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Britain's Independent Television Authority (Part I)

BURTON PAULU

BURTON PAULU has been manager of KUOM at the University of Minnesota since 1938. During 1953-54, he was a Senior Fulbright Research Scholar in London, where he made a study of British broadcasting. The following has been taken from Chapter three, "The Structure of the Independent Television Authority," of Dr. Paulu's forthcoming book *British Broadcasting* (\$6.00). The editors of the *Quarterly* are most grateful to the author and to the University of Minnesota Press for their permission to print this important material in advance of book publication. The second and final part of this excerpt will appear in the Fall number of the *Quarterly*.

THE TELEVISION ACT OF 1954

THE BILL TO CREATE the Independent Television Authority was introduced into Parliament on March 4, 1954, and became law on July 30, 1954. All of the bill's basic features survived the debates, although a good many of the 206 amendments introduced (145 of them by the opposition) were incorporated into the final version.

The Television Act sets up a corporation something like the B.B.C. to own and operate television transmitters. The new ITA is subject to controls very similar to those of the B.B.C., in addition to which the government retains the right to regulate its advertising. Although the Authority itself is permitted to produce the equivalent of America's sustaining programs, most of its broadcasts are prepared and presented by privately financed program contractors from their own studios; the contractors pay the ITA for this privilege and meet their costs by selling spot announcements. Sponsor control of program content is forbidden, and the ITA is required to supervise all programs closely. In theory, therefore, the British ITA is not commercial television American-style, in which sponsors often provide the programs for which they pay, but rather follows the pattern of the press, editorial content and advertising being sharply separated. All this was the result of the concern of both Conservatives and Labourites lest under a commercial system advertisers might control program content.

THE INDEPENDENT TELEVISION AUTHORITY

The Television Act begins by setting up the Independent Television Authority to provide "television broadcasting services, additional to those of the British Broadcasting Corporation and of high quality," for a period of ten years. In a number of respects the B.B.C. pattern is followed. Corresponding to the corporation's Board of Governors is the Independent Television Authority itself, consisting of from seven to ten people appointed for not more than five years—and also dismissed at will—by the Postmaster General. The government of the day, therefore, has the same degree of control over the governing boards of both organizations, and in both cases the Postmaster General is the responsible minister. He is expected to provide information and answer questions in Parliament about the ITA and B.B.C. in like degree.

With the ITA as with the B.B.C., the government resists attempts at parliamentary control of program content. In November, 1955, the Postmaster General refused to direct the ITA to refrain from broadcasting such programs as a film of a Spanish bullfight, and in December of the same year indicated his intention of leaving the control of advertising details to the Authority.

Another parallel feature is the requirement that three of the Authority's members be chosen to represent Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland. The B.B.C. practice is written into the Act to provide that no person shall be an Authority member if he is a member of the House of Commons or of either House of Parliament in Northern Ireland. To keep B.B.C. and ITA affairs separated, it is stipulated that no member of the Authority may be a B.B.C. governor. The desire to safeguard the ITA from advertiser control underlies the elaborately phrased provision that no Authority member is to have any "financial or other interest"—particularly "in any advertising agency," broadcasting equipment company, or program contracting group—that "is likely to affect prejudicially the discharge of his functions as member of the Authority."

The Authority is authorized "to establish, install and use stations" and to arrange for the presentation of programs over those stations. It is administratively responsible for all programs, though most of them are to be provided by program contractors. It may, however, originate such programs as are necessary to secure a proper balance of subject matter, particularly those that "cannot, or cannot as suitably, be provided by programme contractors." It also is authorized to provide fill-in programs as needed. But it is not to do radio broadcasting (although it may carry sound-only relays of the B.B.C. party political broadcasts), nor, without the Postmaster General's approval, is it to engage in the manufacture or sale of broadcasting equipment.

One reason the government set up a single Authority to license the stations was that it wanted to avoid having to choose among competing applicants—just as it originally set up the British Broadcasting Company in 1923 as a monopoly mainly for that reason. The government thus has only one licensee with which to deal, and the licensee then must select the program contractors.

The Act is replete with provisions to ensure a high quality of programs. Parliament's lack of confidence in a commercial system is clearly shown: the B.B.C.'s Licence merely requires the corporation to "send efficiently," whereas the Television Act devotes several pages to program standards. First there are some general provisions, which, like all the rest, apply equally to programs originated by the Authority itself and to those produced by the program contractors. Nothing is to be broadcast "which offends against good taste or decency or is likely to encourage or incite to crime or lead to disorder or to be offensive to public feeling or which contains any offensive representation of or reference to a living person." Programs of all types are to "maintain a proper balance in their subject-matter and a high general standard of quality," and news is to be presented "with due accuracy and impartiality." There also is to be impartiality in "matters of political or industrial controversy or relating to current public policy." In response to fears that the ITA might become a dumping

ground for American films and kinescopes, to the detriment both of cultural standards and employment in the entertainment industry, it is the obligation of the Authority to see "that proper proportions of the recorded and other matter included in the programmes are of British origin and of British performance." Labour spokesmen suggested that the British proportion be set at not less than 80 per cent, but the government rejected a specific figure as administratively unworkable. Special committees are provided, to advise on the critical areas of religious and children's programs, and it is the duty of the Authority to secure compliance with the recommendations of these committees.

With the ITA as with the B.B.C., the government has power to initiate or veto programs. The Postmaster General or any other minister of the Crown may "require the Authority to broadcast . . . any announcement . . . with or without visual images," and the Postmaster General may "require the Authority to refrain from broadcasting any matter or classes of matter." The Postmaster General also may stipulate the minimum and maximum, and even the exact times of broadcasting. The Postmaster General has used his power to prohibit editorializing by the B.B.C., but the Television Act itself expressly enjoins the ITA from editorializing. The ITA is not allowed to originate any political broadcasts, although it may relay in their entirety (though not in part) the B.B.C. political broadcasts, and it may broadcast "properly balanced discussions or debates" on political issues.¹ Program contractors are not to present religious or fund-raising broadcasts without prior permission from the Authority.²

Several clauses in the Television Act protect the B.B.C. against the potentially greater financial resources of the ITA. To prevent the ITA's getting exclusive control of public or sporting events, "the Postmaster General may make regulations as to the grant to the Authority and programme contractors and to the British Broadcasting Corporation respectively of television broadcasting facilities in respect of such events." (This, of course, works

¹ Television Act, Section 3(g, i, ii).

² *Ibid.*, Section 3(4).

both ways, since the Postmaster General might also rule that the B.B.C. could not enjoy exclusive coverage of a big prize fight, for example.) Furthermore, no program contractor is to acquire exclusive rights to sound-only broadcasts unless he actually is using the material in a television program.³ There is no objection to quiz programs or contests, but to prevent the ITA's buying its audience by scheduling programs on the order of "Stop the Music," the Act stipulates that no gifts or prizes are to be offered that are available only to persons tuning in the program.

PROGRAM CONTRACTORS

The ITA draws its main financial support from the sale of time to program contractors. When commercial television was first discussed, Lord Waverly and the Archbishop of Canterbury were the leaders of a group who deplored its complete dependence on commercial revenue. Accordingly, the government introduced an amendment authorizing the Postmaster General to give the Authority outright as much as £750,000 a year; it was understood that this was to come from the license fees collected from television owners, although the Act does not so state.⁴ In addition to being eligible to receive this annual gift, intended to cover the cost of sustaining programs, the ITA may borrow from the Treasury a total of £2,000,000 for capital construction. None of this public money is to go to the program companies, however, since they are supposed to have their own capital at the outset, and to become self-supporting through advertising revenue.⁵

In view of their importance to the scheme, program contractors receive special attention. They are to be chosen on a competitive basis. In order to minimize American influence, non-British citizens and corporations are disqualified as applicants (although the

³ *Ibid.*, Section 5(3).

⁴ During most years, the B.B.C. receives only about 85 per cent of the net license proceeds. It was claimed by the government that this £750,000 would come from the portion of the licence money that would otherwise go to the Treasury, but critics of this financial arrangement replied that the B.B.C. needs, and by rights ought to have, all the license money remaining after collection and other administrative costs are met.

⁵ Television Act, Sections 11-15.

Act does not prohibit the employment of foreigners by program contractors). Advertising agencies also are excluded as contractors. Contractors must comply with the many programing and advertising requirements laid down in the Act and promulgated under its authority. The ITA is required to insert in its contracts clauses giving it the right to examine all programs and advertisements in advance, and to require the companies to record programs for subsequent examination. Furthermore, as the counterpart of the government's veto power over the Authority, the latter is to reserve an absolute veto over any or all programs prepared by the contractors. The program companies are subject to heavy fines and even contract cancellation for violations of these rules.⁶

Advertising, of course, is very carefully regulated. The Television Act itself devotes several pages to this and related subjects; there is a set of "Rules as to Advertisements" attached, which the Postmaster General may amend or repeal with parliamentary approval; and the law requires that an advisory committee on advertising standards is to be appointed (which shall include experts on medical advertising), and its recommendations followed.⁷ By way of general provisions, the Authority is instructed "to consult from time to time with the Postmaster General as to the classes and descriptions of goods or services which must not be advertised and the methods of advertising which must not be employed." Commercials are to be limited to what Americans call "spot advertising," with program contractors supplying and controlling program content and then selling announcements to advertisers on the newspaper pattern; short, documentary-type treatments of commercial products, however, are admissible as program rather than as advertising material. The Act admits as program matter "items consisting of factual portrayals of doings, happenings, places, or things, being items which in the opinion of the Authority are proper for inclusion by reason of their intrinsic interest or instructiveness and do not comprise an undue element of advertisement." This provision has the effect of extending the

⁶ *Ibid.*, Sections 5-6; Third Schedule, p. 21.

⁷ *Ibid.*, Sections 4, 8; Second Schedule, pp. 20-21.

amount of commercial material which the ITA may present. Orders for advertisements may be received through advertising agencies or direct from the advertisers themselves, "but neither the Authority nor any programme contractor shall act as an advertising agent."

A great point is made of the separation of responsibility for program content and advertisements, and everything that could enforce that policy is written into the Act. This requirement is most fully stated as follows: "Nothing shall be included in any programmes broadcast by the Authority, whether in an advertisement or not, which states, suggests or implies, or could reasonably be taken to state, suggest or imply, that any part of any programme broadcast by the Authority which is not an advertisement had been supplied or suggested by any advertiser; and, except as an advertisement, nothing shall be included in any programme broadcast by the Authority which could reasonably be supposed to have been included therein in return for payment or other valuable consideration to the relevant programme contractor or the Authority."⁸

This prohibits an advertiser from declaring on the air that he is in any way connected with the program for which he indirectly pays, and it also prevents the performers from stepping out of character to give the commercials, as they so often do in the United States. It does not, however, prevent advertisers from inserting newspaper announcements calling attention to, or associating themselves with, television programs. Nor can it rule out the indirect control which results from the preference of advertisers for telecasts having high audience ratings.

Further instructions are given in the attached "Rules as to Advertisements," which declare that "advertisements must be clearly distinguishable as such and recognisably separate from the rest of the programme"; that the amount of time given to them "shall not be so great as to detract from the value of the programmes as a medium of entertainment, instruction and information"; and that they "shall not be inserted otherwise than at

⁸ *Ibid.*, Section 4(6).

the beginning or the end of the programme or in natural breaks therein.” (However, a “natural break” is not—and indeed could not be—legally defined.) The Postmaster General has authority to stipulate the minimum interval between advertisements as well as to list the classes of broadcasts (of which religious programs are mentioned specifically in the Act) in which there should be no advertisements at all. There is to be “no unreasonable discrimination either against or in favour of any particular advertiser,” and no advertisement is permitted “by or on behalf of any body the objects whereof are wholly or mainly of a religious or political nature, and no advertisement [is to have] any relation to any industrial dispute.” If local demand justifies it, time is to be set aside for short local advertisements.⁹

Mention has already been made of the general accountability of the ITA to the government, and of the controls reserved over its activities. Like the B.B.C., the Authority is to open its accounts to government examination, and it is to make an annual report to Parliament. In addition, both it and its program contractors must meet certain minimum wage standards and conform to specified labor practices. In order to operate its stations, it must also have a license from the Postmaster General, which among other things specifies the technical standards to be maintained.

The Television Act, then, sets up a commercial version of the British Broadcasting Corporation rather than a transplanted American television network. Its many rules for program standards and advertising, the inevitable consequence of the long and intensive debate that preceded its passage, were designed to avoid or at least minimize the evils of competition and commercialism so often discussed during the previous thirty years. British commercial television was established after the pattern of the press rather than of commercial broadcasting in the United States, Canada, or Australia, partly to avoid the evils of sponsor control and partly because in the field of advertising the press was the only mass medium with which the British had had extensive first-hand experience.

⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 20–21.

If the experiment fails to fulfill the hopes of its organizers or arouses too many enemies, there are plenty of ways in which it can either be reformed or ended. The ITA, like the B.B.C., is set up for only ten years, after which period its operations probably will be investigated by a committee of the Ullswater and Beveridge type. In the meanwhile the government has the reserve controls already described, and the ITA its powers over the program companies. The rights of revocation given the government by the B.B.C.'s Charter and Licence are lacking, but the Authority's Licence does contain a clause which leaves it no more free of ultimate government control than is the B.B.C.: "This Licence shall, *unless previously revoked by the Postmaster-General*, continue in force until the twenty-ninth day of July one thousand nine hundred and sixty four."¹⁰ Noncompliance with the terms of the Act and Licence presumably would be the only grounds for revocation, although the government of the day is left to decide that for itself. On the other hand, it also is possible that the Act may be amended to loosen controls, should the original rules prove too stringent for commercial television to survive financially.

In any event, the new Authority is clearly on trial during its first few years of operation. Its success, and indeed its survival, depend on whether or not it can become self-supporting, produce programs acceptable to the general public, retain the respect of its friends, and silence its enemies.

THE INDEPENDENT TELEVISION AUTHORITY IS ORGANIZED

Less than a week after the Television Act was passed, the government appointed the members of the Independent Television Authority. Their similarity in background and professional status to the B.B.C.'s Board of Governors was an immediate indication of the government's desire to establish the new service firmly. The

¹⁰ *Broadcasting: Copy of the Licence Granted on the 6th Day of April 1955, by her Majesty's Postmaster-General to the Independent Television Authority* (Cmd. 9451), § 7(1). Also available in Independent Television Authority, Annual Report and Accounts for the Period 4 August 1954–31 March 1955, pp. 16–19.

chairman was Sir Kenneth Clark, chairman of the Arts Council, who had been director of the National Gallery, professor of Fine Art at Oxford, and wartime member of the Ministry of Information. The vice chairman was Sir Ronald Matthews, former president of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce. Lt. Col. Arthur Chichester, chairman of Moygashel, Ltd., the linen manufacturers, was the member for Northern Ireland, and Dr. T. J. Honeyman, director of the Glasgow Art Gallery and rector of Glasgow University, represented Scotland. Other original members included Sir Henry Hinchcliffe, director of Barclays Bank, one of Britain's largest, and former president of the Association of British Chambers of Commerce; Miss Margaret E. Popham, former principal of a women's college; Miss Dilys Powell, a film critic; and Mr. G. B. Thorneycraft, a civil service expert. Later Lord Aberdare of Duffryn and Lord Layton were added.

The Director-General of the ITA is Sir Robert Brown Fraser, a former newspaperman, who joined the Ministry of Information in 1939 and in 1946 became Director-General of the Central Office of Information. The deputy Director-General is Mr. B. C. Sendall, principal private secretary to the Minister of Information from 1941 to 1945, and later home controller of the Central Office of Information, controller of the Festival of Britain office, and an assistant secretary in the Admiralty.¹¹

A whole series of important policy decisions had to be made by the new Authority. How many stations should it construct, where should they be located, and in what order should they be put on the air?¹² How many program contractors should be engaged? Should the emphasis be on developing a nationwide network programed from London or on strong local production units? How should the Television Act's requirements on advertising standards be implemented? How soon could the new commercial

¹¹ *London Times*, July 21, 1955, p. 4; August 4, 1954, p. 6; September 17, 1954, p. 6. The members of the Authority and much other information about the ITA are given in *Commercial Television Yearbook and Directory*, 1st edition; see also ITA, *Annual Report 1954-55*.

¹² An excellent summary of the ITA's organizational problems is given in the *London Times Radio and Television Supplement*, August 19, 1955.

television organization be made self-supporting? At the same time that all these problems were faced, the Authority and its contractors had to build offices and studios, set up engineering and program staffs, secure talent, plan programs, and start audience-building campaigns.

PLANS FOR STATIONS

It was decided to begin by establishing a nationwide network covering the main population centers, and then to construct additional stations in the principal metropolitan areas. This was substantially what the B.B.C. had already set as its objective; by the time the first Authority station went on the air, the corporation had thirteen stations covering over 90 per cent of the United Kingdom's population, although no B.B.C. second service was in sight. In Britain as in the United States, however, there is a shortage of desirable channels on which to broadcast. In the United Kingdom there are thirteen VHF television channels, covering approximately the same frequency range as America's channels 2 through 13 (although the exact space devoted to like-numbered channels is not the same in the two countries). The first five of these—referred to as Band I—are used by the B.B.C. Channels 6 through 13 are grouped together as Band III (the intervening Band II being reserved for FM radio broadcasting). Of the eight possible channels in Band III, three have been allotted to the ITA and one more promised. The government is considering the problem of freeing the remaining four channels for television broadcasting.

On channels 8 and 9 initially assigned to it, the Authority decided to operate three stations: one in London on Channel 9, one in the Midlands on 8, and one in northern England on 9. It was hoped to place the ITA's aerials on the B.B.C.'s masts, just as so many American stations serving the same region share towers, since reception is better if all signals in one area come from the same direction. Upon request the B.B.C. agreed to let the Authority share its masts at the new Crystal Palace station in London

and at the existing stations at Sutton Coldfield and Holme Moss. But unforeseen technical complications made joint use unfeasible initially, so that the Authority proceeded to set up its own towers.

It was decided to begin service as soon as possible with a temporary station in London on South Norwood Hill, known officially as the Croydon station. This is located near the Crystal Palace, site of the B.B.C.'s new London television transmitter. When the ITA sets up its permanent London station in 1957, it will move its aerial to the B.B.C.'s mast. The potential audience of the Croydon transmitter is in excess of eleven million people. The station went on the air September 22, 1955. The second transmitter near Lichfield, which began broadcasting February 17, 1956, serves some six million people in the industrial Midlands of England; like the nearby Sutton Coldfield transmitter of the B.B.C., it covers Birmingham. The third, in northern England, is near Bolton, and covers much the same area as the B.B.C.'s Holme Moss transmitter, including Liverpool and Manchester. Its seven million potential viewers have had service since May 4, 1956.

It is hoped to supplement these three stations, which serve some twenty-four million people, or about half the country's population, with twenty more stations in the course of the Authority's first ten-year license period and thus bring commercial television to about 80 per cent of the population. A station for northeastern England is scheduled for the fall of 1956, and Scottish and Welsh stations for the fall of 1957. But the same general limits on capital expenditure which in February, 1956, definitely shelved plans for a second B.B.C. network probably will delay additional ITA stations for at least several years.¹⁸

¹⁸ Technical data on these stations are given in *Commercial Television Yearbook*, p. 17.

TV Opens the Screen to New Playwrights

LELAND L. NICHOLS

LELAND L. NICHOLS, as an undergraduate, specialized in communication and received his M.S. in Journalism at the University of California, Los Angeles. In addition to his internship with N.B.C. Television News, Mr. Nichols has worked as a medical writer and has published in *Westways* and the *Journal of County Medical Association*.

OLD MOVIES on television have been a theme of gag writers since the early days of the new medium, but accuracy now demands that audiences listen to jokes about old television plays appearing as movies. The logic for this anastrophe lies in the sale of nearly fifty original television plays to producers of feature motion pictures. The success of the Hecht-Lancaster production of Paddy Chayefsky's TV original *Marty*, culminating in the Academy award, has made Hollywood acutely conscious of the value of video plays.

This new source of film properties may prove to be television's most important lasting effect on the film industry. It certainly is already proving to be a boon to the playwrights who have found an audience through TV. A competent dramatist who has not yet won success on Broadway need no longer despair of having his work considered by the movies.

The studios, as every writer knows, buy unproduced stories mainly for the cheaper pictures, and they pay accordingly. Hollywood prefers Broadway hits, novels, and short stories. With Broadway producing only about sixty plays a season, this "showcase" for potential film properties has been of little benefit to most writers; and consideration of novels and short stories doesn't help the playwrights. But the omnivorous appetite of television demands well over 1,200 new plays each year, and it is a growing hunger. How closely these plays are watched by both major and independent film makers is indicated by the fact that some 50 have been bought in the past six months, and are on their way to the screen.

It is not possible to single out any one fact that explains the eagerness of Hollywood to use television material. Several related aspects, however, might be subsumed in the word *pretested*. Once a play has been produced in television or on the stage, its basic soundness can be examined.

Producing a major film is a risky and a costly business. Reputations are made and destroyed by a single picture. Fortunes, of course, can be lost along with reputations. Therefore, if a property can be bought that has been tested, the risks are reduced or removed. A producer can tell whether essential subtlety will come across, whether character is adequately defined, whether movement is smooth. Television production will reveal most of these facts. Film makers are aware, of course, that all good television plays cannot be converted, but they can see if the idea is good drama and has feature-film possibilities. Fred Hift noted in a recent *Variety*, "some finer nuances have a tendency to get lost"; but an alert film producer can reject TV plays that depend heavily on this kind of nuance. For a Hollywood producer, watching television drama is like having a reading of a potential property in full-scale production. He gets the benefit while someone else pays the bills.

