has introduced to the audiences of the New York metropolitan area such English poetic plays as D. G. Bridson's "Aaron's Field" and J. Boronski's "The Face of Violence." WABF, a New York FM station, likewise carries BBC plays and has recently produced Christopher Fry's Broadway success, *The Lady's Not for Burning.* Over both WNYC and WABF this writer has produced Fry's *The Boy with a Cart.*

In network programming there have been productions of two *Julius Caesars* (CBS-TV), of two *Macbeths* (CBS-TV), of *Coriolanus* (CBS-TV), of *Hamlet* (NBC-radio), of *Othello* (NBC-TV), of *Twelfth Night* (NBC-TV), of *The Comedy of Errors* (NBC-TV), of *Romeo and Juliet* (ABC-radio). On NBC-radio the voice of John Barrymore has been heard in recorded excerpts from *Hamlet, Macbeth, Richard III,* and *Twelfth Night.* T. S. Eliot has been represented with *Murder in the Cathedral* (ABC-radio), Edna St. Vincent Millay with *Aria da Capo* (NBC-TV), Maxwell Anderson with *Winterset* (ABC-TV), and Stephen Vincent Benet with *John Brown's Body* (NBC-radio), "The Thanksgiving Prayer" (NBC-radio), and "Elementals" (NBC-radio).

Lincoln's birthday, 1950, found Raymond Massey and Beatrice Pearson in a "Cavalcade of America" presentation of "The Thinking Heart." Script writers for "The Thinking Heart" included Carl Sandburg, Robert E. Sherwood, E. P. Conkle, Edwin Markham, Stephen Vincent Benet, Edgar Lee Masters, Walt Whitman.

This cento also included Keat's "On Death" and an epitaph composed by Lincoln himself for a Red Indian beggar, a dead and friendless tramp in a tattered blanket. The strings of the cento were pulled together by poetic narration: "I am Ann Rutledge who sleeps beneath these weeds / Belov'd in life of Abraham Lincoln / Wedded to him, not through union, / But through separation. / Bloom forever, O Republic / From the dust of my bosom." It was an expansive tribute to Lincoln and the tribute was in poetry—old poetry.

The curious may even hear poetry in unexpected places. They may hear Ethel Barrymore read Masefield's "West Wind" on a Jimmy Durante show or Rex Harrison do a scene from Maxwell Anderson's *Anne of the Thousand Days* on the Kate Smith Evening Hour. On a discussion program in tribute to the migrants of America, with the Rev. Dr. Truman B. Douglas, president of the Home Missions Council as moderator, Raymond Massey reads Benet's "Thanksgiving Prayer." And lines by Elizabeth Barrett Browning come from the lips of a participant called upon to identify lines on "Break the Bank."

But all of this—the production of Shakespeare and the use of poetry for incidental purposes in the way incidental music is used, as a trimming, has little in common with radio's poetic heyday when new poetic plays were written directly for radio.

In the vanguard of radio's poetic period was the Columbia Workshop, which made its debut in 1936 and left the air in 1942. The Columbia Workshop resumed operations on February 2, 1946, to be again suspended on April 27, 1947. The brevity of the Workshop's final period was due to the poor quality of scripts submitted. Lou Ashworth, saddled with the unhappy task of reading scripts, says in retrospect that it was like sitting at a death watch. No script submitted had the slightest spark of life.

On January 14, 1952, the Workshop was revived and transplanted to television. The producers of the Workshop, as quoted in the *Writers' Digest,* committed themselves to a half-hour for-

mat, with an emphasis on dramatic presentations and the development of new techniques and talent, with an interest in "all sorts of off-beat stories—comedy, tragedy, melodrama, human interest." But Norris Houghton, the producer of the series, tells me that, although he would like very much to do adaptations of *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, The Ballad of Reading Gaol,* and Rostand's "Last Night of Don Juan," he has no definite plans at the moment for using either poetry or poetic drama.

Columbia's failure to connect the word "tragedy" with poetry is characteristic of our age. We have fallen into the habit of talking of tragedy not in its true historic meaning, as Aristotle talked of it, but rather in the idiom of newspapermen. Journalism captions an airplane crash as "tragedy from the skies," but thinks of the tragedy simply as an event rather than as the entanglement of human beings in experience and as an outcry of the human spirit, a poetic outcry.

That phrase "off-beat," also used in Columbia's statement of policy, awakens a multitude of associations. If we think of the "beat" as a perpetual din of the usual, of the preëstablished in thinking and feeling, the "off-beat" becomes a departure, either a quest for the erratic and false or a quest for the searching and true. Since Columbia is obviously not seeking the false, its quest for the off-beat, a quest for the true, should also include a poetic quest. For poetry is not superficial embroidery to the rest of life. It represents rather a central conception of the whole of life. It has less to do with the formalism of definite patterns and verbal arrangements than with the essential spirit from which it derives.

"Human interest," still another phrase used in the Columbia statement of policy, is also worth analysis. A journalistic item considered of "human interest" usually relates not to the so-called important events of the day but to private experience. It is this private experience which, when fused with the public experience and heightened and deepened, provides a source of poetic drama. Below the surface, beneath the stereotype, is the human element,

and it is by rescuing this human element from the perpetual din of the usual, the tacitly accepted half-truth of surface living, that the poet and the poetic dramatist can function as therapeutic agents in an age that needs therapy.

But broadcasters and the public both are all too likely to dissociate poetic works from the mainsprings of poetry, to forget that the poetic drama, whether on stage or in broadcasting, springs from the life of the people and is as direct and as dramatic as the best prose play of the season. They think rather of poetry as silly, lofty, as opposite to common sense, an embarrassing outlet for emotion and thought.

There was a time, however, when poetic drama did enjoy popular acceptance. It wasn't until the nineteenth century—and then not on the Continent—that the poet was divorced from the theater, which since ancient times had been his natural home. In its greatest periods the drama has been a poetic drama, the natural medium of expression for the poet-dramatist, one and the same person. This poet-dramatist did not set about creating a poetic theater. The theater, part of the life of the community, and poetry, integral to the theater, were indivisable. The audience, taking poetry for granted, saw no opposition between poetry and common sense. The conflict between art and a pragmatic view of life which many people have constructed for themselves in our own time was then nonexistent.

Today, prose drama finds a home in the theater. Poetic drama remains a transient, moving from rooming house to rooming house. Most often it is without a place to lay its head. Sometimes, as in T. S. Eliot's *The Cocktail Party* or in the plays of Christopher Fry, the poetic drama is invited into the theater as a guest who, although very welcome, is treated with more awe than cameraderie.

This unnatural separation, a by-product of both science and pragmatism, has resulted in the glorification of understatement and the de-emphasizing of heightened expression, with the conse-

quent emasculation of prose drama. The separation has also meant that the poetic drama, beating its wings in unhealthy isolation, has grown ineffectual and effete. Even Christopher Fry, the newest poetic voice in the theater, is frequently rhetorical rather than genuine.

In the 'thirties and early 'forties poets looked to radio to provide a reintegration of drama and poetry. That radio should offer this hope was paradoxical, for radio itself was the offspring of the very technology that had been a contributing factor to the estrangement.

The promise rested on the belief that the radio audience is a folk audience, that in reaching this audience the poetic dramatist would be restoring the drama to the popular status which it had once enjoyed. The hope gave promise of realization if this folk audience, an audience including many who do not read poetry or go to the theater, were in some way united in a community of feeling on important issues and if the poet, distilling the emotions infusing these issues, could speak directly to his audience.

