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Contents

The Friese-Greene Controversy: The Evidence Reconsidered

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FOR MANY YEARS after his unhappy death, the name of Friese-Greene was almost forgotten even by those who were beginning to chart the history of the cinema, and even in the city of Bath where he lived and worked. Born and brought up there, I remember as a child being told that "the inventor of the cinema" had lived nearby and that little record remained save for this one epoch-making discovery. At that time, the tide of popularity was running strongly with Edison. The glamour of his name—in England almost as much as in America—obscured all other names of those who had worked in fields which he strove to make his own. The appearance of Terry Ramsaye's *A Million and One Nights,* based on an enormous labor of research, seemed to put "paid" to the pretensions of all non-American film pioneers. No matter what they had done, the Wizard of Menlo Park was there before them. Muybridge was a charlatan and a criminal; Lumière and the Gaumont brothers, borrowers of other people's ideas; Marey, a physiologist right off the main track—and so the list ran on.

In America, the Edison legend (part fact and part carefully nurtured fable) still flourishes—having survived even the old man's stoutly maintained conviction that the power in all the atoms in the world would not suffice to light even the tiniest electric bulb. None of the contenders for credit in inventing the film gets more than a bare mention in America today. Terry

Ramsaye himself, reviewing the Friese-Greene biography in 1949, dismisses its hero as "one of the more nebulously connected of the many claimant fathers of the motion picture. . . . [But] the motion picture was conceived and brought to birth without him." And Ramsaye refers again to "the American origins of the motion picture."

In others parts of the world, research has now restored a truer perspective. The names of many forgotten pioneers have been unearthed, their papers and patents republished, models of their instruments brought to light or reconstructed. And as so often happens, local patriotisms have been aroused by these discoveries, which in turn have swelled into national claims, until the honor of a country may seem to be involved in whether or not one of its citizens gave birth to this or that idea. In this race for priority in the cinema, British hopes have been pinned principally on Friese-Greene. After his name had been properly resurrected and set on a plaque by the mayor and citizens of Bath, investigations by the noted film authority Howard Cricks and others began to establish more precisely his genuine claims to fame. A further step forward resulted from the publication in 1948 of Miss Ray Allister's *Friese-Greene: Close-up of an Inventor*[1] which, by dint of setting forth long imaginary conversations between Friese-Greene and his friends, achieved a vivid portrait of a man who had left little impression on any but his immediate circle. Though the book was wholly undocumented and anecdotal in character, it was evidently based on extensive family research. From total obscurity, Friese-Green had risen in England to a position of some importance in the history of invention. His story had all the elements of popular appeal: he was courageous and poor, prepared to spend his last penny and go to prison for the ideas he believed in; he lived to see the invention he fathered become an industry of world dimensions, while he himself was so utterly neglected that he collapsed and died at a public meeting virtually of starvation. So the legend grew . . .

[1] (London: Marsland Publications.)

Then, the film of Friese-Greene's life—based on Miss Allister's biography—was completed for showing during the Festival year of 1951, with all the prestige that the backing of the Festival of Britain brings with it. Taking their cue from the press release issued by the producers of *The Magic Box,* the newspapers, including *The Times,* began to hail Friese-Greene as "the inventor of cinematography" and "the father of the film." Whatever claims the film makes, an impression has undoubtedly been stamped on people's minds that Friese-Greene was in fact the inventor of the cinema. And if the film has given credence to this claim, the impression has been spread abroad that it represents a considered historical judgment by British scientists.

Therefore, in the light of all the available facts, an important reconsideration is due the place that Friese-Greene is entitled to hold in the history of film.

Now if Friese-Greene (or anyone else) is properly to be called the inventor or the father of cinematography, it is essential that the cinema be a more or less integral invention to which one man's name can be securely attached. So complicated has technology become that there are nowadays few "one-man inventions." Nevertheless, it is fair enough to call Watson-Watt the inventor of radar, or Marconi of radio, or Whittle of the centrifugal gas turbine for aircraft. On the other hand, the automobile is clearly a multiple invention. It was developed in several countries (notably France and Germany) over a period of many decades, and a number of inventors contributed importantly to it. No one—not even Henry Ford—is entitled to be called "the father of the motor car."

The invention of the cinema (setting aside its shadowy antecedents in antiquity) occupied a period of about sixty-five years, dating from the investigation of the phenomenon of persistence of vision and the invention of the phenakistiscope by Plateau around 1832 to the first successful projections of film by modern methods in Paris and New York in 1895, and slightly later in London. So long and complex a chain of inventions could not

possibly have been the achievement of one man. After Plateau and others had established the basic principles, it was necessary to arrive at a satisfactory photographic process (Fox-Talbot, Niepce, Daguerre). Then the system of movement analysis by "successive poses" had to be investigated—Duboscq, Wheatstone, Seguin. Methods of projecting these still pictures in rapid sequence followed—Rudge, who later became the partner of Friese-Greene and Heyl. Successive photography reached its pinnacle in Muybridge's work which stimulated renewed efforts all over the world to solve the final problems of the film camera, the projector, and the photographic material itself. In France in 1882, Marey produced a workable camera in the form of a gun; and by using glass plates, he successfully analyzed the flight of birds. Then, with the invention of ways to make continuous bands of celluloid film—Hyatt and Eastman—camera inventions came thick and fact—Marey in 1887–88; Friese-Greene, Leprince, Edison, and Dickson in 1888; with greater success by the same inventors in the following year. In June, 1889, Friese-Greene took out his patent for a camera; Reynaud used pre-perforated film in the same year; and in 1890–91, Edison perfected the system of perforation which remains standard to this day. The projection of film, which had been accomplished experimentally by Friese-Green, Edison, Dickson, and Leprince, was not satisfactorily achieved until 1895—Armat, Jenkins, and LeRoy in the United States; Lumière in France—and then only by quite different mechanical means.

Incomplete as so short a summary must be, it demonstrates that the cinema was the product of many minds, often working independently along the same lines in different countries. The creation of the cinema depended on emerging processes in chemistry and photography, for lack of which early inventors, such as Ducos du Hauron, could not realize technical developments they clearly foresaw. Above all, the cinema could not advance until there was a mass market for photography and a semieducated urban audience which could gather in thousands to make this

expensive invention pay its way. Because Edison's brilliantly practical mind gave modern form to early tentative experiments, and because he realized that public exploitation was the key to the cinema's success, Edison has often been called "the inventor of the cinema." That claim cannot be sustained, and English writers who have disputed it have pointed to the multiple invention of film. It is curious to find the same people denying this argument in order to establish their own choice of sole inventor—a man who cannot begin to be compared with Edison in the richness of his contributions to the progress of the cinema.

Friese-Greene would, however, deserve lasting recognition if there could be established on his behalf a definite priority in the invention of one or more of the basic elements of cinematography. This would be reinforced if he could be shown to have given the cinema a decisive push forward by his work—in the manner of Muybridge, Marey, Paul, and above all, Edison.

The basic elements of cinematography are generally held to be the following (their originators or discoverers are given in parentheses):

1. The application of the principle of persistence of vision to the fusion of discontinuous phases of action into a seemingly continuous movement (Plateau, Roget, Wheatstone, and Faraday).

2. The use of a narrow, flexible band of celluloid film carrying a sensitive emulsion on which the phases of action can be recorded photographically (Marey, Edison, and Eastman).

3. The establishment of a system of registration by regular perforations punched prior to use in the flexible band, so that all the images are of identical size and evenly spaced in the camera, and are moved forward an equal distance in the projector (Edison, partially anticipated by Reynaud).

4. Means for taking the images in rapid succession, the film being held stationary while each image is photographed, and obscured while the film is moved on to the next image space (Marey, Leprince, Friese-Greene, and Edison). This is the essence of a film camera of the normal intermittent type.

5. Means for projecting the images so taken, the film being held stationary while each image is projected, and obscured while the film is moved on to the next image (Leprince and Friese-Greene). This is the essence of a film projector.

Thus, Friese-Greene played a part in two of the five basic inventions of the cinema. How important that part was remains to be seen. Friese-Greene's advocates rely principally on Patent No. 10,131, which was applied for on June 21, 1889. This patent disclosed the invention of a camera of intermittent type, in which a shutter was used to obscure the film while it was in motion. Again, as in a modern camera, the film was unwound from its bobbin and after exposure wound up again continuously; the transition from continuous to intermittent motion was effected by a slack section of film which would now be called a loop. There was also a rather vague specification for a projector. In the invention of both camera and projector, Friese-Greene was legally anticipated by Leprince (a patent of 1888), who, however, used intermittent motion throughout the mechanism in a manner which cannot be considered very practical. Nevertheless, when we compare today frames of film taken by both inventors in 1888, we find that both are equally good—or from the standpoint of projection equally bad, as we shall see later. Some confusion, however, has been created by Friese-Greene supporters, who habitually compare the date of *granting* Leprince's patent (1888) with that of *applying for* Friese-Greene's (1889). Actually, if the dates of application are compared, Leprince is seen to have an anteriority of three years.[2]

More important, but almost certainly unknown to Friese-Greene, was the latest work of Marey—the French physiologist, who, as we have seen, had invented the camera gun in 1882; he

[2] The name of Leprince, who was born in France but married an Englishwoman and lived in Leeds, has fallen into obscurity because of his mysterious disappearance from a train in which he was traveling to Dijon in September, 1890. The circumstances certainly did not point to suicide; but no trace was ever discovered of his body, his baggage, or his assailants. His equipment was put under legal lock and key, and such influence as he might have exerted on the history of the cinema (he was about to leave for the U. S. to market his patents) was stifled at the very start. He seems to have been a man of some ability and practical application.

was then reaching the culminating point in his twenty-years research into the anatomy of motion. On October 29, 1888, eight months before Friese-Greene's patent application, Marey disclosed to the Académie des Sciences an intermittent film camera which had all the basic features of Friese-Greene's, including means to move the film bobbins continuously while the film in the aperture moved intermittently. Friese-Greene's supporters make great play of the fact that Marey's disclosure was not a *legal* one. However, as a well-known scientist and head of the Station Physiologique du Parc des Princes, Marey was not concerned with holding a legal title through patents, but wished to disseminate his discoveries as widely as possible in the scientific world. In these circumstances, it would seem that public disclosure to so eminent a body as the Académie des Sciences should rank equal with an application to the British Patent Office.

There remains the question of the date on which these three inventors actually first took moving pictures on flexible, intermittently moving film. This question is easiest to answer in relation to Marey because of his standing in the scientific world. His date lies between October 15 and 29, 1888. There is no doubt that both Leprince and Friese-Greene achieved some success the same year, but the exact date is uncertain. Twenty years later, Friese-Greene claimed that he had taken films in 1887, but it is unlikely that so frequent a visitor to the Patent Office (he took out 70 patents during his lifetime) should have allowed two years to slip by when he had such an important invention in his hands. His biographer, Miss Allister, also claims that he took films in 1887; but she does not bring forward a shred of supporting documentary evidence. With regard to Leprince, it seems curious that, with his camera patent applied for in 1886, he should have let two years slip by before building and using a film camera; but there is as yet no evidence to the contrary.

Modern as they were in certain respects, the cameras of Marey, Friese-Greene, and Leprince were not able to take pictures which could be satisfactorily projected; for none of them contained a

solution to the basic problem of registration—the precise positioning of successive images on the band of film so that they may be made to fall exactly on top of one another on the screen. True, both Leprince and Friese-Greene employed perforations in 1888 (prior to Edison); but surviving strips of film show that successive frames were displaced up or down, or did not include the same area of the scene. At first, Friese-Greene perforated his film in the camera itself—a method which does not meet the necessary conditions of exactness and which shows that he was more concerned with perforations as a means of driving the film than of securing proper registration of the images. Only in 1890 (that is, after Edison's and Dickson's definitive work on perforations), did Friese-Greene succeed in taking pictures of equal dimensions, though he probably knew nothing of the work of the American inventors.

To summarize, Marey in France, by public disclosure to a learned society, anticipated Friese-Greene's patent application for a camera capable of recording photographic images on an intermittently moving band of film, the unwinding and winding up of the film being performed continuously. Leprince, also with an English patent application, anticipated Friese-Greene by three years (in contrast to Marey's eight months); but his camera, though it performed the same functions, did so in a less satisfactory manner. Apart from these public disclosures, the first actual films were taken by all three inventors at about the same time. Not one of them, however, was able to take satisfactorily projectable pictures; and the system of perforation employed by Friese-Greene was not properly designed to accomplish this purpose. In his patent application of 1889, there is no mention of perforations; and Friese-Greene abandoned their use just when Edison was achieving definitive success with them.

The evidence here set down would seem to invalidate the claim for Friese-Greene, as made by Howard Cricks:

> It is, however, the writer's contention that Friese-Greene's work antedated by some years the use by any other inventor of those two

essentials of modern kinematography, the intermittently moved film, its travel masked by an obturating shutter; and the perforated film.[3]

There remain the claims which have been made that Friese-Greene invented the film projector and gave the first public projections of film. Very little information has come to light on the subject of Friese-Greene's early projector experiments; and the first dates on which he is claimed to have publicly projected films are February 25 and June 20, 1890, at photographic congresses in Bath and Chester, respectively. Search through contemporary photographic and other journals has, however, disclosed no reference to these projections in accounts of the congresses; though such screenings would surely have ranked among the most memorable events of the meetings if they had actually taken place. Some writers think, therefore, that Friese-Greene merely projected a series of "successive poses" in the manner which his partner Rudge had devised many years before.

Furthermore, there is the question already raised of whether the pictures taken by Friese-Greene *could* have been projected. On this point, Mr. Cricks writes, "An examination of the patent [of 1889], and of a camera constructed in accordance with it . . . admittedly raises the question of whether [Friese-Greene] ever succeeded in producing with it motion pictures of an acceptable standard."[4]

Moreover, Leprince's patent application for a projector antecedes Friese-Greene's by about three years, and with remarkable prescience calls for the use of a Maltese cross to provide the intermittent movement—an essential feature of all modern 35-mm. projectors. But Leprince's projector, like his camera, suffered from one grave mechanical defect; it failed to combine continuous movement for the take-off and take-up with intermittent movement for the film in the gate. In spite of this, however, we know that, at the beginning of 1890, Leprince gave a demonstration of a single-lens projector using celluloid film before the secretary

[3] "The Place of Friese-Greene in the Invention of Kinematography," *British Kinematography* (May, 1950), 163.

[4] *Ibid.*, 158–9.

of the Opéra in Paris. This is attested by a certificate which was given him by the secretary.

The remaining evidence supporting Friese-Greene's claims to priority for the camera and projector is an affidavit sworn by him on December 1, 1910, for use in a patent action before the American courts. Such evidence, so long after the event, should not be accepted unless it can be backed up by contemporary drawings, models, or dated sections of film. No contemporary documentation has been brought forward to support Friese-Greene's claim to have taken pictures on paper or celluloid with an intermittent movement in 1887, and to have projected them at about the same date. Other film pioneers—Edison, Dickson, Lumière among them—seem to have refreshed their memories with liberal doses of hindsight. Mr. Cricks remarks of Friese-Greene's affidavit,

> Surveying [it] after a lapse of 40 years, remembering that it related to events 20 years sooner, and regarding the pieces of equipment now illustrated, one finds it difficult to believe that Friese-Greene did not give way to optimism in some of his statements.[5]

And he goes on to point out that a camera constructed according to the patent specification could not possibly have taken pictures at the rate of twelve per second, as Friese-Greene had claimed. Such a camera could not have been operated at more than two or three pictures per second, which is not nearly fast enough to give the illusion of motion. There seems to be no supporting evidence that an earlier camera had operated more quickly.

Finally, we must consider the claim that Friese-Greene's camera patent influenced the work which was going forward at Edison's laboratory at West Orange. Soon after filing his patent in 1889, Friese-Greene transmitted some details to Edison. He received only a formal reply, not signed by the inventor, asking for full drawings. These were sent, and there the matter rested. Some twenty years later, when Edison was taxed with having early knowledge of Friese-Greene's camera patent, he stated that he

[5] *Ibid.*, 161.

had never received the letter. The truth of this statement is not challenged by Friese-Greene's supporters; probably, the letter was opened by some junior person in the Edison establishment. If the letter's contents were seen by Dickson, possibly they influenced the course of film research at West Orange. But it must be remembered that Dickson, who was well acquainted with French and had at his disposal a library of 30,000 volumes containing almost all the world's scientific periodicals, was familiar with the work of Marey; and he had probably seen the *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Sciences* in which Marey had described his similar camera the previous year. These are both hypotheses, the accuracy of which need not further detain us since there appears to be no doubt that Friese-Greene anticipated Edison in the use of the camera, just as he was himself anticipated by Marey and Leprince.

There is only one film priority which is indisputably Friese-Greene's: the taking of the first stereoscopic movies in May, 1889. Influenced undoubtedly by the current vogue of the Victorian stereoscope, Friese-Greene took his first pictures in Hyde Park in stereoscopic pairs. Miss Allister in her biography makes it plain, however, that he was entirely ignorant of the principles of stereoscopic projection.[6] (It is interesting to note that the year 1951 saw the completion of the first stereoscopic film produced in England, sixty-three years after Friese-Greene's first tentative experiments.)

The facts presented here suggest that Friese-Greene did not originate any of the major ideas of cinematography, though he was much ahead of his time in grasping the possibilities of the motion picture and in working strenuously if lamely toward their accomplishment. At every stage of his work, he was handicapped by lack of funds, and, above all, by lack of basic mechanical knowledge. The authoritative *British Journal of Photography* in

[6] Nevertheless, she claims that Friese-Greene took out "the first patent for a process of stereoscopic projection" (*op. cit.*, 72). However, the process disclosed was entirely unworkable; and moreover, Friese-Greene, in 1893, had been anticipated by another British patentee who, in 1891, had disclosed the modern system of projection by polarized light. (See A. W. Judge, *Stereoscopic Photography*, 3rd ed., 436.)

a sympathetic obituary notice (misquoted by Miss Allister) states: "Although [Friese-Greene] was an ingenious mechanician, he had, so we judge, the very slightest acquaintance with the scientific elements of chemistry and physics."[7] And Mr. Cricks himself says, "There is no evidence that he was possessed of sound mechanical knowledge."[8]

With these disabilities, it is perhaps all the more commendable that Friese-Greene reached even the second rank of the cinema's inventors. But in our admiration for his farsightedness and tenacity, we should not overlook the fact that, on the evidence now available, priority for important innovations must be denied him. It is sometimes said that these comparisons of dates by months and weeks are a niggling and useless form of research, and that it does not really matter who anticipated whom, for the fact of the invention is the important thing. That may well be true. But so long as national and personal claims to invention are made—and they show no signs of abating—it is surely necessary to try to establish the facts of priority, however narrow and fortuitous the difference of dates may prove to be.

On the broader issue mentioned above of whether Friese-Greene deserves recognition for the practical impulse he gave to the development of the cinema, we can be much more brief. Cricks states,

> To summarize, it must be freely admitted, that the contributions of William Friese-Greene to the practical development of kinematography are not very important. Edison, Paul, Lumière, played a far more important part in laying the technical foundations of the film industry.[9]

And Georges Sadoul, in the second edition of his monumental work, in which he most carefully explores the contribution of British pioneers to the development of cinematography, has this to say,

> Mais Friese-Greene [comme Leprince] est un chercheur malheureux, et, dans la mesure où elles n'inspirèrent pas West Orange,[1] ses recher-

[7] (May 13, 1921), 281.
[8] *Op. cit.*, 158.
[9] *Op. cit.*, 158.

ches n'eurent qu'une très médiocre influence sur l'invention pratique et universellement répandue du cinéma. ['The reference is to Friese-Greene's letter to Edison referred to on an earlier page.][10]

There remains a last possibility that new evidence will come to light which will place Friese-Greene's name in the cinema's roll of honor ahead of those of Marey, Leprince, and Edison, instead of level with or behind them. In this connection, it is most regrettable that Miss Allister, who spent two years of research on her biography, should have produced a book wholly lacking in documentation, save for a list of the titles of Friese-Greene's patents. Possibly she has assembled a mass of detailed information which she has not yet seen fit to publish. If so, she would put all film historians in her debt by making this data available. And, unexamined records of Friese-Greene's work may yet remain.

Since the historical record is thus still in doubt, it would seem that an impartial Committee of Inquiry ought to be set up to examine the claims of Friese-Greene and other British pioneers to the credit of making important basic discoveries in the cinema. The two bodies responsible for the technical and cultural study of the cinema—the British Kinematograph Society and the British Film Institute—might jointly form such a committee and perhaps complete their work within a year. Many of the early showmen of the cinema are still alive; some apparatus yet remains intact; there are doubtless documents still to be examined.