This factor of "tested producibility" is the first advantage that television offers the maker of feature films. He must keep in mind, however, that most TV drama seems to be better suited to the small screen and to black and white, rather than to CinemaScope and color. The second big advantage of the TV preview is the tested reaction of the audience. Since it is this reaction that makes the difference between success and failure, TV ratings play a big part in attracting producers to video plays. Even granting a factor of unreliability, the ratings give some clue to the popularity of a given play.

A teleplay, then, is pretested for popularity and producibility. Investing a large sum of money in producing this kind of story is not nearly as risky as turning a novel or a short story into a motion picture. Also, it takes much less time and money to prepare a shooting script.

Producing a teleplay involves some of the same problems and risks that Hollywood faces, but the stakes are lower and a negative audience reaction to an individual play will not ruin a series. Reputations are not at stake on each show. Popularity is determined by an average. Even teleplays that get poor ratings may prove to be artistic successes and give a series valuable publicity. The producers of the Alcoa Show, for example, may have worried momentarily about the bad publicity that "Thunder Over Washington" received in some papers, but it did not hurt the program. (In this particular case, the producers can take comfort from the fact that David Davidson's story was sought by Hollywood.) A video producer can take a chance even with a story that he knows is offbeat. If the material is well written and has any glimmer of originality, it has a chance of being sold to a TV producer who needs twenty to forty-five plays a year and cannot always be too critical.

Once a teleplay has been produced, and the ratings are in, a feature film maker can review the results. If the show was good and the ratings indicate that it held its audience, it has an excellent chance of being sold to Hollywood. Thus, film producers may select materials that they may otherwise never consider. Paddy Chayefsky's *Marty* is the notable example. No Hollywood producer would have touched a story about a fat butcher's lack of love life; but once this story had been developed on TV, its fragile beauty was obvious.

Conventional plots, as well as unusual ones, are being previewed on television. *The Return of Johnny Burro*, which Milton Gelman adapted from a *Saturday Evening Post* story for the Robert Montgomery show, has been sought by MGM. This is a heavy Western in a mood not unlike *Shane*. RKO has picked up F. W. Durkee, Jr.'s story of a lady who plots to murder her husband. This story originated on "Climax" as *The Lady and the Prowler* and faced some criticism when viewers imagined that they saw comparisons with the tragic Woodward killing, which was then in the headlines. Gore Vidal's *Death of Billy the Kid*

first turned up on "TV Playhouse." When United Artists bought it, there was no worry about this story being offbeat. The same security of Westerns prompted Metro to buy *The Last Notch* which Frank Gilroy did for United States Steel. Retitled *The Fastest Gun Alive*, movie-goers may be reminded of *High Noon*.

Series shows, as well as offbeat and conventional stories, are being converted from the little screen to the big one. Allied Artists is planning to put "Medic" into movie houses. Harold Mirisch, president of the studio, has hired James Moser, creator of "Medic," to do an original story for the screen. Hal Roach, Jr. is taking on KTTV's filmed *Racket Squad* which Allied will release. Jack Webb capitalized on his "Dragnet" in a Warner Brothers feature that retained the TV title. "I Love Lucy" has been transmuted into box-office gold twice, becoming *The Long, Long Trailer* and *Forever Darling*. The filming of series shows, which began in a limited way with radio regulars, will continue as established audiences are built up around actors, ideas, and titles. A good steady rating gives a potential producer the feeling of safety that encourages investment.

Optimistically, the use of television plays by the movies could break the established tendency to rely on proven material and established stars. However, TV plays present some unique problems which may restrict the trend. Ignoring these problems can mean that the teleplay will become no more than a small addition to the list of star-studded musicals, Westerns, and boy-girl clichés that have afflicted the film industry.

Television drama is being attacked for two characteristic faults that can seriously limit the convertibility of much of this drama. Jack Gould, the New York *Times* critic, has written often about one of these faults. It is the too frequent weakness of the third act. This lack of resolution may be attributed to time limitations and to some lack of courage. Sponsors have been blamed, perhaps unjustly, for favoring weak endings that can offend no one. The time limit may be solved gradually as shows expand to ninety minutes, but the problem is a real one. Happily, it is no prob-

lem for Hollywood. *Marty* demonstrated how a writer gains through having a little extra time for the development of his story.

Last act weakness, then, can frequently be overcome in the film script, but a second major blight of TV drama is harder to correct. It is television's lack of scope. A half hour or an hour, minus commercials, does not leave much time to tell a story. Introduction of characters, plot development, and climax all have to be compressed; all are slaves to the clock. A story must be told with economy of characterization and complication, and its sweep is definitely limited by the picture tube on which it will be seen.

When Hecht and Lancaster brought *Marty* to the screen, they moved from the coffee-shop and the living-room scenes of the original to the sidewalks and the boulevards of New York. This worked perfectly with Chayefsky's story, but it won't work with all. Much TV drama is conceived in one room or two, and it has no excuse for moving into any larger world. Movie-goers are conditioned to expect movement; this is the charm and magic of the motion picture. The trend is toward more scope, not less. The intimate world of video plays will rarely expand to giant-screen proportions.

The problems of transferring TV stories to the screen relate, of course, to the specific teleplay, and do not apply to all television dramas. When a producer looks at a show as potential material for his studio, these problems must be considered. It is probably true that most of the year's 1,200 video dramas are as incompatible with movie needs as movies have often proved to be with television's.

We must hope that the problems of conversion do not tempt playwrights to do teleplays with Hollywood in mind. Both dramatic media would suffer. This is not a very likely danger, however, in view of the men who are now engaged in turning out the majority of television drama.

The new playwrights developed under the impetus of TV are young and remarkably dedicated to their work. Paddy Chayefsky,

who is only 32, speaks at length about the importance of "art" in a recent article in the *New York Times*; and, it should be noted, commends Hollywood for the talent and sensitivity which was lavished on the production of his story. Horton Foote is 38, and already has established himself as an actor, director, and writer. He is the author of *A Trip to Bountiful* which starred Lillian Gish on Broadway after its initial success on TV. Richard Nash taught drama at Bryn Mawr before turning to playwrighting and his successes with *See the Jaguar* and *The Rainmaker* on Broadway. For television, he has written several carefully crafted, violent plays like *The Joker. Deal a Blow*, which was on "Climax" before the story was sold to RKO, was written by 25-year-old Robert Dozier. Dozier's roots lie in Hollywood, where his father is production chief at RKO; but his talent permits no charge of nepotism. His story of youth and delinquency is a mature drama. Equally independent of famous relatives is David Shaw, 38-year-old brother of novelist Irwin Shaw. Shaw's light touch has spun magic with such television plays as *Native Dancer* for "TV Playhouse." These men, and the twenty to twenty-five others, who are doing the bulk of TV writing have met the problems of their medium with amazing success. Whether or not this success has now become formula is a legitimate question.

Fred Coe's dramatic show "Playwright 56" has been unable to avoid the dangers of soap opera and now flirts with melodramatic formula. Little stories of very private triumphs and failures are part of life and have a place in television, but the N.B.C. fortnightly theater has not maintained the line between private drama and public spectacle. Harry Ridgley's story of a rail-roader's last run in *The Day the Trains Stopped Running* was as predictable as any of the daytime radio fare. *Return to Casino*, by Mann Rubin, re-covered the ground that William Faulkner tilled in *The Fable*. Rubin's story moved from the obvious to the anticipated. N.B.C.'s "Matinee Theater" promised a varied menu on its luncheon diet, but it has served a potpourri of pedestrian plays.

With over a thousand teleplays a year, it is trite to observe that they cannot all be of top quality; the danger lies not in occasional bad writing, but in the pit of formula melodrama. Any encouragement of this kind of writing is a serious disservice to television.

One of the problems that faces television, and now confronts the movies through the transference of TV plays to the screen, is the limited number of writers who contribute to the new medium. Blanche Gaines, a leading TV literary agent, laments this fact and agrees that the number of newcomers' scripts worthy of consideration is limited. Because of this, few editors buy direct, relying on agents to winnow out the chaff. "I don't know how a new writer can get started in television," she says, and adds that an out-of-town writer is at a particular disadvantage since he is not available for story conferences even if his script is read and considered.

The limited number of playwrights who are receiving recognition is reflected in the sales of television scripts to Hollywood. The forty-six stories that had been sold to Hollywood by the spring of 1956 were written by twenty-six men. Rod Serling led with five; Chayefsky, Robert Alan Arthur, and Reginald Rose had each sold three; and Whitefield Cook had sold two originals to the movies.

The trend of television and of Hollywood to buy from established writers cannot be reversed. It is natural that a producer should have a higher expectation of excellence when considering the work of a writer whom he admires. However, to keep both popular dramatic media healthy, fresh material must constantly be acquired. If television restricts this flow by discouraging new writers who may not fit the formula, a great damage will be done.

An elusive peace has now been arranged between the films and television. Both industries are in good financial condition and are engaged in much work of respectable caliber. If this peace becomes stagnation, it may take years before those committed to security of investments over dramatic integrity and experiment can be routed.

When in Rome ... (Part II)

HUGH GRAY

HUGH GRAY is a screen, radio, and television writer. His connections abroad have included working with Korda, Cavalcanti, and the B.B.C. As a screen writer in Hollywood since 1944, his credits include *Quo Vadis?* *Ulysses*, and *Helen of Troy*. Mr. Gray has recently completed a novel set in Alexandria in the time of Augustus, and is currently a member of the faculty of the motion picture division of the Theater Arts department, University of California, Los Angeles. Part I of the author's impressions on location in Rome appeared in the preceding issue of the *Quarterly*.

THE TROJAN WAR is a subject in which the average Roman may be said to take a sensitive interest. Whatever the actual historical facts, you will find, if you press him, that he believes that Rome was founded from Troy by Aeneas, son of Aphrodite. And why shouldn't he? The great Julius Caesar did. At least, he laid claim to a direct line of descent from the Goddess of Love; and without a doubt his handsome figure—"forma magnifica et generosa," the hostile Cicero admitted—was in the true line of such a divine inheritance. So was his prowess in the fields of love, a prowess of which his admiring legions, who had shared his fields of battle, boastfully sang as they marched behind him in his triumphs.

Not only Julius Caesar but, as any mere visitor may readily conclude, the whole Italian race might very credibly claim descent from the Goddess of Beauty.

This legend of the Trojan foundation of Rome has been kept alive down the long centuries in Italy by the poets and by two in particular who are without their superior since Homer, by Vergil, namely, and by Dante.

In the schools in Italy, they still read Homer from the Greek. Vergil they absorb from the very air itself. And Dante is at their tongues' tips so that they can tell you in the poet's own words how he treated as leniently as Christian theology allows the unbaptized forefathers of The City and placed them not in torturing Hell but in painless Limbo. There are "Electra mother of Dardanus founder of Troy and, with her, pious Anchises' son,

Aeneas” and “hawk-eyed Caesar all-armed” and, presumably for his brave defense of Troy and his supreme sacrifice on her behalf, Hector too.

It was round Italy’s shores, they likewise believe, that Odysseus, or Ulysses, as the Romans called him, sailed on his journey in search of Ithaca. Circe’s cave and the Sirens’ rocks and many other places that tempted him are there for you to see.

It was into this world then, in the company of the American coproducer of *Ulysses*, that I flew once again, above the blazing lights of St. Peter’s, on Easter Sunday evening, 1953. Under my arm as I landed was a copy of a script that had been prepared in the United States and which I fondly imagined to be the shooting script. This time, however, we were not part of an invading Hollywood army.

American contributions to the production of *Ulysses*, beyond the script that I was carrying, were the film’s two male stars, Kirk Douglas and Anthony Quinn, cameraman Hal Rossen, and an arrangement with Paramount for United States distribution. The cameras and their operators were from British Technicolor who were to do all the laboratory work, and the balance of the cast were Italian and French. The whole enterprise was organized and supervised not by an American company of vast resources operating in the spacious Cine Città with its extensive lot and great stages but on the modest lot of the company of Ponte-De Laurentiis in the fields that lie beyond St. Paul’s without the Walls, on the way to Ostia.

First, about the script. In the beginning, there is always the word; and in the end, there are the credit titles. Those who saw *Ulysses* will remember that the writing credits were almost a feature of the movie. There were no less than seven of them, three American and four Italian. How this came to be is part of the story of the making of almost any international picture and of the kind of meeting of minds that must there take place. It is part, too, of the different estimate of the screen writer in Hollywood and Europe. For in Europe, outside perhaps England, there

is no system basing credits on actual contribution to the script such as the Writers Guild of America has set up. It is part also of the long lesson in the meaning of the word *pazienza* that is learned in moments when, for all the love you bear a lovable people, you bend your head and grimly pray, while faith works overtime:

Let me not to the marriage of true minds
 Admit impediment. Love is not love
 Which alters when it alteration finds
 Or bends with the remover to remove;
 O no! It is an ever fixed star
 That looks on tempests and is never shaken. . . .*

With a living tradition that is in their blood stream, it is not of course surprising that in Rome they are inclined to suspect the classical values of the Hollywood writer. Even in New York, for that matter, and elsewhere in the world, they likewise laugh loudly when a Hollywood writer sits down to his Homer or his Vergil. The only difference between the Roman and the New Yorker, here, however, is that the Roman would laugh just as loudly at the notion of a writer from New York sitting down to his Homer or his Vergil.

The traveling writer, like the traveling player who crosses international boundaries, likewise learns en route that the word *dramatic* can have different shades of meaning in different countries as well as in different ages in the same country. A full survey of these things, however, lies outside the scope of this article. It is sufficient here to say that there were long weeks of discussions before we all agreed upon a script—or shall we say upon a story line? For though much of the essential part of the script was fixed,

* It is my feeling that screen writers everywhere should reach an international agreement on credit titles. I think overseas producers, and writers too, would see the value of this step. For example, following *Ulysses*, I went to Germany to write a script for a joint Italo-German organization. The contract I was asked to sign included the usual European clause to the effect that in the event that more than one writer should work on the screenplay, the credits would appear in alphabetical order. There was no mention of how much work or the proportionate values. When I protested and asked them to substitute the American Writers Guild ruling, they readily agreed. There is no reason why this should not always happen. The only alternative solution is for the writer to take some such pseudonym as *Abe Aba* and so make sure that if he is going to be on a list he will at least be at the head of it. In Italy, they actually introduce the writing credits with the word *elencho* meaning "list" or "roster" of writers. Imagine the line-up there would have been had *Ulysses* won a writing Oscar!

there were to be continuous revisions throughout. Indeed, a writer working abroad must early acquire a capacity to keep his balance on shifting sands. For in countries where words come readily and where everything will be dubbed anyway, every reliance is placed upon the power and the opportunity to improvise. This may have its advantages, but they are small compared with the disadvantages; and they are nothing compared to the confusion that is thereby created when a film is shot in three languages and with only a guide track.

On the night of the première, it is likely to be only too painfully evident that the polysyllabic volubility of the Latin has forced the American writer into a lengthiness that does not make for telling dialogue. But what can he do? The words must fit the wagging tongue and the fluttering lip. At no time, however, is this a more trying experience than when the American writer originally wrote the dialogue which was subsequently lengthened in Italian. So, if words and lips are to agree he must now rewrite at length what he had once so lovingly pruned!

Brought up as I had been in places where movies are shot in one language at a time and sheltered as I likewise was during the making of *Quo Vadis?* from any other method, my first experience of a multilingual scene stays vividly with me. It was at the very outset of the shooting on an interior constructed in the open and depicting the palace of the "great-hearted Alcinous," king of Phaeacia on whose shores, it will be remembered, Ulysses had been cast. Nausicaa, the king's daughter, played by Rossana Podesta—the young lady who was later to graduate in *Helen of Troy* to the role of the woman who had been the cause of Ulysses' wandering—deeply interested in the handsome stranger, rushes up to her father and, while a hundred eagerly whispering extras look on and *vespas* putter in the distance, points off, exclaiming excitedly in Italian:

"Ecco! Viene, papà!"

Whereupon *papà* turns to see Ulysses entering and greets him in French:

"Soyez le bienvenu!" (or words to that effect).

To which Kirk Douglas replies, in warm American tones:

“Hail, King!”

My surprise at this polyglot performance was short-lived, though for awhile I battled to see, as far as possible, that the words used in the three languages called for similar lip movements. But as time wore on and improvisation became more and more the order of the day, this turned out to be a losing fight. Besides, I was not always on the set.

Little did I then realize that the situation would, so to speak, come home to roost. Long months later, I was called upon to assist at the dubbing of the final English version in Hollywood. Then and then only was I fully aware of what had happened to our original dialogue, in terms of mere syllables alone, when it was rendered into French and Italian!

It is natural for a writer to recall first his experiences with the script, in a venture of this kind. And, of course, there was more in dispute (or should I rather say more to be agreed upon?) than just the improvisation of dialogue, a habit so easily indulged under conditions that offer a second chance to write a line or speak it better.

There were those other questions at which I have already hinted—questions of a nationally, or temperamentally, different dramatic sense—a Latin feeling, for example, that the emotionally charged moment is the truly dramatic one, as against our preference for conflict. But this was only one aspect of Italian film production as I now made contact with it, directly, as distinct from just being involved in the making of a picture in Italy.

As I viewed the over-all scene, I was aware, as I had so vividly been three years before, of the skill and artistry of the Italian and of his living sense of historical tradition but with a difference. The art directors, the set designers and dressers, and the costume makers for *Quo Vadis?* were Italians working under American supervision. Now, they were on their own, performing wonders and always, it seemed, making bricks without straw.

The sets were masterpieces of simplicity and, so, were im-

mensely effective. And all, as it were, came out of nowhere, and were made of virtually nothing. Such a combination there was of phantasy and tradition! And never was this more in evidence than in the dwelling of Circe. Homer speaks only of the outside of her house, built of polished stone with the smoke rising from it. That, we saw in a long shot. But what of the inside? Somehow, the art director had managed to create an interior of such an eerie and other-worldly character that on entering it I truly believed that a witch inhabited it, but not a witch from some wild heath, rather one who was the familiar of the luxurious Olympians.

And when I first saw Circe herself, the aloof, always silently watching Mangano, with her robe all woven of pearls so that she, like the place she lived in, gave a sense of belonging to the sea, my first thought was that she looked like a pearl out of the sea's most wonderful oyster! And odd, ludicrous even, as this may seem to those for whom these legends are something out of another people's world, locked in a dead language, this is exactly what I was meant to think. It is part of what I mean by the living tradition of the Homeric past that survives in its own way in Italy, and is brought to life in the film and that some of its stay-at-home critics found strange and false.

For Monte Circeo, which lies between Rome and Naples—"Circe's land," as Vergil calls it, "where the rich daughter of the Sun makes her untrodden groves echo with ceaseless song; and her stately house glows nightlong with burning odorous cedar wood"—was famous for its oysters that were relished by the oyster-loving Romans, as Horace in his second book of *Satires* tells: "New moons swell the slippery shell-fish but it is not every sea that yields the choicest kind. The Lucrine mussel is better than the Baian cockle. *Oysters come from Circeo.*" Yes, this is the living tradition, the true sense of the gods. For were not the gods, above all and originally, the masters of the forces on whose aid men depended for survival? Zeus himself, the father of all, was originally the rain maker giving the earth its fertility. And so on, down the Olympian line.

And whether, when we went on location, the places where we played the scenes were the traditional ones or not, the very lapping of the tideless, Mediterranean waters made them seem so. Such was the little rocky shore at Porto d'Ercole that served us for Phaeacia where the unconscious Ulysses was washed ashore to be found by Nausicaa. There, in the midst of our shooting, the production manager suddenly called a halt one day; and from behind a rock there was borne a tub of ice in which nestled bottles of sparkling wine. It was the very hour of Queen Elizabeth II's coronation; and we were invited, in honor of the British camera crew, to toast the Queen with them.

Later and farther north, along the shore line of Tuscany, off Grosseto and the reclaimed Maremma, passing vessels might have hailed a strange ship, a Greek out of the past, sailing the blue waters of the Tuscan archipelago; and their crews might have wondered to behold a seemingly mutinous and bedraggled crew tying their captain to the mast, for these sailors of today would not have heard the sounds that echoed in the ears of Ulysses, the siren voices.

Some of those who have seen the picture will recall, perhaps they too with wonder, that these siren voices did not make enchanting music but spoke with the voices of Penelope and Telemachus, calling Ulysses ashore, for he was back in Ithaca. Here, however, was a case where dramatic treatment called reasonably for a departure, in details, from the narrative. To be convincingly enchanting, the music that Ulysses heard would have had to be of such surpassing beauty as to convince the audiences and enchant them as he was enchanted. Where could such music be found? What else to use, then, in its place but the trick that would surely bewitch him, namely, to let him hear the voices he was longing for and in answer to which he would run his vessel ashore on these fatal rocks?

By August and the time of the thunderstorms, we were back in the studio and in the cave of Polyphemus. No sequence, I feel, was better done. There were, in point of fact, two caves. One was

as it might be in nature. The other, constructed under the direction of that master of the trick shot *Herr Schüftan*, was scaled down so that the actor who played Polyphemus—a former Italian Olympic wrestling champion—might walk about inside it and tower like a monster against the little more than pebble-size rocks.

Inside the full-sized cave was a great model of the giant to which Ulysses and his men played. By skillful cutting back and forth between the scenes in the two caves, a wonderful illusion of a giant was created on the screen.

It was in the larger cave that we seemed to spend week upon week while it echoed with the bleating of the very live sheep of Polyphemus' herd; and, in that very realistic way they have with these things in Italy, one of these sheep was killed before our eyes and cooked upon a spit for the purposes of the scene. I wondered as I watched if in this, as in so many other things, the past was not still alive, the Rome of the augurs and the *suovetaurilia*. With the passage of the days, the illusion swiftly grew—illusions of this sort seem somehow to grow easily in Italy—that we were really in the cave of Polyphemus, and the dampness and the smell of the sheep and of the cheese that Ulysses and his men were using as a prop all helped to feed the illusion.