The hope has been lost. The very poets who held it most fervently now voice only their disillusionment. "I continue to believe," Archibald MacLeish wrote me on January 16, 1952, "that radio offers a stage for poetry, but I doubt that the producers of radio in the United States share that opinion or care that it is held by others. In that sense the hopes I held at the time of *The Fall of the City* have not been realized. I have just finished my third verse play for radio (*The Trojan Horse*). It was produced on the 14th of this month by the BBC on their Home Program, but American production seems to be impossible—at least by one of the broadcasting chains." One doesn't have to labor the point. But why should an American poet of acknowledged stature have to turn to the broadcasting facilities of another country to find his audience? And why, in contrast to our poetic aridity, should the BBC offer an example of poetic fertility, regularly producing new poetic plays of vitality and poetic insight?

Norman Corwin, writing me on January 21, 1952, had this to say: "Production of poetic radio plays has declined because of the disinterest of the producers, combined with the apathy of educators, the audience, and the poets themselves. Writers are using this form very little, if at all, because they are not encouraged to do so. Poetry is still considered a sissy art in this country. Radio has certainly not fulfilled the hope I saw in it. It stood on the brink of the Promised Land, then fled when it saw television coming. Its standards have once again approached the lower depths of venality, and its public service is at a minimum. (CBS's cancellation of "School of the Air," the dropping of its house symphony; NBC's letting go of Toscanini, etc.[1]) Documentary radio has no vitality, and even the forced feeding of the Ford Foundation has not made any apparent difference in the over-all picture."

Norman Corwin went on to say "I have small interest in writing for TV until it is ready to invest in the kind of bold experimentation that created and sustained the Columbia Workshop. It could be a superb medium for poetic drama, for it combines intimacy with the fluidity of expression that so well suits so many types of verse drama. But television has ignored the poetic play because it is the kind of vehicle that can be supported on sustaining programs only—and there is not enough money. Sponsors will not undertake to pick up the check for poetic drama on any consistent basis, because as a rule they eschew anything they suspect of being 'highbrow'—i.e., anything that will require an audience to think."

Archibald MacLeish, equally bitter about poetry's fate in television, is less certain of television's indigenous suitability as a vehicle for poetry. "The great advantage of radio," Mr. MacLeish wrote somewhat wistfully in the letter quoted above, "is—perhaps we should say *was*—the fact that the imagination is reached through the ear. If you have read the foreword of *The Fall of the City,* you will realize what my position was on that point."

MacLeish and Corwin take opposite points of view on television

[1] When he wrote the letter, Mr. Corwin was not aware of NBC's present series of Saturday night Toscanini broadcasts.

as a medium for poetic drama. The difference between them is a matter not so much of the suitability of television as of the degree of suitability. In radio the word is pivotal, and this is why it made a strong appeal to the poet. In radio it is the word that paints the scene, the literary cadence that stirs emotion; the word which, unfettered by the distractions of sight, of the physical world, is sovereign.

Poetry in television is possible; it is plausible; it is appropriate. Certainly it is as appropriate as it is for stage or film. But it is not indigenously right in the same way that for radio it is right. When the old Columbia Workshop broadcast T. S. Eliot's *Four Quartets,* read by John Hall Wheelock and James Johnson Sweeney, there was no music; there were no sound effects and no acted interpretations, just pure poetry. Concentration on pure poetry is not possible in television, which offers visual satisfactions. A chorus for a television poetic drama might be an expressive dancing chorus (not in the dancing girl sense but in the interpretative sense) even more appropriately than it would be a speaking chorus. The word is not sovereign.

The real danger that the poetry of the word—and there has been so much loose talk about other kinds of poetry—faces in television is that it will become background to another art such as the dance; that the visual image will dominate the literary image. I am thinking of the kind of debasement of the word that took place in the sequence of Ophelia's drowning in Laurence Olivier's film of *Hamlet.* In the play it is the queen, newly aware of Ophelia's suicide, who describes the drowning to Laertes. The lyricism of the words evokes beauty out of grief: "There is a willow grows aslant a brook, that shows his hoar leaves in the glassy stream; there with fantastic garlands did she come of crowflowers, nettles, daisies, and long purples . . . there, on the pendant boughs her coronet weeds clambering to hang, an envious sliver broke; when down her weedy trophies and herself fell in the weeping brook—but long it could not be till her garments, heavy

with their drink, pull'd the poor wretch from her melodious lay to muddy death."

In the film the relationship between the word and the event, the lyricism and the actuality are out of joint. As the camera focuses on the drowning itself, we watch details, garments heavy with water suck down the body. The queen's words are simultaneously superimposed as mere narration. Poetry and the emotion attendant upon poetry are reduced to spectacle.

On September 5, 1948, NBC-TV produced *Aria da Capo* by Edna St. Vincent Millay. The almost total absence of camera action and of stage business made for an effect that was static and lacking in enchantment. Columbine's "Pierrot, a macaroon! I cannot live without a macaroon" and Pierrot's rejoinder "My only love, you are intense," for example, seemed curiously malapropos and artificial, whereas in "blind" radio the illusion would have been acceptable. NBC's conclusion was that in the future the *Aria da Capo* type of poetic play was definitely out of the question for television, that the poetic play for television must have strong plot and characters that come close to the audience's own experience.

But whether television is a suitable medium for poetry becomes a theoretical question in view of the fact that poets are not writing for this medium. Ross Donaldson, supervisor of the NBC script department for both radio and television, tells me that poets just don't submit scripts. When I asked whether the network has commissioned poets in the same way that it has commissioned Gian-Carlo Menotti to write his recently broadcast television opera, *Amahl and the Night Visitors,* Mr. Donaldson's answer was an embarrassed "no."

The "no" was offered not without explanation, however—that to date television has not yet begun to make money and has therefore been unable to indulge in too many luxuries; that, developing more quickly than radio in its time, television has often had to sacrifice "values"; that, within the NBC inner circle, however, the meditative mill grinds slowly but surely to produce what the

staff affectionately terms "Operation Frontal Lobe," programs of stature, programs that have ideas. "Operation Frontal Lobe" points with pride to its forthcoming 26-week series, "Victory At Sea," scheduled to begin in September, 1952. Music is by Richard Rodgers. The major motif of the series is the violence affecting man during the 1940's, the symphony of a decade.

This motif is an essentially poetic idea, but it is a composer, not a poet, who is at work on it for radio. I am not suggesting that "Victory At Sea" should substitute poetic narration for music. I am merely reiterating the theme of this lament—that at the present time the poetic impulse is to be found almost anywhere but in poetic drama for broadcast.

Certainly the broadcasters have an obligation to the audience which, although admittedly small, once supported and would again support poetic drama. This is a minority audience, of course, but it is a fallacy to think of a minority merely as a numerical group, smaller than the majority and therefore entitled to little or no consideration. Fewer programs, perhaps. But not, certainly, no programs for the discriminating. Such programs are a cultural staple and cannot be dismissed as mere luxury. To dismiss poetic drama as highbrow, of interest only to the few, and therefore either beneath or beyond the broadcasters' notice, is like trying to separate an egg from its yolk and yet continue to describe the yolkless segment as an egg.

The Television Code

FRANK ORME

FRANK ORME, editor of *TV Magazine,* a trade monthly published in Hollywood, came to television via radio. During the 'thirties he was radio editor for Southern California Newspapers, Inc., and a free-lance radio script writer. Mr. Orme now combines editing with the writing of television dramatic programs and is the author of about fifty articles on television.

(This is the first of two articles discussing the television code. In a forthcoming issue, the code will be analyzed from the point of view of the NARTB.)

TELEVISION,[1] which is potentially the world's most powerful instrument for bringing enlightment and understanding to all people, has been inundated for many months by criticisms from individuals, organizations, and publications; out of this flood has come the new television code of the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters (NARTB).[2] The code was put in operation on March 1, 1952.

In my opinion the television code is strictly a backwash product; through it the NARTB, a trade association, has succeeded in inflicting upon the American public a completely un-American type of censorship over the public-owned television channels. The television code establishes outright censorship, complete with punitive powers vested in a highly prejudiced jury, and with a vice-squad type of review board that is ridiculously inadequate to carry out the responsibilities it has undertaken.