Certainly no other approach can definitively establish the place of Friese-Greene in the technical history of film. That place is widely disputed abroad. Terry Ramsaye, as we have seen, denies him any importance; and, at the same time, he exaggerates the importance of Edison. English critics tend to dismiss Ramsaye as a mere fiction writer; but *A Million and One Nights* entitles him to a high place among the historians of the cinema. Moreover, as editor of the prominent trade paper *Motion Picture Herald,* he wields considerable influence in America. In France, M. Jean Vivié, Permanent Secretary of the Association Française

[10] *Histoire Générale du Cinéma* (2nd ed.; Paris: Editions Denoël, 1948), I, 96–7.

des Ingénieurs et Techniciens du Cinéma (AFITEC), has recently taken issue with Howard Cricks of the British Kinematograph Society over the position to be accorded to Friese-Greene.

In my opinion, the fairest judgment of Friese-Greene is that of Georges Sadoul, who couples him with Leprince and says,

> C'est par le developpement de la méthode des poses successives, que lui avait enseignée J. A. R. Rudge, et par la connaissance de l'évolution de la technique photographique (qui s'orientait vers la création d'un appareil du type Kodak), que W. Friese-Greene atteignit à ses conceptions, analogues à celles de Leprince, et fort en avance sur leur époque. . . . Il est possible que les travaux de William Friese-Greene aient déterminé un certain courant en Angleterre, dès 1888. Ce courant fut Néanmoins très loin d'avoir la force et la fécondite de celui de Muybridge-Marey-Edison, qui conduisit à l'invention du cinéma moderne. . . .
>
> [Friese-Greene] reste en marge des grands courants que déterminèrent des hommes comme Muybridge, qui eurent la chance de pouvoir réaliser pleinement leurs découvertes, fussent-elles techniquement inférieures à celles d'inventeurs sans influence. . . .
>
> Car il ne suffit pas, pour être un grand inventeur, d'avoir mis au point une théorie et des appareils plus ou moins satisfaisants, il faut aussi avoir réussi à les faire adopter au moins par les specialistes, à une époque où ils sont encore susceptibles d'ouvrir la voie à des progrès décisifs. Il faut en somme avoir pu faire d'une découverte en soi une invention pour tous.[11]

It will require fresh evidence, patiently sought and impartially assembled, to substantiate any higher claim than this for the importance of Friese-Greene's work. Until that has been done, it would seem imprudent to bestow on him the title of "inventor of cinematography," so freely employed in recent months in the British press. There is no one in any country who can justly claim that title; and the film biography of Friese-Greene, in order to secure a lasting place for his name, should have contented itself with recording the life of a gallant inventor, incurably optimistic in the face of adversity, who foresaw—as few of his contemporaries did—the great future of the cinema, and who strove unsuccessfully but valiantly to bring it to reality.

[11] *Op. cit.*, 91, 92, 96.

Films from Overseas

GERALD WEALES

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RENÉ CLÉMENT'S NEW FILM *Lovers, Happy Lovers,* which is in English, has nothing in common with his exquisite *Forbidden Games* except that once again the director walks a thin line between sentimentality and bad taste without losing his balance. It would have been so easy in the earlier film for the depiction of the children to turn soggy and sloppy as so often happens with cinema children from all countries. In the new film, which chronicles the expedient love affairs of a young man who is incapable of a genuine feeling for any of his partners, Clément avoids both of the obvious pitfalls—that of turning the protagonist into a lovable rogue and that of making him a hissable villain. The condemnation that the Legion of Decency has handed the new movie because of its insufficient respect for purity—like the controversy that arose over the use of religious symbols in *Forbidden Games*—indicates that once again Clément has chosen a delicate and difficult subject. Although the new film is avowedly a comedy and uses none of the almost painful sensitivity of *Forbidden Games,* neither film can with any justice be accused of playing loosely with a serious subject. Clément's method is neither one of special pleading, nor one which wishes either to praise or blame. He simply chose a subject—one that is close to most human beings, and so one that must inevitably tread on sore spots—and then placed it on the screen, where he calls attention to this or that aspect of the subject with his wonderfully perceptive camera; the rest he leaves to the audience. The condemnation arises, I assume, from the fact that the film is supposed to be funny. But Clément is no more espousing the amatory career of his hero André Ripois than he is

presenting the "brutally frank and stinging exposé of its hero's unmitigated preying upon the amorous susceptibilities of a series of dames," that Bosley Crowther has read into the film (New York *Times,* October 3, 1954). If anything, since no artist's objectivity is ever complete, Clément seems to lean toward the side of purity; for the irony of the title *Lovers, Happy Lovers* underlines the fact that none of the affairs in the film are ever happy for very long.

The thing that makes *Lovers, Happy Lovers* much more than the ordinary comedy of sex is the character of André. He is completely amoral, an adult child who is continually surprised and hurt when the world fails to recognize that it has been created primarily for his use. He is after only two things, women and the material comforts that money can provide. Early in the picture, it becomes apparent that only the second of these has a permanent hold over him; for, as his wife explains to a friend of hers who is the current object of his advances, he finds any woman who will not give in to him a bore and any woman who will, an even greater bore. He is capable of the most appalling behavior in his attempts to arrange his life comfortably, and he feels no sense of guilt about anything that he does; each of his rationalizations is childish, a sudden act of defiance or kindness, which serves notice that the incident is closed so far as he is concerned. After he deserts the pregnant girl whom he has seduced with a promise of marriage, he catches sight of himself in the mirror as he sits over his breakfast; tousled and pajama-clad like a small boy, he snaps out a sudden "So what!" at himself and then lowers his head again to his food. When he walks out on the prostitute who has fed and housed him when he was out of a job, he steals fifty pounds from a dresser drawer; but he stops on the way out to turn on the radio so that the dog, who has watched the theft, will not be lonely in an empty apartment. His indifference to the women who love him is made a little sadder and a little funnier by his devotion, early in the film, to his few possessions, a teapot and a radio. In the scene in which the radio is accidentally knocked from under his arm and is crushed beneath the wheel of an automobile, he picks up the

pieces with all the confusion, anger, and horror that a mother might register over the body of a child; and, in that moment, we know almost all that there is to know of André. He has a recurrent gesture of dismissal which eloquently defines him: each time one of his conquests leans toward him with any possessiveness, his hand involuntarily comes up to his ear to brush away the annoyance, the tickling of the loved one's hair. The gesture is used most effectively when, after we have seen it often enough to know what it means, his bride puts her head on his shoulder in the car as they drive away from the church.

Gérard Philipe, in his first English-speaking role, plays André in a performance that is certainly the best thing he has done since *Devil in the Flesh.* His pouts and angers, his momentary excitement and delight, and his endless gauche assurance never touch on the farcical—which one might have expected after *Beauties of the Night*—but they remain funny and often very perceptive. Wisely Philipe keeps his André fascinating throughout the film without making him charming enough to seduce the audience into really liking him.

There was very little loud laughter in the theater the night I saw *Lovers, Happy Lovers,* for the comedy is not the kind that produces such laughter. The few attempts at it—a scene in which André tries to hang wallpaper and some rather commonplace bits using dogs—are the least successful things in the movie. But other obvious bits, such as the bowler-hatted gentleman reading *Gone With the Wind* over Joan Greenwood's shoulder on a bus and Valerie Hobson's rich young lady with literary pretensions (which she played with the comic dignity that she used so well in *The Promoter,* although she manages to imply that Catherine in *Lovers* is not nearly so intelligent) are amusing. Some credit here must surely go to Hugh Mills who wrote the screenplay with Clément, for it is doubtful that the French director could have used so much English material so well without Mills's help. The funniest things of all, however, are as often as not a little sad, too—scenes, such as André with the crushed radio and his pick up

of Norah by returning her lost glove which he has stolen to make the introduction possible. In this latter scene, the camera is looking out through the window of the bus at the two characters who have just stepped down; and, although we cannot hear what is said, we can see the flustered eagerness of the girl who wants to be on her good behavior but who also wants to know the handsome and apparently very nice young man who has so politely retrieved her missing glove; when the hesitation ends and the confusion clears, the couple move off across the street together; and the camera catches the glove lying forgotten in the gutter. Joan Greenwood plays the girl with less mannerism and more art than she has used since her voice turned her into such a success.

The film also uses still another kind of comedy, the wry comment, which can best be illustrated by the last scene, played on a golf course. The setting seems irrelevant at first since André is in a wheel chair—the result of an accidental fall from a balcony when a dramatic gesture, an attempt to win his wife's friend, misfires. André's wife, who thinks his suicide attempt was caused by her talk of divorce, has returned, certain that she has complete possession of him; as she pushes him across the course, his eye wanders to still another girl; and then the camera switches quickly and picks up the legs of an unknown golfer teeing off. The game is beginning again.

* * *

Lovers, Happy Lovers is not the only film around this quarter; it is simply the one most worth talking about. There are other, more conventional, comedies from England. *Genevieve,* which has been extremely successful here, tells the story of two couples who drive ancient automobiles in the annual run from London to Brighton and back. This technicolor film, which is handsomely dressed and well acted, is most noteworthy because it manages to be funny quite often. It might reasonably be suspected that the jokes about old cars are few in number and easily worn out—a suspicion that Red Skelton's *Excuse My Dust* of a few years ago confirmed—but *Genevieve* happily mixes the familiar deflated

tires, loose steering wheels, and kind-hearted traffic policemen with some good situation comedy as well as with the running character contrast between the bored, disgusted women and their enthusiastic, hobbyist escorts.

* * *

Scotch on the Rocks is another of those mild English comedies that insist on the importance of individuality and dramatize their insistence by presenting the quaint and lovable foibles of a group of characters from some remote corner of England or, as in *Passport to Pimlico,* from some particular section of London. Since the setting this time is Scotland and since the inhabitants of Laxdale overcome the efforts of an English M.P. to move them out of their native village, an inevitable and unfortunate comparison with *Tight Little Island,* which has been playing around again, comes to mind. *Scotch on the Rocks* is not nearly so charming. Kynaston Reeves's performance as the stage-struck curate and Roddy MacMillan's as the mournful young undertaker got most of the laughs, although they both are grossly caricatured. These two characters and Joyce Grenfell's hotel proprietress from *Genevieve* (she is pushing her familiar bit about as far as it can go; her hotel-keeper has none of the bite that her swank salesgirl had in *A Run for Your Money*) should at least temper the myth of English subtlety. Some of the customers who take such delight in English caricatures look with horror at the Ma and Pa Kettle of Marjorie Main and Percy Kilbride, but in this instance the distance from the art houses to the neighborhood movies is not a long one.

* * *

Max Ophuls' *Le Plaisir* mixes comedy and sentimental romance in filming three short stories by Guy de Maupassant. "The Mask" and "The Model" are negligible except for some good camera effects in the first one. Ophuls expresses the whole atmosphere of meaningless gaiety at the dance by speeding the movement of the dancers until the whole screen begins to blur. The third and longest of the three, "The House of Madame

Tellier," tells the story of a successful madame who takes her ladies to her niece's first communion in the country. The film divides its time between some very funny sequences which show the unhappy effect of the closed house on the town and the startling impression that the prostitutes make on the country and that the communion makes on them. In one good scene, one of the girls, Rosa, begins to cry during the communion; and her tears are communicated bit by bit until everyone in the church is crying. Jean Gabin gives an excellent performance as the madame's brother, the father of the communicant; he gives the farmer the kind of naïve sophistication that city dwellers prefer to think does not exist in the country and a beguiling clumsiness in his eagerness to impress his visitors, especially Rosa. Peter Ustinov reads an English narrative, highly descriptive material apparently from the stories; but such description, although necessary in a short story or novel, is an excrescence on a film if the camera has done its work properly.

* * *

The quarter also brings two dramas, neither of which is particularly satisfying. *Edge of Divorce* is an English movie that is in fact a thesis drama, although the thesis is no longer the woman's quest for freedom, as it might have been fifty years ago. Now the pleading is for marriage; the hero and heroine realize before the film ends that they will make a grievous mistake if they allow their petty quarrels to mushroom into a cause for divorce. For the sake of the children and for the sake of the love that they suspect is still there, they stay together. Except for one scene in which the two older children fight angrily for possession of the photograph of the man who is to marry the mother after divorce, the film is a patchwork of dramatic clichés, melodramatic bits, and characters whose reality is only skin-deep. The dialogue is surprisingly bad, skipping from the commonplace to the theatrical; and the performances, including that of Valerie Hobson as the troubled would-be divorcee, are completely without imagination.

The film might have seemed better in retrospect if the one good scene had not been there to show that the film was capable of real strength.

* * *

From France comes *Pit of Loneliness,* for which Colette wrote a screenplay for her sister Jacqueline Audry to direct. The theme is Lesbianism in a girls' school; the time is the late nineteenth century. The director has managed to overcome the dangers inherent in such a subject, as all the reviewers pointed out, by the sensibility and good taste with which she presented her film. Unfortunately, however, *Pit of Loneliness* moves with such care around its subject matter that it often drags badly; there are long and very dull stretches in it. The problem may lie in the fact that the rivalry between the two schoolmistresses, who have also been lovers, must be focused through one of the girls. As written and as played by Marie-Claire Olivia, the girl does not have the sensitivity and the experience to transmit the complicated relationships. Since this is true, the director must go outside Olivia for certain scenes; the result is a disjointed quality. There are impressive individual scenes in the film, perhaps the best of which is the first glimpse of the weak and clinging Mademoiselle Cara, the feminine one of the two teachers. She is sitting on a divan, parading her imaginary illness, protesting the attentions of the girls who wait on her with such eagerness; Simone Simon manages in one short scene to make her petty and petulant, cruel and domineering, and a little charming into the bargain.

Sunrise: A Murnau Masterpiece

DOROTHY B. JONES

DOROTHY B. JONES served as chief of the film reviewing and analysis section of OWI during World War II. This piece on *Sunrise* will appear in somewhat revised form in her forthcoming book on important American films which were studied while she was a Fellow of the Rockefeller Foundation in the field of film criticism. Having just completed a study of the portrayal of India and China in Hollywood motion pictures for the Center for International Studies at M.I.T., Mrs. Jones is now working on another survey of Hollywood film content for the Fund for the Republic.

AMONG THE WORKS of the German-born director F. W. Murnau, *Sunrise* (1927) remains today a film which is still enjoyed and appreciated by discriminating cinema audiences, as well as by many average movie-goers when they are given the opportunity to see it. Despite the fact that *Sunrise* is a silent film, the average person enjoys it as a fascinating story told with honesty and sincerity. Others with more finely developed capacities for discrimination find additional pleasure in the profound understanding of human nature—implicit in all of Murnau's best work—and also admire and appreciate the subtle artistry with which he fashioned this picture.

Yet, strangely enough, *Sunrise* is a film which has rarely been given serious consideration by film critics. Although all have not expressed the scorn which Paul Rotha recorded in *The Film Till Now*,[1] most critics have either ignored it completely in their discussion of Murnau's work or passed over it lightly as an unfortunate, Hollywood-influenced production unworthy of its talented director. A quarter of a century, although possibly not an appreciable length of time for a film to live, may perhaps give us the perspective necessary to reëvaluate *Sunrise* and to understand why it has thus far stood the test of time.

Based on the short story "A Trip to Tilsit" by Hermann Sudermann, *Sunrise* tells of a young peasant whom a city woman seduces

[1] (New York: Funk & Wagnalls Company, 1949), 182. This assessment of *Sunrise* originally appeared in 1930, but Rotha in no way amended it in his 1949 edition as he did by adding footnotes with respect to *Intolerance* and a number of other films.

to drown his wife. He takes his wife across the lake to the city but cannot carry through the plan. The young couple rediscover their love for one another and spend a happy day in the city. On the trip home however, a storm blows up, the boat is capsized, and the wife is lost. The city woman, assuming that her plan has succeeded, goes to the house of the man who is nearly insane with grief and anger. He is choking her to death when word comes that his wife is safe. The city woman leaves and the man and wife continue their life together.

A motion picture telling such a story is bound to be a psychological melodrama. But in the hands of Fred W. Murnau, this story is told with such striking simplicity that it has the universal appeal of a fable. The film has a lyric quality which has rarely been achieved in moving images. And the camera which focuses almost exclusively on the young peasant and his wife is less concerned with the objective events of the story than with the meaning of the events to these two human beings.

A high tribute to the artistry of this film is the pervading naturalness and simplicity. For, although Murnau deliberately created a simple folk tale, he simultaneously has shown us the tremendously complicated human motivations and the subtle moods which lie behind the actions of even the most simple people. The postures and movements of the actors, the varying pace as the story unfolds, the lighting, the camera movement, and, above all else, the relationship of the central characters to the ever-moving backgrounds in which they are pictured have all been employed as means for helping us to share and understand the human emotions which are dramatized in this film.

Thus, Murnau was not content to characterize the peasant (as Sudermann did) as a boorish, overbearing and somewhat cunning man whom one can readily imagine capable of murdering his wife. Instead, the peasant in the film is pictured as an essentially simple, hard-working young man who loves his wife and child. By so doing, Murnau has given his central character greater universality; but, at the same time, he has raised the interesting

psychological question of how it is possible for such a man to agree to murder his wife. In the opening sequences, Murnau sets out to provide the answer by detailing with remarkable cinematic skill and artistry the nature of the man's relationship to the city woman.

Under a low full moon, the man is seen moving slowly through the mists of the dark meadows to a rendezvous with the city woman. The camera slowly follows him, then moves on past him to a clump of willows, and finally on through the willow branches to reveal a clearing where waits the city woman, dressed in a tight-fitting black gown, sophisticated, bored, twirling a flower in her hand. As she hears the man approaching, she hurriedly powders her nose; then she looks expectantly toward the camera as he comes toward her, and they embrace and kiss fiercely.

In the scene which follows, the city woman suggests that the man murder his wife. He is horrified, grabs her by the throat, and almost strangles her. As he gets up to leave, she comes after him. He tries to fight her off, but she holds him by the neck and then by the hair as she finally succeeds in kissing him passionately on the face, and then on the mouth. They drop to the ground; and bending over him with more kisses, she tells him, "Leave all this behind—come to the city." In large type, the words are repeated: **"COME TO THE CITY."**

Crucial to an understanding of the entire story is the rising emotional climax of the man's seduction by the city woman; and this is reproduced by the succession of carefully selected and combined background images, as well as by the actions of the players themselves. The sequence begins with what Lewis Jacobs has well described as a mood of "quiet sensuality. . . . [in which] The overhanging mists, the dew, the full moon, the sinuous and constant movement of the camera—all combined to create a dark, somnolent mood."[2] But this mood prevails only in the first part of the sequence. When the siren whispers in his ear that he should murder his wife, the scene becomes one of violent anger; and

[2] *The Rise of the American Film* (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1939), 363.

this mood, in turn, is transformed by the city woman into one of violent sexuality.

This last mood is accomplished, in part, when she forces him to submit to her kisses and is carried further up a rising scale of sexual excitement by the images (presumably of her creation) on the screen which suggest the excitement of city life. As the meadow behind them dissolves into a travel shot of a large city square at night filled with moving traffic, the couple appear to move into the center of the square, and eventually fade from sight as the whole screen pictures a succession of rapid travel shots. Whereas in the opening of the sequence the camera moves slowly and sensuously, now it moves rapidly and with abandonment in long breath-taking and dizzying strokes, peering down glittering streets and finally climbing recklessly up the side of tall buildings to take in the sky line of the metropolis alive with moving searchlights. The sexual significance of the dance-band and dance-hall images which follow is implicit: the dance-band leader with his back to the camera dominates the screen (the man who calls the tune and sets the pace for the dancers) while to his right, the screen features the dance floor with its scattered dancers; and this entire image moves in a circular fashion toward him as if gyrating to the wild music of his band.

But the movements of the dance-band images which next fill the entire screen are at an even higher pitch of excitement and are still more clearly sexual in their kinesthetic meaning. All of the musicians rise up and down in unison on the stressed beat; and, in the interim, they sway in unison from side to side. The sexual significance of this rhythmic pattern is once more related to the man and city woman when they reappear on the lower half of the screen where the woman is revealed on her knees doing a wild orgiastic dance to the music of the band. As the band fades from view, the city woman has obviously aroused the man into taking an active role as her sex partner. There immediately follows a blurry long shot of the village as seen from over the lake, with the full moon just begining to pass behind a cloud. By means

of its total imagery, this shot suggests the exquisite sensation of intense sexual pleasure (which, as suggested by this diffuse long shot, blurs awareness of objective reality); and, at the same time, it symbolically suggests the imminent climax of passion (as the moon starts to pass behind a cloud). But even more telling is the contrast between the hazy beauty of this long shot of the village and the dark ugliness of the following close-up which shows the matted bulrushes to reveal where the pair have lain together. Further, as the camera pans slowly a little to the left, the deep mud close by is revealed; and the camera follows their footprints through the mire until her high-heeled, patent-leather shoes come into view. Then, the camera tilts up to take in her black figure gathering together the rushes with which he is to save himself after drowning his wife. In these two successive shots, Murnau has contrasted the pure beauty of intense sexual feeling with the dark cold ugliness of the return to realities which follow when, passion spent, the man is left to face the meaning of his act.