Nothing in this sequence is perhaps so remarkable on the screen as the making of the wine, always providing of course that you are not surprised at its somewhat speedy fermentation. It was not yet the grape harvest when the scene was shot, so that in all that land of vineyards no ripe grapes were yet available. But time pressed, and the scene had to be shot. So that it might benefit from all the photogenic value of rich black grapes such as do not ripen, even in the harvest, among the neighboring *Castelli Romani* or elsewhere to hand, crates of the finest and most purple kind were flown in from hothouses in Holland. These it was that Ulysses and his men trod out to send the purple juices flowing over the rocks. I marveled every time I saw it and asked myself where, outside the confines of the Greco-Roman world, could the Dionysiac quality of that scene be so readily improvised and so completely

communicated to the screen. As I think of it now, I can still hear the director Mario Camerini shouting to mark the frenzied time for the dancing men. Indeed it seemed to me that out of watching it, a man might get a good sense of that *oreibasia*, that spontaneous mountain dancing in honor of Dionysus, that Euripides talks of in his *Bacchae* and to which Gilbert Murray has given the Swinburne touch. For here, truly, were men filled with panic, their "storm-swift feet wildly laboring, fiercely fleet . . ." This again, then, is what I mean by the living tradition.

So, after the long months, the shooting was complete; and after still longer months, so it seemed, the film came to the screen. In Italy, the people flocked to see it; and over here, audiences took it to their hearts in the warm embrace of a gross of—so it is estimated—over two and a half million dollars. It had its defects, particularly in the areas of sound. But these, it seems, were generously forgiven.

It also had its critics among the professionals. Before their criticism of the dramatic and technical shortcomings, one humbly bows. But, as a writer whose work has been much with stories of classical antiquity, I confess that I for one, both here and on other occasions, have been disturbed by the classical punditry of some of them, a claim to which neither in the case of *Ulysses* nor of other similar films, from the internal evidence of their comments, do they seem lawfully entitled. Indeed in this respect, I cannot help wondering about these guardians of all our values in the same terms as those in which Juvenal pondered the problem of the eunuch: "Quis custodiet ipsos custodes?"

After *Ulysses*, in the order of production, though it preceded it in the order of writing, came *Helen of Troy*. But to this, I contributed only my work on the screenplay and was not present for the filming. However, I was in Rome when production began, and I went over to Cine Città to see Priam's proud palace rising where once had stood the palace of Nero. The studio car that came to take me there was driven by one of my old friends from *Quo Vadis?* days, and for a moment time seemed to slip back.

It was spring again along the Appian Way. The trees were everywhere in bloom, and my old friend spoke of them like a true poet. Then as we talked, he ventured to come round to the question of *Quo Vadis?* It had been magnificent, he said. But there was a touch of regret in his voice. Something, he seemed to hint, had been lacking. What? Could it have been the true flavor of the times? And as I gazed about me at the ruined tombs that flanked the Way, I agreed that this might well have been. Who, indeed, could truly capture it?

And some day, I must go back and ask him what he thinks of *Helen of Troy*. By then, MGM will have made *Ben Hur* again and De Mille will have shown us his *Ten Commandments* once more and the moment will indeed be round to where we came into this second cycle of historical spectacle that was first set in motion in Rome some forty years ago.

Wisely, to ensure my return, I have never left Rome without casting my coin into the Fontana di Treve. Nor do I cease from time to time to murmur prayerfully with Horace:

O changeless source of life, immortal Sun,
The passage of whose shining car doth mark
Our day and night! So let it ever be
That on thy journeys thou shalt ne'er behold
A city half so fair as mighty Rome!

Unless of course it be Athens! Ah, Athens! . . .

Japanese Film Art in Modern Dress

EARL ROY MINER

EARL ROY MINER is an instructor in the English department at the University of California, Los Angeles. His interest in Japan has grown from wartime training and work in military government. Mr. Miner has written on Japan and translated for various newspapers, *Hudson Review*, *Atlantic Monthly*, and *American Literature*. The film series reviewed in this article was presented by the Committee on Fine Arts Production of UCLA through the coöperation of the Motion Picture Association of Japan, their American representatives, and the Japanese Consul General in Los Angeles. The series was conceived and developed through the faith and imagination of Harold Leonard, a lecturer at the university, who reviewed some hundred feature films to find the five that were shown.

IN THE PAST FEW YEARS, Japanese films have emerged from obscurity to become a part of most filmgoers' experience, a routine task for reviewers, and even a subject for the healthy skepticism of parody on television programs. Such pictures as *Rashomon*, *Ugetsu*, *Gate of Hell*, and *The Golden Demon* have given to the West a cinematic experience whose very strangeness is now familiar. The gorgeous historical pageantry, the disciplined acting, and the superlative visual beauty of these pictures at their best may be likened to the legerdemain of a superb magician—at once familiar, satisfying, and mysterious. Commonplace as these unusual films have become, however, there has been a growing feeling, more often implied than expressed by reviewers, that the magic of the Japanese films has been exhausted, and that there may be no more tricks left in the bag.

To dispel what may be called these enchanted misgivings, certain Japanese film companies and some Americans have given considerable thought to introducing Japanese films of a very different nature from the beautifully mannered historical films that have been shown since 1951. The first tangible result of these deliberations has been the Japanese Film Series presented jointly by the University of California at Los Angeles and the Motion Picture Association of Japan. The series was presented at the university on five consecutive Sunday evenings in March and April, 1956, to audiences that responded to the excellent news-

paper coverage with large attendance and to the films with spontaneous applause.

What the audiences saw were five contemporary films selected both for their quality and variety, and for their treatment of modern Japanese life. The films had much of the lyricism and cinematographic beauty of the period films, but their more contemporary settings gave them a weight of realism that, with perhaps one exception, strengthened other qualities in the films. Since this one picture seemed somewhat inferior to the rest, it may be reviewed first, and the rest in order of ascending quality.

*Inn at Osaka*¹ could hardly be called a failure with its cast of able actors and the experienced direction of Heinosuke Gosho. It presents an episodic treatment of the problems of a group of people connected in one way or another with the protagonist Mita, a minor insurance company executive and would-be writer. He has been transferred from Tokyo to Osaka where a lively geisha falls in love with him, servants come to him with their problems, and he faces the difficulty of getting on with an unreasonable and shady superior. The problems may be said to arise with his coming to the "inn at Osaka," but it is not clear that his returning to Tokyo has settled them.

The episodic nature of the film makes brief description of the action impossible. The film's merits lie rather in photography of the Osaka scene—which excels everything else in the picture—than in cinematographic unity. Worthy of warm applause are the acting of Nobuko Otowa as the geisha and two or three excellent sequences, such as the one showing the dead body of the religious fanatic father of one of the girls attracted to Mita. But the picture's faults seem more insistent. There are too many static episodes that express the naturalistic slice of life but do not advance the film or relate to other episodes. The focus on Mita, the only source of unity, is sometimes imperfect in order for the camera to stray to scenes of even greater unhappiness than the hero is

¹ *Osaka no Yado* (1954). Shintoho Co. Directed by Heinosuke Gosho. Photography by Jyoji Ohara. Music by Yasushi Akutagawa.

heir to. But the most grievous faults are those of tone and pace. The naturalism of Japanese films and prose fiction alike is apt to be mixed with a tendency to the sentimental, as if the basic lyricism of Japanese art must accompany even the most fruitless suffering. When the sentiment and the naturalism are given structure and meaning, the results may be impressive; but the mixed tone is all too often inconsistent. *Inn at Osaka* is unfortunately sentimental where it can least afford to be, over the main character, Mita, who is idolized as a prince charming by everybody except the blackly evil characters of the film. The picture has many local beauties, so to speak, but is somewhat misshapen as a whole.

However, this largely unfavorable response may be due in part to the unwieldy presentation of the film. At this particular screening instead of subtitles, it had a spoken commentary that was expert and accurate but only rumbled confusion into the ears of those in the audience who strained to follow the intonations of the actors' Osaka dialect. Luckily, only this film lacked subtitles.

Perhaps *Inn at Osaka* would appear in a better light in a series where the other films were less outstanding; certainly the other films in this series seem superior to it. The second and third—*The Echo* and *Their First Trip to Tokyo*—invite more favorable comparison, since they present excellent though differing treatments of Japanese family life. On the whole, *The Echo* is idealistic and *Their First Trip* realistic in approach, although the distinction is somewhat inadequate.

*The Echo*² deals with the problems that may arise in the Japanese two-family system. The son and his wife live in a suburb of Tokyo with his parents, a situation in which young brides proverbially and film heroines usually suffer from a domineering mother-in-law. In this film's novel plot, however, the husband's parents side with their daughter-in-law who quietly endures the outrageous behavior of her philandering and callous husband,

² *Yama no Oto* (1954). Toho Co. Directed by Mikio Naruse. Photography by Masao Tamai. Music by Ichiro Saito.

and who is far more likable than their own daughter who periodically leaves her good-for-nothing husband to intrude upon the parental scene. Besides this contrasting parallelism of the two young wives, there is the contrast between the wife's seeking an abortion (an act with no stigma in over-populated Japan) rather than have a child by an unloving husband and his mistress who, resenting his mistreatment of her in another way, determines to bear his child as something her very own in a chaotic postwar world.

This fresh plot is given further unity by the meaningful focus upon the father and daughter-in-law, who develop a warm affection and respect for each other. Only their warmth of feeling makes her position tolerable; but in the end the impossibility of any change taking place in the husband-son leads the wife to part from him and the father to retire to the country, terminating the only relationship that has ever given either of them any happiness.

The director, Mikio Naruse, has wisely avoided any intimation of sexual attraction between the young wife and the aged father-in-law. Instead, by occasional flashes of comedy, by a kind of timeless—if repetitive and floating—sequence, and by superlative photographic lyricism, he has presented a film showing the beauty of suffering when attended by compassion and sensibility. Quick cuts without transitions and repeated or cyclic sequences help to take the action out of time in the very act of pressing the movie forward. The fault of the movie is perhaps concomitant with these particular lyric virtues. There is a certain haziness of definition—the son's motives and the submissive wife's seeking an abortion do not seem sufficiently accounted for. The actors are extremely well cast, especially So Yamamura as the father, although Setsuko Hara as the young wife must seem incredibly sweet and submissive to married Americans of either sex.

*Their First Trip to Tokyo*³ seems conventional in comparison

³ *Tokyo Monogatari* (1953). Shochiku Co. Directed by Yasujiro Ozu. Photography by Yuharu Atsuta. Music by Takanobu Saito.

with *The Echo*, and yet it is fully as satisfying. The plot turns on the visit of an elderly couple from the country to what they regard as their loving and successful children in Tokyo. It turns out that their sons and daughter are no great successes at all and too busy in their own affairs to pay them any real attention. Only the fiancée of a son killed in the war shows them any real affection and respect, and they return home with a sadly diminished opinion of what life and one's children have to offer. When the mother falls sick soon after the return, the children—including the dead son's fiancée—make a trip to be with her at her deathbed, a kind of contrast to the parents' trip to visit them.

A story like this succeeds only with good actors, good direction, and good photography. The actors are exceptionally well chosen from the ranks of the most skilled and experienced veterans, and none is allowed to star at the expense of the others. The photography, like all else under Yasujiro Ozu's direction, is handled with a kind of unobtrusive realism. He allows no one emotion to dominate; the children are not ogres in their lack of filial love, but merely people too busy with their own affairs; and one's sympathy for the old couple is restrained by their almost comic countrified speech and their bumpkinish ways. The real test of such realism as this is the death of the mother. Deaths—especially of mothers, girls in love, and young poets—ought to be banned by law from Japanese films, since they are usually as sad, wet, and interminable as the September rains. Except for the fact that it is too long, Mr. Ozu's sequence is an exception. He succeeds because he handles it in the same realistic way as everything else: the children are tearful only till they begin to recall their own affairs and divide up their mother's belongings.

Two things besides the muted realism deserve praise. The relationship between three generations and several families is handled with an ease and assurance that are reflected in every aspect of this splendid production. And the symbolism—to use perhaps too strong a word—of the Japanese summer heat, which compels every human being to seek his own comfort, seems to be an at-

mosphere that explains the children's behavior; and to the extent that it discomfits travelers in travel garb even more, it justifies the embarrassment of the parents and the mother's falling sick. The film is not one to call great, but it has the satisfying excellence of art of integrity and beauty.

*Wheat Whistle*⁴ is a film of great charm and beauty, dealing with the problems of adolescence in a setting reminiscent of the Japanese 1920's. The central character is a shy, but proud and eccentric, son of a delightful Buddhist abbot who is not unlike Chaucer's worldly monk. A sentimental, if talented, poet, the boy has one real confidant, a rakish and gregarious fellow student who also writes. The two get on well until our idealistic hero comes to think his friend is toying with the affections of a restaurant-keeper's daughter whom the poet would himself like to love if shyness and social pride did not prevent him. After an abortive duel, he breaks off with his friend; and, to occupy his now free time as much as to fulfill his various urges for self-expression, he writes poetry that is published (there is a wonderful scene when the father approaches the abstemious boy with *sake* to congratulate him on his success) and takes to pursuit of a woman who steals money from the temple offertory box. The boy thinks that he is in pursuit as a detective, but his interests are really amatory, to the considerable delight of the somewhat faded but still glamorous thief. They are both disappointed, after a short bout of wrestling on the greensward, when neither gets the money or the other, although the woman can scarcely be blamed for these failures. He then answers a police summons with the fear that the authorities regard him as both an accomplice to robbery and an attacker, only to discover that his advice is being sought over his fellow student who is in trouble for rowdiness with drink and women. The hero rushes with considerable relief to the friend who is again dear to his heart, only to find that he is dying of tuberculosis, sorry for having trifled with the girl's feelings—he really loves her—and anxious to commission our hero executor of his (completely un-

⁴ *Mugi-Bue* (1955). Toho Co. Directed by Shiro Toyoda. Music by Ikuma Den.

published) poetic works and loving caretaker of the girl. The friend dies, and the pair visit his tomb; but the tempestuously mixed emotions of the boy prevent his reaching an understanding with the girl. The film ends with him convulsed in sobs by the side of the stormy sea, crying out at a world so inimical to every aspiration of an adolescent.

The plot line is worth relating at such length both for its considerable charm and because it shows that this film is strong where such a film as *Inn at Osaka* is weak—in story structure. There are many Japanese films and novels where the lack of plot does not matter because unity is conveyed through tone, but the special virtue of this film is that it has both. The one sequence where the plot structure falters is the death of the friend. Director Shiro Toyoda has done well to split up this deathbed episode, but it is still too long and sentimental for American taste. (Perhaps it is we who are sentimental in our distaste for tears and scenes of death.)

Even the best story can fail in the telling, however, and there are many places in *Wheat Whistle* where the film might have broken down. Each time such a moment is reached, the film offers comedy, photographic beauty, or an unexpected turn of events that is yet reasonable. The production could scarcely be bettered in pace, in variety, in scope, or in the changing proportions of the screen image. One example of the care and skill employed in this film must suffice. The movie is set at some period in the teens or twenties of this century in a large town or small city near the mountains. This is precisely the period and setting that millions of the mature Japanese film public can recall as their own adolescent period and is, so to speak, the period of adolescence of modern Japan. The charm evoked by this setting is somehow conveyed even to a foreign audience.

The charm might have become sentimentality were it not for the direction, the skill of the actors, and the pervasive comedy of the movie. The experienced actors seem all to have understood their roles perfectly and to have been able, with proper direction, to convey their parts with the assurance typical of the best Japa-

nese traditions of stage and film. The comedy is a delight in itself, a catalyst of many more complex moods, and a way of keeping the characters—especially the central one—at a healthy, unsentimental distance from our hearts. Perhaps this is the place to remark that if the film series did nothing else, it exploded the myth of the humorless Japanese. The humor is natural, various, and as universal as Dickens or Chaucer. All in all, one must expect to see, in a lifetime, few such enjoyable films as *Wheat Whistle*.

If “enjoyable,” “charming,” and “wonderful” are the proper adjectives for *Wheat Whistle*, the only proper way to describe *Doomed*⁵ is as one of the greatest films of our time. It is long and various: it winds and unwinds, it shifts from mood to mood, silence to roar, present to past—all in the most unabashed and absorbing fashion. There are some things that strike one as Elizabethan—long speeches and “big” emotions—some things that are Dickensian—the gallery of characters from the Japanese Circumlocution Offices—and some things that are expressionistic—the revels through Tokyo at night; but above everything else, the picture is a complete exploration of the film as an artistic medium. Its flash backs, dissolves, fade-outs, contrasts, montages, and rapid changes in focus or scale of the film image exploit the potentialities of the film medium with the thoroughness of an Eisenstein. It is a film maker’s film, a justification of the medium.

But it is also a “movie”—a film to be enjoyed—a picture of a hundred moods and yet a singleness of impact that is almost devastating. That this is true is not due to the basically simple plot: a minor bureaucrat finds he has six months to live, searches for ways to give his short life a meaning, and ends by pestering the city officials into making a small playground, which they take full credit for after his death, though with some self-questioning. Stated in these terms, it would appear that very little happens in the almost two and a half hours of the film. But precisely the opposite is the case, because the risks Director Akira Kurosawa

⁵ *Ikiru* (1952). Toho Co. Directed by Akira Kurosawa. Photography by Asaichi Nakai. Music by Fumio Hayasaka.

chooses to run are rather those of overpowering the audience with action, variety, and complications.

The question to be asked about this remarkable film is, then, about its unity, its coherence. In a superficial sense, Mr. Kurosawa has seen to it that no unity of plot is required—scene changes into scene and the audience is delighted at every moment to seize upon what the moment affords. But in a more fundamental sense, the extraordinary display of film technique is related to the theme of the play, the idea that human life has a rich and precious significance—whether one is a nobody, a fraud, or a person of integrity—and that some human beings can even achieve beauty and dignity by a spiritual exertion untypical of them or the rest of the world. It should be noted that the Japanese title, *Ikiru*, is the verb “live,” and expresses this characteristic Kurosawa theme better than the translation “doomed.” The thematic line is presented without sentimentality (although some of the characters are sentimental), but with a gusto that is itself an expression of the theme. Comedy and pathos, satire and tragedy, degradation and lyricism—all mingle in a film that might have been naturalistic except for the director’s insistence on the affirmation of life, the love of human antics, and the glimpses of sudden beauty afforded by every scene. The theme is conveyed through the film as film more than through the quasi-literary medium of dialogue. The dialogue is indeed rather mediocre, although the subtitles are almost miraculously lively and accurate. The film lives as a totality, a human comedy that only barely manages to hold together its many parts.

For highest praise, most people would undoubtedly choose the scene of the funeral banquet with its many flash backs. It is superbly acted and paced in the relentlessly casual tempo of the rest of the film, and possesses an insight into human nature that gives a profound inner logic to a sequence as well as to a film that only *seems* to get more and more excited and out of hand. The banquet scene has faces chosen with the care of a Dickens or a Gogol in choosing names. The banquet becomes more and more maud-

lin and satiric as the characters reveal themselves, and more and more tragicomic as the good "little" dead man rises in proportion to fall of pride in the other characters. In spite of the variety and the seeming excesses, all is clarity and all is art. There can be no doubt that *Doomed* is the best of the five films in the series, or that it is one of the most powerful and brilliant of the postwar films of any country.

Although these films are worthy of attention in themselves, their showing in Los Angeles has had a kind of collective significance which ought not to go unmentioned. The Japanese Film Series was the first such event in this country, perhaps anywhere in the world: the first coherently chosen body of Japanese films, the first group shown to an audience not primarily of Japanese descent, and the first group of modern films on modern Japanese life to receive such attention in this country. It was, then, a historical event.

It is difficult to say which the series has proved the more conclusively—that the Japanese film industry has come of age, or that the taste of American audiences has matured. There are no doubt many Japanese films that, whatever their quality, are culturally too alien to be understood by even the more favorably disposed American audiences; but it is now possible to say with assurance that Japanese film art is not only artistically equal to the work of any country, but also that it is truly international in its universal human appeal.

The Future of Film and TV in Britain

STEPHEN WATTS

STEPHEN WATTS has been writing the "London Letter" in the Sunday film section of the New York *Times* for the past six years. He started writing about films in his native Glasgow at the age of twenty and was for fifteen years (less war service) film critic of the London *Sunday Express*. He is a past-president of the Critics Circle (London) and the author of a novel and a volume of short stories.

FEW READERS OF THE *Quarterly* are likely to have heard of Grandma Groves. Her identity—or rather her significance—can best be established by the fact that she is the suggested export of British television to American television, in retaliation against such imports as "I Love Lucy," *Liberace*, *Lassie*, and Roy Rogers. Not suggested by me, I hasten to say, but by the sharper-penned TV critics, who appear to the fairly detached observer to be rapidly approaching choleric frenzy over the state of "independent," or commercial, televised entertainment in Britain. (It is disillusioning, when one comes across a friendly critic, to remember, belatedly, that his paper has a sizeable financial stake in ITV.)

Grandma is an irascible old lady who plays a leading role in one of the local tele-serials, "The Groves Family." Now I am not a television critic, but the most realistic route into the subject of British films is via television, the great challenge, competitor, and—in the wrong sense of the word—alibi. With the exception of Ed Murrow, none of the London critics seems to like any of the off-the-peg features bought from America. Lest this should hint at chauvinism, I have to report that they really don't like anything initiated here either, except the occasional irruption of a fresh, undaunted personality (almost never a professional artist or entertainer) or the program that brings to the small screen for a special purpose someone like Sir Laurence Olivier who is not normally tempted by the medium and appears only because he wants, very properly, to pay a tribute to the late Sir Alex Korda, appeal for a charity, or plug a film. But, nonetheless, many people continue to look at television; and when they are doing that

they are not looking at movies, at least not in the movie theaters. With the opening of the northern stations, we are moving toward the milestone of five million sets, which is one to every ten citizens of this island.