There are serious doubts concerning the legality of the code's procedures; there are, however, no doubts concerning the code's

[1] This article is concerned primarily with such negative elements as censorship, improper controls, and programming which is possibly—or probably—injurious to segments of the television audience. This is written with full awareness that television is making many important contributions to our culture, knowledge, and understanding; television is already established as a significant influence upon American living. In many ways it has attained a stature far beyond that which could have been demanded from so young an industry.

[2] Copies of the television code are available for 15 cents a copy by writing to NARTB-TV, 1771 N Street, N.W., Washington 6, D.C.

inadequacies, improper assumptions, and ambiguities, as this article will show in following paragraphs.

The television code establishes within the NARTB television board of directors police control over the programs televised by more than eighty TV stations which have subscribed to its terms. Let there be no misunderstanding about the power assumed by this group of thirteen men; Judge Justin Miller, NARTB chairman of the board, twice called this board of censors the "supreme court" over administration of the code in his public address at Stanford University on February 29.

The code itself consists of a preamble, various sections on program standards, many statements proclaiming the broadcasters' responsibilities to the public, and a section of regulations and procedures. The document was formulated by the television section of the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters. Subscribing stations (as this is written) include about eighty-five of the one hundred and eight video stations in the United States.

There is, of course, no connection between the controls exercised by the NARTB through this code and the governmental controls over TV administered by the Federal Communications Commission. The FCC attempts no censorship over program content, except to examine a station's operation under the broad interpretations of public "interest, convenience and necessity."

Stations subscribing to the television code are permitted to display on the air and in promotional material the NARTB so-called "Seal of Good Practice" which purportedly guarantees to the public that the station's programming—ALL programming, not just particular programs—complies with the standards set forth in the code. This seal is highly misleading; many programs are being televised, and will continue to be televised, which do *not* adhere to code standards. Already the press has exposed many instances of flagrant code violations in programs aired by subscribing stations.

The purpose of this television code should be to establish minimum program standards so that the American people can accept television in their homes without opening them to degrading or otherwise harmful influences, and without turning their living rooms into a huckster's paradise. If the men who formulated the code had this purpose in mind, they certainly have come up with an unwieldy and inadequate instrument with which to accomplish it.

The code combines a high-sounding creed with censorship regulations; as Dr. Dallas W. Smythe (research professor in the Institute of Communications Research and professor of economics in the Economics Department of the University of Illinois) points out, the code assumes the right of the NARTB, as a trade association, to make policy decisions in the name of the public, thus tending to add to the autonomy of such cartels in controlling matters which should be left with the individual or with governmental agencies properly representing the interests of the people.

Dr. Smythe also suggests that the code identifies immorality with innovation in the arts, and that it will be stultifying to the development of freshness and originality in TV programs.

The Winter, 1951, issue of the *Quarterly* published Dr. Smythe's article, "The Consumer's Stake in Radio and Television," which expresses his views on censorship. I want to take space here to quote two excerpts.

> One view makes a neo-Victorian sense of morality the guide to wholesomeness. For people with this view, it means the absence of certain kinds of vulgarity. Such critics may succeed in imposing on television as they have on motion pictures a censorship policy which prescribes the height of necklines and kinds of gags which will be acceptable. But if this view prevails there is real danger of throwing out the baby with the dirty bath water. Such a policy will accentuate the already pronounced tendency of the advertising sponsors to avoid program experimentation. Banality and formula entertainers will become even more dominant in television than in motion pictures. . . .
>
> The contrasting interpretation of wholesomeness might apply this

term to entertainment which had the following qualities: respect for human beings with insight into all their elements of strength and weakness, of humor and grief; spontaneity, candor, imagination, and originality. . . . At the other end of the scale, one might place vulgarity in the sense of degradation, triteness, and certain types of formula drama in which people are represented as two-dimensional shadows who move in response to fate, technology, or creaky plot gimmicks. It may be argued convincingly, I think, that the dignity of human beings may be assaulted more grievously and the family hearth more abused by such misrepresentation than by the low-cut gown or the joke which offends some minority pressure group. . . .

Wholesomeness . . . is more than the negative notion of sterilizing the comedian's jokes, and determining the permissible amount of the female body which may be exposed to the hearthside viewer. It is a characteristic of the works of the creative artist judged by some such standards as I have tentatively suggested. . . . In large measure the forms which such entertainment might assume have not yet been created by the television producers, writers, and directors. All the more reason, therefore, not to shackle them so tightly with the twin handcuffs of a censorship code resembling that of the motion pictures and of advertising pressures for conformity to existing types of shows.

Censorship is a delicate and complex subject; it certainly deserves a far more intelligent treatment than the action of the NARTB in establishing a code such as the one under discussion.

One is faced with a paradoxical situation: if the code is enforced the results will be bad; if the code is *not* enforced the results will be bad. Unenforced and unenforceable laws and regulations spawn hypocricy, disrespect for authority, and moral laxity. Thus the code, which is certainly a form of unenforceable law, has put into action harmful influences working in two opposing directions: it will inevitably exert improper controls over some phases of TV presentations; it will, to a degree, succeed in stifling criticism through the delusion that the broadcasters are properly policing their programs, and set up a hypocritical complacence among some executive members of the industry.

Our *TV Magazine* survey of crime programs televised in Los

Angeles during the first week of May, 1951, revealed, among other things, that: (1) 70 per cent of all programs televised for children during the survey week were based on crime; (2) eight hundred major crimes were portrayed on children's programs during this single week; (3) the average child in the television home saw death inflicted by violence more than forty times during the survey week. Horror and brutality were prime elements of TV's contribution to the children of Los Angeles.

For many hours each week programs for children are portraying the forces of law and order as weak and inadequate. These forces win only because some slow-witted, brawny hero with a quick trigger finger and pile-driver fists arrives in the nick of time to save civilization from the forces of evil. Broadcasters tell us that these westerns and other crime programs are all right because the good always wins, and wrong always loses. BUT—good doesn't win because it is backed by intelligence; nor does it win because right and decency govern our way of life. In most of these programs right is right only because physical power, and incredible luck, and foolhardy recklessness are packed into one individual "hero."

While this process of education was going on, the broadcasters were creating this code, which, except for its sections on enforcement procedures, is based largely upon a similar, almost-forgotten code established for the guidance of broadcasters in July, 1948.

Mechanically, the administrative structure of the code is this: at the top is Justin Miller's "supreme court"—a board of censors composed of the thirteen members of the NARTB television board of directors. This group is supported by a five-member review board which has no actual administrative power.

The censorship jury consists entirely of men who are directly concerned, financially, with the programs they will judge. Four members are employees of the four major television networks; six others operate video stations in various localities. Each of these six has from one to four contracts to televise programs supplied

by the networks. The code, in one of its few definite declarations, emphasizes that all proceedings connected with administering the code will be conducted by these censors in complete secrecy. Presumably the public, the press, the Federal Communications Commission, and even other NARTB members will be excluded from these star-chamber sessions.

The five-member police or review board is also composed entirely of NARTB members. One is located in Seattle, one in Milwaukee, one in Kalamazoo, one in Baltimore, and one in Atlanta. Each member of this review board is occupied with the strenuous project of operating a television station in his own community; each will serve without payment. They will meet five times during the next year.

With the exceptions of the members in Baltimore and Atlanta, each member of this review board lives in a city where the one station in operation is the one directly under his personal control. There are three stations in Baltimore, two in Atlanta. The member living closest to the Hollywood program production center is Mrs. Scott Bullitt in Seattle. Not one member lives within viewing distance of a major production center. Three of the five members are unable to see regularly any programs televised by any stations except their own; of the one hundred and eight stations in operation in the United States, only eight are within viewing range of members of the review board. The five members between them have seventeen commercial contracts with the four major networks.