This seduction sequence makes possible our understanding how such an essentially simple and boyish person could agree to murder his wife. The nature of the man's relationship to the city woman is clearly suggested by visual analogy in the early part of the sequence—before the murder of the wife has been proposed. From a view of the lovers, the film cuts to show the young wife seeking solace at the bedside of her child whom she holds on her arm and kisses. In the succeeding image, the city woman is holding the man on her arm as she kisses his face and neck, while he (in a comparable position to the child in the previous picture) lies back smiling. By this association of images, the relationship between the city woman and the man is defined: she, the worldly-wise woman, is as the mother; and he, as the child.

Also from the seduction sequence, we learn that this woman is sexually the active aggressor rather than a mere temptress. She has just suggested that he murder his wife, yet he allows himself to be seduced and thus commits himself to her and to her plan for murder. They have lain together on the rushes in the mud, the

picture tells us; and he has become as cruel as she, for he has accepted her and is wedded to her and what she stands for. He feels guilt toward his wife, but he is bound by an even greater guilt to the city woman—the shared guilt of a sex act which has committed him to murder—which is made clear when we see him for the first time following his seduction. Gathering the rushes, the city woman turns to him and says, "After the boat has capsized, save yourself with these bulrushes. The rushes will hold you up—scatter them before you reach the shore and tell everyone she drowned by accident." (Throughout this scene, the man stands passive, his hands thrust into his pockets, his back to the camera, his shoulders hunched over in the depressed and somehow bestial posture, which remains characteristic of him until later when his resolution breaks, and he finds himself unable to carry through the city woman's plans.) The rushes are now symbolic both of the death plan for the wife and of the act of infidelity, two secrets which the man shares with the city woman.

Bearing the bundle of rushes, the man returns home and stealthily enters the barn. About to hide the rushes, the man is nosed by the horse and is so greatly startled that we become aware of how acute is his feeling of guilt. As he covers the bundle carefully with canvas, pressing it down out of sight with both hands, something in his manner and gesture suggests that in his own mind he is already hiding the dead body of his wife.

That the man's guilt centers upon this bundle of rushes is brilliantly suggested in his manner of awakening the next morning. In sleep, he moves slightly and turns his face toward the camera. Then his eyes abruptly open, and in sudden panic he sits bolt upright on the edge of the bed, his eyes wide with terror. There is a quick cut to a shot in which the camera moves in very quickly toward the bundle of rushes, now half-revealed as they lie under the canvas, and brings them into sharp focus in a close-up. Again we see his startled face, as he throws back the comforter and peers more closely. Realizing he has been dreaming, the man relaxes, puts his head down on his hands, and covers his eyes.

The camera's rapid truck in on the bulrushes, bringing them from a blurry to a clear focus, reproduces the startled sensation of awakening and carrying the fearful vision of a dream over into reality; and the man's reactions indicate the weakening sensation of relief which follows. More than this, we realize fully the man's great guilt as he awakens in horror to the thought that the rushes have been uncovered.

But Murnau uses still other means to show the man's acceptance of the city woman's plan to murder his wife. The very image of the murder which the man carries in his mind is the one originally supplied by the city woman. During their rendezvous in the field, the woman had first asked, "Couldn't she get drowned?"; and the caption dissolved into a picture of the husband standing in the boat and pushing his wife into the water. This image makes specific the woman's plan as her words urge him, "Then overturn the boat, it will look like an accident." Later when the man thinks of the plan to which he has become partner, this same image reappears and makes plain that *her* thought is dominating him.

Even more explicitly, the following morning the man weeps with remorse as he looks out through the doorway at his young wife feeding the chickens; and the ghost image of the city woman appears behind him, her hands going around him as she presses him close and kisses him. He averts his face, and her image dissolves, but now again, she appears below him, smiling, her lips lifted to his, inviting a kiss. At the same time, a large close-up of her, kissing his hair, appears behind him. The size of this close-up, a ghost image which takes up almost a third of the screen, suggests the overpowering influence of her presence. He presses his clenched fists against his temples, and the images slowly fade.

Throughout the entire first portion of the film, we see a man in deep conflict. This is perhaps most vividly summarized in a single close-up shortly after he has asked his wife to go across the lake with him to the city. She gaily makes preparations for the journey, obviously convinced that this is a gesture of reconcilia-

tion. Then there is a close-up of the man's hands as they move down slowly and deliberately around the bundle of rushes, like hands around the neck of a victim who is about to be strangled. His hands lift the bundle up slowly, and the camera tilts up to reveal his face, taut and glassy-eyed. The grim gesture in relation to the symbolic bundle of rushes makes clear that although he feels impelled to go through with the murder of his wife, he feels deep rage toward the city woman; and it is she, rather than his wife, whom he would really like to murder (for when the city woman first suggested the murder, he attempted to choke her; and later, at the close of the film, when he believes his wife to be lost, he does in fact almost murder her in this fashion). Yet there appears to be no way out, no way to resolve the conflict. The depth of his resultant depression is suggested by his stooped posture, his sluggish walk, his unshaven and generally unkempt appearance, his dark brooding countenance, and his complete self-absorption which sets him apart from all that goes on around him.

In all of this, Murnau demonstrates an intuitive understanding of the dynamics of personality. But *Sunrise* raises and convincingly answers the even more amazing psychological question of how a woman can accept and forgive her husband after he has planned to murder her. To begin with, the man and wife are shown to be simple peasant people, and their life together has been a good one. We catch a glimpse of this early in the film when the servant tells of what their life was like before the coming of the city woman: "They used to be like children . . . carefree . . . happy. . . ." And in a brief flashback, we see the man plowing the field while the wife and child sit under a tree close by; then he stops his work to play with the child. Clearly, this young couple loved one another and enjoyed life together prior to the arrival of the city woman.

But the real answer to the question is to be found in the characterization of the wife as a gentle, loving, and genuinely happy woman. Above all else, her womanly qualities of tenderness and compassion are repeatedly emphasized—as she weeps and fondles

the baby after her husband has left her to meet the city woman, as she lovingly covers her sleeping husband and gently strokes his brow the following morning, and as she tenderly stoops to feed the baby chicks and shows kindness toward the dog.

Actually in the wife, Murnau has created an image of pure goodness, just as in the city woman his creation is one of evil. Never for one moment is there a shadow of jealousy, anger, or even resentment in this woman whose husband has not only been unfaithful, but has planned her murder. Yet so great is Murnau's skill and understanding as a master of character that we do not resent this perfection in the wife; in fact, we are scarcely aware of it. For he has succeeded in making this image of human perfection completely real and understandable by combining mature serenity and compassionate understanding with childlike innocence and simplicity. There is no trace of righteousness in this woman; indeed, her goodness appears like the innate goodness of an essentially happy child.[3] Although she is pictured as a mother, the wife appears to rely upon the servant who cares for the child. Indeed, the wife herself often seems to be like a child; for example, her appearance on the night of her husband's seduction: she is sleeping in the moonlight, and the long shot of the bedroom makes her seem small and childlike.

The wife's complete trust and reliance upon her husband is the key which makes her behavior appear believable. To her husband's infidelity and his attempt to kill her, she responds like a child whose trust in an adult has been broken; when he leaves her for another woman, she is heartbroken; when he attempts to murder her, her first reaction is one of fear and withdrawal, then of grief. These are the reactions of a child who feels his security completely bound up in an adult and who feels hopelessly incapable of doing anything to free himself from the relationship. Yet in the process of reconciliation, the wife shows a maturity and

[3] The concept of the innate goodness of children is one that predates our knowledge of personality development based on psychoanalysis. However, it remains a myth which our culture finds difficult to relinquish and which Murnau utilized in his creation of this character.

understanding which do not appear in the least inconsistent with what has gone before.

As the man and wife set out on their journey across the lake, an incident occurs which foreshadows the events to come. The dog, barking loudly, wants to follow them. (Perhaps the animal has sensed something wrong in the man's dark mood.) He breaks his chain, jumps the fence, and swims toward the boat. The wife wants to turn back at once; but the husband, with his hard and distant mood, turns a deaf ear to her pleas. (What is the suffering of a dog to a man who is about to drown his wife?) Only after the wife helps the animal into the boat does the husband turn back, unwillingly. As he walks the dog up the little hill back toward the kennel, the wife looks after him with troubled eyes. Now fully aware of his dark mood, she starts to rise as if to get out but soon relaxes, smiling a little at her own doubts; then sitting there with the rippling water filling the screen behind her, she begins to look genuinely frightened and again starts to rise. But the man comes down the path; and the wife, looking small and alone, sits back again in the stern of the boat. A moment later, they are pulling away from the shore—his body crouched over the oars, his dark face lowered, his thoughts centered within himself.

When they reach the center of the lake, the man rows more and more slowly and finally stops altogether. The wife leans forward toward him, her eyes wide with fear. He puts first one then the other oar into the boat and moves toward her, his hands hanging apelike by his sides, his face cruel, hard, and determined. The wife draws back in terror, then, as his figure looms over her, pleads for mercy. A close-up of his two hands outstretched as if about to throw her overboard is followed by a pan shot of his arms thrown in a sudden gesture across his face; the awful moment has come and gone, and his resolution is broken. Quickly he steps back and frantically rows toward the shore, as she sits in the stern, her face covered with her hands. A rapid series of brief shots spell out the empty moments as, head down, he rows desperately with increasing speed, and as numbly she sits with her hands covering her

face. Neither looks at the other, but as the boat hits the shore, he moves toward her and makes a gesture to help her out of the boat. Suddenly activated by fear of her husband, she rushes past him, jumps onto the shore, and runs away while he, calling and pleading, follows her.

The sequence of the trolley ride into the city with its series of long unbroken shots is one of the most volubly expressive passages of the entire picture. The interminable agony of these two human beings huddled on the platform of the trolley—she numb and remote, drawn as far away from him as possible, he mute and miserable beside her—is more acutely felt because of the landscape which flows endlessly past the windows. Following its winding track, the trolley carries them along the edge of the lake (where, as if in mute reference to what has gone before, a lone boat is seen out on the water), through the woods, into the outskirts, and finally into the very center of the city itself. Despite the gradually increasing activity around them, they remain unseeing until the trolley comes to a stop at the end of the line in the middle of a wide city square.

In the city, the camera follows the couple as each moment brings them a little closer to that moment of understanding which is the rebirth of their love for one another. The simplicity, the subtle beauty with which this is achieved on the screen is difficult to describe in words. The dangers of moving traffic, the impersonality of the crowds, the strangeness of the city places—all help to draw them together as he protects and guides her through the streets. Filled with remorse, he tries to reassure her of his love; but though she accepts the food and flowers which he offers her, his kindness only makes her weep the more. Finally they go into a church where a wedding is taking place. Seated in one of the rear pews, they listen together as the wedding vows are taken. "Keep her and protect her from all harm," the minister tells the groom, and the husband too is finally able to weep. "Wilt thou love her?" the minister asks; the groom nods solemnly. And the husband, tears falling, gropes blindly for his wife's hand and puts

his head down on her lap, as she caresses and strokes his head. Now she guides him (as he guided her when she wept) out of the pew to the side aisle. In the corridor of the church, they are shown standing together, her arms about him, his face hidden on her shoulder. He drops to his knees, hiding his face against her. A close-up shows her stroking his hair, and he raises his face to ask, "Forgive me." In answer, she kisses his brow. There follows a close-up of two bells in the church tower, swinging in alternate directions, yet tolling together. The man is weeping now in relief, and she kisses his cheek. He smiles, and she, smiling also, gently turns his face toward her (out of shadow and into light) and kisses him tenderly on the mouth. There follows now a huge close-up of the two bells tolling in unison, ringing out the joy of new love and the harmony of human understanding.

The reconciliation of this husband and wife is one of the most moving stories ever told on the screen, and it is told almost entirely visually. (There are only half a dozen titles in this entire portion of the film—from the time when the man sees he cannot go through with the murder until the scene just described.) So well are these two human beings portrayed that at no moment is there any doubt as to what they are feeling. Their emotions are expressed not only in their carriage, movements, and facial expressions, but by the telling way in which they are pictured in relation to the scene around them. In addition to the examples already given, we have them leaving the church and walking out into the square, unaware of the traffic around them. The background itself dissolves to express their subjective attitude toward reality, for they are seen to be walking dreamily through a meadow full of flowers which indicates that they have returned once more to the country scenes in which they first fell in love. But it is of supreme importance that each successive stage of the reconciliation is pictured at considerable length. We do not sense briefly, but instead observe over a period of time and in some detail the full expression of each feeling and attitude; and thus, we ourselves become fully steeped in the subtly changing moods

of these two people. Furthermore, this slowness of pace allows time for us to absorb the deeper meanings implicit in the physical posture and movements of the actors. For example, early in the reconciliation sequence, the wife looks into her husband's face as she accepts the flowers which he offers her and then weeps into them. We cannot help but be aware (though perhaps unconsciously) that the wife is holding these flowers exactly as a mother cradles a baby in her arms. By his direction, Murnau time and again subtly suggests the thought behind even the simplest act and gesture.

Naturally for a contemporary movie audience, *Sunrise* moves at a much slower pace than today's sound films. But if the observer adjusts himself to this pace at the beginning of the picture, he will be rewarded except possibly for a few individual scenes in which the actors' motions have been slowed down to the point of tedium, to detract from rather than add to the sense of reality. However, the artistry of this film is so great that even in such scenes, Murnau's intention may well have been to create deliberately a partial sense of unreality. For example, in the tense moments when the husband walks toward the wife in the stern of the boat, his actions are so slow that they appear almost as slow-motion photography; and his posture and movements are therefore exaggerated so that they become strange and unnatural. A sense of the unbelievable actually happening before our eyes was undoubtedly exactly what Murnau was aiming for to make this moment appear like some strange nightmare. Today, however, the sense of the unbelievable goes beyond what Murnau intended; therefore, the effect he desired is not wholly achieved, possibly because the contrast in pace intended in this scene has been heightened further by the conditioning our eyes have been given during the intervening years through a much faster tempo of movement on the screen.

Perhaps the most remarkable thing about this motion picture is the fluidity of its images, which flow freely from objective to subjective realities and back without any break in continuity. For

example, after the man leaves the city woman and returns home, he is shown lying on his bed and looking toward his wife (and toward the camera) who is sleeping nearby. He continues staring in horror toward her, and slowly water begins to appear on the lower rim of the screen, gradually flooding it completely and obliterating all else but his outstretched figure. He appears to be completely surrounded by the rippling water, while his eyes remain open in the same fixed expression of horror. Then gradually his figure is obliterated by the water; and, as the morning sun catches the ripples, the camera pans up to reveal the shore line of the town shrouded in the morning mist; and this is followed by a picture of his wife, standing in the morning light, looking down on him as he sleeps.

In addition to the complete fluidity of images, this segment also illustrates another characteristic of the entire motion picture—the richness of meaning inherent in the images. The image of the man staring in horror toward his wife is seen sufficiently long for us to grasp what he is thinking. Then, as the water begins to appear at the bottom of the frame, we feel from the image itself how this thought (of the drowning) slowly hems him in and finally surrounds him until he loses consciousness in sleep (as suggested by the obliteration of his figure beneath the water itself). The image has symbolic meaning also, for we see it is he (rather than his wife) who is drowning—he is being lost because of his acceptance of the city woman's plan for murder, just as he was lost once he submitted to her sexual advances. Indeed in this image, Murnau again links the murder plan and the seduction, for the image of the man's outstretched figure being gradually surrounded and finally submerged by the rippling water is also symbolic of the sex act which sealed his acceptance of the murder plan. And this same image may be interpreted as having future reference as well, for the waters which, in this scene, shut off his sight of his wife, are, we are told, the waters of the lake near the village—the same waters into which he will peer hopelessly, after hours of search, believing that she is forever lost to him.

Murnau's method of cinematic expression in much of the film is unique. As in the seduction sequence and others, the walk of the married couple into the center of the square outside the church conveys its meaning not by relating one completely fresh image to the next, but by retaining an image of the person (or people) and by slowly dissolving the background so as to make it expressive of the thought or mood of the person being shown. In some instances, the image of the person also dissolves into a mood picture which occupies the entire screen. Here, the step back to objective reality is taken by a brief intermediate one of the reappearance of the individual whose thought is being portrayed. This figure appears before the mood background disappears and before the original scene is reaffirmed. Thus both the objective situation and the emotions or thoughts of the person being shown are visually interpreted, and continuity between them is unbroken. So, Murnau's film moves with ease from the act itself to the unconscious idea behind it, from the reality in which a character finds himself to his concurrent fantasy, and back once more to reality with complete freedom—all of which suggests again and again the depths which lie beneath the surface of human behavior.

Murnau uses other cinematic means for communicating the thoughts of his characters. For example, when a character speaks of a past or anticipated event, Murnau pictures it, and always in such a way that he distinguishes it from the immediate events of the story itself. For example, to represent a remembered scene (as when the servant recalls the happy days of the young couple), he slightly blurs the focus in order to contrast the vague quality of recollection with the more precise vision of reality. Or to picture a plan of action which is told by one person to another (as when the city woman outlines her plan of murder to the man), Murnau records the action in slow-motion which helps show that the act is one of passion rather than careful design. One of the remarkable things about all of these devices is that they are natural to the style of *Sunrise* and are consequently accepted without conscious realization that they are in any way unusual.

In this connection, and purely from a pictorial standpoint *Sunrise* is one of the most beautiful motion pictures ever made. Close study reveals that the composition of each shot in relation to the motion to be photographed within it must have been planned in advance and executed with great care. Unforgettable for their sheer beauty in composition and expressive motion are such pictures as that of the wife, framed in the doorway. As she makes the simple gesture of stooping down to feed the baby chicks gathered around her, a feeling of womanly tenderness is captured in an image of lasting beauty. Another memorable moving image is the city woman's view of the village street from her bedroom window, as the peasants with their lanterns begin to gather for the night search on the lake.

Fred W. Murnau was a true motion-picture artist. Perspective, composition, action, balance of motion within the frame, and lighting were all fully conceived in advance and were carefully worked out on the set before anything was recorded on film. All of the sets for *Sunrise* were built with the perspective of the camera in mind. For example, the ceilings of the interiors slanted downward, walls converged slightly toward the back of the set, and floors slanted slightly. Yet, as seen through the eyes of the camera, the interiors appear only to have unusual depth.[4] Those who worked with Murnau state that he was an artist who knew always exactly what he wanted and tirelessly aimed to achieve it.

Murnau expresses meaning frequently by means of subtle symbolism. The reeds which symbolize the man's act of infidelity as well as his acceptance of the city woman's plan for murder play a particularly ironic role in the closing portion of the film. After their reconciliation, the young couple spend a happy day in the city, sharing many small adventures. They sail home by moonlight, deeply content in their new love. But as they near home a sudden severe storm blows up. The man remembers the bulrushes which he had surreptitiously hidden in the prow of the boat and with which he had intended to save himself. Now he

[4] This effect, known as "forced perspective," obviously requires that the camera on such a set be placed only in one position and remain stationary in photographing the action.

manages to tie the rushes with a rope to his wife's back as she clings to him in helpless terror.[5] A moment later the mountainous waves sweep over them both, and the boat is capsized. The man is washed ashore, but the wife is lost.

During the search which follows, the bundle of rushes plays an important and pictorially dramatic part. Summoned from their beds by the husband, the men of the village leave in their small boats to search the lake. We see a long shot of the dark water as from the top right corner of the frame the body of the wife, supported by the bundle of bulrushes, floats on the tide downward to the lower left of the frame. The search continues, and the husband leans far out over the prow of one of the boats, his lantern almost dipping into the dark water, as he calls her name repeatedly into the night. Again, we see the wife's body move silently through the water across the frame. But this time a trail of rushes marks her path for one bundle has scattered, and her head is slowly being submerged. This trail of rushes comes into the light of the husband's lantern, and we see his horror-struck face. There is a beautiful and dramatic close-up of his lantern held over the dark water as a bunch of the rushes which support her wet shawl move into its light, followed by another bunch containing the rope. Again, we see a close-up of his horror-struck face, then, a shot of the old man at the oars who, after looking toward the husband at the prow, silently removes his hat and bows his head. Now the husband collapses, and one of the men comes to help and comfort him.