Since television in Britain became dual-programed and competitive in late 1955, I have paid it the mild compliment of making a collection of clippings, from newspapers and magazines, which seemed in a rough way to chart its progress, or at least its infantile history. This is not so much because I am concerned with television per se as because I am concerned, professionally and personally, with trends of popular entertainment and especially with the cinema which is of necessity allied to television, although most of the time the alliance has no more mutuality or comradeship than sometimes informs the relationship between parties to a political treaty.

Looking through the mass of clippings now, I am inclined to push them off the edge of the desk toward the wastepaper bin and sum them up, for American readers, in a phrase: British television has learned nothing from the readily available casebook of American experience, and British cinema, in relation to television competition, has been equally obtuse. To expand this general finding, perhaps unnecessarily, it appears on the evidence that only the expected has happened: cinema attendances have dropped; the volume and enterprise of film production have shrunk even while studio executives have been insisting that they are not afraid of the TV challenge; and, of course, the advertiser has asserted his never-doubted but often-denied authority as the ultimate arbiter of what the viewing audience shall see. The significance of the last point is that, as the public never knows what it wants but develops a curious, stubborn allegiance to much that it is given, the makers of the commodities who buy television time are now the most influential force in molding the tastes and preferences of the whole entertainment public.

One of the more thoughtful writers on television, Maurice Wiggin, recently wrote in the *Sunday Times*:

We got along quite well without commercial television, and if it were to sacrifice everything to the one end of attracting a mass audience at all times then it is certain that standards would be lowered to vanishing point, and values sadly twisted. The human animal is lazy, and even bad television is fascinating. You may hold that every man has a right to slum it, mentally and emotionally, inert before a machine which pumps out a distorted and tendentious picture of the world. I do not deny the viewer's right to do so. But I question anybody's right to peddle him the dope.

Now nothing could be clearer than that "the one end" of commercial television is "attracting a mass audience at all times"; so, if Mr. Wiggin is right about the consequences bound to flow therefrom, and if I am right about popular taste in one medium affecting another, related medium, then the outlook for British films on the level of art or even notable intelligence is black indeed.

But no situation in entertainment remains static for long. The very few film makers (the sadly departed Korda was one; Carol Reed is another) whose instinct is to go on making the films they want to make, come hell or high fidelity, may gradually be joined by others who take heart from the difference in quality between films made for the theater and those made, as it were, for the home. They may stop giving lip service to the claim that the big screen can do things the little one can't, and really begin to prove their point. On the other hand, some *modus vivendi* may be arrived at by which real movies can get their money back by television showing (wildly impossible at present) or by the projection of tele-films on cinema screens to audiences who, for reasons not yet entirely discernible, may choose paid-for seats in public instead of free ones by their own fireside.

But prophecy is not my line, and for the present the British film scene can be scanned in vain for immediate prospects that are at all heartening. There is the occasional whistle in the dark, as when a film-trade journal recently seized eagerly on a Columbia program of extracts from new films (put on, astonishingly, free by the noncommercial B.B.C.) and quoted the *Daily Mail*

critic's verdict that they "showed up TV drama for the hesitant fledgling it is." Since *On the Waterfront* and *From Here to Eternity* were two of the films used, the critic was setting rather a high standard that the generality of films can hardly claim to reach.

Then there was J. Arthur Rank, telling 250 of his theater managers that "competition is always good," that John Davis (his right-hand man) "has got his coat off and is going to lick TV," and that his studios are going to make "a lot of good pictures because everybody is keyed up to the challenge of TV." Unfortunately when the Rank production program for the remainder of this year was available for inspection, it contained no project suggesting in theme or scope that novelty or belligerent ambition of which Mr. Rank had raised hopes—though that is not to say that the several capable writers and directors at the Rank studios' disposal will not make some good films in 1956. Indeed, much of the optimism vented these days is merely fashionable and rings hollow. The *Kinematograph Weekly* reports that in the United States "it is now generally accepted that the bread-and-butter programme no longer satisfies a public that only needs an excuse to stay home and watch a choice of up to a dozen alternative television programmes," and adds "we would be closing our eyes to obvious facts if we refused to admit that the same thing may be happening in this country." Yet, despite the fact that "bread-and-butter" pictures are still being made here (are, in fact, the majority), the *Kine* comes to the conventional optimistic conclusions about the future. It is difficult to see on what evidence.

The *Daily Film Renter*, which now runs a TV feature to keep an eye on the rival, may declare "the only thing the exhibitor need fear . . . is the production of inferior films"; but this seems to me, on current inspection, to mean that the exhibitor is far from free of fear. The same trade journal recently devoted three consecutive days' editorials (under the heading "Dilemma") to expounding the need for the cinema to "co-operate with TV in such a way that the box-office in its over-all take is not only not damaged but actually derives benefit from the situation." There

was some lack of precision, I thought, in explaining how this is to be done, rather as when politicians declare that we must “get tough” in the Middle East without actually nominating the form the toughness is to take, because there is no way of doing so that wouldn’t sound a little silly.

I gathered that the film industry, beyond touching its cap to TV and saying “Any films I can make for you today, please sir?”, getting cuts of its own films aired teasingly, “popularizing” its stars through TV shows, and just plain buying tele-time to plug itself, had very little in the way of a future.

Only a very dedicated man could hang around the film business, writing for and about it, for a couple of decades without catching the fear contagion of the downbeat story. The time when you must especially avoid downbeat writing is when the story is of its essence downbeat. So far, the ineluctable downbeatness of this story has caused me to break this cardinal rule. But my defense is that so many other people here—including some of those who matter most—have been so consistently and distressingly upbeat in their utterances and attitudes that a little healthy gloom seemed in order, and I have resisted most of what little cheerfulness kept trying to break in.

I cannot regard it as sensible to try to lull intelligent readers with such charming little statistics as, for example, Kenneth Winckles, another top Rank executive, has lately been dishing out—and, worse, being applauded for doing so. Mr. Winckles points out that in the years 1950 to 1954 the drop in British cinema admissions was of the order of 9 per cent, compared with an 800 per cent rise in television sets. The journal that praised Mr. Winckles for basing his optimism “on facts and not on wishful thinking” seems to me to require its unrealistic head examined. The number of homes with geographical access to Britain’s one-program, monopolistic, noncommercial, tax-payer-backed TV in 1950, as compared with the present, was relatively minute; the only comparative figures of importance must be those

after September, 1955, when, as has been said, TV became competitive and began spreading. Cinema admissions for the first complete year with television in full blast, 1956, compared with the figures for the last complete year without the competition, will be the first statistics to tell a true story; averages smoothly ironed out back to 1950 prove nothing. The Winckles case is almost like saying that the cinema stood up well to the counter-attraction of television when there wasn't much television to stand up to.

To start on the upbeat section, Britain is still a filmgoing country; and that most reliable source, the Board of Trade, gives the latest figures as twenty-four visits to the movies per head of the population per annum. That is quite a consumer market to conjure with, and it ought to be able to survive the shocks and shrinkages that competition brings. Although there is a good deal of artistic and technical talent in the studios, there is not enough to justify the expansion of production that some people clamor for, basing their argument on industrial standards which take no heed of the artistic *imponderabilia* involved. What matters is the use to which the talent is put.

On the production executive level, we are neither wealthy nor healthy. Sir Michael Balcon, with his close-knit team of Ealing writers, directors, and producers, is too well known to require my testimonial. The death of Sir Alexander Korda removed the only real impresario—it would not be too much to say the Diaghilev—of British films, and there is no one to take his place. But the two biggest studios, Rank's Pinewood and Associated British's Elstree are ruled over by an accountant (John Davis) and a lawyer (Robert Clark); and one cannot avoid the feeling that the actual film makers would be better for a controlling (not to say guiding and inspiring) influence drawn more directly from knowledge and experience of the craft of making films.

Still, *Genevieve* and *Doctor at Sea* came from Mr. Davis' stable and *The Dam Busters* from Mr. Clark's; so one must not depre-

ciate them. Whether a *Breaking through the Sound Barrier*, *The Third Man*, or *Richard III* could get itself made without a Korda around is, however, a disquieting but legitimate reflection.

It is significant that producer-directors of the repute of Carol Reed, David Lean, Ronald Neame, Frank Launder, and Sidney Gilliat have all detached themselves from the Rank allegiance; and what conclusion is to be drawn from their commitments at the time of writing? Look at them: Reed is putting the finishing touches to *Trapeze* for Hecht-Lancaster. Lean is going to Ceylon to make *The Bridge Over the River Kwai* for Sam Spiegel and Columbia release. Neame has had a hit with *The Man Who Never Was*, and is preparing *Seawife*—both for Sumar, a new company that releases through Twentieth Century-Fox—after which he will direct Alec Guinness in Joyce Cary's *The Horse's Mouth* for MGM. Launder and Gilliat have contracted to write, direct, and produce an original this year for Columbia. In other words, this pack of leading movie makers is working either for American employers direct or on films that will set out to be international in appeal, which in this country means patterned to appeal to the American mass market.

If it be conceded that British films have made the best impression when they have been simply true to themselves and made with both eyes on their own intrinsic purpose instead of having one eye skewed round the corner trying to figure how somebody else will like what they are doing, then the Anglo-American collaborations in British studios do not augur well. Not long ago Albert Broccoli, who is half of the company called Warwick which has been producing here for the last few years, arrived back from the United States and gaily announced that the American public was happily accepting British films—as evidence, his company's *Cockleshell Heroes* etc. Of course, Mr. Broccoli is right by his own definition: a British film is a film made in Britain. Warwick's films are in effect American films made on location, just as are MGM's *Ivanhoe* and *Quentin Durward*, though they give employment in British studios, even, occasionally, to stars (usually

second-billing) and British directors; but they have ultimately no more connection with the main stream of British films than have the principal people involved in them. Would a Pandro Berman or a José Ferrer pretend he was doing other than making a picture abroad when he was working on one of those "British" pictures? I imagine not.

On a less blatant level, I would cite the successful *Man Who Never Was* as an example of the dangers of "insuring" American appeal by using Hollywood names even if they have to be dragged in by main force. *The Man Who Never Was* may have gained in billing power by being able to put Clifton Webb and Gloria Grahame on the marquee but it succeeded as a film *in spite of* those fundamental miscastings.

Do I make myself vulnerable now as a proponent of some sort of a celluloid "racial purity" policy in the production of pictures purporting to be British? I can only hope that such misinterpretation may be avoided in a sympathetic general acceptance of a thesis that is based on what has been best in British films in the past; and it has to be faced that we are not now producing many pictures of the quality of, say, *Brief Encounter*, *Odd Man Out*, or *Great Expectations*.

Any argument on the creative side of films always tends to veer off toward the commercial. American influence in British films has two root causes, and neither of them stems from any sinister desire of Hollywood to "colonize" England. The first cause is the law—no doubt economically sound as things are with us—which prevents American film earnings from being wholly taken out of the country, thus encouraging the spending of them on production as an alternative to leaving them in the deep freeze. The second is the intricacy of financing a film here, with the financiers so wary that they require "end money," or completion guarantee insurance, as well as a distribution contract before they will ante up a penny, and a Government bank (National Film Finance Corporation) which lends the taxpayers' money with such proper caution that it takes far longer for an independent producer to set

up a picture than it takes to make it; and he cannot budget on making more than one a year. (The NFFC, for all its caution, has doled out some £6,000,000 of which the greater part will have to be written off as a loss.)

In any such review as this, there must come a dreaded point where a paragraph begins, in fact or in effect, with the words, "What British film production needs. . . ."—and this is it. Top-level management is the first thing. Three or four Balcons instead of one would be a good start. What would be required of that management is not genius but a lot more courage, initiative, and catholicity than is now evident, and less effort to arrive at big-scale results by small-scale, would-be formula, methods. Announcing and parading new "stars" might be replaced by putting new, hopeful talent into parts where somebody other than the publicity office might be inclined to see star potential. Stories might be found more often—for they exist—in new novels and plays or through encouragement of original screen writing instead of being dreamed up to fit television comics, humbly accepted in a package delivered from Hollywood, or written by quite able men to the requirements of bosses who in more normal forms of commerce would be frankly known as middlemen and retailers, with as much connection with manufacturing as that implies.

Goodness knows we have able writers: Graham Greene has withdrawn from films only because of dissatisfaction with his experience in them; Eric Ambler will do just as many screenplays of the quality of *The Cruel Seas* as he is given the opportunity to do; T. E. B. Clarke did not exhaust his comic invention with *The Lavender Hill Mob*; or William Rose, his ingenuity and originality with *Genevieve* and *The Ladykillers*. J. B. Priestley's great skill and fecundity lie dormant, so far as the screen is concerned, because he, even more than Greene, has been sickened by experience.

But perhaps before the courage that is required on the executive level can operate and inform production, its antithesis, fear, must be exorcised. The two big fears are the American market

and (where we came in) television. I am convinced the American-market fear can best be dispelled by forgetting it—and, of course, making films that can earn their keep in the home market, and letting the American bonanza fall where and when it unpredictably may.

As for television, perhaps the experience of *Richard III* in America will revise all our ideas. Perhaps, just as radio news, which was predicted to kill newspapers, in fact increased their readership, the small-screen showing of films at home will have a trailer reaction and bring people all the more to the cinema. Unlikely things have happened (though not many), but until then what Britain needs is freer opportunities for the men who want to make movies for the best reason in the world—because they like the idea and sincerely believe that other people will like it too.

Film and TV—A Shotgun Marriage?

ARTHUR KNIGHT

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ALTHOUGH COMMERCIAL TELEVISION has been going full blast in the United States since the end of World War II, there are still two schools of thought as to just what it is. According to some, TV is simply radio with pictures. The rest think of it as movies by air. True, there are the vague glimmers of a middle ground, a suspicion in some quarters that television might in fact be something unique, an art in its own right. But just as the motion picture leaned on theater and vaudeville and the Wild West shows for a decade or more, so television continues to lean upon the arts from which it draws its peculiar sustenance. To date, there has been no D. W. Griffith of television, no one to seize upon its special qualities and techniques and, through an act of creative imagination, transform them into something unique from film, radio or, for that matter, filmed theater. Television continues to be an exceedingly prosperous hybrid—but a hybrid that has the possibility of being radically transformed at any moment by the director of one of its many "experimental" programs or, even more drastically, by a technician in one of its equally numerous experimental laboratories.

Just a glance at American television today, however, confirms the domination of the "radio with pictures" point of view. The strict time schedules of commercial radio have been carried over intact, imparting their arbitrary segments of quarter-, half- and full-hour programs—in marked contrast to the movies where the unfolding of the story alone dictates the length of the picture. Further, the television story must be told in such a way as to leave appropriate "breaks" for the sponsor's message, quite irrespective of how much the play may suffer by being divided into these ar-

bitrary "acts." But precisely because so many of television's top executives entered the field directly from radio, the propriety of their rigid program schedules and time out for the commercials has scarcely even been questioned. Indeed, the sole exception would seem to be the Ford Television Workshop's experimental "Omnibus" which, with ninety minutes to play around in—and an endowment from the Ford Foundation—can afford to permit plays and features to go their full length without interruption. (It might be mentioned, however, that "Omnibus" itself has on occasion lost sight of its unique position in TV, seeking to condense *King Lear*, Shaw's *Arms and the Man* or Puccini's *La Bohème* into the allotted time span and imposing upon itself the very limitations it was created to avoid.)

It is also significant that the average television script, unlike the movie script, places its emphasis almost entirely on dialogue. Unless some very special effect is desired, the writer will leave such matters as camera placement, camera movement, and the cutting from shot to shot to the discretion of the television director. Hence, it is among the directors, producers, and cameramen, rather than in TV's top executive echelons, that one encounters the "movies by radio" approach. These are, after all, the people who must translate words into pictures, who must supply the visual interest that will keep audiences looking at their sets. The director, while rehearsing his cast—generally in a bare room, far from cameras and, not infrequently, far from the studio as well—develops his own ideas of how his cameras will move from shot to shot, which camera will photograph the various bits of business while another is setting up for the next take. He works out in advance, as far as he can, his cutting plan—when to work in close-up, where he needs a long shot, where he might use three cameras in combination, cutting from one to another to heighten the tempo of his scene. Indeed, some television directors have become so expert at this sort of thing that their work almost looks like a movie! Which is scarcely surprising. After all, what else did they have to learn from?

After all the days of rehearsal, however, and after whatever precious hours of "FAX" time he can wangle—dry runs with camera on closed circuit—the director must retire from the stage at just the crucial moment, the moment that his show goes on the air. He must retire into a control booth from which, in a cold sweat, he watches the result of all his planning. Through throat microphones, he is in contact with his floor director and can correct the more glaring errors. But more of the time, he is concerned with what he sees on the small monitor screens within the control room, screens that show exactly what each camera is picking up, plus another that shows what is actually going out over the air. It is here that he does his cutting, deciding when to switch from one camera to the next. "Take one!" he will call to his technician at the monitor panel, and the technician punches up the first camera. "Ready on three!" he may say as the third camera lines up for the next shot—"Take three!" And the image from the third camera goes out over the air.

For all his careful preparation, the director is still limited to what the cameras on the floor give back to him. An important reaction shot, planned as a tight close-up in rehearsal, is lost when the hatbrim of a minor player comes between the camera and the performer. A scene may have played itself out on the screen, its visual impact gone; but until the next camera—momentarily snarled in a cable—can get there, that shot must remain on the air. The actress who blows up in her lines, the workman in overalls momentarily visible through a Roman arch, the failure of camera two in the middle of a program—these are only a few of the hazards that confront the television director each time he puts a show on the air. For there is no going back, no possibility of re-shooting, no editing around a mistake. In short, the *control* essential to any art form is lacking. The director may improvise beautifully. The cast may so skillfully cover up those momentary lapses of memory that they go unnoticed by the general public. But inevitably some violence has been done to the original conception. And even if the original conception was of itself no great

work of art (as is so often the case in television), there is always the sobering possibility that it might have been.

It is not surprising, then, that film is being used increasingly as the medium for important dramatic and comedy shows. Although some sponsors continue to proclaim that "this program comes to you *live* from Hollywood," the very statement carries with it the implication of a losing battle, of plumes in the dust. Film is so much more flexible a medium. If something goes wrong, the shot can be made again. If a comedian's joke falls flat, it can be eliminated. Also gone are the time-space restrictions of live TV. In film, all the world's a stage just so long as you can get a camera there. Settings need not be limited to what can be crowded onto the floor of a TV studio. A character can advance from youth to old age within a single half hour without worries about the make-up problem. The physical limitations that have hedged writers for television in the past are suddenly removed. At least, to some extent. The De Mille kind of spectacle with a cast of thousands, that favorite extreme long shot in Westerns of the stagecoach tiny against the majestic buttes of old Arizona, vast scenic panoramas—these will inevitably come out as meaningless blurs on the small screen. The intimacy of television still has to be respected when preparing films for it.

But these aesthetic considerations are only one—and probably the least important—reason why film has come to play such an important role in television today, and will unquestionably become even more important tomorrow. For film has actually become an economic necessity for a station's operations. One has only to look about in the major centers of television production—New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles—to realize what vast amounts of real estate are tied up in TV. Old theaters, old warehouses, old riding academies, and arenas are now television studios. In New York alone, C.B.S. operates 19 separate studios; N.B.C., 15 studios; A.B.C., 7. In radio, a group of actors can rehearse their show for an hour or two in a quiet room, carry it into the broadcast studio and be done with it. By contrast, an hour-

long dramatic show in television requires about two weeks of steady rehearsal. Settings start going up at least three days before the program goes on the air; the "FAX" rehearsal generally taking place sometime during the last two. All of this ties up space—not merely while the show is on the air, but for days and weeks before. Although the cast rehearsals are held not in the studio but in rehearsal halls, hotel ballrooms, or lofts all over town, the physical mounting and dismantling of a show may limit a studio to two or at most three programs a week; and a really big show, like the "Omnibus" program, ties up its studio for an entire week. Is it any wonder that the TV channels are overloaded with quiz programs, give-away programs, and panel shows that need little or no rehearsal and no props outside a placard bearing the sponsor's name in large letters and a few tables and chairs? Is it any wonder that outside events—baseball and football games, fights, political conventions—are seized upon by the telecasters?

And isn't it also possible that these are more truly the proper sphere for "live" television? After all, what gave television its tremendous impetus in this country was a series of live shows that, for many, transformed the home receiver from an expensive toy into a virtual necessity. The Kefauver crime investigations, the 1948 and 1952 presidential nominating conventions, the Army-McCarthy hearings—these were more than entertainment. They were an education, an education in democracy. They brought vast sections of the population for the first time face to face with their legislators, their representatives. The public saw at first hand the complicated machinery of government, the even more tangled processes of government investigation. Taxpayers were turned into informed citizens—and relished the experience. Since that time, President Eisenhower has made telling use of this new medium in his occasional reports to the nation. Similarly, the telecasts of the World Series and other major sports events and, to a lesser extent, operas and symphony concerts, have permitted millions to participate in what had hitherto been limited to the privileged few who could afford the price of admission at stadium

or concert hall. The popularity of such shows as Ed Murrow's "Person to Person," N.B.C.'s "Wide, Wide World" and even, on a much lower level, the innumerable interview programs that turn up on both national hookups and local stations, all are based on television's unique appeals of intimacy and immediacy. Sets and props, demanding valuable studio space, are either minimal or nonexistent. Production values rise out of the thinking and planning that goes into such a program, and the intrinsic interest of the people and places that the cameras reveal.