The duties assigned to this five-member, part-time review board are these: (1) They are required to maintain a continuing review of ALL television programming. (This programming, during the next twelve months, will total four hundred and fifty thousand hours, broadcast in sixty-five different cities, even if no other stations come on the air during this time.) (2) The review board must receive, screen, and clear all complaints on program content which come to the NARTB. (3) They must define and interpret

the code. (4) They are required to develop and maintain appropriate liaison with governmental agencies and with accountable and responsible institutions. (5) They must inform, expeditiously and properly, all subscribers of the attitudes and desires programwise of accountable organizations and institutions—and of the American public in general.

Their sixth duty under the code is to review and monitor programs. They are also required to reach conclusions and to make recommendations, or to prefer charges to the television board of directors concerning violations and breaches of the code. They must also make recommendations to the board of directors concerning amendments to the code.

These five persons, the code states, are going to do all these things; they are going to do them in their spare time; they are going to do them without pay.

The NARTB has set aside $40,000 for installing, publicizing, and operating the code during its first year. This amounts to about ten cents per hour to supervise the programs under its control. On the other hand, the motion picture industry spends $250,000 per year to review four hundred films—*six times as much money, to censor one thousand times less programming.*

Film censorship can be done in one office; television censorship must cover sixty-five cities. Film censors are paid full-time salaries; TV censors are not paid at all. No film censor is financially concerned with the programs he reviews; practically all television censors are financially concerned with programs they will judge. Film censors neither claim nor admit the scope of responsibilities undertaken by the video censors.

Another comparative factor is the difference between the codes themselves: while the film code is certainly no masterpiece of legal definition, it is, at least, many times more concise and definite than its TV counterpart.

These comparisons are not intended as a brief in support of the film censorship code; they are used for the purpose of illustrating

the magnitude of the job the broadcasters have blandly undertaken. They show the impossibility of any effective enforcement of the television code through the procedures which have been established to bring about this enforcement.

Nothing in the code provides the public with safeguards against arbitrary or capricious actions by the censorship board. This board, through its mandatory secrecy clause, can discriminate against any station, against business competitors, or against isolated stations or producers. The code provides the NARTB with the opportunity to submerge any complaints which come to it in a well of secrecy which could stifle public criticism of program content.

Probably the code's most flagrant breach of responsibility to the public is found in section seven, under the heading, "Termination of Contracts." This clause boldly provides for a station to display the NARTB Seal of Good Practice for as long as twelve months, even while the station operator is willfully televising each week one, two, or a dozen programs which violate the standards set forth in the code. This clause, which I am told violates Federal law if it is put in operation, permits a broadcaster to carry any program, regardless of whether or not it violates the code, until the first so-called legal cancellation date of its contract with a network or advertiser. It was an open invitation, during the period preceding March 1, for a broadcaster to sign long-term contracts for questionable programming.

Federal law prohibits any broadcaster from delegating any of his responsibility as a licensee. Federal law says that a station operator must remove any program at once, if he considers it unsuitable. *This television code* says that it is all right to televise such a program for twelve months.

Terminology of the code in many instances is so vague and ambiguous that it defies interpretation. The censors must define such terms as "wholesome entertainment" . . . "helpful stimulation" . . . "casual treatment of divorce" . . . and "a certain amount

of proper presentation of crime, violence, and sex to children." There are many *shoulds* and *should nots,* but very few *shalls* and *shall nots.* If, through a remotely possible action, the NARTB television board of directors ever suspends or revokes the right of any station to use the Seal of Good Practice, the courts will almost certainly set aside such a judgment on the grounds that the document is so confusing that no station operator could be expected to define a violation of its provisions.

Obviously, the National Association of Radio and Television Broadcasters, through this television code, has not provided an adequate solution to the problem of controlling abuses by broadcasters of privileges granted to them by the people of the United States. It is equally obvious that our broadcasters, as a group, have failed to realize the significance of their attempted control over the most vital of all media of mass communications. Physical science has given us the atom bomb; it has also given us television. Television, of the two, is intrinsically far more powerful. Control of such an instrument certainly does not properly lie within less than fifty controlling members of a not-too-distinguished trade association.

Legally the control power over television operations rests with the people of the United States. Television channels are public domain properties; they are used by broadcasters through short-term licenses. Fundamentally the rights, the powers, and the *responsibilities* of television's use remain with the public. Television's greatest need is an active public interest, and a public understanding of the public's right and the public's stake in this most important of all inventions.

There is no need for pessimism regarding the future of television. Television is already making tremendous contributions to public welfare. Nor is there a need for a change in the present system of control over television. The sore spots can be eliminated without revisions in the control machinery.

Public interest and public understanding of TV are growing

week by week; newspapers and magazines throughout the country are fostering and directing this interest, and these publications will in turn devote more space to critical appraisals of television as this interest grows. The effects of public opinion on the content of TV programs are becoming apparent; ratings (which constitute the real code governing our broadcasters) have fallen substantially for many programs which have been criticised most strenuously. Even the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, which could eliminate the worst of the children's programs within three months if it would take definite action, is beginning to show signs of abandoning its timidity regarding television.

We cannot expect the elimination of mediocrity in programming because it is a physical impossibility to produce vast masses of entertainment which rise above mediocre standards. We can, however, expect and demand elimination of much of the trash currently televised for children; we can demand elimination of excessive and semifraudulent advertising; we can obtain more programs of true value by actively supporting the sponsors of such programs.

When these things are accomplished the broadcasters will, of course, claim the credit through their self-sacrificing interest in the public welfare; but why not let them pin a medal on their chest at that time, regardless of the motivation? At least this award will be based on something more than the NARTB's Seal of Good Practice.

"Miss Julie"

RICHARD ROWLAND

RICHARD ROWLAND was educated at Columbia and Oxford and is now teaching at Columbia as a member of the English Department. Both of his earlier articles in the *Quarterly* have been reprinted abroad.

IT IS RARE indeed that one leaves a film with the gratified feeling that here is a whole work of art, something complete and thought-out and meaningful, something one can think of as one thinks of a play by Shakespeare or an opera by Puccini or a novel by Henry James. Usually one says "That was a fine bit of acting," or "How cleverly he uses his camera," or "There was more of the book's meaning left than I expected"; we appreciate the films with reservations which we do not make for the other arts. When a film appears which makes us forget these reservations, the feeling of discovery is intense. But how often has it happened? The judgment is personal: I can name four or five Chaplin films, Carl Dreyer's *Passion of Joan of Arc,* and, for all its crudities, Von Stroheim's *Greed.* Now, for me, it has happened again with the Swedish film, *Fröken Julie,* adapted by Alf Sjoberg from the famous play by Strindberg.

Nothing had prepared us for this brilliant film. Sjoberg's only other film known to English-speaking audiences was *Hets,* shown in England as *Frenzy,* in America as *Torment;* it was a melodrama of adolescence, filled with over-simplified psychologizing and moody shots of stairways, good of its kind but in a lugubrious Germanic tradition considerably beneath the first-rate.

Strindberg's play is, like all of his plays, tight, enclosed, anti-cinematic in its evocation of claustrophobia. It has only three characters; it is aimed with relentless singleness toward a didactic point, the assertion at the heart of most of Strindberg's plays that warfare and hatred are the only possibility between the sexes, that woman is a devil in whose hands man and all decency are power-

less. No one can deny the brilliance or power of Strindberg's best plays; few would dare to credit them with much understanding; they dramatize a state of mind any of us recognizes as the borderline of sanity; the world *can* look like this to a man, but it is a disastrously incomplete vision of life beside which Baudelaire's and Webster's and T. S. Eliot's, for all their various limitations, seem complex and many-sided and humane.