Thus, to the end, the rushes remain symbolic of the man's betrayal of his wife. The outcome—or what appears to be the outcome when the search is abandoned—is exactly as the man and the city woman had planned: he has been saved, the wife has been drowned, and the villagers accept it as an accident. But the meaning of these events to the man himself has now been completely altered by intervening happenings: whereas before he wished his

[5] By associative image, the film underscores his protective role by picturing next the terrified child at home clinging to the servant who holds the babe in her arms as she looks out of the window at the pouring rain and lightning.

wife dead so that he could go away with the city woman, now he wants his wife alive; whereas before he desired the city woman, now he is certain that he loves only his wife. He must suffer not only the anguish of her death, but the horrible guilt of knowing that only a few hours ago he had wished for it.

There are innumerable other instances of the use of symbolism throughout this film. For example, the flowers offered by the man to the wife after they leave the restaurant have a double meaning: flowers are an expression of love not only for the living, but for the dead. Symbolically they are an appropriate offering: they remind us (and her) that he had wished her to be dead; and, at the same time, they express his present feelings of love toward her. Also the two bells in the church tower ringing out together are expressive of the harmony and joy that the man and wife are feeling together; they are the wedding bells which mark their reconsecration to one another.

Meaning in *Sunrise* is also frequently communicated by establishing significant contrasts, either within a given image or by contrasting a mood or circumstance to an earlier one which occurred in the same setting. For an example of contrasting a character and his background in a given image in order to heighten our awareness about the mood of the character we see the husband, his head lowered over the oars in dark brooding, against the lake which glitters brightly in the sunlight. Similarly, the city woman, with her sophisticated clothes, her affected manner of walking, etc., appears in striking contrast among the simple peasant folk. This latter contrast is seen in reverse in the barbershop and ballroom scenes when the man and wife with their quaint country dress and manners mingle with city people. For contrast of mood in the same setting, we have the gay mood of the young couple as they board the trolley to return home, for this cannot be seen without recalling the agony which marked their trolley ride into the city. Nor can the husband's grief as he enters the bedroom and passes his wife's empty bed be seen without recalling his earlier entrance after his seduction by the city woman. These contrasts

in mood are strongly felt not only because they occur with the same people in the same setting, but also because the camera records the scene from exactly the same angle to intensify our unconscious awareness.

In any discussion of contrasting moods in *Sunrise,* the striking difference in feeling between the first and second portions of the film must be noted. Lewis Jacobs has written,

> . . . the first half was characteristically Murnau. . . . This half had a lyrical quality and was removed from the real world. . . . The second half, obviously suffering from Hollywood interference, was completely different. Its mood was realistic; the lyricism was dissipated by comic relief; the universality was destroyed by melodrama.[6]

The same contrast in the handling of the first and second portions of the film has been noted by many other critics, and most of them have similarly assumed that the shift was due to interference with Murnau's original purposes.

Actually, however, when we grasp the underlying theme of this film, no such interference is apparent. The mood which Murnau created in the first part of the film does indeed remove it from the real world, and this is exactly as Murnau had intended. He was picturing a situation of conflict which drew the man into a world where his real values and his normal perspective on his life had, through his infatuation with the city woman, been completely altered. A man obsessed, he moved in a strange and unreal world. This mood continues unbroken until the man finds himself unable to go through with the city woman's plan for murder, and at this moment the spell is broken. The period of reconciliation forms the transition to the second portion of the film, which Lewis Jacobs has correctly described as realistic. Now the man is no longer being driven by emotions which run counter to the main current of his life and remove him from reality into a strange and unreal world. From a man living in torment, he becomes once more himself, a simple peasant who is in love with his pretty wife. Consequently the entire mood and treatment become realistic. Notably, humor begins the moment the reconciliation has been

[6] *Op. cit.,* 362.

completed: outside the church, people line the walks awaiting the appearance of the bride and groom; but the peasant and his wife come out of the church, their arms entwined, oblivious of all around them, and make their way through the aisle of curious and amused onlookers. And as the pair, imagining themselves in a flowering meadow, walk out into the square, our smiles turn to laughter, especially when they find themselves embracing amid the confusion and hubbub of stalled traffic. Finally, reaching the curb in safety, they, themselves, laugh heartily—not only at the incident but in relief at being at long last in the fresh air of normalcy. Here, the realistic mood and treatment, with accompanying strains of humor and gaiety, begin and continue unbroken until the tragedy of the storm when the man is once more thrown back into the world of nightmare. And now reality itself appears to have taken on the shape of that nightmare. The return to the earlier mood is tremendously effective, since it reminds us that reality often does confront us with circumstances which seem to reflect and stir up our deepest conflicts, throwing us into a torment which mocks the normalcy of our more healthy emotions.

Thus, not only are the changes of mood from unrealistic to realistic and back again completely in keeping with Murnau's purpose, but they come about gradually and understandably in terms of what is happening to the characters. With truly remarkable insight, Murnau has used the peasant's familiar background of the village to heighten the sense of nightmare and the unfamiliar scenes of the city as a background for the naturalness and genuine feeling between the husband and wife. And, with the three central characters themselves, the contrast also in a sense becomes one between the simplicity and naturalness of country life on the one hand and the complexity and synthetic qualities of city living on the other. (This contrast is humorously underscored, for example, in the series of alternating shots which place the natural grace and simplicity of the man and wife in counterpoint to the pseudosophisticated manner of a city couple who are among the onlookers during the peasant dance in the ballroom.)

Although the realistic scenes of the city may not have the same lyricism of the earlier and final sequences of the film, they have a charm and warmth and reflect Murnau's sensitivity and understanding of people. Instead of detracting from the universality of the film, the sequences in the city add to it; for the two dominant moods of the picture, though in complete contrast, complement each other. They are "the bitter and the sweet" which Murnau refers to in his line of preface; they are what the modern psychiatrist might more accurately describe as the sharp difference of feeling which exists when we are dominated on the one hand by unconscious (socially unacceptable) drives, or on the other by conscious (socially acceptable) ones. That this contrast was Murnau's intent, rather than the result of interference from Hollywood, is borne out by the fact that Charles Rosher, Karl Struss, Frank Powolny, and others who worked with him on this picture all assert that Murnau worked entirely without studio interference of any kind and that the picture was, in every sense, one of his own making.[7]

The happy ending of *Sunrise* has also been marked by some critics as a Hollywood imposition. Some, among them the noted British critic Paul Rotha, apparently feel that the picture should have ended in tragedy, that the wife should have been drowned in the storm, leaving the man to face the bleakness of life without her. Such a point of view is in a way understandable since, except for the happy ending, *Sunrise* almost perfectly fulfills the definitions of tragedy outlined by Aristotle in his *Poetics*. To begin with, the man fits Aristotle's definition of a tragic hero, for he is "neither eminently virtuous or just, nor yet involved in misfortune by deliberate vice or villainy, but by some error of human

[7] Charles Rosher, who photographed *Sunrise,* was in Berlin with Murnau when the director worked out his plans for the picture. According to Rosher, the film was completely planned by Murnau before he came to this country. Even the sets for the picture were designed in Berlin. Murnau signed a contract with William Fox with the understanding that he would first make *Sunrise* and that he would be given a free hand in carrying out this picture. William Fox kept his word. He assigned a unit manager to handle the business details of the picture, but all final decisions on the production were made by Murnau himself. Charles Rosher reports that no one but himself, Murnau, Karl Struss (who was also responsible for some of the photography), and the film editor saw any part of the picture until it was completed.

frailty." Such a man is by far the best hero of a tragedy, Aristotle tells us, "for our pity is excited by misfortunes undeservedly suffered, and our terror, by some resemblance between the sufferers and ourselves." In this respect the man in *Sunrise* is an ideal hero, for his weakness, as dramatized in the film, is a universal one, existing in every human being to a greater or lesser degree. Actually, the man's weakness is inherent in his passive tendencies, his unconscious desire—existent in all of us to some degree—to be led, controlled, possessed, and perhaps even violated by someone stronger than himself. These tendencies are activated in his relationship to the aggressive and dominating city woman, and because of them she is able to seduce him into the idea of murdering his wife.

Tragedy in its highest form must also involve "discovery," according to Aristotle, "a change from unknown to known, happening between those characters whose happiness or unhappiness forms the catastrophe of the drama, and terminating in friendship or enmity." In the Greek tragedies, this meant the discovery of blood ties between two persons, either one or both of whom were unaware of the relationship. In a modern drama, it is appropriate that the revelation should be one of a psychological rather than purely physical sort. Thus does the man in *Sunrise* discover that his wife, whom he has agreed to do away with, is actually the woman he loves. This "discovery" by the man of an already existing fact (which one feels is understood and fully accepted by the wife from the beginning of the story) is beautifully and subtly dramatized in the early city sequences, and culminates in their reconsecration to one another in the church.

Another primary element of tragedy as defined by Aristotle is "revolution" which he describes as "a change . . . . into the reverse of what is expected from the circumstances of the action." This, indeed, is what occurs in *Sunrise* in the latter portion of the film. After a happy day in the city, the young pair plan to sail home by moonlight—"a second honeymoon." All is well between them, and one expects that they will return happily to their home and

that the city woman will be sent on her way. Just as on the trip across the lake to the city, we had a sense of impending danger, now by the very contrasting circumstances of the homeward journey, we are assured of a happy and safe return. But the reverse of what is expected happens. Thus the climax of the story involves "revolution" in the Aristotelian sense.

But inevitably in evaluating *Sunrise* in these terms, we come to the crucial matter of the happy ending itself. Now the modern idea of tragedy rests primarily on the question of whether the ending is happy or unhappy. This factor was not so important in the judgment of Aristotle who applied the term "tragedy" to many plays of high seriousness which ended happily (for example, Sophocles' *Philoctetes*). In defining what he regards as the "perfect" plot for tragedy, however, Aristotle does specify that "the change of fortune should not be from adverse to prosperous, but the reverse . . ." And it might be argued that had the wife been drowned *Sunrise* would have been in form almost a perfect Aristotelian tragedy. Such a fateful ending would even have met Aristotle's requirement of implied design, for the man in the end was forced to suffer by chance that which he had originally intended should happen. Since the artistry of this film is so great, and since it has been substantiated that Murnau completed his picture without interference of any kind, the question then arises as to why Murnau rejected an unhappy ending.

Before answering this question it may be well to point out that the short story on which the film is based did have a tragic ending. In the story, however, the man is drowned while his wife survives: he could have saved himself, but instead, in his efforts to save her life, he loses his own. This tragic ending appears to be completely correct for the story as it is developed by Hermann Sudermann, for in it the man is shown to be far more villainous than in the picture. Also in the short story, the man schemes over a long period of time with the woman (the servant in the household of the young peasant couple) and cold-bloodedly plans his wife's murder. Sudermann has the man redeem himself at the end by dying

in the act of saving his gentle wife. Through such an ending, good triumphs over evil: the good wife survives, the evil woman fails in her murder plan and loses the man, and the man proves himself essentially good through his act of sacrifice. Thus, Murnau had two possible tragic endings from which to choose. On the one hand, had the wife been drowned, the film could have provided the emotional catharsis found in the highest form of Aristotelian tragedy. On the other hand, had Murnau followed the original story more closely, the picture could have been a tragedy in the modern sense of the word, carrying with it a sense of finality, of heroic grandeur, of exaltation.

Actually, neither of these endings would have provided a convincing or satisfying conclusion for the motion picture which Murnau made, for his entire development of the story makes the ending which he chose the only possible one for this picture. Murnau rejected both these tragic endings because either one of them would have negated the film's underlying mood and theme and destroyed the remarkable unity of his work. For Murnau did not want to make us feel either purged of emotion (in the Aristotelian sense) or exalted (in the manner of the more modern tragedy). From his film in its entirety, he wanted above all else simply to make us feel the wonder of human relationships—the complex motivations which govern the lives of human beings (even the lives of a simple peasant and his wife), the nuances as well as the quiet depths of understanding which exist between a man and a woman who love one another, the subtle moods which color the days of our lives. *For the theme of the picture is that not events themselves, but their meaning to human beings and the use to which we put them is what matters.* This theme is inherent in the development of the story which writer Carl Mayer and director Murnau worked out together, and it accounts for the unusual cinematic techniques which Murnau used throughout in telling this story—techniques which, as we have already shown, made it possible for him to place primary emphasis throughout on the *meaning* of events to his central characters. This theme is

likewise borne out by the film's ending. Murnau shows how the man's affair with the city woman, even his attempt to carry through the city woman's plan for murder, brings the man and wife to a new awareness of their love for one another, thus enriching their lives. And, significantly, it is the bundle of reeds (symbolic of the man's infidelity and the murder plan) which the man uses to save his wife. By the end then, the reeds become the very means by which these two people are able to continue their life together.

Thus in *Sunrise,* Murnau tells us that good and evil are both part of living, that our mistakes and our suffering need not ruin us, but that what these events mean to us and what we do with them is what matters, for they may indeed become the very means by which our tomorrow may prove to be a better day. Life goes on, Murnau tells us, and bitter or sweet is essentially good, for there is always the promise of the sunrise and another day.

Gail Kubik's Score for *C-Man:* The Sequel

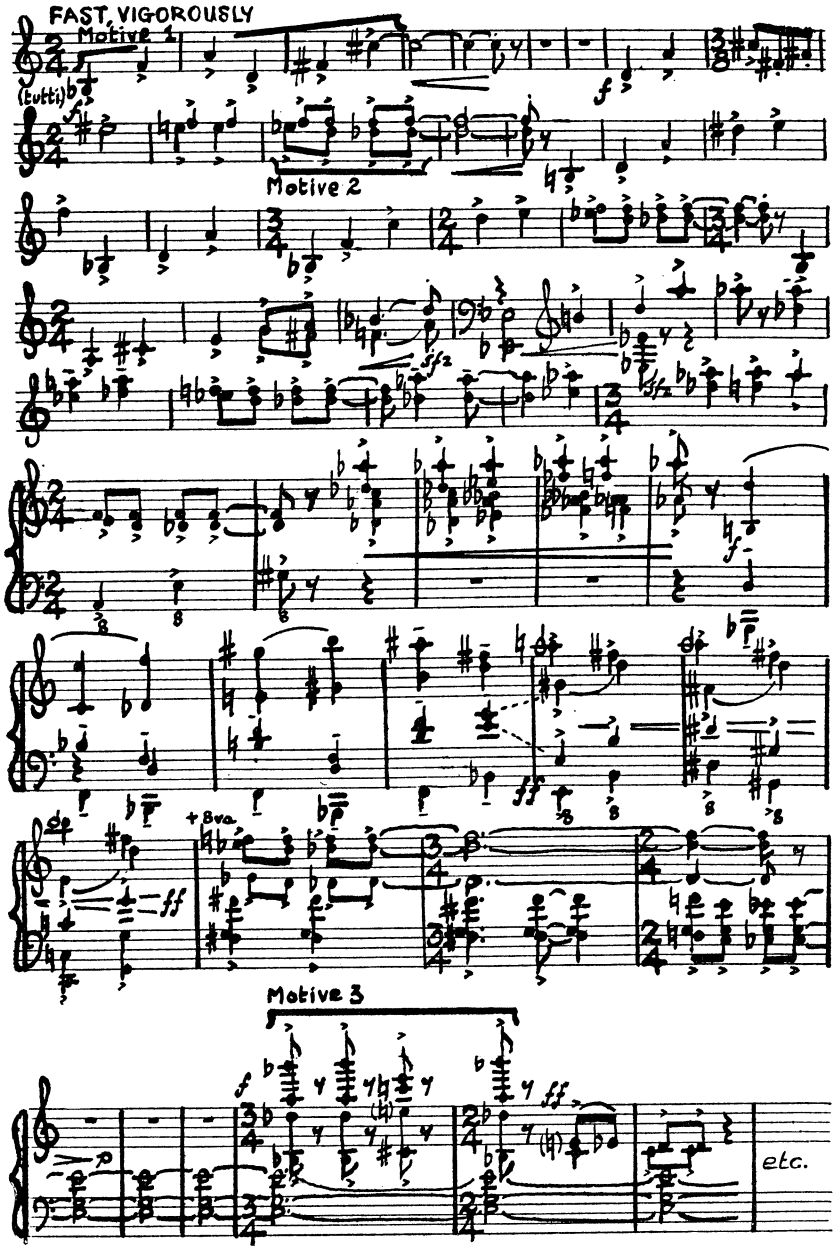
EVERETT HELM

EVERETT HELM, whose Piano Concerto was performed recently by the New York Philharmonic and Mitropoulos, has published articles in the *Saturday Review,* New York *Herald Tribune, Musical Quarterly, Musical America, Music Review,* and other journals. In addition to concert music in all major forms, Mr. Helm has written dramatic music for C.B.S.

GAIL KUBIK'S *Symphony Concertante*—which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in 1952—is based directly on his score for *C-Man* (Laurel Films Production, 1949), and provides an almost unique instance of musical adaptation. For a film score to be made into concert music is not so unusual. Many composers have done that—Copland's *Red Pony,* V. Thomson's *Plow that Broke the Plains,* etc.—but generally, they have made suites, using almost unchanged the most suitable sequences from the films' scores. Kubik's work, however, is entirely different. Instead of having compiled a series of excerpts from *C-Man,* he has refashioned the material into one of the thoroughly abstract forms of concert music—the symphony—in which the musical necessities and demands are of an entirely different order from those of a film score. A confrontation of the two scores, therefore, is of considerable interest in revealing the essential differences—particularly those of a formal nature—between effective film music and successful concert music. This comparison is of no less interest in revealing the points at which film- and concert-music requirements and techniques overlap. For in some instances, Kubik has transplanted, with only slight modification, entire sequences from *C-Man* into his *Symphony Concertante*—a procedure which suggests that certain parallel functions can exist in both the functional- and abstract-music forms.

The purpose of this article is to point out wherein these

Example 1



parallels and differences lie in relation to the two Kubik scores. The writer has made analyses of both scores, has relooked at the film, has listened to the recording of the *Symphony Concertante,* and has given considerable thought to the best method of setting forth his findings. One possible way to begin is with the conclusions: film music is thus and so and concert music so and thus, with references to the Kubik scores to support and illuminate his findings. Or, the more clinical approach could be used, in which the conclusions would be allowed to emerge from an analytical comparison of the two works. The latter procedure has been chosen as being the more fruitful. Since the film music has already been treated in the *Hollywood Quarterly,*[1] attention here will be concentrated on the *Symphony Concertante* and its relation to the film score.

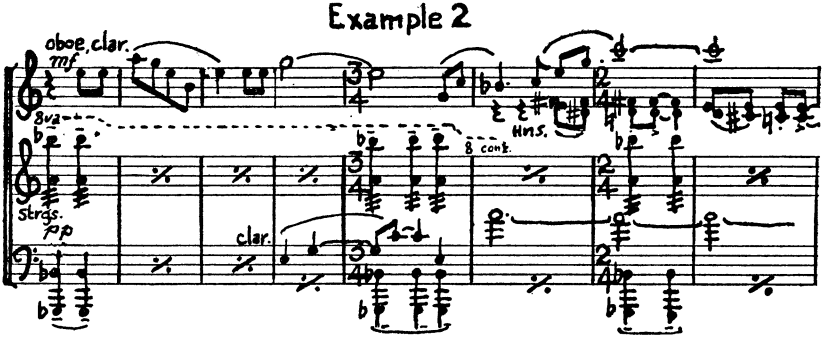
When Gail Kubik was commissioned by conductor Thomas Scherman to write a composition for the Little Orchestra Society of New York, the composer still had the music of *C-Man*—which he himself had just conducted and recorded—very much in his mind. According to Kubik, there were certain musical themes, ideas, and colors in his film score which he wanted to save from the likely oblivion of most films. Especially was he fascinated by the color contrasts offered by the piano, trumpet, and viola—contrasts that Kubik felt he had only begun to explore in the *C-Man* score. Similarly, Scherman was looking for a work which he could use to present in public performance the Little Orchestra's pianist, solo violist, and solo trumpeter. Scherman's Beethoven size orchestra differed radically from the unusual combination—clarinet, three horns, three trumpets, two trombones, percussion, piano, one viola, and one string bass—which Kubik had used for his film score; but this only added to the challenge presented by the reshaping of the *C-Man* ideas into an abstract concert work. Thus in the *Sympony Concertante,* trumpet, viola, and piano form the solo-concertante group; whereas, the orchestra consists of wood winds in twos (piccolo, bass clarinet, and contra bassoon

[1] Frederick W. Sternfeld, "Gail Kubik's Score for *C-Man,*" IV (Summer, 1950), 360–9.

doublings), two horns, one trumpet, one trombone, percussion (one player), and a small body of strings.