There is perhaps a further significance in the fact that even those sponsors who seem to place most emphasis upon the "live" quality of their dramatic or comedy programs are more than willing to place the heart of their shows, their advertising messages, on film. Here, obviously, the question is less one of artistic control than of control over the effectiveness of their sales pitch. It just wouldn't do for the announcer extolling the virtues of a filtered cigarette to burst into a paroxysm of coughing. And what if he should commit a spoonerism on the name of the product, like the fabled "Bupert's Rear" of an earlier era in radio! No, the commercial must be foolproof, and completely encompassed in an even twenty-, forty-, or sixty-second segment, with not a precious moment wasted. The answer, nine times out of ten, is the filmed commercial—with emphasis increasingly on the animated cartoon, the form that offers not only the highest degree of control but also the maximum amount of "sell" per second.

Today, despite the present emphasis on live programing, film already occupies fully 40 per cent of the average television station's air time, an extraordinary percentage until one recalls the many uses films have and the many kinds there are. Outside of New York, a good proportion of this time goes to kinescopes, filmed versions of live shows made directly from the TV screen during an actual telecast. "Kines" are kept as a permanent record of the show; but they are also used to service stations not connected to the network by coaxial cable, stations that have conflicting commitments at the time the show is on the air live and

—dependent upon the arrangements made with the talent involved—for subsequent rebroadcasts of the same show.

Of the films produced specifically for television, outside of the filmed commercials and station breaks, perhaps the best known are those series built around either a fictional character or a star personality—"I Love Lucy" or "Our Miss Brooks," Groucho Marx or Loretta Young. In the case of the Groucho Marx show, the film is little more than a recording medium, with the program staged in a TV studio before a live audience. Its sole advantage is that Marx can run his brusque and hectoring interviews longer than actual air time and then, on the basis of audience response, clip out the weaker passages. (He began using this technique in radio, recording on tape and then cutting for time.) What the audience gets is, in effect, pretested material, "the best of Groucho." The dramas or situation comedies, on the other hand, are more apt to be shot in a movie studio or on location, utilizing all the techniques of ordinary film making but bearing in mind the special requirements of the small television screen. Some of them—and especially those made directly for a national sponsor—are carefully produced, cleverly directed, and well acted. The field of the half-hour "package show," however, is still dominated by the philosophy of the fast buck. Whole 13-week series may be shot in a few weeks, using the time-honored techniques of Poverty Row, subordinating production values to quick and easy camera setups with few mobile shots and, it would seem, even fewer re-takes. It is possible to spot in a Western series a posse dashing past a boulder one week, the stagecoach being held up at that same boulder the next week, the hero fighting a gun battle there the next week, and the posse dashing by in the opposite direction the week after—all taken from the same camera, the same position and at the same time, but for four wholly different stories. Such films are invariably tricked out with "canned" music—recorded music from a stock library—and often, in the comedy shows, "canned" laughter as well.

As long as this type of thinking prevails in the field of filmed

TV dramas, hope for its development is small indeed. There are, however, numerous indications that this era is already beginning to pass. Most of these shows have been made by independent packaging agencies seeking sponsorship on the basis of a catchy title, a name star, and an extremely low budget. Few of the big sponsors are interested any more. They have a product to sell, and they are understandably chary of tying it to such shoddy, cheap-Jack entertainments. The packagers have had to hawk their shows, sponsor by sponsor, to the smaller stations around the country, far from the green fields of Madison Avenue; whereas, the big sponsors are now buying more expensive, more carefully produced series or, with an even greater frequency, underwriting their own filmed shows. As one look at the little screen will reveal, the boys are still pretty deep in the woods (particularly on the writing end). But at least that first hurdle, impossibly low budgets, has now been got over—and there's nowhere to go but up. With major film companies entering the field after their long and bitter opposition to TV—first the Disney studios, followed by Warner Brothers, Fox, and MGM—the standards are bound to rise even farther.

In a number of instances, the television networks have themselves gone into film production for special program material. Perhaps the most notable TV film to date has been N.B.C.'s 26-week series "Victory at Sea," produced by Henry Salomon, Jr. and masterfully edited by Isaac Kleinerman from literally millions of feet of combat newsreel material. Presented originally as a prestige feature by the network, it was subsequently sold to sponsors around the country for re-runs, as well as being cut down further for theatrical presentation. This same unit has also been responsible for "Three-Two-One-Zero," a thoughtful study of the atom and the atomic age; for "Nightmare in Red," a historical account of the rise of Soviet Communism; and "The Jazz Age," a protracted glance at America in the twenties—each an immensely skillful assemblage of existing film material. N.B.C.'s "Elder Wise Men" series also makes intelligent and original use

of the motion picture in television, here for extended camera interviews with such people as Bertrand Russell, Robert Frost, Pablo Casals, and Frank Lloyd Wright. Although the camera is little more than a passive observer in these films, the close-range insights it affords into the minds and characters of these men is an occasion for real gratitude—and especially since on film they provide an imperishable record of their personalities. The same network's short-lived "Background" show sought to combine similar camera interviews of people in the news with specially edited existing footage to provide an informed and informative background to current affairs.

At C.B.S., the emphasis seems to be on original documentary material, as in their programs "The Search" and "Adventure." Here, crews of documentary film makers are sent all over the country—to research centers in colleges, universities, and hospitals for "The Search"; to cover the ways of the Navajo, or the wonders of the West, into the air and under the sea for "Adventure." In some instances, original footage may be supplemented by stock material; but the basic approach is to build a picture of a place, a process, or a people through on-the-spot reporting. The same idea lay behind many of the Ed Murrow shows, also on C.B.S., such as his "Argument in Indianapolis" and his memorable sequence on Senator McCarthy. Camera crews recorded objectively and at length what they found in Indianapolis, where the American Legion opposed the formation of a branch of the American Civil Liberties Union, or in the Washington hearing rooms where McCarthy pursued his un-American investigations. The footage was later edited, and pointed, by Murrow's staff in New York. "Omnibus" frequently commissions films, both dramatic and documentary, for inclusion in its program—films on Maine lobster fishermen, on the mid-Western Toby shows, and, of course, the famous Lincoln series. "Omnibus" has also pioneered in a new type of commercial, short documentaries that make no effort to sell a product but rather take the viewer behind the scenes of the sponsor's operations to see how a Greyhound

bus is serviced between runs or how Nash-Kelvinator's researches are solving the problem of preserving food *without* refrigeration. Playfully referred to as "Omnibusiness films," they are in fact a long step forward toward a more enlightened public-relations policy among TV advertisers.

Not infrequently, specially filmed material is used in conjunction with, or as the television people prefer to say, "integrated" into, a live show. Indeed, Alistair Cooke of "Omnibus" and Charles Collingwood of "Adventure" have become quite skilled as "voice over" narrators, reading commentaries to silent footage or to films prepared originally in another language. Where a solid segment of film is used, this presents relatively few difficulties—simply providing the commentator with a microphone and a monitor TV set on which he keeps his eye as he reads from a carefully timed script. But it is also possible—though far more complex—to insert brief sections of film into a live show from time to time as illustrative material, thus clarifying a subject with something more animated than charts or models—an exploration of the teeming, microscopic life in a drop of water, a study of the awesome potentialities of the atom. Because the networks' film chains are housed in separate studios, far from the stages for their live shows, such presentations require extremely careful cueing and coördination. The results have frequently been worth the effort, however, combining the impact of a live, authoritative discussion with the film's ability to show an operation precisely and clearly. Integration has also been attempted on dramatic shows, filming perhaps a sequence in which the boy and girl say good-by to each other at Grand Central Station to be used on the air as a transition between Act I (live), the boy's apartment in New York, and Act II (live), a farm near Esopus, N. Y. Unfortunately, the differences in photographic quality, in lighting and in make-up—as well as the audience's basic awareness that the young couple hardly had time to leave the studio and dash down to Grand Central in the first place—detract from the sense of sustained illusion necessary to the effectiveness of a play.

By far the greatest part of the films that turn up on television, however, are pictures that were originally intended for theatrical exhibition, or informational and documentary pictures produced with the nation's vast 16-mm. audience in mind. Here the exigencies of studio space are most clearly revealed. Almost any live program would be preferable to some of the pictures that turn up during the late afternoon or late evening hours, pictures that were inferior when first produced a decade or more ago. And yet the studios take them, run them, and re-run them year after year. For, quite apart from the fact that they require no rehearsals or standing sets, films can be cut to any length to accommodate whatever time slot happens to be open. It is not unusual to find a picture that originally ran an hour and a half or more sandwiched into a scant sixty minutes. Violence, of course, has been done to the story, with great chunks lifted bodily out of the picture—sometimes entire reels eliminated. The hard-pressed TV editors rarely have time for an "artistic" cutting job. And the truth is that few of the pictures they are called to operate upon demand or merit a more conscientious reëditing. (One recalls, in contrast, King Vidor going through his *Big Parade* shot for shot, painstakingly eliminating a few frames on either side of each splice in order to reduce the total footage by 800 feet, as his studio had ordered.) When the film in question is a *Major Barbara* or a *Paisan*, though, the heavy hand of the man with the scissors can become acutely painful.

No less painful are the frequent insertions of filmed commercials during the running of a feature. Most stations seem to regard a feature movie as simply a thread on which to string as many of these profitable beads as possible, halting the progress of the narrative every seven or eight minutes to splice in another sponsor's message. At other stations, where the staff editor shows signs of recalling the Saturday afternoon serials, action is permitted to rise to some sort of dramatic peak before the commercial is introduced. In either case, the wear and tear on the viewer who is trying to follow, and even make some sense out of the

truncated story, is considerable. For years, the quality of feature films available to television—cheap, independent productions, vast stocks of British “quota quickies,” and a sprinkling of foreign-language pictures—was too dispiriting for anyone to worry about. More recently, however, with programs like “Million Dollar Movie,” the telecasters have gotten their hands on some fairly distinguished material. In recognition of this new quality (as well as because they had to pay dearly for it), they have extended the time slots allocated to film showings, often running the entire picture without any cuts—although still breaking in from time to time for the necessary commercials. And here is the dilemma of the American television people today. They want quality films, but in order to pay for them they must resort to the disruptive commercial despite the fact that the better the film, the more disruptive it becomes. When N.B.C. offered the world première of a British comedy *The Constant Husband* on a Sunday night “spectacular,” *Variety*’s reviewer was moved to comment, “If the web had set out to invite viewer resentment it couldn’t have done a much more imaginative job . . . When four bankrollers share a 96-minute show, and each of course insists on being seen and heard, it’s murder on the audience.”

Short films—documentaries, interest films, travelogues, two-reel comedies, educationals—would seem to lend themselves more readily to the requirements of television. But, although great quantities of such material are used, program directors tend to regard them somewhat contemptuously as “filler.” Indeed, at least one distributor makes it a practice to send out on consignment dozens of shorts, all unassorted but carefully timed, to stations all over the country to be used as needed. The result is those quaintly inappropriate little pictures that follow a short ball game, a fight that failed to go the full ten rounds, or some similar outside event that ran under its anticipated time span. It is true that on occasion the telecasters do make an effort to use “filler” material intelligently, but even here the time pressures can cancel out their effectiveness. N.B.C. once booked a short art film on Fra

Angelico to follow a Metropolitan broadcast of an Italian opera. When the opera ran a few minutes longer than expected, the picture was forced off the air a few moments after the credit titles had appeared. Occasionally, the film distributors try to put together full quarter- or half-hour programs out of existing film material—sport quizzes, the popular “Movie Museum,” the “John Kieran Almanac.” On other occasions, the stations themselves—and most notably, WABC in New York—try to book in shorts that will not only complement each other but also add up to an entire series of more than ordinary interest. The Film Council of America, an organization sponsored by the Ford Foundation to promote nontheatrical film making and utilization, has made available to the TV stations prepared series of outstanding, prize-winning documentaries. For the most part, however, the short film continues to be a stopgap, the television equivalent of the staff pianist or organist from radio days who held himself in perpetual readiness for an occasional emergency performance.

Unquestionably, there is room for improvement in television’s use of the film medium. Unquestionably, there will be even more room when the nation’s present 425 TV stations swell to an anticipated 2,000 or more. When that happens, the already acute shortage of studio space will be aggravated to the point where films must become not the stopgap but the very center of television programing. And although the live show, the on-the-spot coverage, the “you are there” spontaneity of television will inevitably remain its greatest asset, the dramatic, comedy, and educational features that make up the bulk of its programing can only gain from this coming shotgun marriage with the movies.

In the meantime, the movie companies, originally sworn to a fight to the finish with the rival medium, seem to be finishing the fight on TV’s own terms. As already noted, several of the major studios have begun creating original shows for the television screen (tied in with numerous plugs for their upcoming theatrical releases, it must be admitted). But this is only part of a rapidly changing scene in Hollywood. Feature film production

continues to fall off, but whole studios that used to turn out pictures for theatrical showing are now making TV films. Small, independent telefilm studios have sprung up throughout the entire Los Angeles area, creating new jobs for technicians and performers. Even the live shows, once emanating primarily from New York and Chicago, are moving increasingly to the Coast, taking advantage both of the superb facilities in Hollywood's Television Cities and of the concentration of star personalities to be found there. The movie studios, which once were writing clauses into their actors' contracts forbidding them to appear on TV, now not only permit the stars to participate (with more than a passing reference to their current film inserted into the script), but actively seek television recognition for their latest productions, donating performers and even generous clips from the film itself in return for the nationwide publicity accruing from an airing on the Ed Sullivan or Dave Garroway show.

Another aspect of television that engages the interest of the movie industry—and the active financial participation of at least one major company—is toll TV, TV free of sponsors and commercials, with the shows paid for by the viewers themselves. Its proponents point out that top quality programs, including films, would be economically feasible under such a setup. With a potential audience of millions paying to see the show, the entire production costs could be earned back in a single night. Although several variations of the plan have already been worked out—including a coin-box arrangement, a rate-card system, a coded-card system, and a special wire from the telephone company—the essential idea is always the same. The picture is sent out scrambled, impossible to view without some special decoding device attached to the receiver in the home. To date, the Federal Communications Commission, which regulates all aspects of television broadcasting, has refused to give any one of these a general go-ahead signal, although several have had trial runs in specific communities. Each time, the local theater men, the ones who have the most to lose if toll TV is successful, have risen up in their

righteous wrath. "Toll television conflicts with free enterprise," they maintain. "The air waves belong to everybody." Without disputing the justice of either viewpoint, the tests themselves have been too inconclusive to justify the adaptation of any toll-television system at this time. This simply means that the battle between film exhibitors, television station operators, and the film companies they need to supply them with product has been postponed to a later date. That the battle will be joined one day is indicated in a recent informal *Saturday Review* poll of its readership. Seventy-five per cent voted in favor of toll TV.

There is, on the other hand, one form of toll television that has already won for itself the open enthusiasm of many a theater owner and the active support of 20th Century-Fox. It is, of course, large screen, theatrical TV, with the picture piped into each subscribing house by special wire. Although it has not yet been used for films, such special events as a Metropolitan Opera production of *Carmen*, an elaborate ANTA Album, and numerous championship bouts have already indicated the potentialities of this medium. The closed-circuit telecast of the Rocky Marciano-Archie Moore championship fight in September of 1955 hooked together 129 theaters in 92 cities to produce a record gross of over \$1,000,000. Obviously, receipts like these do not displease the theater men. Meanwhile, Fox is readying its closed-circuit, large-screen, color-TV Eidophor system for theatrical installation during 1956; and RCA has demonstrated a similar closed-circuit TV process suitable for theatrical exhibition. Although both of these have been designed primarily for the telecasting of live shows, distributors are not unaware of the possible savings in print costs when it becomes feasible to televise film on these systems as well.

Thus, the interests of film and television touch at many points, sometimes in happy harmony, sometimes in bitter conflict. There is no question but that, ultimately, both are wrestling for the same audience. For years the film companies had withheld their product from the networks on the theory that even if they gave only "teasers" from forthcoming pictures, the mere announcement of their stars in scenes from their pictures would keep peo-

ple from going out to see a movie—any movie—that night. It has now become quite clear that people seeing these previews on their TV sets are all the more eager to see the picture itself when it comes to their community, and the film companies have done an abrupt about face—so much so that one industry executive warned recently that too many good television shows from the Hollywood studios would keep audiences out of the theaters altogether! The circle is now complete. On the other hand, the film companies seem quite happy to reap the rich rewards of producing for television (all of their own shows are sponsored by cigarette companies, motor companies, etc.), more than content to lease their facilities to independent telefilm producers, to enter cautiously into the ownership of TV stations (there are FCC regulations covering this), and to experiment with closed-circuit home and theatrical television. Although few would be so callous as to admit it, now that the government has finally divorced film production from theater ownership in the final analysis the studios could scarcely be hurt by TV. The stations will have to get their films *somewhere*. Only Hollywood's present dependence on the independent theater owner, the man who controls the outlets for their pictures, makes the industry especially sensitive to the inroads of television on their audiences right now.

And sensitive they are, for until TV can supply the millions of dollars—whether in tolls or sponsor commitments—required to make their movies, Hollywood remains jealous of those theater audiences, and jealous of every advance in television's program quality and techniques. They know that every TV "spectacular" means sharply reduced movie attendance for that night. They know that several evenings of the week are already checked off as slow nights at the box office because of top-rating shows on TV. At the time when the movie companies were rushing 3-D films to the screen, they were stunned to learn that in another few years 3-D reception would be perfectly possible in the home. They are watching warily the steady advance toward color television; for color brings new life, new depth, new reality to the small screen's image. And they know that even the small screen

itself is merely a matter of time, that it is already technically possible to enlarge it to a proportion in the parlor that would just about equal the screen size in the theater.

And yet, as both movie men and theater men nervously reassure each other, people do like to go out for their entertainment. They like the warm, hypnotic spell of the movie house, the possibility of losing one's identity in the crowd and finding it in the glamorous, larger-than-life personalities on the screen. For young people, going to the movies is a "date"; for their elders, an escape from the cares and problems of day-to-day living. They find a special warmth, a special satisfaction in being part of the crowd that laughs at a comedian's joke or shudders at the villain. This empathy, this ability to project oneself into the character and emotions of the people on the screen is something that television can neither provide nor as yet has found an adequate substitute for. And the proof is that television has not produced a single personality who has been able to captivate vast sections of the public as Chaplin, Fairbanks, Valentino, and Mary Pickford once did in silent days, as Marilyn Monroe and Marlon Brando do today. The small screen with its doll-like figures is only part of the reason; at least as important is the familiar parlor furniture, the familiar family circle, the familiar and recurrent commercials—all constantly impinging upon the consciousness, destroying the illusion and the blessed solitude that one finds in the movie house. One turns on the TV set for distraction or, perhaps, for information. One goes to the movies for refreshment and discovers there, on occasion, that heady sense of personal involvement and spiritual replenishment that only real art can give.

Movies and television seem destined to walk the long road together. Already the screen is benefiting from the new playwrights, directors, and performers developed by TV; whereas, television freely borrows both the glamour and the techniques—not to mention the films themselves—of the Hollywood studios. The future is likely to bring them even closer together. It may be a shotgun wedding but, like so many quarrelsome married couples, they need each other.

The Taming of the Shrew: Entertainment for Television

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THE AWKWARD CHANCE that makes suddenly available almost more than enough popular versions of Shakespeare is equally liable to disregard climactic arrangement in doing so. Thus the television audiences which had just thrilled to Sir Laurence Olivier's *Richard III* were presently offered another large production, Maurice Evans in *The Taming of the Shrew* ("Hallmark Hall of Fame," March 18). Many loyal Shakespeareans doubtless approached the Evans performance with a dutiful sense of pleasure, uneasy lest this dim, by anticlimax, impressions from the star-studded Olivier film. Apprehensiveness seemed especially justified; for Evans, with his slight physique, soulful eyes, and beautifully resonant voice, was not an obvious choice for the swashbuckling, whip-cracking, wife-taming Petruchio. In his Hamlet, he had demonstrated little more than an ability to re-enact his successful Richard II in any role given him.

But any advance prejudices must have been dispelled after a few minutes of the performance. Evans did not, to be sure, prove to be the choleric, ruffian Petruchio intended by Shakespeare. In his taming of Katherina, there was a kindly, serene lyricism (almost at times as though he were humming happily to himself) instead of the crass cockiness of Shakespeare's hero; but this harmonized with the more diminutive and sensitive Katherina played by Lilli Palmer. Moreover, Evans was an active, romping, if not roughly masculine Petruchio. At best, he authentically expressed sheer delight in receiving slaps and insults from a young

lady of spirit, physique, and wealth; at worst, his wooing had the smiling imperturbability of a crooner.

But what really saved the Evans *Shrew* from being an anticlimax to the Olivier *Richard III* was the integrity of a different technique and different genre. The two productions had in common only the limitations of a screen and the advantages of color (which proved to be disadvantages for most viewers, who missed not only the color but also the close details). The Olivier *Richard* was basically a film, and was merely "rented" for television. It employed the pageantry, the expansive scenes, and the largeness of cast which a film—and a long one—can successfully employ. Its appearance on television was only incidental to its fuller purpose. *The Shrew*, on the contrary, was specially designed for television. All its deviations from Shakespeare—its abridgments, its simplifications, its added stage business—revealed a skillful intention to shape an uncommonly sprawling Shakespearean comedy for the small screen, for an hour-and-a-half's entertainment, and for the fitful attentiveness of a television audience.

Maurice Evans was surely responsible for much of the intelligence and authority with which the play was adapted to its new medium, but one suspects that the remarkable resourcefulness with which all the angles of television were used was largely the achievement of William Nichols, though George Sylvester may deserve some credit beyond his excellent directing of the actors. It was Mr. Nichols, one recalls, who had successfully transformed the "Hit Parade" from radio to television; and this was a task involving no little inventiveness, since on the screen it was no longer possible merely to replay the same songs week after week. In staging *The Shrew*, Nichols displayed, besides inventiveness, a canny recognition of the shrinkages which a play must undergo in translation from the stage to the smaller screen.