But from this cinematically unpromising material Sjoberg has built up a film rich, deep, truly moving, a film which uses every resource of the screen to create a picture of life so delicate in its perception, so singing in its beauty, that we emerge from the theater shaken as only a few artistic experiences can shake us.

One must go back to the play to appreciate what a truly creative act this has been. The play tells how Miss Julie, daughter of a Swedish count, brought up by her feminist mother to hate and distrust men, is stirred by the peasant celebrations of Midsummer Eve to fling herself at the head of her father's valet, Jean. After the shame of her seduction, their conflicting desires to master and to be mastered—his based on a caste system and hers on her mother's sexual theories—drive them implacably on to her suicide at his command. In this bald outline the plot seems arid and tendentious; such is never the feeling one gets from the film. Part of Sjoberg's change is mere multiplicity; new characters have been imagined with extraordinary completeness, so that, for instance, the father, in the play a vague off-stage shadow, has here been endowed with more pitiful life, perhaps, than the heroine. The mother is a monster, but she has been elaborately developed from hints in other plays of Strindberg's; we believe in her more than we ever do in the Laura of *The Father,* who is seen only in one setting and one situation.

Much of the play was built up in reminiscences, through which Jean and Julie described their past to each other; these the film has expanded and pictorialized into some of the finest moments of the story. The cinema flashback has become a hackneyed and boring

device, but here it is used with fine and novel effect. There are none of the conventional dissolves; the reminiscent voice speaks, and on the screen, behind the speaker, the figures of the narrative appear in the same room; casually the camera moves to them, forgetting the narrator. So we see the terrible mother leading the frightened child off into mental servitude while the shattered girl that she is to become fills the foreground of the screen, and we think "here—in this room" and shudder in sympathy. The freshness and power of this device is uncanny; the past haunts a scene as it does so often in reality.

Part of the film's power is the result of its freedom from interruption. It is unflagging, our interest absolutely sustained. Scene moves into scene brilliantly and effortlessly; the brawling peasants overturn a keg of beer which merges into the peasants themselves spilling into the farmyard, which merges into a burst of fireworks; not since Hitchcock's scream which became a train whistle has so showy a metamorphosis been contrived—yet how much more central and meaningful this one is than Hitchcock's can only be felt by seeing the film. Even during the credits the screen is filled with Miss Julie and her canary in the window, watching the peasants lighting their fires; on the left side of the screen her eyes are restless and hungry behind the lines of credit; the canary, unobscured, fills the right-hand side of the screen. When later, Jean, in wanton self-essertive cruelty, kills the canary, we feel it as deeply as Julie does, for Sjoberg's device has imprinted the canary on our mind as something of importance; in the play we did not know of the canary's existence until just before its death and the effect was less strong.

Although movement is incessant, never does Sjoberg resort to moving the camera merely to create interest; never does the camera look at things eccentrically without some clear reason. In one scene the camera, emphasizing Jean's essential servility, looks up at Jean and Julie from behind the count's boots; he kicks the boots angrily away, turns and stands in the same position, so that

we see Julie against the wall beneath the towering threat of his masculinity. When Jean is exploring the mansion as a child, the camera moves slowly, wonderingly, caressingly around the portraits and the formal statuary and the rich gardens. When Julie is describing her mother's madly farcical experiment in exchanging the duties of the sexes on the farm, the camera rocks and seesaws wildly.[1]

Sound, too, is used with great suggestive power: the mother's hysterical laughter rings wildly through the house, the drunken folk music suddenly twists out of shape into something frenzied and hideous during the seduction, the trembling bell whose silence has been too loud bursts into frantic summons.

But most of the film's strength comes from its insight into character, an insight resulting from interpretation of the Strindberg play, not from the letter of it. Sjoberg's actors have helped him greatly; Anita Bjork brings great understanding to Julie's variety; she shows us her tremulous virginity and her cold ferocity; it is not easy to forget the wanton gesture with which she puts her hand on Jean's hip, the harsh accents her voice assumes when she addresses Christine and later its honeyed cajolery when she tries to persuade Christine to share their honeymoon with them, her shaking despair when the canary is murdered. Even better is the way in which Nef Palme's subtle coarseness reveals the valet's soul and its pathetically limited dreams.

We are always somewhere within this film, not standing outside as an observer; we can always say not only what we see but how we see it, through whose eyes. The childhood episodes have a springtime wonder throughout Jean's reminiscences—it is uncanny how lovely the rococo privy looks to us as well as to him—and also absolute terror in Julie's reminiscence; the scene of her father's abortive suicide is appalling: the fallen body fills the foreground; far in the corner of the room the forgotten child huddles. The camera's eye is the child's eye, emphasizing the distance be-

[1] It is worthy of note that Sjoberg's cameraman was Goran Strindberg, the dramatist's grandson.

tween death and life; as the flashback ends we return to the grown Julie's perception and watch the black-gloved hands of her mother close in with terrible finality about the thin shoulders of the terrified child in the white frock. When Christine, the servant girl, orders back to the stable the coach in which Jean and Julie had planned to elope, the camera moves off and looks at the neat farmyard and Christine's stiff, self-righteous, church-bound figure with Christine's own unrelenting severity. At the end of the film the camera moves from the dim uncomprehending eyes of the father and wanders vaguely over the lovely limp form of Julie, the razor, and halts shockingly on the triumphant portrait of the mother; as the lights go up, we are aware that at last we are ourselves again and can emerge from this strange haunted world of Julie and her father, a world whose external sunlight and grace was so significantly shadowed.

In Strindberg's preface to his play, he expressed his awareness of the limitations of the dramatic form and then went on to say:

> In explanation of Miss Julie's sad fate I have suggested many factors: her mother's fundamental instincts; her father's mistaken upbringing of the girl; her own nature, and the suggestive influence of her fiancé on a weak and degenerate brain; further, and more directly, the festive mood of the Midsummer Eve; the absence of her father; her physical condition; her preoccupation with the animals; the excitation of the dance; the dark of the night; the strongly aphrodisiacal influence of the flowers; and lastly the chance forcing the two of them together in a secluded room, to which must be added the aggressiveness of the excited man.

It is hard to imagine a performance of the play perfect enough to justify all this; its Julie is really less complex than this suggests. Strindberg's hatred of women, turned against the mother and Julie's own aggression, dominates the play; Sjoberg's film seems at once gentler—Strindberg's harsh phrase "a weak and degenerate brain" is his and not Sjoberg's—and truer. Perhaps Strindberg put all those things into the play; it is not possible to feel them as

they pass, except as occasional flat statements; in the film, they are there as constantly evoked actualities or as poetic images; flat statement is unnecessary. The film is, indeed, an answer to Strindberg's ambitions; not only has it escaped the limitations of the theater,[2] it has escaped the often crippling limitations of Strindberg's ailing mind. Julie, her father, Jean, Christine are all real and pitiful—even the mother's dark, brooding figure has pathos in the terrible wedding-night scene. One pities each of them because they are doomed and because their humanity has worth in it in some form, however unlovable it may often be. Strindberg's play too often sounded like the knowing child who says "It's not my fault I'm a heel; it's my parent's fault." Here the parents and children and environment are entangled in responsibilities; the result is life itself at its most pitiful.