It should be said at the outset that, although the *Symphony Concertante* utilizes a large amount of material from the film score, there is no hint of this fact; so new is the musical context which surrounds that material. The *Sympony Concertante* gives completely the impression of being nondescriptive, concert music. Occasionally, however, it does have a dramatic character which

Example 2



may well be traceable to its origin as a piece of dramatic, functional music. An example of this is the opening which, since it reveals especially clearly Kubik's methods of adaptation and musical rethinking, will be considered here at some length. The work opens with a long passage of unison and two-voice writing that exposes and develops the two principal motives of the movement. These lead to a short third motive which appears again only at the very end of the movement (Example 1).

At bar 76, a shimmering ostinato figure is set up in flute and strings against which is heard a short, lyrical tune given to oboe and clarinet in unison. This ostinato is, in fact, a lightened version of the heavily pounded piano chords which start in bar 3 of the title music (Example 3); but it is now so far removed in spirit that the relationship seems almost fortuitous. The lyrical tune, though written for solo viola in the film, is note for note, the same in both scores (Example 2).

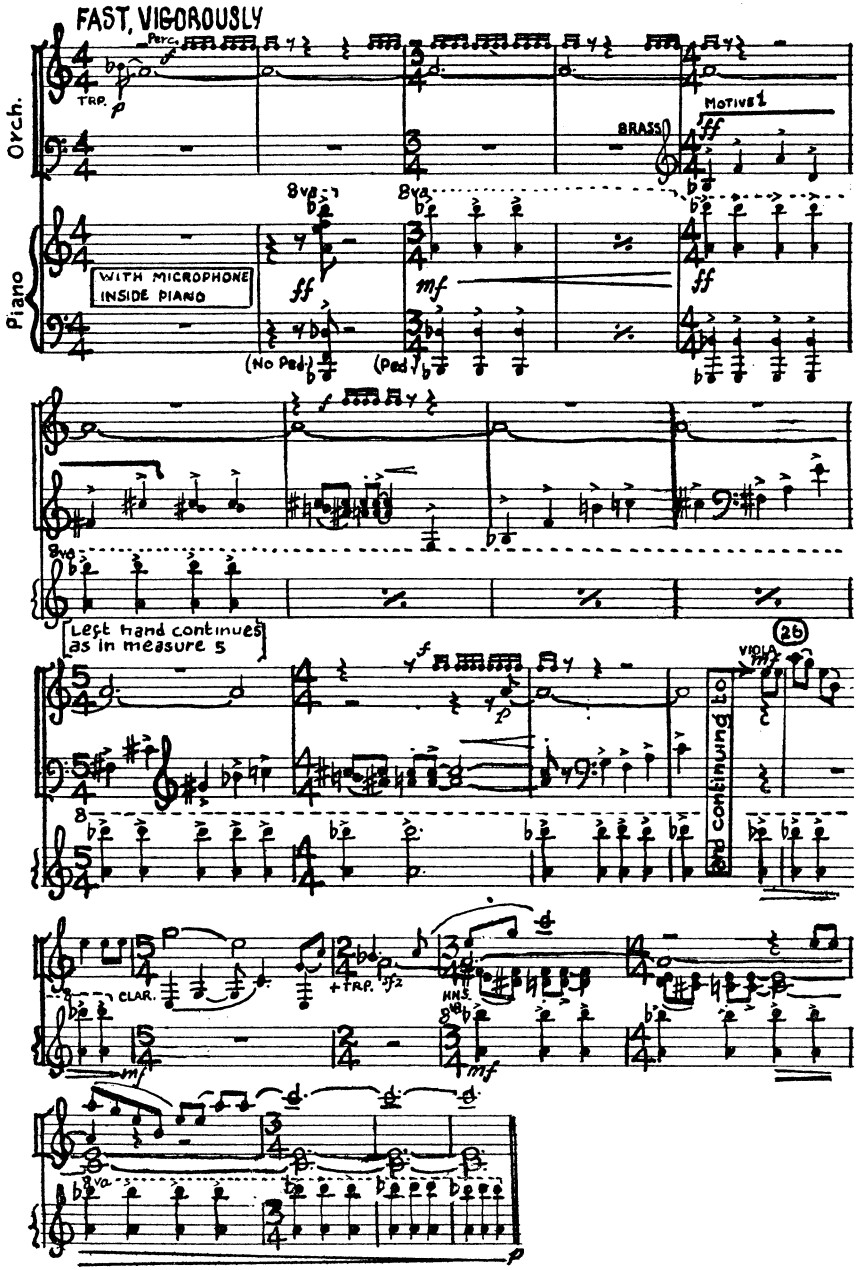
The entire introduction, then, is based on, and is an extension

of the title music of *C-Man*. Here, in reduced score, is the main-title sequence. Even to the eye, the difference in treatment of the same material is easily apparent (Example 3).

The first four bars of the title music are omitted in the *Symphony Concertante*. These four bars serve in the film, not only to set the mood and create immediate dramatic suspense, but also to delay for a few seconds the entry of the important title theme—in the event, as so often happens, the theater projectionist begins showing the film before the sound is full up. A device of this sort obviously has no place in the concert hall. Apart from this, however, we immediately notice the diametrically opposed techniques that are displayed in the handling of the material. In the film score, the purpose of the title music is to set a mood and hold it—in a sense, a primitive, direct, and skillful means. Immediately, the mood is established by shock treatment—brutal, savage writing, metrically regular, dissonant, and percussive chords suggesting hammer blows—plunging into a thick texture, into the tonal atmosphere of crime and violence which is maintained throughout the film. The piano (with the microphone placed *inside* the instrument) is the leading protagonist. It is powerful, strident music, in which little musical development takes place. As title music, it is enormously effective, gripping the listener and serving exclusively the needs of the film.

This same thematic material is stripped of all its dramatic and functional trappings when it appears in the *Symphony Concertante* (Example 1). Reduced to one melodic line, it is immediately subjected to variation and development (e.g., the bar of $\frac{3}{8}$ in the second statement of motive 1). For here, the purpose is not to give away the potentialities of the musical material, but to reveal them gradually as the work unfolds. Yet the bare theme in itself is striking and commands immediate attention as, indeed, a good theme must, be it in a symphony or a film. The texture, consistently thick in the title music, is spare here, even ascetic. Only gradually does the one- and two-voice writing give way to a fuller sound. The ominous pounding effect of the title music is

Example 3


FAST, VIGOROUSLY
Perc.
TRP.
Orch.
Piano
BRASS
MOTIVE 1
WITH MICROPHONE INSIDE PIANO
(No Ped.)
(Ped.)
8va
Left hand continues as in measure 5
VIOLA
26
CLAR.
+TRP.
HNS.

completely absent, and is replaced by a rhythmic structure that employs irregular phrases and frequently changing meters. Verbatim repetitions are confined to motive 2, which comes back at intervals like a refrain. The piano, so important in the title music, is entirely absent in the introduction.

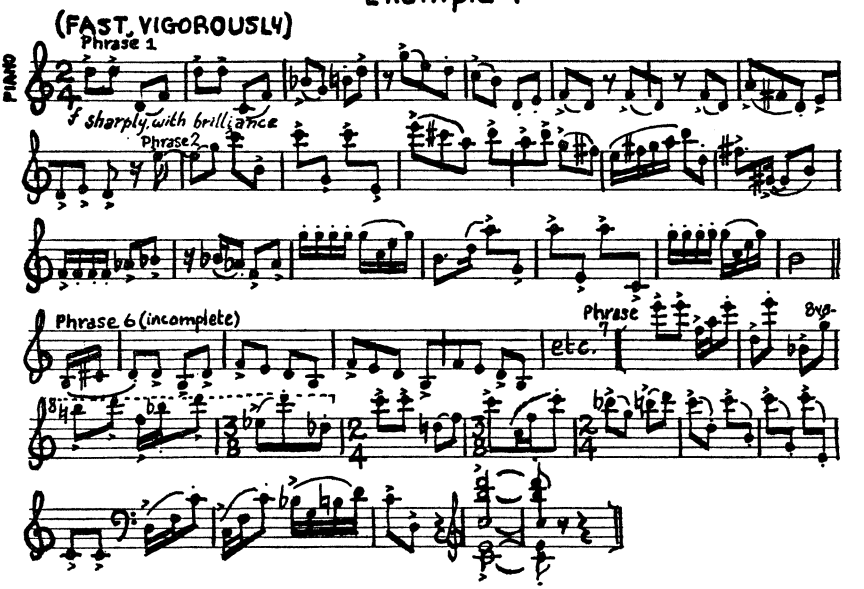
Needless to say, an inevitable difference between the film and concert versions has to do with the matter of time. The thirty-four bars of title music last exactly sixty seconds; the 105 bars of the introduction last one minute and forty seconds. (The first movement of the *Symphony Concertante,* containing 611 bars and with but two additional themes to those found in the introduction, lasts over eight minutes.) In the concert work, the composer was subject to no outside restrictions; the music was to have no purpose and no meaning outside itself; and the timing was a matter of sheer musical form.

In the film score, the lyrical viola tune which brings the title music to an end, (Example 3, measure 26) appears (at exactly 0:46 2/3) behind the film's dedication to the men of the Customs Service—hence, the C-man title. This tune provides the color and emotional change appropriate to a dedication; and it also serves formally as the device by which we are led easily, unconsciously, into the gay, pert little dance piece which accompanies the film opening of early-morning New York in fast montage. (Used in the last movement, this sequence will be discussed later.) In the *Symphony Concertante,* too, this lyrical tune, differently scored (Example 2), serves as a transition; though here, it leads to a long, driving, brittle piano solo which exactly balances in length the orchestral introduction. This transition in the film score is accomplished quickly in 13 1/3 seconds, and is emotionally, a drastic one—from a mood of nasty violence to one of bright extraversion. In the *Symphony Concertante,* on the other hand, the very same tune leads us to a section which is similar—emotionally at least—to that of the introduction, but thirty-six seconds are required to take us there. These two transitions clearly illustrate another difference between film and concert music: the film-

music form is apt to be primitive and direct as the organization of its melodic materials or its texture.

In the previously mentioned piano solo in the second section of the first movement, Kubik introduces for the first time new material—i.e., material not derived from *C-Man*. The orchestral introduction was based on short motives that were developed,

Example 4

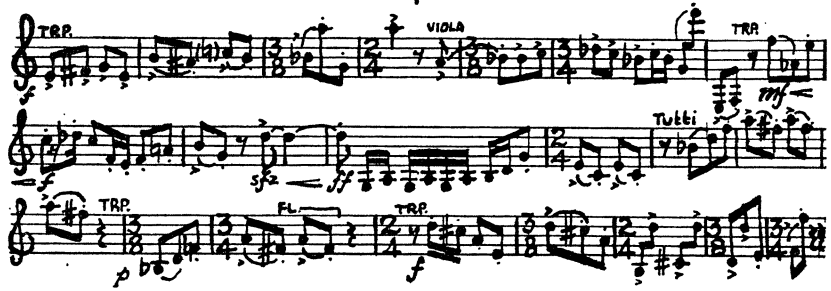


modified, extended, and varied; whereas, the piano-solo section consists of a long melody comprising many phrases, each of which is essentially different although some cross-references exist. Some of the more important phrases contained in the piano solo may be seen in Example 4. At the end of the piano solo, the viola and trumpet take the stage to engage in a long dialogue (bars 210–349) which is based on material that again has no relationship to the film score. After a statement for twenty-one bars of this dialogue tune (Example 5), the trumpet and viola commence a free variation of the material; and at this point (bar 233) the development section begins, in the course of which the orchestra becomes gradually more and more involved in the texture and fabric. In bar 349, the piano solo theme enters (Example 4), and

is played against motive 2 of theme I (Example 1) in the solo viola; at bar 381, a six-bar statement of this same motive 2 by the orchestra serves as a transition to, and frame for, the next major section of the movement.

In bars 387 to 473, Kubik has written some of the most fascinating music of the *Symphony Concertante.* Motive 2 of theme I (Example 1) and melodic fragments—echoes, one might almost say—of the long piano theme (Example 4) murmur mysteriously,

Example 5

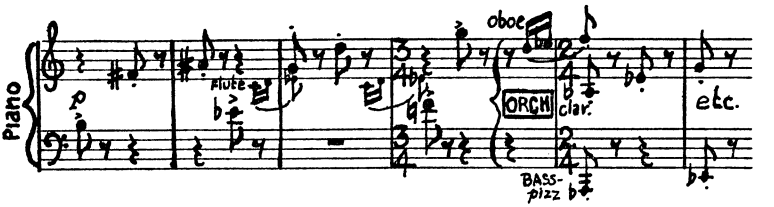


always double pianissimo, among the three solo instruments. Violins I and II enter "as soft as possible" with long-held notes which act as an adhesive. While the soloists continues to toss around their fragments against this cushion, bassoon and bass clarinet play the dialogue theme (Example 5). Throughout, the texture is extremely thin—the piano is used as a single line instrument which plays at the extreme top or bottom of its range. The effect is eerie. The composer himself says that he has tried to catch—"but in a diatonic way"—something of the same unreal, "white" quality of the scherzo movement of Berg's *Lyric Suite*—which Kubik describes as "maggot music."

This section is ended by a short tutti that corresponds to the orchestral frame which opened it. Immediately, a long orchestral crescendo gets under way, employing motive 1 of theme I and a counterpoint derived from phrase number 6 of the piano theme (Example 4). The crescendo is not only one of dynamics but of material as well; the texture gradually thickens and the theme I motive flowers. It is heard at first (Example 6) in single notes by

the solo piano; then, it is given in extended forms—first by clarinet, and then by the three solo instruments. The orchestra takes up the theme, even more extended, in canons that grow ever closer. The trumpet and viola develop the aforementioned counterpoint, while the solo piano pounds out insistently, as though determined to dominate the musical imbroglio, motive 2 of theme I. One complication is added to another until, at bar 564, the full orchestra takes up triumphantly phrase 6 of the piano theme, states it, finally, in its full length, and repeats it in

Example 6

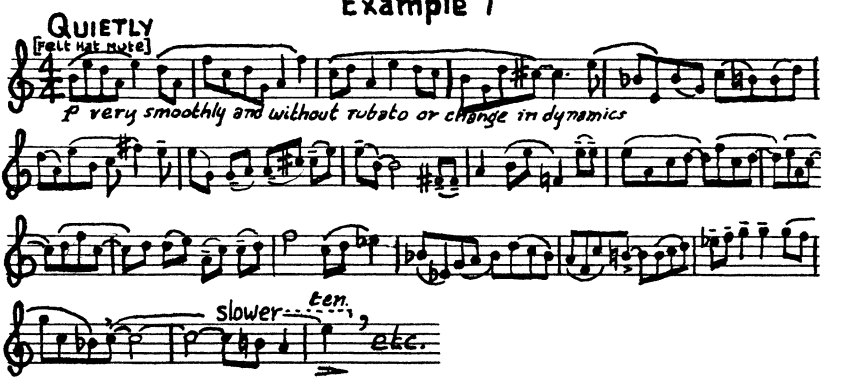


various extensions; meanwhile, the concertante group plays florid material that includes part of the dialogue theme (Example 5). Reaching the climax of the movement, orchestra and soloists state the seventh and last of the piano-theme phrases (Example 4) against which the horns are heard with motive 1 of theme I. At bar 601, the D-major tonic is reached; we hear, in solo piano pianissimo motive 3 of the introduction (Example 1); then, a II-V-I cadence, fortissimo, and the movement is ended.

A comparison of the second movement with the *C-Man* score is particularly interesting and rewarding. Here the entire material is taken from the film score and adapted in such ways as reveal Kubik's skill and originality in their fullest scope. The movement is striking—one of the composer's best inspirations. Even critics as frequently divergent in their tastes as Olin Downes and Virgil Thomson have both remarked on the power and originality of this movement. However, this sequence in the film is also highly original and extremely effective. To accompany a long scene in a passenger plane, during which a premeditated crime is committed in all secrecy, Kubik has compounded a score out

of four different sound tracks: (1) the hum of the airplane motor; (2) (the principal one) a long, endless trumpet melody; (3) the same melody staggered at a fraction of a second and then filtered through an echo chamber—which, when combined with track 2, imparts to the melody a strange fuzzy effect that disguises the trumpet timbre to the point of removing the instrument's identity; (4) brief, jerky statements recorded with normal acoustics by the balance of the orchestra of motive 1, theme I (Example

Example 7



1) to underscore the action inside the plane. According to the composer, the disguised trumpet melody was meant to convey a feeling of warmth and security inside the plane in flight—a kind of abstract, impersonal security as suggested by the seemingly endless nature of the tune. Equally important, perhaps, is the feeling of limitless space that this third track evokes through its constantly maintained quarter-note pulse, its unfluctuating *mezzo forte,* and, later on, its varied chromatic progressions within a relatively limited compass. Interesting to note, from the standpoint of film-music craftsmanship, is the composer's opinion that the hum of the motors (track 1) acts as the "harmony" behind the trumpet tune. The beginning of the trumpet melody can be seen in Example 7.

The ever-growing tenseness of the dramatic situation is supported in the film score by a long crescendo during which the orchestra, commenting directly on the action, becomes more and

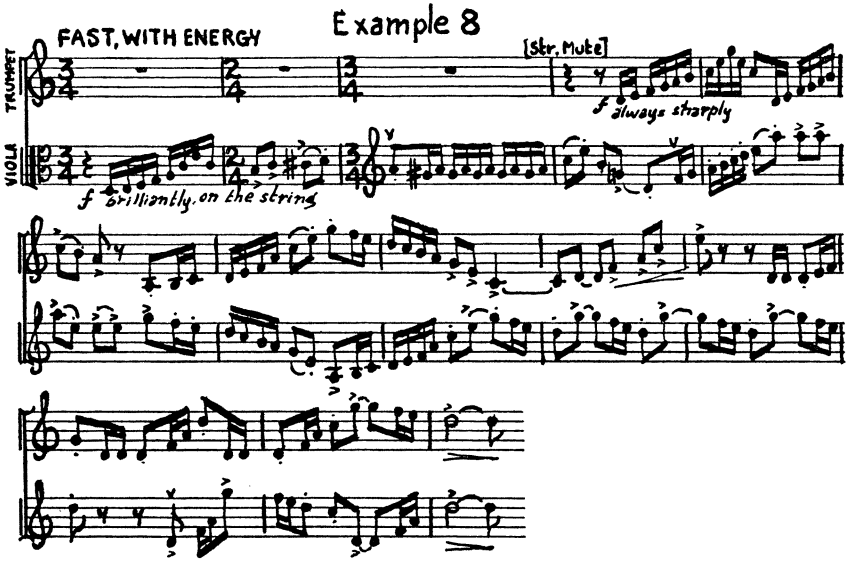
more active. The mood of slight foreboding gives way to one of ominous threatening and, finally, to one of anguished excitement. The orchestra utilizes with telling effect motive 1 from the main-title music (Example 3) which is heard with increasing insistence; and the percussion and piano (here used as a percussion instrument) develop a steady rhythmic pulse that is, nevertheless, at variance with that of the trumpet tune. The musical excitement mounts with that of the action and dissolves in a double-fortissimo chord to end the sequence.

In the *Symphony Concertante,* Kubik has not only taken over the trumpet tune practically in its entirety, but has also retained the over-all form of the film sequence. The seemingly endless melody (ninety-four bars in length) is again assigned primarily to the solo trumpet, with the solo viola sharing in its presentation and doubling often at the unison or octave. This melody is in striking contrast to the angular materials of the first movement since it employs chiefly step-wise and chromatic movement and avoids literal repetitions. Even the pregnant motive E-E flat-F-E natural (remarkably similar to B-A-C-H, which has been called the motive par excellence of music of Western civilization) is subjected to minute and skillful variation. It is perhaps not without interest that this motive, so effective here in a slow movement, is identical with the main theme of the first (allegro) movement of Vaughan Williams' *Fourth Symphony;* the differences of treatment and context are as vast, however, as the personality and aesthetic differences which separate the two composers.

The first ninety-six bars of this second movement are scored for the solo group alone. Unobtrusively, the piano enters at bar 46 with an inner-pedal point on A which continues in repeated sixteenth notes until the end of the melody. This pedal is a direct musical counterpart of the hum of the airplane motors—the composer's "harmony" in the film sequence. The orchestral comments of the film score, which reflect the dramatic developments, are omitted entirely in the *Concertante;* but the feeling of growing tension is achieved by other means and to another end. In

place of a climax of dramatic excitement, Kubik builds to one of abstract or purely musical excitement; and his method is chiefly to increase activity in the piano, which has constantly more elaborate embroideries of the A pedal point, involving increasingly distant harmonies. The *tessitura* of the solo trumpet and viola becomes higher and that of the piano ever more extended, as the dynamic is also increased. At the point at which the dis-

Example 8

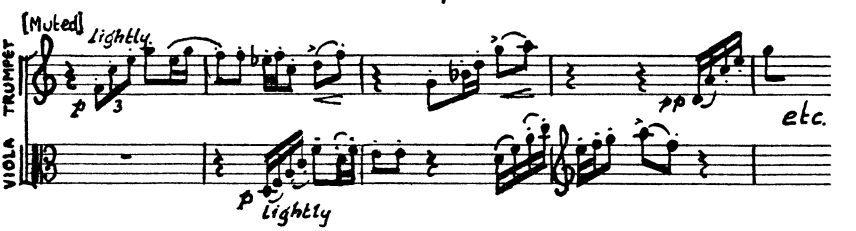


solve occurs in the film score, an epilogue of twenty-one bars begins, employing the solo viola in a melody which moves against parallel triads in two horns and trombone. This passage is again a verbatim quotation from *C-Man*—the lament which accompanies the finding of an old woman who has been beaten by thugs. Here, the motive E-E flat-F-E natural is further developed. The close of the movement is a ten-bar citation of the main (trumpet) melody.