The first and most obvious reduction in Shakespeare's material was the elimination of the Induction. A devotee might first cavil at this loss. It is the one portion of *The Shrew* undeniably Shakespeare's; it sets the necessary mood for the ensuing play;

and it is in itself delightful comedy. Stage audiences never tire of the farce of the drunken bum (Christopher Sly) hauled into a nobleman's house, dressed in finery, provided with a “wife,” convinced that he has but dreamed in lunacy his long years of debauched poverty, and then, for his better cheer, shown the play which really constitutes *The Shrew*. But probably no television viewer honestly missed the Induction. Its purpose of introducing the play was taken care of by placards (in Elizabethan fashion) announcing performance and scenes; by an initial carnival episode setting the proper mood of gaiety; and by a stylized, *commedia dell' arte* acting and costuming of several of the characters so as to indicate as clearly as did the Induction the fact that it is to be a play with a cheerful purpose, and not a realistic story of brutal wooing. In addition, Nichols supplied the modern equivalent of an Elizabethan Presenter. This performer proclaims certain important lines salvaged from the Induction, especially those concerning therapeutic mirth as the intent of the play:

For so your doctors hold it very meet,
 Seeing too much sadness hath congeal'd your blood,
 And melancholy is the nurse of frenzy.
 Therefore they thought it good you hear a play
 And frame your mind to mirth and merriment,
 Which bars a thousand harms and lengthens life.

If one grants that Nichols successfully avoided the necessity for the famous Induction, the question still remains: Why did he feel obliged to avoid it? In the answer lies, perhaps, the reason for other abridgments throughout the play. Time, though important, was not the primary reason, for the carnival scene and the introductions given members of the cast carry us several minutes into the program before we have any Shakespearean dialogue at all; and abundant additions in stage business made later on easily take up the rest of the time needed for the Induction. More likely, Nichols sensed that the limited dimension of television reception—especially its imperfect theater depth—could not fuse Induction and play into a single work as did Elizabethan theaters.

Even a large screen could not easily make the viewer feel that the two plays were really one. Probably only multiple staging, with an audience that feels itself a part of the performance, can carry off the Induction with unqualified success.

Similar simplifications made within the play itself are further evidence of purposeful limitation of scene. Only two scenes involved numbers of people: the carnival episode, which was doubtless brilliant with color; and the marriage scene, which was staged choreographically and representationally. Both scenes were lively; neither was especially useful in a dramatic sense. The profusion of performers, the blur of rapid action, and the feeling that one should recognize unknown faces—all tended to make the viewer merely uncomfortable.

The best scenes, and there were many of them, were focused upon at most two or three persons, and mainly—in contrast with Shakespeare's more casual structure—upon the two principals. The courtship-of-Bianca plot, which earlier adapters had made into the major substance of the play, was effectively reduced. Instead of three suitors, there were two; the trick at the expense of Lucentio's father was omitted; and most important, the number of disguised characters was reduced from four to two.

Thus freed from the task of staging elaborate intrigues, Nichols was able to concentrate upon ingenious stage business for fewer and more intelligible episodes. The results were frequently startling, and almost invariably right for television.

Elizabethan asides, which one would have thought a peculiar difficulty for the screen, were effortlessly managed by the sudden, momentary intrusion of the confiding face between the audience and the action. Elizabethan wordplay, tediously incomprehensible for modern audiences and yet the substance of the wooing scene, became in Nichols' interpretation only a pleasant accompaniment to what was certainly the most surprising stage business in the production: the viewer suddenly found himself witnessing shrew and tamer in what was either a boxing or a wrestling match (there were no blows, but a musical triangle sounded gong-like,

at the end of rounds). Tamer was victorious, and was carried about on the shoulders of celebrating fans. Shrew was limp with exhaustion, and her acquiescence in the marriage—often thought a difficulty in interpretation—became readily understandable. When Baptista, her father, returned to inquire of Petruchio, “How speed you with my daughter?” Kate sat imbecilically dazed through her wooer’s delighted praise of her mildness. Likewise, the reference to Kate’s “limping,” which in Shakespeare merely means a rough, ungainly walk, was given a far simpler explanation in Kate’s having suffered a fall in the wrestling match. An especially good touch was added to set forth Petruchio’s comment,

O, the kindest Kate!
She hung about my neck.

Petruchio illustrated by placing Kate’s arm about his neck, from which it fell limply to her side.

With an engaging disregard of historical probability and consistency, Petruchio’s country house—the next campus on which his “taming school” is located—was converted into “Petruchio’s Ranch”; and the honeymoon journey was undertaken in a covered wagon through a snowstorm. Here again, amazing objects leaped on the screen without introduction, yet not without relevance. All things considered, one was not too surprised by the bear that suddenly loomed before the viewer. One was only a little more disconcerted by the alacrity, the inevitability, with which Petruchio dismounted, disappeared, and, before one knew it, was back on the wagon carrying a bearskin.

With so full and hilarious a staging, Shakespeare’s dialogue inevitably suffered. Nichols never forwent the chance to dramatize episodes that Shakespeare had chosen merely to narrate. The honeymoon trip, for example, is in Shakespeare’s version only a part of the dialogue. Perhaps because it was not actually depicted, Shakespeare could use it to make of Petruchio a much more brutal woman-tamer than Evans—even with the symbolism of the bearskin—chose to be.

But in only two scenes can it be said that the camera proved to be less effective than Shakespeare's language (here mainly third-rate Shakespeare) in depicting action. The scene in which Hortensio was shown with the lute broken over his head proved surprisingly uncomic, because by now so stale, when acted. Yet as narrated by Shakespeare, it somehow resists the cheapening effect of repetition, and of Laurel and Hardy:

And with that word, she struck me on the head,
And through the instrument my pate made way;
And there I stood amazed for a while,
As on a pillory, looking through the lute.

Television simply could not convey the slow, mute, lugubrious grotesqueness of this verbal picture.

An even greater loss was suffered in Nichols' absolute neglect of Shakespeare's wedding scene—again a matter of verbal narration—and the substitution of an independent, musical, expressive, but totally inferior interpretation through the dance form. Here, in contrast with the pate-breaking farce, Shakespeare supplies adequate dialogue and action in his narrative; and it would have been an easy matter to act the scene before the camera, with focus upon only the priest and the couple. When, for example, the priest asks Petruchio if Katherine is to be his bride,

“Ay, by gogs-wouns,” quoth he; and swore so loud,
That, all amaz'd, the priest let fall the book;
And, as he stoop'd again to take it up,
The mad-brain'd bridegroom took him such a cuff
That down fell priest and book, and book and priest.

Then, immediately after the marriage vows have been recited, Petruchio calls for wine:

“A health!” quoth he, as if
He'd been aboard, carousing to his mates
After a storm.
.....
This done, he took the bride about the neck
And kiss'd her lips with such a clamorous smack
That at the parting all the church did echo.

It is hard to see why Nichols overlooked such unfailing comedy, especially since Shakespeare had virtually done him the favor of adapting to the dimensions of television. Possibly the comic discomfiture inflicted upon the priest would today seem in bad taste. But the hearty drinking of the “health” and the “clamorous smack” would provide stage business of exactly the sort that Nichols felt obliged to invent upon other occasions.

Only one other distortion of Shakespeare is at all regrettable; and this, like most of the others, may be considered a necessary simplification of theme for a swift, spirited production. Not only were Bianca’s suitors reduced in number; Bianca herself, played by Diana Cilenti, underwent a change from Shakespeare’s modest and ideal Elizabethan young lady to a simpering, pampered brat. She wailed with calculated lugubriousness for her father’s sympathy just after Katherina had given her a not too painful, though admirably placed, wallop. In Shakespeare’s version, there is no wailing, only a silent weeping, with the effect of setting forth Katherina more blatantly as the shrew she is obviously meant to be. Miss Cilenti’s Bianca was made more obnoxious by her babyish, cooing sort of voice, and by the saccharine way she engaged in love-making (incessant and startlingly close to petting) with Lucentio. The effect of this debasing of Bianca was to motivate sympathetically Kate’s shrewishness, and add a modern psychological understanding.

This understanding, in justifying Kate’s shrewishness, rendered rather pointless the Renaissance moral of the play as expressed by Katherina herself in her famous admonitory address to the other ladies. On the other hand, a modern audience could not understand, let alone accept, the Renaissance doctrine of woman’s absolute submission to man. And to provide good cheer at the end of the play, Nichols doubtless found it expedient to represent not—as did Shakespeare—the taming of a proud, in-subordinate woman, but rather the calming, through serene masculine strength, of a girl psychologically troubled by sibling rivalry. And Lilli Palmer played the role so as to take full advan-

tage of this more favorable interpretation. Almost from the beginning, she left no doubt that she was the worthier girl of the two—unpopular, but spirited and sensitive; unappreciated, but not unlikable. Shakespeare's shrew, on the contrary, is palpably a monster at the beginning, and the taming of her is the "wonder" that it is finally said to be.

But softening of some of the brutalities and primitive creeds of the play altered, in no serious way, the farcical impact of the work. And the same may be said of the other techniques of translation that Nichols used to adapt Shakespeare's work to the present day, and specifically to television. Nichols and Evans correctly recognized that *The Shrew* was farce, that its horseplay was more important than its dialogue, that most of its dialogue was not Shakespeare at his best, and that even at its best it no longer had sufficient vitality to animate most of the rambunctious scenes.

Though the adaptation to television was throughout intelligent, no evidence suggested that Nichols had ever been a conscientious student of Shakespeare or of Shakespearean staging. Research in theatrical history could, to be sure, have suggested many of the deletions Nichols made. And research could particularly have emboldened him to alter the play quite freely. It was not until the latter half of the nineteenth century that Shakespeare's play was performed in anything like its original form; and from volumes of theatrical history, Nichols might have learned that *The Shrew* succeeded best when it was freshly interpreted. But the audaciously irresponsible antics of Nichols' staging leads one to suspect that the successful translation from Shakespeare's text to television script had grounds somewhat less august than scholarship—that, in fact, it was simply the case of a clever modern entertainer sensitively catching the spirit of an earlier and equally shameless master of the art. Television audiences will henceforth think the better of Shakespeare because he has proved himself capable of more than holding his own in their own territory, and of doing so without the pleasant but essentially alien commentary of culture.

RICHARD III: TWO VIEWS

I. Some Glories and Some Discontents

JAMES E. PHILLIPS

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THAT SHREWDEST of commentators on Shakespeare, Dr. Samuel Johnson, observed that *Richard III* "is one of the most celebrated of our authour's performances; yet I know not whether it has not happened to him as to others, to be praised most when praise is not most deserved." Dr. Johnson's words may be applied, with somewhat different connotations, to Sir Laurence Olivier's film production of the play. In this film, according to most of the press and periodical reviews, we have indeed the most celebrated of this producer's performances. But given Shakespeare's original conception and achievement, one may ask in Dr. Johnson's words if the screen adaptation has not been "praised most when praise is not most deserved."

The qualities that critics have singled out for praise in Sir Laurence's production are perhaps too obvious to need more than brief recapitulation here. As in his radio adaptation of the play some years ago, the film version simplifies and clarifies the basic political situation on which the entire plot action depends. Shakespeare's original relied on an Elizabethan audience's general knowledge of the Wars of the Roses, which were then no more remote than the Civil War is to present day American audiences, for an understanding of the intricate dynastic tangle in which Richard was involved. The same audience was probably familiar also with the earlier trilogy of Shakespearean plays on Henry VI,

where situations and characters alike lead directly into *Richard III*. But few modern audiences could be expected to bring such helpful background information to a performance of the play. By judicious cutting and rearrangement of Shakespearean material, supplemented by equally judicious borrowings from the Henry VI trilogy, Sir Laurence's adaptation deftly sketches the outlines of the family brawl that constitutes the action of the play.

Although the opening scenes, thus adapted, may confuse those students familiar with Shakespeare's original who spend too much of their energy in seeking to force each one of the lines into its proper place in Shakespeare's Yorkist tetralogy, the resulting simplification of essential conflicts is gratifying to the untutored and the unprejudiced alike. After all, the fact of supreme importance to be established if one is to appreciate Richard's career and character is his pathological determination to be rid of people who stand between him and the throne. In purely dramatic terms, it matters little how these people are related. The fact that they stand in Richard's way is all we really need to know. To make this basic fact clear, Sir Laurence's production courageously defies the purists.

Praiseworthy also, in the positive sense of Dr. Johnson's dictum, are many of the individual scenes. Certainly one could ask for no more brilliant theater than Richard's wooing of Anne, his scene with the boy king and the young prince, his feigned reluctance to accept the demand of a coerced handful of citizens that he take the crown, the nervous nonchalance of Gielgud's Clarence on his way to prison and certain death, the calculated suavity of Sir Ralph Richardson's Buckingham when the extent of Richard's perfidy finally dawns on him, and the impotent sensuality of Edward IV as portrayed by Sir Cedric Hardwicke. All, through sheer power of acting, provide those moments of pleasure that only outstanding actors reading outstanding lines can provide.

But if these are the points on which the film version of *Richard III* may be praised, one must still ask the question, with Dr. Johnson, whether, in the light of Shakespeare's original, these are

points where “praise is not most deserved.” Or, to put the same question another way, are there points in the original play which the screen adaptation has missed that are more truly deserving of praise? The answer to such a question, of course, assumes that the measure of any production of a Shakespearean play must be the full intent and scope of the dramatist’s conception as revealed in the accepted text of his play. The cutting and adaptation of a full Shakespearean text to meet the requirements of the theater is a practice precedented, as we know, by Shakespeare himself, if we can assume that he authorized the shortened stage version of the Folio text of *Hamlet* adapted from his full conception of the play as embodied in the Second Quarto of 1604. But the critical question arises when one asks whether such adaptations retain the essential elements of the dramatist’s original conception. It is on this score that one must conclude, after viewing Sir Laurence’s production of *Richard III*, that perhaps the “praise is not most deserved.”

In terms of its debilitating effect on the full dramatic and poetic richness of the original play, perhaps the cutting of old Queen Margaret, much remarked upon by reviewers of the film, best illustrates one of those elements in Shakespeare’s drama deserving of praise that the film adaptation has sacrificed for reasons of its own. Probably no reader of Shakespeare would deny that Margaret needs some cutting down. Her tirades against Richard and his brothers for their murder of her husband, King Henry VI, and her son, the Prince of Wales (in *3 Henry VI*) are magnificent poetry in the high ranting tradition. But they seem to occupy a disproportionate amount of time and space in the tragedy of *Richard III*. Nevertheless, it is obvious that Shakespeare gave her a part in the play for a purpose, and that she deserves to retain at least some of her function if the play is to have the full meaning that the dramatist intended.

The effect of her absence is strikingly pointed up in the film version of the play. There, Richard himself emerges as an arch-villain operating against a group of victims who are at worst

gullible, and at best innocent, bewildered sheep who suddenly discover a fox in the fold. But Shakespeare's original, thanks largely to the offices of Margaret, leaves no doubt that Richard is simply a smarter villain amongst a pack who morally and ethically are no better than he. Margaret constantly reminds us that Edward IV, Richard's brother, was one of those who stabbed to death King Henry VI, his predecessor and her husband; she reminds us also that Richard's brother Clarence had played false first to his own family, then to hers—a weathercock who could never be quite sure which way the political winds were blowing. In language equally vivid and corrosive, she upbraids Edward's Elizabeth, Dorset, Rivers, Buckingham, and Hastings for conduct in the past that was shady to say the least. But her most vitriolic wrath is reserved for Richard, that "elvish-mark'd, abortive, rooting hog."

Audiences familiar with the *Henry VI* trilogy, as the first audiences of *Richard III* probably were, would not have needed Margaret's reminders of the utter corruption of both these houses as much as we might today. They would have had clearly in mind not only the brutal acts of Edward, Richard, and Clarence against Margaret's family, but also the equally brutal acts of Margaret herself against the old Duke of York, the father of Edward and Richard. Certainly they could not have forgotten the terrible scene in 3 *Henry VI* when Margaret, taunting the defeated Duke of York, offers him a handkerchief dipped in the blood of his youngest son to wipe his eyes. In a word, Shakespeare's first audience for *Richard III* would have been fully aware of the complete chaos and horror into which the Wars of the Roses had plunged England, and which provided the moral and political atmosphere of the play.

Nevertheless, Shakespeare saw fit to introduce Margaret into the final play of his tetralogy as a reminder of this background of universal corruption. Modern audiences can be grateful that he did so. The "I told you so" tenor of her tirades keeps the whole cast of characters in proper perspective. Thanks to her, we know

that Richard’s villainy is a matter of degree only, that he is intellectually more astute but by no means morally or ethically or politically more degenerate than his victims. Without Margaret, the film version accordingly deprives the portrait of Richard of some of its original subtlety and shading. And without her, the play loses much of the somber tone of inevitability that is usually considered one of the chief “points deserving of praise” in the original.

Another praiseworthy point in the play that is deleted from the film is of quite different order, but all the more surprising, given the box-office appeal of its principal actor Sir John Gielgud. This is the scene in which Clarence pleads futilely with the assassins sent by Richard to murder him. Granted the episode is of little relevance to the progress of the plot and the development of the title character, it is still one of the most dazzling bits of theater and poetry in the Shakespeare canon. The screenplay gives us at least Clarence’s account of his dream, with its premonitory suggestion of his death by drowning conveyed in the splendid, Dalilike imagery of

a thousand fearful wrecks,
A thousand men that fishes gnaw’d upon . . .
Inestimable stones, unvalued jewels,
All scattered in the bottom of the sea.

But since the screen play chooses to show Clarence hacked to death before his body is thrown into the butt of malmsey, the poetic dream is rendered a little pointless. Far greater a loss, however, is the complete omission of Clarence’s dramatic pleading with his murderers, set off as it is by the preceding low-comedy conversation between the murderers themselves when they decide to let money overcome their consciences, an interlude also cut from the screenplay. When they confront Clarence finally, his intellectual subtlety, his adroit shifts in appeal, and above all the mounting desperation with which he tries to defend himself constitute one of the most effective scenes in Shakespeare’s original play. Its deletion from the screen adaptation, especially after Gielgud’s brief but brilliant handling of his encounter with Richard

early in the play, suggests another of those points more deserving of praise that the film has tended to ignore.

In the film version of Richard's wooing of Anne, however, one can see most clearly, perhaps, the results—for better and for worse—of sacrificing subtle dramatic values in order to obtain simplified theatrical effects. Judging from reactions of undergraduate students and others not intimately familiar with the play itself, I am not convinced that Sir Laurence's simplified version is completely effective even at that. A good many honest and willing viewers have found this the least credible and most contrived scene of the film. (So, it must be confessed, have many honest and willing readers of the scene as Shakespeare originally wrote it.) But close analysis of the original scene suggests that Shakespeare had a conception that was at least potentially credible, howsoever time-consuming in execution.

In the course of a scene more than twice as long as that depicted in the film, Shakespeare shows Anne undergoing a long series of psychological shifts in attitude toward Richard. For more than half this scene, her pure hatred holds out. Then Richard appeals to her vanity by applauding her beauty "that did haunt me in my sleep." As Dr. Johnson remarks on these lines, "Shakespeare countenances the observation that no woman can ever be offended with the mention of her beauty." Anne begins to break, but Shakespeare's lines reveal the breakdown slowly through a number of subtle, psychologically convincing gradations. At first, she is so revolted that she spits at him (once was enough for Shakespeare, though not for the screen adapter). Then he offers her his sword that she may kill him on the spot. Anne cannot bring herself to this, and her defense accordingly falls another degree. Then Richard raises doubts in her mind as to her own true feelings—and she responds, "I would I knew thy heart."

The breakdown, as Shakespeare portrays it, now begins to move rapidly. Richard plays his trump card—omitted in the film—when he appeals to her sense of Christian duty by vowing that he will shed "repentant tears" for his murder of her husband

and her father-in-law, and she responds that “it joys me too, To see you are become so penitent.” In the context of the long scene, her remark is credible enough at this point. More important, it is the line that reveals the fundamental difference in treatment of the scene between the play and the film. Sir Laurence realized quite rightly, as a reviewer in a national magazine has pointed out, that sheer sexual appeal was the actual basis of Richard’s incredible triumph over Anne. But Shakespeare’s original goes beyond this bald fact by showing that only when sexual desire can be made acceptable to the participant in terms of a moral or religious rationalization does it become convincing in terms of recognizable patterns of human behavior. Sir Laurence went directly and vividly to the heart of the matter, but, in so doing, he has sacrificed something of Shakespeare’s more extended and more credible analysis of the complex relationship between Richard and Anne.

For these dramatic values thus cast aside in the interests of clarity of outline and vividness of theater, Sir Laurence’s adaptation has substituted elements of varying effectiveness. The introduction of Edward IV’s mistress, Jane Shore, is a visual delight, but her silent, leering presence confuses readers of the play who cannot immediately place her, baffles non-readers of the play throughout, and in the final analysis adds very little that is dramatically relevant to the play as a whole. The battle scenes at the end are an attempt at theatrical spectacle so confusing to critics and audiences alike that further comment here is probably unnecessary. On the credit side, however, the film version has reduced the long scene between Richard and his young nephews in a way that has distilled the essence of the dramatic values inherent in the episode as Shakespeare wrote it. Certainly one of the memorable points of the film is the frozen hatred of humpbacked Richard’s response to young York’s boyish remark that his uncle “should bear me on your shoulders.” This, together with those cinematic virtues that I have mentioned above, have been praised in the film, and with justice.