But—and here is the miracle—at its most beautiful, too. For the lyricism of this film is what is finally unforgettable—the grace of the small boat racing down the stream as Julie and Jean flee the laughter of the peasants, the halo of light above the hay, the knowing grace of the garden statues at night, the heavy joy of the folk dancers. These moments are pure lyricism, the visual equivalent of the moments in drama when a gesture or a sentence catches an event and transmutes it into a symbol to echo in one's memory: Vittoria's lines in the last act of *The White Devil,* Mme. Ranevsky's gesture of farewell in *The Cherry Orchard,* any of scores of lines in *Othello* which transfigure that sordid tale of jealousy and violence. Such things are the opposite of realism but they do not falsify; they bring depth to details, making us see things with new fullness. Life can be seen so by the observant eye; certain writers have had special skill in bringing it to the written page—Homer, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Turgeniev, Chekhov (not Strindberg) are names which spring first to mind. The cinema is exquisitely able to achieve such effects; how rarely it bothers to. Flaherty and

[2] Strindberg wanted a theater without intermissions, with limited and suggestive scenery, without footlights blotting out the individuality of the actors' faces. All these have been accomplished for him by the film.

Chaplin and René Clair have occasionally achieved such lyricism; usually the cinema is too busy merely telling a story, creating suspense, painting portraits (all of which *Miss Julie* does brilliantly) to pause over the significant detail in this way. But in Mr. Sjoberg is a talent which can do much more than that; here, for instance, is someone who could bring the troubled harmonies of Chekhov to life on the screen if he chose to. It will be exciting to watch for more films from him.

The French language has a word for the direction of a film far more meaningful than the English terminology—*realisation.* Even in English this carries fuller meaning. Certainly it describes the process here perfectly; the text has been made real, flesh has clothed the bones, meaning has been made plain. Two recent attempts (both admired in some quarters) to make short stories into long films have shown the pitfalls in doing so. In neither *The Fallen Idol* nor *The Rocking Horse Winner,* in spite of all the characters and incidents added to the bare originals, was any new meaning discovered. It was quite simply a spinning out of a terse story into a repetitious and attenuated film. Here, Strindberg's play must have been doubled in length, but it seems stripped and spare, meaningful in every moment. This is a true realization. Few films have ever been so stamped with the unifying mind of an artist as *Miss Julie* is.

A Bibliography for the Quarter

Book Editor, FRANKLIN FEARING

BOOKS

THE INFORMAL, "qualitative" analysis of communications content has been going on for a long time, as witness the vast accumulations of interpretive writings of all sorts—literary criticism, social history, studies of social and political philosophy, etc., etc. These are all concerned with the analysis and interpretation of written texts of one kind or another. But content analysis as a systematic procedure conducted in accordance with explicitly formulated rules is relatively new. Perhaps the most comprehensive statement of its theory and technique yet to appear in print is Bernard Berelson's *Content Analysis in Communication Research* (The Free Press, Glencoe, Illinois, 1952). This book is a revision and expansion of the same author's *Analysis of Communication Content* issued in mimeographed form in 1948.

The issuance of a volume devoted to the exposition of a specific method is always an important event, and in this instance it marks an interesting stage in the development of a field of research. It is apparent that, as viewed by the social scientist at least, content occupies a central place in the communicative process, and its description may not be haphazard and impressionistic, but must be done in accordance with objectively defined procedures and, if possible, be quantitative. All formal definitions of content analysis agree on this last point, and there's the rub. To many persons, some of whom in one way or another are professionally concerned with communication, the attempt to quantify such intangibles as value, theme, "meaning" in communication will either seem impossible, or merely pretentious.

After an illuminating discussion of the two types, Dr. Berelson concludes that there is no basis for the "silly dichotomization be-

tween analysis based upon 'mere frequencies' as against 'real meanings,' " and that a constructive integration of the two methods is possible. This is no doubt true. Nevertheless, if the requirements of reliability (in the statistical sense) and objectively as defined by Berelson are to be met, content analyses will have to be in some degree quantitative. And there will be those who will continue to find the simplest statements about the meaning and significance of communication content made by individuals whose insights and critical acumen they respect worth a barrelful of findings resulting from the use of a more rigorous methodology.

It does not appear that content analysis as defined in the more rigorous sense was invented by the social scientist for his own amusement. The pressures for reliable, quantitative statements about communications content come from many sources, industrial, political, governmental, as well as from social scientists concerned with testing hypotheses about society, culture, the effects of the mass media of communication, or the interpretation of the protocols produced by the patient in the psychological clinic. I suspect that in these and other areas (perhaps even in the "literary" field) increasingly the requirement will be for descriptions of content based on procedures that are objective and which will yield data capable of statistical analysis.

Berelson has supplied the best discussion to date of the rationale, techniques, and applications of these methods. Even the die-hard supporter of intuition and insight as superior to quantification and objectivity will find it profitable reading. The only criticism which this reviewer would make—and it is a minor one—is concerned with the omission of any discussion of the problem of the degree and kind of training of the analysts (the judges who categorize the content). It is a requirement of the scientific method that observers have a specified amount of training to make particular observations. This is especially important in content analysis, particularly when the categories are evaluative or interpretive. The method of giving instructions in the use of specified criteria,

and the type of preliminary experience to be required in the use of particular criteria are of considerable technical importance.

Unfortunately, the book has no index. There is a comprehensive classified bibliography which appears to cover all pertinent literature published through 1950. The author was professor of social science and dean of the Graduate Library School at the University of Chicago, and is at present with the Ford Foundation.

Language and Communication (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1951) by George A. Miller is intended as a college textbook in a field where only recently courses have been offered. As the author points out in the "Foreword to the Teacher" there are two ways in which the material in a course in communication may be presented. In one, the instructor may begin with the detailed study of the molecular facts of phonetics, the perception of speech including the human auditory mechanisms, and language acquisition, and conclude with the consideration of the social phenomena of communication in human society. In the second, the procedure is reversed. The first approach is adopted in the present book. The first chapters are concerned with the physiology and anatomy of the human speech mechanisms and phonetic analysis, and the last chapter is entitled "The Social Approach." There is considerable pedagogical precedent and logic for both procedures, and Professor Miller argues eloquently and cogently for his approach. He believes it is easier to displace the average student's beliefs about the magical character of language and communication with scientific conceptions if one begins with the simpler phenomena. He also argues that we actually know more about phonetics, auditory processes, and the like than we do about such topics as propaganda, and hence it is the sounder method to begin where our knowledge is firmly grounded. These are good arguments, but for this reviewer the gap between speech phonetics and the complex phenomena of *communication* is not successfully bridged by the approach of the present book. The firm grounding in the facts of phonetics, acoustics, and speech production, important as they

are, does not seem to afford a sufficient basis for understanding communication at the level of, say, the mass media. Human communication is, as Professor Miller states in the preface, a social event. Such events are molar and not readily reducible to simpler units. Also, to this reviewer, a presentation of communication which is limited to its vocal and aural aspects seems oddly incomplete, especially since a vast amount of communication involves both visual and auditory materials.

Nevertheless, granting the book's general orientation, Professor Miller has written a useful and competent text. The material on phonetics, language acquisition, and verbal habits is presented with insight and reflects an expert knowledge of an extensive and difficult literature. There is an excellent bibliography. The author is a member of the faculty at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

A basic and indispensable reference work for libraries, the motion picture industry, and students of motion picture history as well as for the legal profession, authors, and publishers is the monumental 1,256-page catalogue just issued by the Library of Congress, listing more than 50,000 motion pictures. *Motion Pictures, 1912–1939* consists of three parts: the list of main entries by title, an index of names, and the series list. The following information is given concerning the main entries: title of the film, production statement, date, sponsor, physical description (footage, running time, number of reels, sound or silent, color or black and white), notes which describe the film more completely, credits, claimant of the copyright and author, copyright date, and registration number. The index of names lists the names of persons and organizations associated with the production of the films referred to in the main section of the catalogue. The third section lists the series titles which are contained in the main entries.

It is interesting to note that prior to 1912 motion pictures were registered in the Copyright Office as photographs. *Motion Pictures, 1912–1939* may be purchased for $18 from the Register of Copyrights, Library of Congress, Washington 25, D.C.