The third movement is cast in the form of a rather complicated rondo, and combines various elements of the film score with some new thematic material. Also, it employs certain material from the first movement, (e.g., the transition tune (Example 2) at the end of the introduction) which gives the *Symphony Concertante* a

cyclical form. The A section of the rondo movement utilizes the first thirteen measures of the toccata which, in *C-Man,* accompanies a hectic and quite unoriginal ambulance chase. Although this is a weak point in the film—reverting for its effect to standard chase procedures—Kubik bolsters it considerably by his imaginative music which cuts through sound effects of sirens, screaming tires, and the like. The film toccata comprises fifty-two measures for trumpet and viola which play in rapid movement against the rest of the orchestra. In the *Concertante* after a five-bar orchestral

Example 9



introduction of a hard and aggressive nature, the main theme (A) of the movement is heard—a duet, as in the film score, for trumpet and viola which employs extensive contrary motion between the two instruments (Example 8).

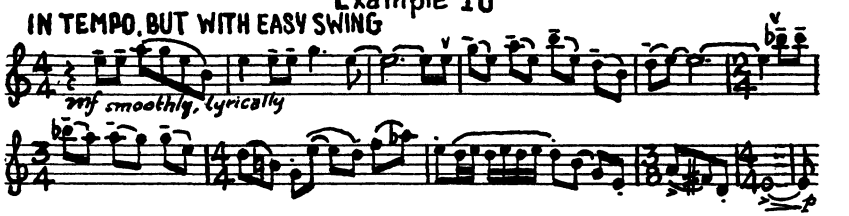
At bar 19, theme B—a contrasting tune of a whimsical, fanciful nature, a kind of question and answer dialogue between viola and trumpet—is introduced (Example 9).

This tune is unconnected with the *C-Man* score in which the toccata, A theme (Example 8) freely developed, is built to a great climax in order to correspond to the dramatic needs of the film. In the concert score, however, a climax at the beginning of the movement would be obviously out of place; hence, the introduction of a new melody, and the truncation of the film toccata.

Theme A returns at bar 49 as trumpet and viola exchange the material they had at the earlier first statement. At the end of theme A, a short transition introduces a measured trill in the violins; and against this (bars 67–114), the piano plays theme C, of which the first six notes are the same as motive 1 of the first-movement introduction. The melody is actually a series of fortis-

simo, staccato chords constructed always on the interval of the perfect fifth. Its rhythms are asymmetrical and jerky. Gradually, the full orchestra is introduced; the fabric thickens, and the dynamic increases to a loud tutti. An eleven-bar transition in the piano, again using motive 1 from the opening of the first movement, leads to an unaccompanied duet between trumpet and piano, employing theme A in augmentation. Following this duet is a statement of theme B (Example 9), scored for full orchestra; then, a short transition leads to theme D (bar 173).

Example 10

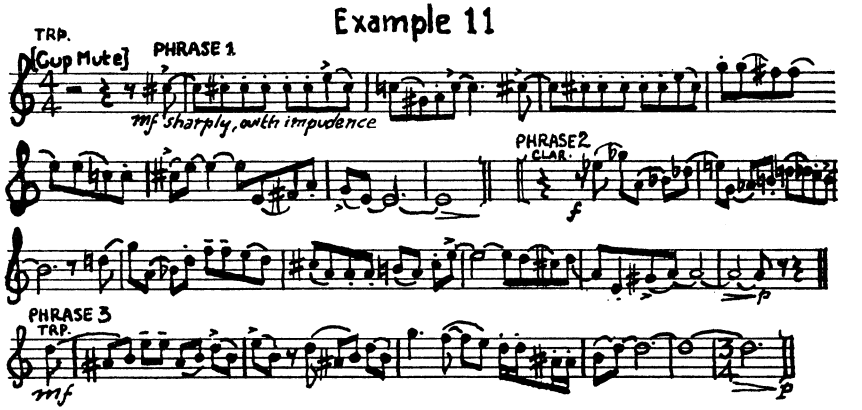


Here, Kubik lifts from his film score the entire dance sequence which accompanies the "New York Waking Up" footage. Let us see how it was possible to do this. Why was a thorough reshaping of materials not necessary?

The use of the "New York" sequence—as with the epilogue of the slow movement—was possible in the *Concertante* because the film footage for which the sequence was composed did not change its emotional tone, did not introduce visual or dialogue cues that had to be accentuated in the musical commentary. The composer, therefore, was free to write his music in one of the abstract forms if he so desired, making certain only that the mood of the resultant piece be at one with the mood of the film's footage. Cheerful action, cheerful dialogue: cheerful music. And Kubik supplies exactly this in the film: a cheerful little intermezzo in three-part form of which the tune in the *Concertante* becomes theme D. Lively, impudent, and clearly influenced by American jazz, this melody offers contrast to motorized theme A, fanciful theme B, jerky, percussive theme C. The first part of D is given to the solo viola and clearly derives from the transition tune (Example 2)

which we heard at the end of the first movement introduction (Example 10). A six-bar bridge passage leads us to the second part of D: three phrases are given to trumpet, then clarinet, and back to trumpet again (Example 11). To round out this "New York" sequence, the *Concertante* returns to the opening measures of D (Example 10) which, as before, is given to the solo viola. Suddenly, without preparation and with fine dramatic effect, theme A, inverted and in high violins, fortissimo, cuts in over the

Example 11



end of theme D. There follows a brilliant passage of fifty-one bars in which theme A is developed freely by the orchestra alone, using the devices of inversion, retrograde, and augmentation. This builds to a fortissimo at the top of which, in bar 277, theme C is heard; but now, the measured trill—heard before in strings—is played fortissimo in the piano in double octaves, while the orchestra has the angular, percussive theme formerly given to the piano. Shorter than its original statement, this section reaches an enormous climax—the biggest of the entire work—which terminates in bar 302 by a pianissimo *subito* that is extraordinarily effective. Theme C is stated again in an even shorter version, the piano continues the trill in sixteenth notes, and the two solo instruments have the staccato notes of the theme.

In measure 324, theme A (Example 8) is played by the wood winds and is heard in augmentation against which the piano and viola have new angular counterpoints. (Kubik clearly shows his

liking for Roussel here.) Beginning in bar 343, two phrases from dance-like theme D are heard in entirely new settings which involve some extremely interesting orchestral effects. Then, a short reference is made in the solo trumpet to theme A, again in augmentation. At bar 371, there begins a long cadenza for the three soloists, all playing fortissimo and in unison, which is for the most part a fractured version of the piano transition heard in bars 117–128. The cadenza is followed by a short coda for soloists and orchestra (bars 404–418) which employs both normal and augmented forms of theme A played together, as well as a fragment of theme D, which balances the short reference to it which occurs as the transition tune at the end of the introduction of the first movement.

This rather extended formal analysis of Kubik's *Symphony Concertante* has served—it is hoped—not only to show the thematic relationships between this work and the *C-Man* score, but also to illuminate one essential difference between abstract and functional music in relation to construction and form. Obviously, from the formal standpoint, the demands are of two entirely different natures. The form of film music is determined by the action and by the dramatic necessities; that of abstract music, by the architectonic requirements of unity and variety inherent in the music itself. Film music is, and must be, illustrative. Abstract music is a law unto itself; the formal problem is capable of many solutions, but is governed nevertheless by basic laws of proportion which cannot be ignored. The complicated formal structure of the last movement of the *Symphony Concertante* illustrates one composer's response to these laws and his solution of the problem of unity within variety. The constant cross references of thematic material in ever varied form would be unthinkable in a film score, where they would only confuse the listener and his response to the action on the screen. It might be said that the technique of film writing is similar to that of fresco: broad expanses covered with strongly delineated, immediately effective masses; whereas, that of abstract music has more in common with mosaic design:

recurring motives and patterns that nevertheless add up to a well-organized whole. The recurrence of motives in *C-Man* (and there are several such instances) is no less valid and effective for being dictated by the action. But the motives return in each instance in a clearly recognizable way; whereas, in the *Symphony Concertante,* the relationships are often so disguised that their unifying properties are felt indirectly rather than noted directly. Their return in the film is occasioned by the extra-musical course of the dramatic action; in the *Symphony Concertante,* by considerations of purely musical form.

The differences in Kubik's treatment of the main-title theme in *C-Man* and in the *Symphony Concertante* illuminate a very essential difference between functional and abstract music. Mood is the primary consideration in film music, and is generally best achieved by direct, primary means (as here, largely by the hammered piano chords). The mark of a good film composer is his ability to write direct, communicative music that is nevertheless not routine or hackneyed, but that has freshness and originality. Yet his desire for originality must not lead him into obscurism or overcomplication, and too great subtlety may destroy his music's effectiveness. His music is a secondary factor, necessarily subservient to the film—whether he likes to admit it or not. In abstract music, an excess of mood may (and often does) lead to sentimentality, bombast, or bathos; for abstract music requires all the subtlety that may render film music ineffective. Depending only on itself, and being a language unto itself, abstract music cannot readily support emotionalism and sentimentality since these qualities suggest a situation in which music is, as stated, a secondary factor. In writing abstract music, the composer is obliged to create tensions and drama (that unquestionably are present in all great music) in terms of pure music and by means of purely musical devices. He must, in short—as Kubik has done here—be sure that his thinking is adjusted to the demands of the abstract forms and that he has cleared his mind of attitudes essentially grounded in the dramatic, functional music forms. Failure

to do so may well explain why the abstract music of many an excellent composer of functional music does not come off.

Kubik was able to transplant several *C-Man* sequences almost intact to the *Symphony Concertante,* which indicates that there are also occasions when film music and abstract music meet on common ground. For example, each of the sequences that was incorporated almost unchanged into the *Concertante* had an inner structure that was purely musical in its origins and that was not dictated by, or dependent on, the action on the screen. Only one detail in its architecture, the over-all timing, was determined by the film's and not the music's structure. Furthermore, the music in these sequences portrayed a mood only in general terms and was not directly connected, action wise, with the film's footage. The music of "New York Waking Up" is a case in point: this amiable, cheerful music is no more specifically descriptive than, let us say, the first movement of Beethoven's *Seventh Symphony.* Another instance is the trumpet melody of the airplane voyage—an ingenious tune that conveys no *precise,* descriptive emotion. Formally complete in itself, it is not tied to any character, action, or particular foot of the film. The dramatic commentaries of the orchestra in this sequence of the film score were entirely omitted in the *Symphony Concertante.*

Yet, neither of these sequences could conceivably have been carried over into the abstract form if they were not of sufficient musical stature to stand on their own legs, so to speak. Most film music, unfortunately, is not of that stature and can have no conceivable existence apart from the celluloid to which it is attached. In the instance of class-B and -C films, this is perhaps of lesser importance, although better music would certainly improve matters even on this level. Many otherwise first-class films are hampered by second- and third-class music; and this is cause for bitter lamentation, since first-class music could be had easily enough if producers would dissuade themselves of the traditional belief that long hair is equivalent to long faces. Let the producer—who now commissions the routine, made-out-of-Ravel-Delius-Strauss-and-

Sibelius score—listen to the *C-Man* score to convince himself that it is dramatically effective *and* original. Let him also listen to the *Symphony Concertante* to assure himself that Kubik is a genuine "long hair." Let him then ponder whether it is not in the best interests of artistic quality—a quality that is, incidentally, certainly no more expensive than the paste-and-scissors job which he is now calling for—to engage composers whose ability and technical equipment permit them to work in both abstract and functional media.

Of course, the function of the film industry is not to commission scores that may later be transformed into symphonies. When more film scores are *capable* of such transformation, however, the industry will have made a very definite advance in quality—assuming that such an advance is considered desirable. Admittedly, not all serious composers have those specific gifts, instincts, and directness of utterance which are essential to the writing of film music. But many more do than the film makers might imagine. The principal conclusion to be drawn from the Kubik example may well be that, despite all differences of technique, approach, and underlying philosophy, effective film music and good abstract music should have—*can* have—much more in common than is considered possible, judging by the current product.

The B.B.C. Revisited

RICHARD ROWLAND

RICHARD ROWLAND is a familiar name to *Quarterly* readers. A frequent contributor from 1946–53, he was also a member of the faculty of the English Department at Columbia University. Mr. Rowland is now at Oxford working toward a D.Phil., writing a critical study of John Fletcher's plays.

WHEN I RETURNED to England last autumn, thirteen years had passed since I had listened to the British Broadcasting Corporation with any regularity. Although the war and the postwar period had intervened, my first impression was that nothing had changed. Bebe Daniels and Vic Oliver were still going strong, the newscaster could still be heard taking off his hat as he read "The death has been announced . . . ," and Larry the Lamb was still bleating on "Children's Hour." Of course the Third Programme had been added, so that there was no telling what might turn up on that wave length—Kierkegaard, *musique concrète,* or Inca drama (I can vouch for them all, though until a few weeks ago I would gladly have bet there was no such thing as the last).

To an American, I believe, the most perpetually surprising thing about the B.B.C. remains the amount of time devoted to drama of all sorts, Inca and otherwise. Not soap-opera serials—though "The Archers" and "Mrs. Dale's Diary" take care of that, too—but full-length plays of an hour or more. Plays, as such, have never been very popular in American broadcasting; only heavy reliance on big-name film stars has kept such enterprises as "Lux Radio Theater" going. But in England, for no easily discoverable reason, such programs are extremely popular. Each Monday and Saturday evening on the Home Service, each Wednesday on the Light Programme, and each Sunday on the Third Programme, there is a full-length play; this disregards matinees and the irregular performances which are likely to turn up other evenings, especially on the Third.

The result of this is, among other things, a great drain on avail-

able material; the literature of the theater over the centuries is hard put to sustain such a strain upon its resources, and much of the finest theatrical work is ill-suited to broadcasting (though this consideration cannot often be said to restrain the B.B.C.).

It is not surprising to discover that the works which depend most upon language come off best on the air, though the pedantry with which the B.B.C. reproduces the text of a stage play is often stifling. Cutting may be necessary and legitimate, but the only other alteration which seems permissible is to add to Shakespeare endless variations on "But look where comes my lord of Buckingham," so that the audience will know who the next speaker is. Predictably, the more absolutely the production follows a theatrical original the less likely it is to succeed on the air. So *Once in a Lifetime,* Kaufman and Hart's old satire on Hollywood—which I had remembered with great affection—seemed oddly muscle-bound. Sound effects were desperately overworked in an attempt to establish such physical facts of setting as the eye would have established instantaneously, but the comedy itself never really got off the ground. Paul Claudel's *L'Otage,* in a pedestrian English translation, was so tightly bound by its act divisions and the exposition necessary to a "well-made play" that it seemed wholly artificial and sterile. In the theater, such limitations are accepted as necessary conventions; over the air, they are only a nuisance. "Saturday Night Theatre," an undistinguished weekly series of light comedies and thrillers, is at its best on the thriller evenings, because they are usually free adaptations of detective novels; whereas the comedies stick to the four-wall conventions of the stage farce.

Elizabethan plays often prove more adaptable to the conventions of radio than modern plays: their own convention is freer; they depended upon speech rather than setting, and their eloquence comes over the air with startling power. This is not, of course, always so. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* proved dull; spectacle is in danger of overwhelming this play on the stage, but visual effect is necessary for its fun if not for its poetry. Kyd's fine

ranting piece of nonsense *The Spanish Tragedy*—Hamlet's stepfather—I found intolerable, though I had anticipated that it would be good fun; it is pitched on a single note which assaults the eardrums longer than they can bear. Webster's *Duchess of Malfi* had more power; it is a broken, varied play, ranging from the simplicity of "I am Duchess of Malfi still" to the roaring excess of Ferdinand's madness. And Marlowe's *Dido,* because the interest is almost wholly rhetorical, was surprisingly interesting on the air; there never was much to the play, perhaps, beyond splendor of language, but that survived admirably.

Of course, the drama department of the B.B.C. has its share of successes. A few weeks ago, it offered a dramatization of *Oblomov,* Goncharov's novel, which, we are told, is a Russian classic. Certainly here was a revelation, a comic portrait of extraordinary delicacy and pathos, the sort of sprawling shapeless story American radio would never dare to touch; in performance, the concentration the radio necessarily gives to voice made this gentle comic characterization beautifully clear. And there have been several dramatizations of Miss Ivy Compton-Burnett's novels. Her readers will know that her stories are told almost entirely in dialogue; their appropriateness for the radio is evident, and the result was triumphant. Not only did the witty incisive dialogue come over the air with devastating comic effect, but the power of the novels was further illuminated by radio performance—something which we could say of few radio adaptations. Listening, I realized how much more sober a comment on life these novels were than I had thought. Surely no parent could have listened without troubled soul-searching to the terrible comedy of Horace Lamb's relations with his children in *Manservant and Maidservant* (*Bullivant and the Lambs* in its American edition). The pathos, too, of Miriam the maid who has never considered whether she is happy and George, the surly footman who uses a knife to steal a helping of pudding when, as Cook points out reprovingly, a spoon was provided—this was directly touching as it had not been in the novel. On the printed page, the dialogue seems undifferentiated; it is

not. With uncanny skill, the author makes her subtle distinctions between speakers; but few of us are subtle enough readers to perceive this. The voices of the B.B.C. actors brought it all out: there was delicious comedy in Bullivant's pompous but slightly vulgar imitation of his master; memorable indeed was the sound of the voices of Cook and Bullivant joined in self-satisfied sacred song.

Much of the success of the B.B.C. excursions into drama is due to the labors of their repertory company, a group of players of immense industry who go on year after year, playing wildly assorted parts with great devotion, but little financial reward, at least by American radio standards. A lady named Betty Hardy is a good example; quite unsung, she has been playing on the B.B.C. ever since I can remember, doing things with her voice which few American stars of stage, screen, or radio could compass. Yet how many people even in England are aware of her name? I remember her at Stratford in 1939 as a perfect Emilia in *Othello;* later at The Oxford Playhouse she played in Chekhov, Pinero, and John Gay, always dependable, modestly submerging her considerable talents to the demands of the play, as she now does for the B.B.C. In recent months, she has been Harriet Beecher Stowe on television, has read Eleanor Farjeon's poems on "Children's Hour," played Flora grown-up in a sequel to *The Turn of the Screw,* a French governess in Mrs. Molesworth's *Tapestry Room,* and other roles in *Peter Ibbetson, Gammer Gurton's Needle, Manservant and Maidservant,* Anouilh's *Rendezvous de Senlis,* Strindberg's *Easter,* the Inca play, and a great many others.

Another member of the B.B.C. team is an Irish lady named Siobhan McKenna whose beautiful voice is saved for such special events as dramatized Welsh legends and a reading of Yeats's "Crazy Jane" poems. The passionate directness of these poems combined with the music of an unforgettable voice provide an exception to the rule that poetry read on the air is soporific or affected or both. One other striking exception to this rule was Robert Frost's dry, crackling voice bringing out all the tartness of his own *Witch of Coos.*

But the B.B.C. actors are at their best when they are in something written directly for radio. One such series (not a formal series, but a recurring phenomenon on the Third Programme consists of dialogues built around historical and literary figures—Henry James meets H. G. Wells, Dr. Bowdler on trial, Proust's Albertine regained, Dr. Johnson in various encounters. These are always, as their subjects would suggest, highly literate but also far more aware of the potentialities of radio than most of the adapted plays. They are, I suppose, a highbrow equivalent of quiz programs, a parlor game essentially. Many of these scripts have been written by J. I. M. Stewart, tutor at Christ Church, Oxford, and author of a long series of detective novels. His scripts are learned but not above the wisecrack, witty and donnish in a playful way. It cannot be supposed that these events have a very large audience, but they seem to me far more acceptable than the more solemn uplift programs which the Home Service offers. For the B.B.C.'s worst fault is to be pedantic in a solemn and condescending way. The B.B.C.'s publication *The Listener,* for all its excellences, reveals some of this schoolmarmish tone; real instruction is accepted, but many of these talks are too dilute to forgive the tone of superiority in which the reader is addressed. It is only fair to say that among the worst offenders in this way are visiting Americans, but it must then be added that the rigors of American competitive radio would have kept these people off the air. The B.B.C. talks are not all solemn, of course; one of the real successes of popular commentary is Alistair Cooke's weekly series of "Letters from America"; relaxed, easy, witty, unbelievably well informed, these are radio comment as good as Elmer Davis', though of a different kind.