In the final analysis, however, it is our understanding of Richard himself that must be the test of the screenplay in relation to Shakespeare's original conception. Sir Laurence's portrayal of the character is little short of brilliant in conveying the "alacrity of spirit" that Richard himself confesses he had once possessed but lost by the end of the play. The film makes vivid and convincing this high-pitched exhilaration of Richard's demonstration to himself that he could win a woman and a crown. It reveals admirably his hypnotic cunning, his intellectual agility, and his delight in any and all manifestations of his amoral personal power. But the film falls short of Shakespeare in failing to make convincing, on the one hand, the physiological basis of Richard's psychological warp; and on the other hand, the psychological disintegration that was both cause and effect of his downfall from power. As for the first, Shakespeare was at pains to indicate that Richard's deformities were indeed monstrous—a hunched back, a truly withered hand, and a dragging leg that was more than a slight limp. Sir Laurence's Richard displays, as one of my academic colleagues has put it, little more than the familiar scholarly stoop. As a consequence, the preliminary explanation that he was motivated by compensatory drives loses much of its power to convince.

More damaging to a full realization of the character depicted by Shakespeare, however, is Sir Laurence's failure to establish clearly, either through dialogue or visualization, Richard's self-confessed loss of the "alacrity of spirit" that had carried him so far. Shakespeare depicted this thoroughly human breakdown of the central character mainly in Richard's soliloquy following the appearance of the ghosts of his victims on the night before the battle of Bosworth Field. A modern audience might well do without the ghosts themselves and their repetitious reminders that the life of a political tyrant does not pay. But the soliloquy that Richard delivers upon awaking after this dream is not only a revealing but also a deeply moving expression by a man whose brilliant self-confidence has at last and inevitably been broken. It is

his final realization that “There is no creature loves me, And if I die no soul shall pity me” that makes Richard one of Shakespeare’s great human creations. In the film, a confusing battle scene and the symbolic rolling of a crown are not adequate substitutes for this fact of lonely human tragedy that is truly most deserving of praise.

II. A Magnificent Fiasco?

HARRY SCHEIN

HARRY SCHEIN is a Swedish film critic who contributes regularly to *Bonniers Litterära Magasin*, Sweden’s leading literary monthly. The following article appeared in BLM, and was translated with the author’s approval by Erik Wahlgren, professor of Scandinavian and German, University of California, Los Angeles.

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Hamlet is an inflexibly composed film in black and white, severely integrated by means of the modern psychological interpretation of the title role. *Henry V* may be characterized as a naïve version of a historical chronicle play, with romantic pastel colors as the symbol-bearing agents of mood. The title role is a frank soldier, psychologically one-dimensional and thus in harmony with the unreality, both splendid and playful, of the drama. It was perfectly in style for Olivier to have allowed no historical-minded urge to contaminate the cry, “No king of England, if not king of France,” but to have represented it instead as an almost boyish battle cry preparatory to an adventurous contest of chivalry.

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Just now, Richard Burton is demonstrating at Old Vic that Henry can also be conceived of in another light, if not as an "anxiety athlete" at least as a man burdened with pondering, torn between intellectual doubt and moral certainty, with a genuine, even intense, religious problem. But the role does not support this psychological shading. The result is neither sport nor drama, but rather one-man theater alongside the play.

In Shakespeare's play, and similarly in Olivier's film version, *Richard III* is something quite different on the other hand. It lacks the complexity of *Hamlet* and the playfulness of *Henry V*. The story of how Richard with tenacious purpose puts to death a whole series of relatives between himself and the throne of England may be accounted not only one of the bloodiest, but also one of the most morbid, products of Shakespeare's pen. Richard completely lacks, for example the redeeming features found in Macbeth, who is arrogant, to be sure, yet in the final analysis merely a victim of fate, supernatural powers, and of course, a fiendish wife. Macbeth undergoes a continual psychological transformation throughout the play. Richard, on the other hand, shapes his own fate and is a scoundrel not merely from the beginning of the play but even earlier. In *3 Henry VI*, the immediately preceding piece of Shakespeare's series of historical plays from the War of the Roses between the Houses of York and Lancaster, when King Edward thanks his brothers for their help, Richard answers:

And that I love the tree from whence thou sprang'st
Witness the loving kiss I give the fruit.

but he adds aside,

To say the truth, so Judas kiss'd his master.

Shakespeare in general begins his plays by allowing subordinate characters, through a casually overheard conversation, to report the situation out of which the drama presently develops; but in *Richard III* he begins by having Richard, alone on the stage, make self-declaration of the fearsome plans that he later in the play carries out step by step.

Richard is thus a thoroughly evil man, a manic murderer (even if the modern historical view has modified this picture), politically smart, highly intelligent but with his intelligence completely subordinated to the murderous lust for power. Such a person is in reality just as uninteresting as Hitler or Himmler. He becomes interesting only when the evilness is given a shadow, a cleavage, a psychological background.

But uninteresting figures are not very frequent in Shakespeare, least of all as totally dominant principal characters. Richard's wickedness does have a shadow; there is a cleavage in his personality, a psychological background. His humped back is of course the key to his problem, and the lock for that key is constructed in 3 *Henry VI*, with admirable lack of self-pity:

For yet I am not look'd on in the world.
This shoulder was ordain'd so thick to heave;
And heave it shall some weight or break my back.

The hump is a historical fact. But historical facts are of small importance for Shakespeare. In *Richard III*, the psychic profile is more important than the physical, and he has Richard emphasize it once again in the introductory declaration:

And therefore, since I cannot prove a lover
To entertain these fair well-spoken days,
I am determined to prove a villain.

But Richard's personality may not be summed up and dismissed with the equation from penny psychology: humpback = insane lust for power. This misshapen murderer is so repulsive that he thinks himself unable to *prove a lover*. But when he forgoes being a lover, he becomes irresistible and stands in the play for seduction personified. After putting to death Lady Ann's husband, he succeeds through cold calculation in transforming her detestation, hate, and vengefulness, if not to idyllic love, at least to the subjection which is the prelude to love. The question mark in his cynically boastful reflection "Was ever woman in this humour won?" is superfluous indeed.

Richard's strength, the attraction he has for women, is empha-

sized once again to make certain, in the brilliant, lightning-like exchange with his sister-in-law. He has killed her husband and wants to marry her daughter. And he persuades this woman, who from the start shows him nothing but hate-filled contempt of the helpless, to promise to do her best to talk her daughter into the marriage.

The only reasonable interpretation of Richard that I can find is consequently the one erroneously adopted by Burton for Henry. Richard's intellectual insight should be contrasted with the manic complex of the cripple, his very crippleness ought to contrast with a sexual attraction of highly unique quality.

But Olivier depicts Richard just as univocally as he depicted Henry—he replaces the uprightness with a completely self-integrated wickedness. The clarity and consistency of Henry, which contributed so essentially to the charm of the film, make Richard into an uninteresting figure. In Olivier's splendid and fascinating acting, Richard is manic, but not demonic. He completely fills the stage and thereby obscures the depth perspective. And with that, the drama loses its broad human substance. And in addition, it loses its greatest dramatic asset. A static personality loses the possibilities of inner development that is necessary in any dramatic context. The remainder of the narrative technique has for its only dramatic asset the political thriller according to which the road to power is characterized by the decreasingly scheming but increasingly crude and brutal nature of the murders in proportion as Richard's power is consolidated.

Olivier has not eliminated the lines that indicate the complexities of Richard's personality. But he gives them less than the necessary emphasis, and he doesn't permit them any life. To this, there is one exception which for once really tests the rule. On top of everything else, this exception is not tied to a line of text but quite independently produced by means of mimicry. When Richard's little nephew wants to sit on his back, Olivier inserts a close-up of himself, with shock-like effect. Richard's falseness suddenly drops its mask. The child is not only a hindrance on the

way to the throne; his unintentional reminder of Richard’s deformity calls forth the cripple’s hate for the little prince’s golden-haired beauty.

The appallingly strong impression made by this scene should not be attributed merely to its brilliant presentation via the film. The scene quite simply fills a psychological need, the dramatic vacuum which Olivier has left through his one-sided interpretation of the role, a vacuum that, when it suddenly but unfortunately only for the moment is filled, all at once lifts the film from historical thriller to the realm of the essential.

But if we ignore this exception, we find that Olivier has quite relinquished the possibilities available to him of introducing modulations. This even applies to the seduction scene with Lady Ann, and would be completely incomprehensible if one did not assume that the fault *here* lies in Claire Bloom’s painfully bad acting.

There are other details in this film, less important in themselves, but still characteristic of Olivier’s way of treating the subject. Their common feature is the isolated effect they have, not only in the displacement of motivation but in the illumination of Richard’s personality. They all confirm the impression of how essential for the dramatic qualities of the play is a Richard with *nuances* of character.

Shakespeare’s dramatic art demands living human beings. A monomaniac murderer suffices by his monomania alone to transform the drama into epic. And the film has become epic, too, in the figurative and literal sense. It does not begin with Richard’s self-assessment, and it does not end with the peaceful appeal of his successor, Richmond. The film begins with a grandiose close-up of the English crown and ends as it began—an image that is symbolic for the epic line that replaces the individual drama.

In the theatrical genius Shakespeare, the necessity for dramatic qualities in a play is obviousness itself. The epic thread is not found within the individual play but in the whole series of plays,

this 15th-century chronicle from the War of the Roses. By locating the epic thread *within* the piece, Olivier not only loses a portion of its dramatic assets but likewise loses contact with Shakespeare's far broader epic horizon, the connection between the various plays which in actuality permits further character shadings in all the roles.

In a comparison of Shakespeare's plays, one finds that Richard by no means is so unique a monster as Olivier's film presupposes, and that the other characters likewise do not stand out so completely white by comparison. Richard's and the king's brother Clarence, for example, who in John Gielgud's confident presentation is given so pure and noble a character, is in fact just one of the many blood-drenched knights of that age. This is evident not only from the previous plays but likewise from the text of the murder scene in prison. The rich psychological interaction (the conflicts of conscience in one of the two murderers, his efforts to salve his conscience by reminding Clarence that the latter, too, had been guilty of murder and treachery) is reduced in the film to a pair of toughs who murder a nobleman for hire.

Richard was obviously no conventional and well brought up aristocrat; but in Shakespeare's version of history his misdeeds are at all events not quite so unique as the film gives one occasion to assume—and thus also of greater general interest.

In the film's almost consistently black and white depiction of character, one consequently pays the most heed to Ralph Richardson's brilliant interpretation of Buckingham. The betrayer who becomes betrayed cannot fail, even in the most schematic connection of events, to excite interest. Olivier's one-sided interpretation of Richard creates likewise a contrasting effect advantageous to kingmaker Buckingham who, not because of frustrations or madness or deformity but simply out of cold political opportunism, helps Richard in his intrigues, only to be betrayed by Richard when he demands the promised reward.

For reasons of time, Olivier has excluded an important subsidiary motif, a drama within the drama, the conflicts between

the two ex-queens. But as a result of this, the film is concentrated once again to a greater extent than the play upon Richard's person—on Richard's in this film quite uninteresting person.

The film differs from the play in various other respects, though these are of less basic importance. Often, the difference is merely a matter of the arrangement of scenes. It is remarkable, not least from a film point of view, that the ghostly interlude before the battle is limited to Richard's nightmares. The continual alteration in the play between Richard's evil and Richmond's good sleep ought easily to have given Olivier occasion for more rewarding experiments in form. Equally remarkable is the fact that Olivier lets Richard be killed by old Stanley instead of by Richmond. A subordinate personage thus inexplicably receives a greater and isolated importance in the place of the original version, which is more in keeping with a change of royalty in ancient times. Furthermore, there is something inglorious in Richard's dying by an old man's hand. It adds to his shame, which is already great enough, and diminishes the greatness to which, notwithstanding historical truths, he is entitled simply by virtue of his being a principal character in a play by Shakespeare.

These reflections around questions of interpretation in *Richard III* clearly do not presuppose for an instant that Olivier has missed the “right” way of shaping the role. A man of his artistic and intellectual qualities, of his obvious engagement with Shakespeare, is naturally quite well aware of the central problem of the play. And one can also take for granted that in the theater Olivier would not interpret Richard as he has done in this film.

Sir Laurence Olivier is today something of a national actor for England. *Hamlet* deals with foreigners. Henry V is a thoroughly sympathetic character. But Richard III is not only an English king but a murderer. And all the “mistakes” in the interpretation of the role that I have pointed out disappear if one seeks to combine a rather primitive national pride with the fact that a historical royal personage was a manic murderer.

The basic error in this film is that Laurence Olivier has tried

to reconcile the filmgoing public with this historical reality. He has done so by denying its reality. In the preliminary text to the film the public is *warned* against believing that the film depicts historical reality—the drama is labeled a *legend* from the days of the War of the Roses. Without reference to historical reality, which today can be merely approached with a more or less large margin of uncertainty, one feels that Shakespeare clearly did not wish to tell fairy tales. To be sure, he wrote above all with the demands of the theater before his eyes; but, at least in the historical plays, he tried to remain within the framework of what for him and his age was historical probability. From this starting point, he could shape living human beings from historical persons. Olivier's lamentable caution has removed him from that starting point and with it not only from historical reality but also from dramatic and psychological excellence.

By this time, the reader has presumably concluded that *Richard III* is a disappointment, a poor film. True, one is disappointed—but in all other respects than those touched on above *Richard III* is actually a great film. At all levels, excepting that of Claire Bloom, appear the greatest Shakespearean actors in England, some of them already mentioned with Richardson in the lead, and then of course Olivier himself in the central, all-dominating role. As a balance to any principal objections that can be made, there remain his destructive weight and his violent strength—massive and at the same time elegant, lion and cobra—his restrained demonism, his sovereign actor's intelligence, his infinitely beautiful diction of an infinitely beautiful language. Anybody with the least feeling for the beauty and genius of the dialogue is fully occupied with enjoyment during the film-technical prolixities that a film of this kind inevitably has.

There is disappointment in the film because it does not give the Richard one has a right to demand. But at the same time, the film gives more than Shakespeare's poem. *Hamlet* lives in film history by virtue of its psychological incisiveness and pictorial mercilessness; and *Henry V*, by virtue of its filmic homogeneity,

its creative treatment of color as antinaturalistic, symbol-laden auxiliaries; but *Richard III* will go down in film history on the strength of its explosive beauty, its refined æsthetic details.

Through the act of abandoning Richard to his single-track fate, Olivier has created a series of liberties for himself as director. The grandiose introduction of the film with Edward's coronation, the splendid and yet so pure-style decor, the deeply saturated intensity of color in the close-ups, without the pastel values that characterized *Henry V* but in their limpid mellowness equally effective in inducing moods—all these are pearls on a thread which is not Shakespeare but Olivier. One recalls a series of images as detached paintings, foremost, perhaps, when Richard is dying—the picture of his upstretched hand, the powerless fingers and the blade of his sword, a desperate grip, cruel and beautiful as the moment preceding death.

Shakespeare, as we know, is full of quotations from Shakespeare. Most people probably wait for them—next comes “to be or not to be”—this is simultaneously recognition and reaction, disappointment or surprise. In *Richard III*, the quotation with a capital *Q* comes just at the end. With his genius in placing “A horse! A horse! My kingdom for a horse!” Olivier does not merely succeed in making the most lukewarm spectator eager to trade the crown of England for a nag—in this scene, he confirms Richard's greatness, too, through the depth of his tragedy.

Weaver's Magazine Concept: Notes on Auditioning Radio's New Sound

PATRICK D. HAZARD

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"WITH A COURAGE born of desperation and destitution" was *Variety* critic Bob Chandler's apt description of the motives behind A.B.C.'s "New Sounds for You." This program is, according to its executive producer Drex Hines, an "effort to do in radio what the digest magazines do in the publishing field; that is, recognize that busy people appreciate a service which selects features especially for them." Robert W. Sarnoff, president of N.B.C., admits frankly that "Monitor" and "Weekday" are also moves of desperate destitution. Radio lost two million dollars at N.B.C. in 1955. "The networks," in Sarnoff's judgment, "have to make these new forms work or else." Mutual Radio has made similar changes in programing and advertising; it calls the new pattern "Companionate Radio." Only well-fed C.B.S., relatively prosperous in terms of radio's diminished fortunes, rides out the storm with Godfrey and sponsored soapers. Even C.B.S. has had to overhaul its advertising structure, allowing many sponsors to underwrite a single program or series of programs through its "segmentation" plan.

Radio's new sound stems from changes TV has wrought in listening habits. Advertising has similarly shifted from an effort to assemble one big audience to a systematic attempt to expose one's message to a cumulative audience assembled seriatim throughout the broadcast schedule. A description of program content in the new radio formats should be seen against the theoretic-

cal ideas of its pioneer, Sylvester L. Weaver, Jr. The magazine concept in commercial radio breaks down some walls between educational and commercial broadcasting; an effort is made at the end of this paper to explore the possibilities of collaboration among mass educators, critics, and broadcasters in light of the educational implications of the "electronic magazine."

Radio itself is not in danger of extinction; it is in fact flourishing. In the first three quarters of 1955, radio-set sales increased over 40 per cent, from seven and a half to ten and a half million. Total TV-set sales increased only 16.5 per cent, from five million in 1954 to six million in 1955. Largest gains were in auto, clock, and portable radios. C.B.S. has recently estimated a national total of one hundred thirty-two million radios.

TV, however, has radically changed where, when, and how these radios are used. Two out of three American homes have more than one radio set. Two out of three American-home radios are located outside the living room—bedrooms have 20 per cent; dining rooms and kitchens, 18 per cent; living rooms, 21 per cent; other rooms, 7 per cent. Four out of five radios are located outside the living room where nearly all the TV sets are. Most radio listening is done by individuals rather than by family groups. Radio listening is up in TV homes and increases as the TV set grows older. Most daytime radio listeners do other things while listening; two out of three nighttime radio listeners concentrate entirely on listening. Since 85 to 90 per cent of the radio homes in TV cities own TV and 75 per cent of *all* radio homes are TV-equipped, radio has become an individual listener's medium.

TV has also changed the economic facts of radio advertising. As TV began to deliver the national market, advertisers used radio to plug holes in TV-network coverage. Spot campaigns and local-station advertising tended to siphon off what TV had left of network radio's revenue. Network radio faced bankruptcy unless it could devise new ways to lure back both listeners and advertisers. It sought to regain listeners by personalizing programming; it sought to regain advertisers by letting a sponsor gain a cumu-

lative audience by small participations in many programs. For instance, in the C.B.S. Segmented Program Plan, sponsors can underwrite five-minute segments of one or more of eleven big-name shows—among them, Bing Crosby and Amos 'n' Andy. Numerous possible combinations of participations are available. C.B.S. offers, for example, a segment each in all eleven programs with gross weekly audience of forty million for about \$18,000. The rating point is being replaced by low-cost presentations of cumulative audiences for many programs. The advantage of this type of advertising is that it can be tailor-made. Small companies can buy a few exposures; large ones can buy into all the programs if they want to. The national market can be saturated by a short campaign carried on major-network shows. High TV-production costs make it desirable for alternate-week TV sponsors to keep their product exposed on radio during off weeks. C.B.S., because it has been in the strongest financial position, has been able to concentrate on changes in advertising rather than in programing.

The remaining networks, on the other hand, had to get more listeners before the new participation advertising would draw many sponsors. Radio's new sound, then, is an attempt to lure back the laggard listener. N.B.C. started in the summer of 1955 with "Monitor," a week-end marathon from 8:00 A.M., Saturday, to midnight, Sunday. (Poor affiliate support of the eight hours from midnight, Saturday, to 8:00 A.M., Sunday, killed that segment.) Since the week end was a poor revenue getter to begin with, it was perhaps the safest place to experiment. There was the usual razzle-dazzle associated with Weaver enterprises. A science-fiction musical theme bloop-bleeped listeners to an awareness that something new was about to emerge from their loudspeakers. "Communicators" from Radio Central—a "push-button listening post on the world"—promised listeners that they were "going places and doing things." The new network radio service was designed to bring listeners into instantaneous touch with everything important, interesting, or entertaining anywhere in the world. News, sports, time signals, weather, and local and

special features were supplemented by entertainment elements consisting of comedy, drama, music, theater, films, and records. Each communicator works a four-hour block backed up by a name-disc jockey, experienced newscasters, a sports editor, writers, and program idea men. Features can vary from a one-line gag to a twenty-minute excerpt from a film or play. "Monitor" had that ants-in-the-pants mobility and immediacy of the American week end it was designed to enliven.

Jazz fans were quickly impressed by panoramic coverage of night spots from New York City to Los Angeles. Bob and Ray, extraordinary spoofers of excesses in popular culture, found a deserved national audience. Henry Morgan filled in radio listeners on what they hadn't really missed on TV by listening to "Monitor." In fact, despite its occasionally neurotic pace, "Monitor" had the beginnings of something long needed in American life: a relaxed yet perspicacious criticism of the popular arts.

One could scarcely ask for a better explicator of creative popular music than Al "Jazzbo" Collins, disc jockey for WRCA, N.B.C.'s owned-and-operated station in New York. His genial and informed introductions of jazz and quality dance-band music at various night spots are sorely needed as a corrective to tin-pan-alley's puffs. Shirley Thomas consistently makes her Hollywood interviews more than the usual chatter. She appreciates the art of film, and her questions tend to reveal the complexity and integrity of that new aesthetic form. Bob and Ray are in the important tradition of popular satirists like Stan Freberg and Al Capp. They bring the tonic of laughter to areas that are impervious to other critical strategies. Literate book reviews and profiles on the American theater give another dimension to "Monitor's" coverage of the arts. Indeed, given a little encouragement and constructive criticism, "Monitor" could help substantially to take the hex off "culture" and "the finer things" in America. Its mixture of hammy showmanship and low-key literacy is precisely the means for easing the century-and-a-half-old cold war in American culture between self-conscious gentility and aggressive lowbrowism. This

is not to whitewash "Monitor." It has a can-you-top-this mentality that is quickly tiring, and it brags about its technological virtuosity until you crave the era of smoke signals. Still, it may deëmphasize these audience getters, in time; and, as it now stands, it remains the best extant hope for a broadcast forum of popular criticism.