A reading of the twenty-four definitions of folklore by as many authorities in the massive *Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology and Legend* (Funk and Wagnalls Company, New York, 1949) makes it clear that a review of this work in a journal devoted to the mass media of communication is entirely in order. One somewhat dithyrambic definition informs us that "whenever sayings, proverbs, fables, noodle-stories, folktales, reminiscences of the fireside are retold; whenever a lullaby is sung to a child; whenever a ditty, a riddle, a tongue-twister, or a counting-out rime is used in the nursery or at school; whenever out of habit or inclination, the folk indulge in songs and dances, in ancient games, in merry-making, to mark the passing of the year or the usual festivities; whenever a mother shows her daughter how to sew, knit, spin, weave, embroider, make a coverlet, braid a sash, bake an old-fashioned pie; whenever a village craftsman—carpenter, carver, shoemaker, cooper, blacksmith, builder of wooden ships—trains his apprentice in the use of tools . . . whenever in many callings the knowledge, experience, wisdom, skill, the habits and practices of the past are handed down by example or spoken word without reference to book, print, or schoolteacher . . ." we have folklore. In other words, folklore is the accumulated store of what mankind has learned, experienced, believed, or practiced, verbally communicated. As such it constitutes a framework for formal literature and art. Its relation to contemporary "popular" culture, especially that of the mass media of communication, is obviously close although the specific relationships still need to be worked out. The incidents, plot structure, and characterizations of many films—the westerns, for example—undoubtedly possess a folklore quality. "This book," says the editor in the preface, "is an attempt to cut a cross section into the spiritual content of the world" and there will never be an end until "there comes an end to spontaneous song and creative symbol, or an end to the grim or humorous 'saw' with which the human mind meets its situation." Undoubtedly, as the dust cover states, because the *Diction-*

ary is a gold mine of plots and characters, fables, myths, legends, riddles, rimes, jokes, insults, religious concepts, and stories of birds, plants, insects, stones and stars, foods and cures, magic charms and spells, it is the biggest *swipe book* of the century, and hence belongs on every storyteller's desk. There are two volumes and 1,196 pages. The editor is Maria Leach; associate editor, Jerome Fried, assisted by a distinguished list of consultants and contributors.

Ideas on Film (Funk and Wagnalls, New York, 1951) is described as a handbook for the 16-mm. film user. It is a compilation of articles and reviews, most of which have appeared in the *Saturday Review of Literature*. The editor, Cecile Starr, who is also the nontheatrical film editor of *SRL,* has chosen her contributors judiciously. They include such names as Rudolph Arnheim, Charles Seipmann, Pearl Buck, Kenneth Macgowan, and Raymond Spottiswoode, all of whom write interestingly and with authority on various aspects of the nontheatrical film. The second half of the book is devoted to reviews of two hundred important 16-mm. films which are available for rental. These reviews adequately describe the films and, praise be, are really *critical.* The films are really evaluated, sometimes devastatingly. Although tagged as a handbook, such a book as this, unfortunately, will soon be dated. Both the film reviews and the articles (some of which are extremely brief) will be superseded in a field which is rapidly changing. But *Ideas on Film* is a valuable book for those who are interested in using existing films of the sort "designed" as Irving Jacoby says in the foreword "essentially to influence what people think."

In *The Little Fellow: The Life and Work of Charlie Chaplin* (Philosophical Library, 15 East 40th Street, New York, 1951) Peter Cotes and Thelma Niklaus have written an engaging essay about a figure whom it has become conventional to characterize as enigmatic. Their book will inevitably be compared with Theodore Huff's *Charlie Chaplin.* The latter is a much more ambitious

work. In fact, as this reviewer noted in an earlier issue of the *Quarterly,* Mr. Huff's book contained more authoritative information about Charles Chaplin than had ever before been gathered in one place, in spite of which, somehow, Chaplin himself didn't seem to be present. The present work, on the other hand, is intended to be interpretive. Whether or not the interpretations are authoritative, we have no way of knowing. In any event, *The Little Fellow* is not presented as a critical "definitive" analysis. It is, rather, in the nature of an appreciation. The book is amply illustrated and there is an appendix containing a chronological list of the Chaplin films.

JOURNALS, RESEARCH, PAMPHLETS, ETC.

The U. S. government is an apparently inexhaustible source of materials in the audiovisual and mass-communication fields. The Federal Security Agency, Office of Education, Washington 25, D.C., lists the following publications in these fields. They are obtainable either from the Office of Education (OE) or the Government Printing Office (GPO).

Catalog of Radio Recordings. Transcriptions which can be borrowed from the Office of Education or purchased from the Federal Radio Education Committee, 1950. OE, free.

Classroom Radio Receivers. Specifications and standards developed by the Office of Education and the Radio Manufacturers Association, 1948. OE, free.

Directory of College Courses in Radio and Television. 1950–1951. Annotated list of 420 colleges and universities offering courses in radio and television, 1950. OE, free.

Directory of 2,002 16-mm. Film Libraries. State and city lists of institutions and organizations that lend or rent 16-mm. films, annotated, 1951. GPO, 30 cents.

General Catalogs of Education Films. Descriptive bibliography of nine general catalogues of educational motion pictures and film strips, 1951. OE, free.

How To Obtain U. S. Government Films. Summary table of how to borrow, rent, and purchase the motion pictures and film strips of 21 different agencies, 1951. OE, free.

work. In fact, as this reviewer noted in an earlier issue of the *Quarterly,* Mr. Huff's book contained more authoritative information about Charles Chaplin than had ever before been gathered in one place, in spite of which, somehow, Chaplin himself didn't seem to be present. The present work, on the other hand, is intended to be interpretive. Whether or not the interpretations are authoritative, we have no way of knowing. In any event, *The Little Fellow* is not presented as a critical "definitive" analysis. It is, rather, in the nature of an appreciation. The book is amply illustrated and there is an appendix containing a chronological list of the Chaplin films.

JOURNALS, RESEARCH, PAMPHLETS, ETC.

The U. S. government is an apparently inexhaustible source of materials in the audiovisual and mass-communication fields. The Federal Security Agency, Office of Education, Washington 25, D.C., lists the following publications in these fields. They are obtainable either from the Office of Education (OE) or the Government Printing Office (GPO).

Catalog of Radio Recordings. Transcriptions which can be borrowed from the Office of Education or purchased from the Federal Radio Education Committee, 1950. OE, free.

Classroom Radio Receivers. Specifications and standards developed by the Office of Education and the Radio Manufacturers Association, 1948. OE, free.

Directory of College Courses in Radio and Television. 1950–1951. Annotated list of 420 colleges and universities offering courses in radio and television, 1950. OE, free.

Directory of 2,002 16-mm. Film Libraries. State and city lists of institutions and organizations that lend or rent 16-mm. films, annotated, 1951. GPO, 30 cents.

General Catalogs of Education Films. Descriptive bibliography of nine general catalogues of educational motion pictures and film strips, 1951. OE, free.

How To Obtain U. S. Government Films. Summary table of how to borrow, rent, and purchase the motion pictures and film strips of 21 different agencies, 1951. OE, free.

List of Standard and FM Educational Radio Broadcast Stations by State and City. List of 133 such stations, 1951. OE, free.

Motion Pictures on the Other American Republics. Catalogue of 104 films of the U. S. Government and the Pan-American Union, classified, 1950. GPO, 15 cents.

Movie Projectors in Public High Schools. Results of a 1940 survey of 16-mm. sound projectors in public high schools. Illustrated, 1950. GPO, 15 cents.

102 Motion Pictures on Democracy. A selective bibliography of 16-mm. films. Classified and annotated, 1950. GPO, 20 cents.

Radio and Television Bibliography. Annotated and classified bibliography of references, 1948. GPO, 15 cents.

Radio Script Catalog. List of 1,300 radio scripts loaned by the Radio Script and Transcription Exchange of the Office of Education. Annotated, 1950. GPO, 25 cents.