About too many of these talks, there is the touch of the amateur, a lack of surety which seems oddly contagious on the B.B.C. In recent weeks, for instance, I have noticed an extraordinary number of fluffs in the news broadcasts, small errors which cause the announcer to stop in surprise, and then in a tone of horror mutter, "I beg your pardon," and try again. One charming recent one was

when the announcer intoned the mysterious and alarming sentence "Nowhere is the weather forecast for the next twenty-four hours," then paused in puzzlement, and started again, "Now here is the weather forecast . . ." This is endearing in its way; if newscasters in the United States make mistakes of this sort, I have never heard one; the effect of their efficiency in slightly terrifying. On the other hand, the excited tones of the average American announcer are at least a parody of something human; the commentators dry Elmer Davis, owlish Raymond Swing, and venomous Fulton Lewis are clearly human beings. But the ideal of the B.B.C. announcer is wholly nonhuman; he is like a ticker-tape machine feeding out the colorless opinionless dispatches. When the machine trips up and admits its vulnerability, we respond either by being shocked or by gloating.

Many of these foibles of the B.B.C. were engagingly parodied by a group of Cambridge undergraduates over the air in September, 1954. The performance was much praised; the great institution was allowing itself to be made sport of. Actually the Cambridge youths had been far more devastatingly effective on the stage when a similar skit had formed part of their annual Footlights Revue; a gangly, red-headed young man named Jonathan Miller, whose considerable comic talents will apparently not be seen professionally for he is studying medicine, succeeded in looking exactly as all the B.B.C. voices sound. On the air, the young comedians got so lost in frantic puns and a sort of gadgety delight in reproducing all the pips, squeaks, and gongs which take up much of the day on the B.B.C. that some of the sharpness of their original satire was drowned out.

This did underline, however, the B.B.C.'s greatest lack: humor. The great personalities of American radio have always been comedians—Groucho Marx, Stoopnagle and Budd in their early days, Fred Allen, Durante, Henry Morgan. These were comic artists of the first order who achieved individuality, exploited the particular quality of radio, and also, be it noted, included an element of critical comment on their own medium. It must be

admitted that comedy is more a matter of national taste than most things—what makes a Chinese laugh?—and also that American radio has spawned a great many wholly mechanical comedians such as Joe Penner; but the impression remains that the B.B.C. comedy is timid, hackneyed, monotonously obvious. An uneasy feeling exists that the powers of the B.B.C. condescend to their comedy programs; the public want them, but really what they ought to want are little talks about excavations in the Holy Land, or with gun and camera through the German fiscal policy, or even, perhaps, pedantic stunts like Elizabethan night on television when the whole evening's entertainment wore ruffs and farthingales from news and cookery talk to a performance of *Friar Bacon and Friar Bungay*. The result of this Elizabethan experiment was an expensive fiasco which is said to have persuaded most of the TV public to switch off their sets by eight-thirty. Comedy and variety get most of the money, and probably most of the brains, in American broadcasting; there is a feeling that any old thing will do for most of the B.B.C.'s efforts in this direction.

My reactions to a year of the B.B.C. are wholly my own and may represent a minority of one; perhaps these things are just what the British public wants; it is hard to tell, for they have never had experience of anything else. American radio may not be a national monument, but the public has chosen it; the B.B.C. often resembles a national monument and is no more of an artistic success than most national monuments. The correspondence columns of the *Radio Times* suggest no serious dissatisfaction with matters as they stand. Ladies write in regularly to express their delight at "Saturday Night Theatre"; complaints concern themselves with such matters as a car in "The Archers" was described as a Humber Hawk, but the sound produced was obviously that of a Ford Consul. The editorial policy of the *Radio Times* may cause this trivial effect; at times, the feeling exists that a B.B.C. audience in the theater would walk out in protest if the object Salome brought in on a platter turned out not really to be the head of the actor who had been playing John the Baptist.

To carp and quibble about the B.B.C. is easy enough; it is often stuffy, often dull. But finally, there is *Under Milk Wood,* Dylan Thomas' play for voices, commissioned by the B.B.C. and an authentic masterpiece—not a masterpiece by comparison with other radio plays but by comparison with the best of modern novels, plays, poems. Would American commercial radio have commissioned such a work from a poet popularly believed to be obscure? Would they have waited such patient years for its completion? The B.B.C. did; and on January 25, 1954, and at least three times since, the B.B.C. has broadcast *Under Milk Wood.* I have listened to it three times, and read it too, with ever increasing pleasure. The B.B.C. assembled a splendid array of Welsh accents to enact this day in the life of a Welsh village which never was on land or sea, but which is larger and truer than life. What profligate talent is here! There are enough characters for a whole row of novels, enough love and joy to fill a library. The influence of Joyce and others is evident, but how boldly individual it is. Who can forget blind Captain Cat whose life has been "sardined with women," crying in his window for lost Rosie Probert? Or the Reverend Eli Jenkins raising his innocent voice in vesper praise of his beloved Milk Wood? Or the wisdom of Polly Garter, no better than she should be and that's good enough for her, crying, "Oh, isn't life a terrible thing, thank God"? Or the ribald comedy of Mrs. Ogmore-Pritchard who won't let the sun into her spotless home until it wipes its feet, or Mr. Pugh cooking up "a fricassee of deadly nightshade, nicotine, hot frog, cyanide, and bat spit" for his "poker-backed nut-cracker wife"? Exuberant, tender, meandering, *Under Milk Wood* is enough to atone for far more errors than the B.B.C. has committed in a year. *Under Milk Wood* is superior to anything else the B.B.C. has produced all year because it was written by a man who was not only a major poet but an experienced radio hand, who knew enough to turn the limitations of his medium into advantages and exploit its potentialities with real craft. (Dylan Thomas' published film scenario *The Doctor and the Devils* shows with what care he studied

that medium, too. For this, the B.B.C. who employed Dylan Thomas as writer and actor and reader deserves its share of homage, as for the loving care with which *Under Milk Wood* was produced.[1]

Shortly after Dylan Thomas died, the B.B.C. presented a memorial program. The poet's voice was heard reading his own noble "Death shall have no dominion"; his friends—poets, preachers, public-house keepers—spoke of him tenderly and joyfully. It was deeply moving and full of life; hardly any note of mourning was struck; the memory was clearly too joyful for that. It was a remarkable tribute to an endearing personality and a poet of great strength who, be it ever to the glory of the B.B.C., probably received more help and understanding from that public monument than from any other source.

[1] A long-playing record of this broadcast has been issued which makes this remarkable production available to American readers.

The Imperial Theme—
Macbeth on Television

CLAUDE E. JONES

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ON ALL COUNTS, the Hall of Fame *Macbeth* produced on November 28, 1954, was the most satisfactory televised Shakespeare we have seen to date. Reasons for this excellence lie in the play itself, the acting and direction, the costuming and staging, and the use of sound and light. And in the complex of all these.

Macbeth, the shortest of Shakespeare's tragedies by some five hundred lines, is approximately half the length of *Hamlet.* It is compact and uncomplicated, therefore extremely difficult to cut. Only in the later witches' scenes is block cutting practicable; even line cutting is complicated by the carefully woven plot in other parts of the play.

Macbeth, like *Hamlet,* has been adapted by each generation for the past three centuries, changed to suit the taste of the times or exigencies of contemporary theater, and played, played, played. That it has survived all these changes, these additions and excisions, and consistently maintained vitality and meaning, shows its inherent strength.

Early adaptations stressed dancing and singing witches in an infernal ballet, a feature highly enjoyed in the Restoration period. Samuel Pepys, an inveterate theatergoer, saluted Betterton's version, which he saw several times, as "a most excellent play in all respects, but especially in divertisement though it be a deep tragedy; which is a strange perfection in a tragedy it being

most proper here [i.e., in this production] and suitable."[1] The divertisement undoubtedly consisted of songs and dances by the witches, who also figured prominently in the versions by Davenant and Garrick which were played throughout the Eighteenth Century. Garrick, in 1744, also added a dying speech for Macbeth. By this time, Lady Macbeth's lines had already been considerably increased to weight her part. Fifty years later, in 1794, Kemble and Mrs. Siddons began the tradition of a specterless banquet. Other changes were required by adaptation of the play to a normal three-act performance.

The Hall of Fame version was shown in two acts, the first comprising Acts I and II of the original. Time lapse was stated at the opening of the second sequence: "Several months have passed." There was no attempt to indicate the actual length in historical time of the second section; but Lady Macbeth aged notably between the banquet scene and her sleepwalking, and time was required for the goings and comings of Macduff and others.

Principal cuts in this production were made in Act IV of the original text. Hecate, usually considered an interpolation by a hand later than Shakespeare's, was omitted entirely, as was the scene (Act III, scene v) in which she first appears. The opening scene of Act IV—the last appearance of the witches—provided the most complete departure, except for cuts, from Shakespeare's text. The witches themselves were alone retained of this whole scene, and appeared to Macbeth in a dream sequence where they uttered only their prophecies: "beware Macduff;/Beware the thane of Fife," "none of woman born/Shall harm Macbeth," and "Macbeth shall never vanquish'd be until/Great Birnam wood to high Dunsinane hill/Shall come against him." With this, they vanished. Here, the resources of television medium provided the adaptor with an admirable device for cutting the original.

Also dependent on the medium was the handling of Banquo's ghost at the banquet. Instead of following the First Folio direc-

[1] *Diary* entry for January 8, 1667. Pepys had not particularly enjoyed a production ("a pretty good play") on November 5, 1664; but on April 16, 1667, he calls *Macbeth* "one of the best plays for a stage, and variety of dancing and musick, that ever I saw."

tion *Enter the Ghost of Banquo, and sits in Macbeth's place,* the TV version presented Banquo's head shaking its gory locks and, for a few seconds, a spectral arm, hand, and goblet. This compromise between our earliest copy of the play and the Kemble-Siddons ghostless version was fortified by having the specter, which is speechless in the text, read the lines "and the pledge," usually assigned to the drinking Lords. This handling stressed the fact, most necessary to the play, that only Macbeth saw the specter, a visualization of his raging conscience.

Another change in the same scene helped the flow of the action and compressed the scenes. Lady Macbeth and Macbeth left right after most of the Lords did; Lennox remained behind with another Lord, and they played scene vi of Act III in the almost deserted banquet hall. The camera switched to Macbeth's bedroom, and he read the speech beginning "It will have blood," then went to bed, where the witches prophesied to him in his sleep. Another use of the bedroom, uncalled for by Shakespeare, occurred late in the televised play when Macbeth, informed that Lady Macbeth was dead, went to their bedroom and read the lines beginning "She should have died hereafter" over her profiled corpse. This change, which will doubtless arouse those lovers of Shakespeare devoted to the sleepwalking scene as Lady Macbeth's last appearance, was actually most effective in context and added strength to Macbeth's farewell to her.

Shakespeare's theater provided a highly fluid staging area so divided that one scene followed another with no need for long pauses between scenes, or even acts. The modern camera allows, however, even greater freedom and flow. One of the most enjoyable features of this production was the highly fluid camera work inside the castle, where the characters, particularly Macbeth, moved from one area to another with constant coverage.

Other devices depending on use of camera included stress on hand movement. The witches and Lady Macbeth were all introduced by shots of their hands. Also made possible by this medium was the use of mirrored reflections, particularly in the handling

of Lady Macduff and her child, and of fog and flame in the early witches' scenes. All of these devices are, of course, common in productions using camera as a medium.

Lighting was, for the most part, extremely successful, particularly in stressing textures and expressions. (Only in the scene immediately after the murder of Duncan, and just before Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking was this not true.) Sound effects were never obtrusive, as they had been in the televised *King Lear;* and music was most skillfully employed.

The production of *Macbeth* underlined the fact that there is a direct aesthetic relationship between dialogue and setting. Shakespeare's high style is most effective with simple sets. For example, the hall and stair scenes, and the exteriors, blended harmoniously with the lines; on the other hand, ornate in themselves, the lines made small rooms seem even smaller, overcrowded and out of place. Such jewels show best in simple settings.

Some technical features of the Hall of Fame production could and should have been improved. There were unintended shadows, apparently thrown by equipment, although these were fewer than those in any of the other Shakespearean telecasts. Make-up for the "bloody sergeant" and the witches was much too heavy; it had the quality of make-up intended for production in a large auditorium, not face-to-face with a camera. Further, the gouts of blood on Macbeth's hands and forearms after the murder of Duncan looked like tar. (Apparently the heavy make-up and blood were, however, successful in the colored broadcast.) Miss Anderson's first coiffeur was startlingly incongruous against the costumes and props, all of which suggested an early period.

The plot and theme of the original play came through most clearly in this production. Interpretation of characters and their relationships followed the text closely, and Shakespeare's devices for clarity were admirably handled. This is possible, in part, because they are easily adapted to televised production. For example, the soliloquy, which was one of the glories of Elizabethan drama, has come back into its own with motion-picture and tele-

vision productions. Two methods have been developed to indicate, respectively, speech and inner thought. In the former, the actor, usually either in motion (restlessly pacing or moving at random on stairs) or dreamily leaning, reads the lines absentmindedly or intently. In the second method, notable in the prebattle scene of Olivier's motion picture *Henry V,* the actor stares off while his disembodied voice comes to the audience.

In the Hall of Fame *Macbeth,* as in the televised productions of *Hamlet, King Lear,* and *Richard II,* the soliloquies were spoken. Through them the audience was kept informed as to exactly what holds Macbeth's mind—his ambition at first, his later uncertainty, and his final overwhelming conscience. Less notably, but also effectively, Lady Macbeth and Banquo used the soliloquy as well. The accompanying business was, on the whole, restrained, and the director in several instances used entrances of other characters who were unaware of the speaker's presence as background for soliloquies. This was the case, for example, at the opening of the second act where Banquo watched the entrance of Macbeth and Lady Macbeth, as king and queen, during his soliloquy about Duncan's death and Macbeth's fortunes.

The strength of Macbeth's conscience was admirably shown by Evans, whose concretization of the symbols of guilt formed the keystone of his performance. He was Orestes-like in his flight from the furies of his mind. ("But no more sights!") Miss Anderson's sleepwalking, though played in a lower key, was most effective, particularly the handwashing. The emphasis on sleep, or rather sleeplessness, was notable in this production, and was meaningfully introduced by one of the witches on their second appearance. The hagridden sleep of guilt was suggested by Macbeth's dream of the witches, and reached its apogee in Lady Macbeth's sleepwalking.

Macbeth was a fond husband in this production, which included one close embrace and a deathbed scene, neither of which was indicated by Shakespeare. Yet this fondness was secondary and came most clearly after Macbeth had assumed the direction

of, and total responsibility for, their misdeeds. The audience was made to believe that his planning the murder of Banquo and Fleance without consulting her (though she thought of it—"But in them nature's copy's not eterne") was actually motivated by his affection for her and his unwillingness to load her conscience with any more sleep-destroying, accursed murder.

Two of the parallels between *Macbeth* and *Hamlet* were very clear in this production. The first of these was Macbeth's fear that the Weird Sisters might be evil spirits leading him to destruction and ultimate damnation. That they are prophesying his future, not directly urging him to a course of action, puts him in a different position from Hamlet, of course, but the question is deep in his mind, nevertheless. The other striking parallel occurs in Macduff's speech about Macbeth after he has been informed of the murder of his family:

> Front to front
> Bring thou this fiend of Scotland and myself
> Within my sword's length set him; if he escape
> Heaven forgive him too!

Macduff's passion in reading these lines brought to mind immediately the violence of Hamlet's rejection of his opportunity to kill Claudius at prayer right after the Mousetrap, the pantomime (of the murder of Hamlet's father) used "to catch the conscience of the King."

Richard Waring's Macduff was most refreshing and direct throughout, in contrast to Staats Cotsworth's highly stylized posturing as Duncan. The use of Seyton as the third murderer came as a surprise but seemed congruous. At the beginning of the production, Evans and Miss Anderson, as well as the minor actors, seemed to be hyperconscious of the camera, particularly with their eyes, but this was not true later. Throughout, there was a feeling that Miss Anderson was straining her voice; Evans also gave this impression just before Duncan's murder but, unlike Miss Anderson, he worked out of it soon. Evans showed a notable

improvement in his acting over his "mugging" performance in *Richard II.*

All in all, this *Macbeth* showed a great improvement in direction, particularly in use of the facilities of the television medium, over telecasts of *Hamlet, Richard II,* and *King Lear.* With actors of comparable ability, future televised Shakespearean plays should be even more satisfactory. Among them we hope to see *Julius Caesar, As You Like It, Midsummer Night's Dream,* and *Othello.*

The UNESCO Television Producer's Study Course

BURTON PAULU

BURTON PAULU was one of the American delegates to the UNESCO television seminar which met in London last summer. This article, however, is a statement of his personal impressions of the meeting rather than an official report of it. Mr. Paulu has been manager of KUOM at the University of Minnesota since 1938. He formerly was chairman of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters Advisory Committee to the President of the Educational Television and Radio Center. During 1953–54 he was a Senior Fulbright Research Scholar in London, where he made a study of British broadcasting.

FOR THREE WEEKS in July of 1954, there met in London under UNESCO auspices the first international study course ever arranged for producers and directors of educational and cultural television programs. The participants were chosen by the broadcasting organizations or national UNESCO commissions of twelve countries. The United States was well represented, with three delegates (one from a national network, one from a local commercial station, and one from the ranks of educational broadcasters), and four consultants.[1] The British Broadcasting Corporation provided the seminar with physical facilities ranging from meeting rooms to projection equipment and with staff assistance; in addition it played host at such varied functions as a Thames River boat trip and several receptions.

The nature of the conference was indicated by its title: "Study Course for Producers and Directors of Educational and Cultural Television Programmes." In American terms this was an educational television "workshop" of international scope.[2] The course

[1] Countries taking part included: Belgium, France, German Federal Republic, Italy, Japan, Morocco, the Netherlands, Switzerland, Ukranian Soviet Socialist Republic, U.S.S.R., the United Kingdom, and the United States of America. The three American delegates were W. C. Dempsey, Station KPIX, San Francisco; Burton Paulu, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis; Perry Wolff, Columbia Broadcasting System, New York. There were four American consultants: Martha Gable, Public Schools, Philadelphia; Douglas MacAgy, Museum of Modern Art, New York; Morris S. Novik, Public Service Consultant, New York; and Father Roswell C. Williams, Creighton University, Omaha.

[2] To Europeans an "educational" broadcast is a program for children's in-school use, or a formally organized adult instructional "telecourse" (to use the American term). As employed in this article, however, the word has the broader meaning given to it by American usage.

aimed at bringing about an international exchange of experiences and opinions in order to stimulate the development and improvement of serious television programs. Much emphasis was placed on international coöperation, although most of the subjects considered also had local and national applications.

During the seminar almost all types of serious television programs were discussed, and many kinescopes were viewed and analyzed. Demonstrations of the B.B.C. studio and remote equipment provided a focus for the exchange of technical information, although with the approach of the producer rather than the engineer. Several experimental closed-circuit productions were developed as laboratory exercises. Great emphasis was placed on full and frank discussion. Since many of the delegates were housed in the same hotel, and the entire group ate most of its luncheons and dinners together, a strong group feeling quickly emerged, which further encouraged the free exchange of ideas and opinions. The three-week session concluded with a B.B.C. telecast on which several of the participants introduced and commented on some of the best kinescopes seen by the group.

Fundamental Differences

In no two countries of the world is broadcasting done under identical conditions. Therefore the delegates at this conference approached many basic problems from different points of view. Most fundamental were the differences of opinion about freedom of expression which separated the Soviet from the other delegates. Although never formally stated, this basic disagreement underlay several debates about program values. Memorable was an exchange of views about an American art program "Through the Enchanted Gate," broadcast by the N.B.C. in collaboration with The Museum of Modern Art) designed to encourage children's artistic self-expression. The kinescope was good, thought many Western delegates, because it stimulated the children to express themselves freely. It was poor, said the Russians, because it lacked direction; "good" art should first be shown, and the young artists then instructed to create likewise.

Divergent educational philosophies and practices were apparent when in-school and formal adult education programs were discussed. Thus the French centralized system could, when television coverage in that country becomes nationwide, attract a large audience for a program predicated on uniform classroom practices; but the decentralized systems of the United Kingdom and the United States require programs of less specific and more general nature. Curriculum theories and teaching procedures also were found to differ: for example, the informal approach of the American in-school programs was puzzling to many seminar members; and the program on teen-age etiquette from Philadelphia could never be a subject for in-school telecasting in most countries. Consequently, what seemed to the American delegates an excellent school program might confuse or even amuse the other members of the group.