The next electronic magazine launched to retrieve TV addicts was A.B.C.'s "New Sounds for You." It began late in October, 1955, in the heretofore lucrative prime evening time, 7:30 P.M. to 10:00 P.M. (NYT), Mondays through Fridays. There are five thirty-minute segments, each segment itself divided into five- and ten-minute parts with five minutes reserved for news. The first thematic unit is "Events of the Day." "Today's Sensational Story," a five-minute tabloid feature, is followed by "Inside Washington," a controversial story from the nation's capital; "Transatlantic Exclusive," Europe's sensational story of the day; "Personality of the Day," the hero or heel of the headlines; and finally, "The News and You," political, economic, and social news as it affects the individual.

The second half hour is called "The World and You." Each segment approximates five minutes. "Arrivals and Departures" has included the last steam locomotive leaving the Long Island Railroad station, a visit to the traveler's-aid booth in New York's Grand Central Station, a visit to an Alaskan airport, celebrities interviewed at major transportation terminals throughout the world. "Let's Take a Trip" has featured the Hall of Fame in Cooperstown, N. Y., the Robert E. Lee Mansion in Arlington, Va., a spice shop, novelist Rex Stout, two travelers who had motor-scooter through thirty-three countries recording music, the United Nations, the Contemporary Art Galleries for an exhibition of Aubusson Tapestries, and a meeting of solar scientists in Phoenix, Ariz. "Yesterday at Midnight": the New York Stock Exchange, the Bowery, a house detective at work, a cleaning woman at the Smithsonian, dancing at Birdland, an interview with Edith Piaf at her current engagement, backstage interviews.

"America at Work and Play" presents spot close-ups with interesting Americans everywhere: the Pan-American Tennis Tournament in Mexico City, the warden of Michigan State Prison, a pre-Thanksgiving visit to a turkey farm, a Notre Dame cheerleaders' rehearsal, Justice William O. Douglas, the editor in chief of *Field and Stream*, the New York City Commissioner of Sanitation, a report on an electronic computer at the Bureau of Standards, the blind at work in Cleveland, Ohio. "From Elm Street to the Great White Way" is the final segment in "The World and You." It has featured the out-of-town opening of the Rodgers and Hammerstein musical *Pipe Dream*; a report on *Three Penny Opera*; a visit to the Mississippi Delta; an interview with Melvyn Douglas, star of the Broadway hit *Inherit the Wind*; Scottsdale, Ariz., the West's most western town; Little Theater, Dallas, Tex.; theatrical set designer Max Gorelik; Irene Selznick, producer of *The Chalk Garden*. Affiliates are encouraged to tape newsworthy programs for this and other segments and send them to New York for editorial decision by the planning board, composed of the executive producer, his assistant, and the editors of the five segments. This attempt to capture the regional flavors of Americana is an important strength of "New Sounds." Such decentralization of programming sources tends to encourage diversity and resist New York-Hollywood erasures of valuable differences in American subcultures. It is another example of radio's new realism—substituting the excitement and interest of real life for the prefabricated sugar nannies of earlier radio.

"Your Better Tomorrow" is the third major section of A.B.C.'s "New Sounds for You." In it, radio is attempting to build audience by serving recognized human needs instead of by creating ersatz satisfactions to fill emotional vacuums. "Your Living Thoughts" has included Dr. Billy Graham, philosophy professor Reinhold Niebuhr from the University of Connecticut, Brooklyn's oldest minister, anthropologist Margaret Mead, author Sholem Asch, a talk on Chanukah, a summary of race relations, and a moving appeal for the UN by Dr. Ralph Bunche. "Your Mar-

riage and Family" has presented marriage expert Dr. Paul Popenoe discussing budgets, quarrels, working wives, and similar topics; Domestic Relations Judge John W. Hill; an Army chaplain discussing problems of G.I.'s; Walter Hendl with tips on when and how to teach children to play musical instruments. "Your Personality" features Dick Satterfield, an expert on etiquette, grooming, and beauty, and other prominent people giving their views on personality problems. "Your Success" features celebrities who explain the reasons for their good fortune; Dick Satterfield is also a regular contributor for this segment. "Your Home" cultivates the do-it-yourself craze. So far, it has featured a furniture expert; tips on building things from old orange crates; a visit to a door store, where unusual things are made from old doors; household hints; magic with leftovers; and activities like those of the New York City 88th Street tree-planting group.

"Soundmirror" is the fourth half-hour segment in "New Sounds." "Sounds of Yesterday" presents stories, readings, and voices that make the past come alive. Materials used have included a debate over the struggle between government and business recorded in the thirties between Harold Ickes and General Hugh Johnson; auto-racer Barney Oldfield; singer Florence Foster Jenkins; the first Edison recording; famous sporting events; Elsie Janis, sweetheart of the AEF; vaudeville star Bert Williams; Jonas Salk on the polio victory; F. D. Roosevelt's prayer for G.I.'s on D-Day, 1944; and the Pearl Harbor announcement interrupting a pro football game. "Sounds of Today," a ten-minute segment, has featured tapes from Unit 99, Sacramento police; a uranium prospector; a football team in the huddle and on the line; voodoo from Haiti; sounds of workmen building the third tube of the Lincoln Tunnel. "Sounds of No Importance" is a showcase for aural humor: the sound of manhole covers, hanging up clothes, knocking on doors, eating breakfast, a moth in a gray flannel suit, ash cans, goat talk, an aspirin going to work, a city at night, cracking nuts, and similar esoterica. "Soundmirror" closes with "Soundings," short editorial-page features. Phone calls and

letters from listeners are solicited and featured. The producers are anxious to expand this feedback potential, making the entire series closer to the conscious desires of the audience. It is this consideration of the audience's actual interests that strikes a freshening note in radio's new sound. For radio can thereby deepen awareness rather than supply substitutes for it.

"Offbeat" is the fifth and final half hour. It begins with a five-minute comedy sketch "Humor." "Focus on the Future," a ten-minute segment, has featured Willy Ley on such topics as satellites, monorails, and rockets; James P. Mitchell on the Guaranteed Annual Wage; an expert on Nostradamus; a report on nuclear energy from Westinghouse laboratories; the future of mobile homes; Duke University's studies in extrasensory perception; Robert Moses on city planning. "Soloscope," also ten minutes, completes the program with readings from literature. Ogden Nash reading his verse and Basil Rathbone doing "The Raven" may be taken as examples.

A.B.C.'s format attempts to retain "Monitor" 's excitement and yet appeal to radio's established listening habits—based on regular features, regularly scheduled. The short "easy listening" segments appeal to a great variety of interests; the producers are attempting to broadcast a radio *Readers Digest*.

It is easy to criticize this show on the same grounds that literary people have criticized its digest-magazine prototype: canned thought or Pablumized ideas is not thought at all. Yet there may be a lack of realism to this kind of cultural snobbery. Factory and office workers and housewives submit to various deadening routines to make possible the advantages of a technological society. Their psychic energies are drained by their jobs. A certain capitulation to their lower standards of self-awareness seems compatible with an expanding culture. And critics who object to an "entertainment culture" sometimes forget that such random amusements are probably a necessary corollary of the frustrating roles inherent in technological processes. "New Sounds for You" brings the listener into frequent if not exalted contact with reality. If his

news is sensationalized, at least he is made aware of the human community. If he is exposed to inconsequential nonsense, he is also exposed to useful and inspiring messages on other parts of the program. "New Sounds" has all the limitations *and* advantages of the magazine it has set out to emulate.

The next entrant in the battle of the broadcast magazines is N.B.C.'s "Weekday." Starting early in November, 1955, it has tried to bring "everything that is essential and much of what is interesting to the American woman." Conceived of as companion and counselor to the American housewife, "Weekday" doles out information, news, service, and entertainment. A staff of thirty backs the host-hostess teams of Margaret Truman and Mike Wallace, and Martha Scott and Walter Kiernan. Although the title "Weekday" has been applied to N.B.C. programming between 10:00 A.M. and 6:00 P.M., Mondays through Fridays, distinctively new material appears only from 10:15 to 11:45 and from 12:00 to 3:00.

Staples include a "Star of the Day" whose records are frequently played and who answers generally intelligent questions about his personal life. Gordon MacRae, Peggy Lee, Vaughan Monroe, Walter Schuman, and Debbie Reynolds were one week's stars. Food consultant Charlotte Adams gives frequent reports. There are two man-and-wife comedy teams, Ted and Rhoda Brown and Jane and Goodman Ace. "Guests of the Day," during a typical week, have included Sol Hurok, Jean Pierre Aumont, Dr. James T. Shotwell, dress designer Ceil Chapman, and Gertrude Berg. Guest editors from affiliate stations discuss their specialties. Shirley Thomas conducts a sensitive interview from a Hollywood set each day. "College at Home" presents lectures by university authorities—Dr. Ashley Montagu was the first—on topics like "The Nature of Human Nature," an anthropological approach to child rearing. Meredith Willson explains long-haired music, with perhaps more condescension than is necessary in "Music Room." Two days a week, Margaret Truman discusses opera and other serious music that she personally likes. Each day,

there is a short story (Steinbeck and Hawthorne have vied with slick-magazine fiction), a serialized dramatization of a best seller, and dramatic readings—Cornelia Otis Skinner reading from Anne Morrow Lindbergh's *Gift from the Sea* was the first. There are numerous lectures by experts on topics of interest and importance to homemakers.

"Weekday" is the most literate and promising of the broadcast magazines. Look at the people it has brought to the attention of the housewife within its first month of operation: Chester Bowles, Louis Bromfield, Orson Welles, Patrice Munsel, Harry Belafonte, Morris Ernst, Ilka Chase, Frank Lloyd Wright, Robert Anderson, T. H. Robsjohn Gibbings, Bruce Catton, Carl Sandburg, Norman Cousins, Eleanor Roosevelt, Julie Harris, George Ballanchine, Benjamin Fine, and Cameron Hawley. This is a mere sampling of the imaginative package that N.B.C. presents daily for the enlightening entertainment of the American woman. This picture window on pertinent reality provided by "Weekday" is one of the most hopeful signs that mass culture is approaching maturity. In a very substantial way, "Weekday" provides a format for mass enlightenment that may be able to make up for many of the weaknesses of formal education in the last thirty years. To fully understand the long-range implications of radio's new programming, it is helpful to examine its ideological background—the imaginative philosophy of industrial statesmanship of Sylvester L. Weaver, now Chairman of the Board at N.B.C.

A general analysis of radio's new sound should begin with a consideration of the "magazine" concept as elaborated by Weaver. Clearly, the new forms are audio translations of N.B.C.'s television programs "Today," "Home," and "Tonight." First of all, in a magazine-type broadcast, it is possible to mix levels of taste in the material presented—something for everyone, in the *Life* tradition of photojournalism. And just as in one issue of that magazine, one may see "horror" photos as well as a brilliant color essay on a phase of American art history, so on "Today" one may hear a literate discussion with drama critic Walter Kerr followed

by J. Fred Mugg's simian antics. On "Home," Theodore Rousseau of the Metropolitan Museum has given a ten-day course in the great masterpieces to a TV audience assembled by appeals generally less Olympian than art history. It may be that in the multilevel magazine we have one of the most distinctive instruments of enlightenment in a cultural democracy. The difference between this conscious mixing of degrees of complexity in programming on N.B.C.'s "Home," "Today," and "Tonight" and the stratified strategy of the N.B.C.'s "Home" and "Tonight" and the B.B.C.'s "Third Programme" is clear. On the former, less sophisticated people are constantly sampling excellence of a level within upward reach; on the latter, graded audiences are hermetically sealed off from each other. There seems little doubt which system has a greater potential for bringing self-awareness to the masses.

Continuing the magazine analogy, just as one leafs through *Life*, looking closely at some things, cursorily at others, scarcely at all at still others, so a listener dialed to "Monitor" psychologically tunes out, by degrees, program material not compelling to him. This psychological tuning out probably works in different ways for all segments of the audience. A highbrow might conceivably hear only jazz, hard news, and Bob and Ray. A middlebrow might tune in only movie profiles and Broadway stage interviews. A lowbrow could choose to attend to only the Saturday afternoon football games and Hit Parade tunes. There is flexibility of appeal, therefore, and—important at least to educators—the likelihood of relaxed exposure to cultural patterns of a level higher than those presently accepted.

Because advertisers do not sponsor a whole show but merely "participate" (for large or small amounts, for a long or a short time), editorial control remains with the networks in the magazine programs. When a network operates within an imaginative frame of reference, there is then the possibility of establishing several electronic magazines which appeal to the actual needs and desires of general or special audiences. "Monitor," for example,

is a kind of entertainment magazine, like *Cue*; "Weekday," a combination of *Ladies Home Journal* and a supermarket slick; "Today," a cross between *Time* and *Life*; "Home," the video archetype for "Weekday" and thus analogous to similar magazines; "Tonight," an *Esquire* wired for jazz.

Weaver's "Wide, Wide World" also partakes of the magazine format, but might also be compared to Steichen's photo exhibition "Family of Man," particularly in its paperback form. It mixes levels of taste in a remarkable way: for example, in "American Rhapsody" there were live shots of folk music in North Carolina; of a lonely mine inspector singing; New Orleans stevedores, a jazz night club, and a marching funeral band; popular idol Frank Sinatra from The Sands, Las Vegas; a touching sequence of deaf children learning to sing in Baltimore, Maryland. In this perfectly natural context, there appeared a profile on the National Ballet of Canada, rehearsing their production of the *Nutcracker Suite*. It would be interesting to know for how many people this sequence was a natural introduction to ballet, enticing them, perhaps, to become one of the 30,000,000 viewers of a full-length television production of *Sleeping Beauty* by Sadler's Wells Company, seen shortly thereafter on N.B.C. "Wide, Wide World" is really Walt Whitman with coaxial cables. The program is occasionally overdone; frequently, moving; in rare (and more frequent) moments, superb—just as is Whitman.

Yet the proponents of book culture are seldom impressed by the magazine (printed or broadcast) as an instrument of self-awareness and upward cultural mobility. The number of book stores in a country is still their index of vitality. Ephemeral media are suspect as sources of enlightenment. This aesthetic snobbery helps explain the polarity of opinion about Weaver. Intellectuals and critics generally regard him as a mountebank. They tend to take his pronouncements as seriously as they took his wartime campaign to send Lucky Strike's green to war. They find him pretentious, as when novelist John O'Hara twitted Weaver in *Collier's* for using the polysyllabic "communicator" to refer to a

plain, old radio announcer. His prose style has sustained more jibes than the late John Dewey's; and it is a rather incomprehensible jargon for a Dartmouth Phi Beta Kappa. As for his Olympian communiqués, critics usually sigh and point to the fact that there are still many mediocre programs on his network, and he's been president for several years, hasn't he? He is, they insist, the humanist huckster, the Madison Avenue boy with a cerebral ulcer, a fast talker who has joined the Book Find Club.

On the other hand, people who work under him have quite another opinion. They refer fondly to his willingness to go personally to hesitant advertisers to help settle contracts for major cultural programs. They say that since he took over at N.B.C. the mediocre man is at the same disadvantage that a creative person heretofore was. The odds have been reversed. The question of censorship has ascended from a mechanical scrutiny aimed at keeping pressure groups at bay to a calculated willingness to take chances on mature situations—if they are justified aesthetically. It is this changed climate of belief about the possibilities of broadcasting that makes Weaver such an important cultural phenomenon. For a century and a half, American culture has steered gingerly between the Scylla of gentility and the Charybdis of "I know what I like" lowbrowism. Now, an executive says and seems to show that culture and commerce are not incompatible. It is this break through the barrier of American self-consciousness about the "finer things" that makes Weaver's career of more than individual significance.

Indeed, Weaver's first principles as they apply to radio, television, and the general society demand scholarly examination and amplification. Is his responsibility report the sort of thing Lyman Bryson asks for when he says that when engineers break stable cultural patterns with technology they have the moral responsibility of reestablishing significant patterns? Do we not witness the effects of avoided responsibility in industrial design, urban planning, and architecture? Is not Weaver implying with his responsibility report that industries must develop a mature

consumer—one whose needs are satisfied and considered as on “Weekday” and on “Home”? And does this not lead to the belief that technology must justify itself not by keeping factories moving and studios broadcasting but by fulfilling human potentials and gearing its operations to know needs as Frances Horwich consciously does for children in “Ding Dong School”? We witness, perhaps, in Weaver a coming of age in American industrial leadership, in which our goal becomes a humane rather than a merely healthy economy.

This sociological dimension of radio-TV criticism is important and, unfortunately, almost nonexistent; but it does not exhaust opportunities for the creative critic. On the aesthetic level, many questions arise. Can radio's new direction—substituting the excitement and interest of reality for the soporific of soap opera and witless chatter—be encouraged by formal educational institutions? How can the book publishers' councils and library organizations use the dramatized best sellers and dramatic readings on “Weekday” to stimulate mere reading among housewives?

Weaver claims that “light” viewers attracted to a quality spectacular on TV are better buys for advertisers and should count more than “heavy” viewers. Could radio become a haven for such light viewers, attracted because of the continuous appearance of elite material? In this way, radio might actually become a catalyst in network broadcasting, establishing a tension with TV that would take the average programming of both to ever higher levels. Exposure to excellence on radio might swell audiences for TV's cultural events, as in an interview with Sol Hurok on “Weekday,” the afternoon before he presented Sadler's Wells on TV.

Perhaps the greatest responsibilities fall on the secondary school where tomorrow's subscribers to electronic magazines are finishing their formal education. Here, a literate criticism of the media is most needed. And one is struck at this point by a major paradox. Gilbert Seldes has argued that the masses are often ahead of the media; here, certainly, the media are ahead of the educators and intellectuals. The program material on “Weekday”

and "Home" makes infinitely more sense in the areas covered than many secondary-school curricula. Seriously, what we fail to do in school, these programs are doing brilliantly.

Respect for contemporary art? What school gives students the respect for the complexity of the film form that Shirley Thomas does in her Hollywood interviews on "Weekday"? Who hears in the public schools of Frank Lloyd Wright or Robert Moses or Harry Belafonte or Henry Dreyfuss? "Weekday" and "Home" show more concern for contemporary creativity than do the schools. What is involved here is a major strategy for the humanities and social sciences in mass education. Marshall McLuhan has urged the creation of the "classroom without walls" that would prepare media patrons to handle modern instruments of communication with sophistication. It seems that the magazine concept in broadcasting has anticipated this responsibility of the school by instituting the "kitchen without walls" or, to use the actual name of a "Weekday" segment, a "College at Home." Should not the school develop curricula that allow children to scrutinize and discuss systematically the best that is being said and done on the media and in the general culture? A viable criticism of mass communication ought to begin in mass education, the only mass medium relatively free from commercial and deadline pressures.

The colleges have two great opportunities in the educational broadcasting inaugurated by the magazine concept. First, there is the need for creating a sense of professional pride, a tradition of responsibility in broadcasting; such a tradition is our best guarantee of excellence. This is what Weaver is trying to do with terms like "communicator" and his theories of a common man elite. That he should be lampooned for his attempts is pathetic. The new college-level programs in communication arts ought to have as a major responsibility the creation of a tradition of responsibility in commercial broadcasting. In this way, the colleges will continuously send groups of fresh recruits to secure the beachheads of maturity established in commercial broadcasting

by the magazine concept and other enlightened programs of mass entertainment.

The second great opportunity is for the scholars themselves. The appearance of people of the stature of Reinhold Niebuhr and Margaret Mead on A.B.C.'s "New Sounds for You" and Ashley Montagu on "Home" and "Weekday" promises an entirely unforeseen context for educational broadcasting. This precedent could be extended to establish the larger showcase for the nation's most creative lecturers proposed by Max Wylie in *Clear Channels*. One hopes that our creative people will seek out the new dimensions that the magazine concept brings to mass education.

What, finally, are the opportunities that the magazine concept—broadcasting's new contact point with reality—provides the professional critic? Will the more spectacular and thus more anecdotal programs monopolize the columns of the critics? Will glamorous TV force her dowdier older sister right out of serious discussion? How carefully will the critics examine the possibilities of TV and radio's vast new classrooms—the various electronic magazines? There has been a great deal of discussion recently of the adequacy of present criticism of the media. Perhaps a foundation will underwrite a conference at which educators, broadcasters, and critics can discuss the possibilities of critical collaboration in encouraging excellence on the networks.

For the emergence of the magazine concept on both TV and radio is a sign of a new maturity at the networks that could be lost if audiences do not materialize for this kind of programing.* Radio's new sound particularly affords educators and critics a chance to make up for the mistakes and sins of omission that have characterized the last generation's approach to commercial broadcasting. If the radio networks languish, it will be a serious loss for American culture. Remarkable new programs like "Biography in Sound" attest to the undiminished creative potential of network producers. Somehow, the energies of mass education, from sec-

* Since this article was written, A.B.C.'s "New Sounds for You" died in April, 1956, of chronic lack of sponsorship. "Mysterytime" and popular music shows are replacing the series that impressed critics but not advertisers.

ondary school through professional courses in graduate training, should rally to salvage the benefits of network radio. That commercial broadcasters have turned to the best as a last resort is not important; at least, they have partially committed themselves, in desperation it is true, to the real needs of the radio audience. In that, they have given us a basis for coöperation. The future of network radio may well be determined by the kind of criticism educators and journalists provide it in the next few years.