School Sound Recording and Playback Equipment. Specifications and standards developed by the Office of Education and the Radio Manufacturers Association, 1947. OE, free.

Sources of Recordings for Educational Use. Annotated list of 56 sources of recordings, 1951. OE, free.

3,434 U.S. Government Films. Descriptive catalogue of all U. S. government motion pictures, film strips, and sets of slides available for public use in the United States. Contains specific instructions for borrowing, renting, and purchasing each film, 1951. GPO, 70 cents.

U. S. Government Films for School and Industry. Catalogue of approximately 2,400 motion pictures and film strips of different government agencies which are sold under government contract by United World Films, Inc. Catalogue prepared and published by UWF with OE approval, 1951. OE, free

U. S. Government Films for Television. Catalogue of 398 U. S. government motion pictures which have been cleared for television, 1951. OE, free.

The Library of Congress is printing and distributing catalogue cards for motion pictures and film strips. Since 1901 the library has printed and distributed cards for books, but it is only recently that similar cards have been issued for films. The cards are of the usual catalogue size, and cover title, production statement, physical description, relation to other versions, summary of content, and credits and cast. All government films are now catalogued, and cards will shortly be available for all current copyrighted films

and film strips and for older films still in use. It is expected that the number of cards available each year in various categories will be: 400 for government films, and 1,600 for copyrighted films (800 theatrical and 800 nontheatrical). Cards for 3,500 government films will be in print by December, 1952. Subscription orders for the total output of cards and bulk orders for individual titles will be accepted by the library. *Rules for Descriptive Cataloging in the Library of Congress, Motion Pictures and Filmstrips* may be obtained from the library (Card Division, Washington 25, D.C.).

The National Film Library of the British Film Institute, 164 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2, has issued a *National Film Library Catalogue, Part 1: Silent News Films 1895–1933*. The catalogue contains 1,700 items listed in chronological order and includes a detailed index. The library expects to issue additional volumes covering sound newsreels, documentary films, and fiction films.

The Healthy Village. An Experiment in Visual Education in West China has been issued (1951) by UNESCO (Publication No. 1001, UNESCO, 19 Avenue Kleber, Paris 16e). This 120-page monograph presents a detailed report of a one-year experiment in making audiovisual aids which could be used in health teaching of a partly illiterate population. The village of Pehpei in the western province of Szechuan, China, was the scene of this unique experiment. The report describes the techniques of preparation and the results of the use of posters, film strips, and special "picture books" to inform the villagers of better health practices. The direct art method used for film strips and animated cartoons is believed by UNESCO to be an important contribution to techniques of visual education of underdeveloped areas. The report is published in English with maps, photographs, drawings, and color plates. French and Spanish editions are in preparation.

The second annual edition of the *Jewish Audio-Visual Review* has been issued by the National Council on Jewish Audio-Visual

Materials, 1776 Broadway, New York 19, N.Y. The *Review* lists and evaluates films and film strips dealing with religious subjects, Jewish festivals, Israel, and intercultural subjects.

The British Film Institute (164 Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.C.2) has issued No. 4 in its series of studies of important film directors. The subject of the present monograph is Jean Vigo. It is compiled by Joseph and Harry Feldman, edited by Herman G. Weinberg, and there are articles by James Agee, George Barbarow, Gyula Zilzer, and Siegfried Kracauer. In addition to these special articles which are reprinted from the *Nation, Politics,* and the *Hollywood Quarterly,* there is a summary of Vigo's life and analyses of his four films, *A Propos de Nice, Zéro de Conduite, Jean Taris, Champion de Natation,* and *L'Atalante.*

There is nothing quite like *Lo Spettacolo* on the American or English scene. A good translation in American vernacular is "Show Business," and *Lo Spettacolo* is something like *Variety* if you can imagine *Variety* with tables of statistics, graphs, equations expressing mathematically the curve of progressive saturation of the market by a film, and articles entitled "Relationship between Expenditure on Entertainments and Final Consumption Expenditures" ("Relazioni Tra Spesa Per Gli Spettacoli E Spesa Per I Consumi Finali"). This would take a lot of imagination. Currently, *Lo Spettacolo* has issued its annual statistical summary of show business in Italy (*Lo Spettacolo in Italia, Annuario Statistico, Anno 1950*). It is published by the Italian Society of Authors and Editors, Via Valadier, 37, Rome.

The National Association of Educational Broadcasters, Gregory Hall, Urbana, Illinois, has issued its Monitoring Study Number 2, *Los Angeles Television May 23–29, 1951,* by Dallas W. Smythe and Angus Campbell. The first of these studies was made in New York City, January 4–19, 1951, and a third, also in New York, has just been completed and is discussed in the present issue of the *Quarterly* (see p. 317). The general purpose of these researches is to obtain an objective picture of the content of television pro-

grams during typical weeks in the major urban centers of television production. All programs on all stations during the test week are monitored by trained observers who watch the programs and classify them according to a prearranged scheme. In addition, monitoring includes the stop-watch timing of all announcements made on behalf of other persons. This is a major research undertaking involving careful preparation of categories and criteria, training of observers, and editing and analysis of results.

In Los Angeles there was a total of 551 hours and 49 minutes of TV programming from seven stations during the study week. In addition there were 73 hours and 12 minutes of programming from one station in San Diego. It is impossible to present here the results of so comprehensive a study in any detail. In the following quotation the authors summarize some of the findings regarding the over-all structure of Los Angeles TV programs:

> The largest single class of programs was Drama (General), with 159 hours, 49 minutes, or 26 percent of all program time. These Drama programs were principally motion pictures. Second in size was the general class, Domestic, with 102 hours, 46 minutes, or 16 percent of all program time. News was third with 76 hours, 6 minutes, or 12 percent. In fourth place were Children's programs with 64 hours, 27 minutes, or 10 percent of all time on the air. Variety programs came fifth with 60 hours, 51 minutes, or another 10 percent. Music (virtually all popular) provided another 6 percent.
>
> Program analysis is a many-faceted problem. For certain analytical purposes, the fact that these six broad classes of programs constituted 80 percent of all TV program time in Los Angeles is most significant. For other purposes, however, it may be equally important to observe that three types of programs within these six broad classes dominated the total program structure. Thus, Drama (General) when added to Drama (Children's) provided the largest single type of program with a total of 205 hours, 20 minutes, or 33 percent of all program time. By similarly putting like program classes together, one finds that Variety (General) when added to Housewives' Variety and the sub-classes of Variety for Children gives Variety of all kinds 19 percent of the total (106 hours and 58 minutes). And thirdly, Popular Music of all kinds

amounted to 8.4 percent of the total TV time on the air, with a total of 52 hours, 32 minutes. . . . These three kinds of programs; all Drama, all Variety, and all Popular Music, constituted 59.8 percent of all TV program time.

The above statements become more meaningful when one knows the criteria by which the various programs were classified. These criteria are given in the report. A finding of considerable interest is that nearly 18 per cent of all the time on the air was devoted to "primary" advertising, that is, advertising which is separable from program content.

To the sound and fury about TV these studies bring a refreshing note of clarity and objectivity. With the exception of a small handful of investigations of the impact of TV on family life, children, etc., the NAEB surveys are the only attempts to date to find out what TV is really about.

What's Happening to Leisure Time in Television Homes, is the title of an interesting report on the influence of television on the living habits of approximately 3,000 families living in urban communities. The survey was conducted by Batten, Barton, Durstine & Osborn, Inc., New York, and is published by them. The families studied were from TV and non-TV homes and the over-all purpose was to determine the differences in such leisure-time activities as movie attendance, reading of magazines, newspapers, and books, and radio listening. Except for movie attendance, the comparisons indicate that TV has had remarkably little effect. The report is in summary form and gives no details regarding the technical procedures used in the survey.