Broadcasting Organizations and Program Policies.—Broadcasting itself is organized, controlled, and financed in different ways, with corresponding effects on program policies. For example, French broadcasting is directly controlled by the Ministry of Information, and hence is subject to close government scrutiny. The British Broadcasting Corporation, on the other hand, is a public corporation with a high degree of independence; yet, because the B.B.C. is a monopoly, the government has strictly prohibited it from editorializing, with the result that it cannot develop such vigorous and forceful news commentaries as those Murrow and Severeid broadcast in this country.

The fact that the American system is privately owned and competitively operated affects our programming in several ways. Such a system places a high premium on attracting large audiences, with the unfortunate result that serious programs are often eliminated; but the desirable one that when broadcast at all they usually are constructed so as to serve as large a group of viewers as possible. On the other hand, the noncommercial systems have the advantage of being largely free from the dictatorship of audience percentages which obtains here, and hence usually are more favor-

ably disposed toward educational and cultural programs, broadcast more of them, and schedule them at more convenient listening hours. The American system, of course, has more money: American networks have tremendous resources and can do wonderful work when they make the effort; whereas systems supported by license fees or government grants have less money to spend, and therefore lack the potentialities of staff and equipment possessed by American networks. However, the advantages in terms of resources are not always in favor of the Americans. European broadcasting is usually done on a national network scale if at all, thus guaranteeing at least a reasonable minimum of staff and facilities; but most American programs are of local origin, which means that they not only lack the resources of New York, Chicago, and Hollywood, but usually fall far short of the facilities of Rome, Paris, Brussels, or London.

New to many delegates were the reports of the American representatives about the varied television activities of our schools, colleges, and universities. Only in the United States are there television (or radio) stations run by educational institutions, or programs organized entirely under their direction: when educators broadcast in other countries, they do so under the direct aegis of the broadcasting organizations themselves. And nowhere else in the world do universities offer instruction in how to broadcast, nor do they carry out extensive research on its methods and social consequences.

Varying Extent of Television's Penetration.—Delegates also became aware of national differences in the extent of television's penetration.[3] Problems of war recovery and material shortages delayed the development of regular television broadcasting until 1951 or later in such countries as Italy, Switzerland, and Western Germany, whereas the shortage and high price of receivers drastically held down audience size. Even today France has only three stations and 100,000 licensed sets, almost all of which are in the Paris and Lille areas. On the other hand, the United Kingdom's

[3] The best source of information on this subject is *Television, A World Survey* (*Reports on the Facilities of Mass Communication;* Paris: UNESCO, 1953).

nine transmitters serve some 3,750,000 receivers located in about 30 per cent of the country's households.[4] The United States at present has over 400 stations broadcasting to more than 32,500,000 sets installed in some 60 per cent of the nation's homes. The number of hours on the air also varies. Only in America is there round-the-clock programming; in most countries it is customary to broadcast an hour or two in the daytime and three or four hours each evening. There are several reasons for this: the belief that the public should not be exposed to television's distracting influence for more than a short time each day, the feeling that there is insufficient program material to fill more hours advantageously, and financial limitations.

It was clear therefore that television's role varies from country to country. In many places, it is only a supplementary medium of communication for the privileged few, with press and radio assuming the main mass-communications assignment. But in the United States, and increasingly in the United Kingdom, it has become an important part of the daily life of a majority of the population. In such countries as Italy, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, therefore, there is no great need for programs in all vital content areas; but in the United States, television has become such a primary instrument of communication as to require the development of programs in all important areas whether or not they lend themselves to effective television presentation.

Basic Agreements

In view of these many differences in background, it is remarkable that the delegates found themselves agreeing on so many basic points: the problems of telecasting educational and cultural material appear to be much the same everywhere, regardless of divergent government ideologies, educational theories, or broadcasting systems.

[4] In the United Kingdom, over 85 per cent of the total population is located within the service area of one or more television stations. This is the highest proportion in the world, excepting for Cuba, where almost all the population is covered. There are about 150,000 sets in Cuba.

Television's Great Potential for Education.—The powers, potentialities, and dangers of television are universally recognized: it alone of all media can bring sounds and pictures, both live and recorded, into the homes of a nation. Television's great potential for education, it was agreed, results from its vivid portrayal of reality. Yet spokesmen from all countries had misgivings lest television's very attractiveness might turn its audiences into passive viewers; for this reason, they urged that so far as possible telecasts should stimulate participation and follow-up activities.

No one accepted television as the panacea for education's problems: it was regarded as supplementary to the older media, rather than as a replacement for them. Nor was television regarded as a good medium for discipline and study. There is a definite limit to how much specific information a telecast can convey, however well it may present some general impressions and stimulate its viewers to further study through reading, visits to museums, or course enrollments. An organized telecourse may do some direct teaching, but the degree of simplification necessitated by the educational level of the audience and by normal viewing conditions, seriously reduces the depth of subject treatment possible.

Role of the Producer.—If significant educational and cultural programs are to be developed, the delegates agreed, there must be close coöperation between television producers and content experts. The producer must translate into visual and sound symbols a body of knowledge and experience hitherto transmitted through other forms of mass or individual communication. Unfortunately the intellectuals, who supply much of the material for serious programs, are often television resisters: they do not think in terms of reaching large audiences through any medium; and they usually have slight regard for television. That this feeling is widespread will come as a surprise to many who ascribe such attitudes on the part of American intellectuals to the preoccupation of American television with entertainment, and to its frequent commercial excesses; but apparently there is the same reaction in other countries where television is noncommercial and

programs usually maintain a more serious tone. The medium itself, therefore, as well as the way in which it is used, apparently induces this negative attitude on the part of many intellectuals toward television.

There were many suggestions for the development of good working relationships and the creation of mutual respect between broadcasters and content experts. Producers must impress scholars as being sincerely interested in visualizing their ideas; at the same time, the latter must regard the producers as their intellectual equals. Institutes have been arranged in a number of countries to bring together producers and scholars from fields which provide broadcasting materials: Canada, France, Germany, Japan, the Netherlands, and the United States reported success from such workshops.

The delegates also agreed that television program planners, producers, and directors are the key people in program development. Spokesmen from all countries reported on the pressures under which these broadcasters must work: Rome, Hamburg, and London, like New York, Minneapolis, and San Francisco, have learned that television is a vast complicated machine which relentlessly devours men's time, strength, and ideas. In developing programs, leadership must be assumed by the broadcasters themselves, who should function as interpretative or creative artists rather than hack workers, despite the heavy demands on them to turn out programs and fill air time. If they are to do their work properly, broadcasters must be highly competent. Only a few people ever have comparable opportunities to influence such large numbers of their fellow men; television broadcasters, therefore, need to possess outstanding personal and professional qualifications.

Production Problems

Since this was a seminar for producers and directors, it emphasized the exchange of ideas about programs and production techniques. Most of this interchange took place during the discussions which followed the screening of kinescopes from a number of

countries, and the viewing of B.B.C. rehearsals, demonstrations, and programs. There was consideration of news reporting and analysis; talks and discussions; music and fine arts programs; children's in- and out-of-school broadcasts; remote pickups and Eurovision exchanges; adult education features; and many miscellaneous program types.[5]

News Programs.—The telecasting of news poses difficult production problems. Coincidentally the B.B.C. inaugurated television newscasting on the very day the seminar convened; previously it had broadcast daily newsreels but no straight newscasts. This fact added impetus to the seminar's discussions of television news broadcasting. There were differences of opinion as to the importance of such programs. Countries with only a few thousand television receivers were inclined to refer the public to radio or press for news coverage, but spokesmen from the United States and the United Kingdom, where more and more citizens turn to television for information and entertainment, stated that they had a social obligation to develop television newscasts, even though television had various shortcomings in the presentation of such material. Delegates from all countries agreed that the choice confronting a producer is often that of providing a good news program which is bad television, or a bad news program which is good television. Important news events often are not visual, and others although visual cannot be brought to the screen by broadcast time. For these reasons, events which are easily visualized may be given more prominence than is justified by their intrinsic merit.

The question then arose: in a television news program, what should be shown when there is nothing good to show? Unless very skillfully used, still pictures were disapproved as stopping or retarding program flow. There was disagreement over the role of television news announcers. In keeping with its radio news policy of minimizing the personalities of news readers (in order

[5] Kinescopes ("telefilms" to the British) and films made especially for television were viewed from France, Italy, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States. The Russian delegates provided no examples at all of their work.

to achieve utmost objectivity in presentation), the B.B.C. television news keeps announcers entirely off screen. This however often requires that, while waiting for the announcer to finish a story, the camera must remain focused on uninteresting and unrelated still pictures or diagrams. Many of the delegates preferred the American practice of showing the news reader himself when appropriate visual material is not available. Nevertheless, the group agreed that neither the American nor the British examples provided the ideal solution to the problem of developing telecasts on which important news would be presented in proper balance and perspective, using techniques consistently well adapted to the medium.

Television news analysis of the sort done so skillfully by Eric Severeid and Edward R. Murrow has no counterparts abroad. Most countries have not yet tried to develop such programs; and the B.B.C.'s policy against editorializing excludes features like Severeid's brilliant review of the Supreme Court's antisegregation decision. The delegates saw a kinescope of this broadcast and admired it for its integration of studio commentator and location film, as well as for its excellent writing, good presentation, and superb production.

But also seen and admired were what the B.B.C. television calls "talks" programs. Here one person may talk throughout, or several people may contribute. Often there are related film inserts. Noteworthy examples included a short formal talk by Lord Beaverbrook, the British newspaper magnate; "Men Seeking God," a series in which Christopher Mayhew, a Member of Parliament, interviewed leaders of six major world faiths in the studio and on films made in their native countries; and "Panorama," a show in which the narrator-interviewer provides the connecting links between interviews and demonstrations on current political, artistic, and scientific subjects. Although these programs lacked the polish and skill of the Severeid and Murrow examples, they nevertheless impressed the group with their significant content, integrity, and complete avoidance of the superficial "slickness"

which sometimes creeps into the American output.[6] Hard to categorize, but definitely deserving of mention, was the C.B.S. "Adventure" series, of which the delegates viewed several examples. These were among the most universally admired programs seen during the entire three weeks of the seminar.

Music and Art.—Instrumental music—like news—was recognized as difficult to televise. An Italian kinescope of Rossini's *Barber of Seville* was perhaps the most highly praised program of the entire session; but the televising of opera is not theoretically difficult, since there are actors and scenery to put on the screen. In this case, the audience saw a lively opera, well sung and acted, on an attractive and well-lighted set. The sound track had been prerecorded, the cast then miming the action before the cameras. But reaction to the televising of instrumental music was generally negative: how can television with its visual orientation deal with instrumental music, whose basic appeal is to the ear? There seems to be no way to show the music itself. The producer can show the grammar of music by televising the instruments as they play, or he can deal in personalities by putting the hard-working musicians or conductors on screen; this was the procedure followed in the American kinescopes shown to the delegates. But these were not accepted as satisfactory solutions to the problem, nor was the careful work of the B.B.C., as demonstrated on one of their broadcasts during the period of the seminar, taken to be the final answer.

Televised art also was discussed. French, Swiss, and British art films developed for television were viewed, together with the N.B.C.'s "Through the Enchanted Gate" and some American in-school programs. The French productions were basically films rather than telecasts, and the Swiss example clearly was an early effort. However, the B.B.C.'s film about the British Walter Sickert showed great skill and ingenuity in presenting an artist of the recent past to a television audience. Sickert's paintings of street scenes were matched with current motion pictures of the original

[6] Formally organized lectures of the "telecourse" variety have been developed extensively only in the United States; none were shown at the meeting, however.

settings, and his London studios were shown as they appear today: there also was an effective correlation of some of his music-hall paintings with appropriate music. But personal ideas of the meaning of art, often accompanied by strong emotional reactions, made difficult general agreement on most of the programs which attempted any measure of interpretation. Programs to motivate children's artistic expression were more readily accepted, although here too the discussion showed how individual is each viewer's reaction to art. Basic ideological differences as to how freely young people should be encouraged to express themselves have already been reported.

Children's Programs.—Television programs for in-school use have been developed in only a few countries, although as more transmitters are built and more receivers installed, there will be much programming for this audience. Despite its leadership in nationwide radio broadcasting to schools, the United Kingdom has thus far carried out only a few experimental television transmissions; since no kinescopes of these programs were viewed, the American examples were the only ones discussed. Most of these came from the Philadelphia Public Schools, the St. Louis Public Schools, or from WOI-TV, the Iowa State College station in Ames. To the European delegates, these programs were somewhat puzzling since American schools are so different from theirs: to them many of these broadcasts dealt with strange subjects at too elementary a level and in an unduly informal manner. Whereas most of the American kinescopes shown during the seminar were of network origin, these in-school programs were locally produced and consequently displayed a wider range of production standards than did the American network shows. All the European programs viewed were developed by national networks, most of which have more resources than does the average American local station or public school system. To the Europeans therefore, these school programs pointed up the fact that although our networks are better equipped than theirs, most American local stations have fewer resources than they do.

All the children's out-of-school programs viewed were of British origin. Especially admired were several filmed puppet shows for children of preschool age which displayed some interesting techniques; for example, a few of these puppets talk, but most of them are either talked to or talked about as they go through their antics. These programs deserve to be investigated by both commercial and educational broadcasters in this country as possible program material.[7] There also was discussion, though without kinescope examples, of British programs for older children. All of these avoid the idolizing of cowboy stars and the blood and thunder plots which unfortunately are typical of so much American children's television.[8] Except for some dramatic features, it was explained, the B.B.C. children's programs aim "to play with the children rather than before them." Accordingly their audiences are urged to participate by singing, marching, or otherwise following the narrators' instructions. There was general agreement that with children's programs even more than with those for adults, the big problem is to stimulate viewers to do things for themselves. Suggestions on how to do this came from many delegates: a successful San Francisco series for example, dramatizes the first portion of a story, but sends the children to the library to read the conclusion for themselves; and over in Moscow, children are asked to complete from their own imaginations stories begun during telecasts.

Adult Education.—The most stimulating adult education programs were of the "grass roots" variety. French television has set up "tele-clubs" in a number of poor and backward rural areas. Each of these raises money for a community television set through public subscription, installing it in a school house or other public building for school use during the day and for tele-club viewers at night. Several evenings each week a good share of the adult

[7] Viewed was "Andy Pandy." Other B.B.C. puppet films for this age level include "Muffin the Mule," "The Flowerpot Men," and "Rag, Tag, and Bobtail."

[8] In the course of the seminar, one of the Russian delegates said that he had been shocked to see a kinescope of an American children's program in which a small boy dressed in a cowboy suit had brandished a toy gun. Such a militant gesture, he stated, would never be tolerated even in play on the television screens of the Soviet Union.

population in these localities—often accompanied by children, since rural France too has its baby-sitter problem—assembles to view general entertainment features as well as instructional programs designed especially for them. The latter programs deal with the mundane problems encountered by these people in their daily living, such as the installation of running water in their homes or the mechanization of their farms.[9]

The seminar also viewed one WOI-TV "Whole Town's Talking" program which demonstrated how the average man can be made to talk before the camera (apparently a universal problem), and how a provocative telecast about a pressing local issue can stimulate remedial community action. Since the average Iowa farm within range of a television station is quite certain to be television equipped, there was no need for communal viewing as in France; nevertheless, there were points of similarity between the two series of programs, and it was interesting to learn that the French series was developed after viewing the Iowa kinescopes.

The great emphasis placed by the B.B.C. upon remote programs came in for considerable comment. (Incidentally, it calls them "Outside Broadcasts" or "O.B.'s," an abbreviation which proved amusing to the American contingent!) In the B.B.C. television as in radio, a separate department with its own writers and producers has been set up to handle such broadcasts. This has led to great emphasis upon the televising of natural television spectacles, like the Coronation and the Trooping of the Colour, and of public events and athletic contests, as well as to the broadcasting of many programs created and produced by the Outside Broadcasts department. The example viewed—a visit to one of Britain's major cathedrals—was distinguished by careful camera work, and had a thoughtfully written script which was well read by one of the B.B.C.'s best known personalities. The program succeeded admirably in conveying the religious atmosphere and historical associations of the Cathedral.

[9] The story of the tele-clubs is told by their founder Roger Louis in *Television, An Experiment in Community Reception in French Villages (Clearing House Series Number 5, August 1952;* Paris: UNESCO).

Somewhat related to remote broadcasting was the Eurovision project in which the countries of western Europe exchanged a number of live television programs. The formidable problems posed by the use of three different and entirely incompatible technical standards were surmounted by having a picture of one standard picked up from an ordinary viewing tube and retransmitted by another camera, much as a kinescope recorder photographs the image on a tube, except that no recording was involved here, since pick up and retransmission were simultaneous. The success of the dozen or so programs involved in the Eurovision exchange was credited to the vividness with which they transported their audiences to countries and events they otherwise would seldom or never visit: viewers participated in football matches, auto races, historical pageants, and city tours.

Program Comparisons.—It is impossible to say that the broadcasts of any one country represented at the seminar were consistently superior to those of any other: no one has a monopoly on skill or creative talent. A number of the European programs approximated good films rather than telecasts, although this is to be expected in view of the relatively limited experience some of them have had in television, and the small budgets on which they must operate. However, the B.B.C. skill both in program planning and production received very high praise, and in certain areas their output was equal to or better than that of the United States. Children's programs, Outside Broadcasts, and talks have already been mentioned. Though not a subject of discussion at any formal sessions, the work of the B.B.C. in serious drama was noticed by the delegates: in Britain, ninety-minute telecasts of the world's great classics as well as of lighter contemporary material are a regular feature. With acting on a par with that of the London stage, the superb B.B.C. dramatic productions may be accepted as a criterion.[10]

[10] For such programs, the B.B.C. has developed ingenious rear-screen projection methods. By reflecting the output of a slide back and forth on several mirrors, the image is made progressively larger until at the final (usually second or third) stage, it covers a large background, in spite of the fact that the total amount of working space may be very limited. On occasion whole plays have been done with all settings created this way, and with excellent results.

Nevertheless, the best programs of all were from American sources. Such things as the C.B.S.'s *Adventure* and the same network's news analyses embodied more of the requirements of first-rate television than did the productions of any other country. These programs combine live-studio commentaries with film inserts, using each to best advantage—the former to maintain topicality, the latter as a remote television camera to surmount the otherwise limiting barriers of time and space. In both writing and delivery, these telecasts were direct and forceful. Above all, they maintained audience interest without sacrificing subject-matter balance or accuracy. It is often disappointing to see what American television, despite its enormous resources, does with its serious output as to amount, quality, treatment, and hours of scheduling. Therefore, it is immensely gratifying to know that when we do make the effort, and provide the proper combination of facilities and talent, we can lead the world.

Results

What was accomplished during the seminar? Much was learned and a great deal of information exchanged during these three weeks. Delegates became aware of the basically different conditions under which broadcasting is done, and consequently realized the impossibility of judging the results by only one set of standards. At the same time they were often delighted to discover how universal are the problems of producing serious and cultural television programs. Furthermore, as they viewed and discussed each other's kinescopes, they developed more and more mutual respect: some programs were good and some were poor, but every country offered at least a few praiseworthy examples. In addition to this, new international friendships were formed among workers in the most powerful mass-communications medium in the world today, in itself a worthwhile achievement.

At its last session, the group discussed procedures for extending the results of the seminar. These delegates, of course, spoke only for themselves, and not for their professional colleagues at home

or for their governments. Nevertheless they agreed, on the national level, to disseminate the results of the course as widely as possible; to organize institutes and workshops in order to bring together producers and content experts; and to develop programs which would inform their viewers about foreign countries, as well as about little known parts of their own countries. On the international level, it was agreed to exchange kinescopes, films, and scripts for both study and broadcast purposes; to loan and borrow stock footage and other material which one country might use in developing programs about another; to provide both personnel and technical equipment so that representatives of visiting foreign stations could produce programs about the host country for their own viewers; to arrange further international seminars like this one; and to provide for the short-term international exchange of producers and directors.

All this must be gratifying to the mass-communications department of UNESCO, which sponsored the course, and to Dr. Henry Cassirer, Program Specialist for Radio and Television, who more than anyone else was responsible for its organization and success.

A Bibliography for the Quarter

Book Editor, FRANKLIN FEARING

FOR THE FOURTH successive year, all programs appearing on all New York TV stations during one week of January have been monitored. The results are reported in *Monitoring Study Number 7, Four Years of New York Television 1951–54* (National Association of Educational Broadcasters, Gregory Hall, Urbana, Illinois, no price given). Previous reports presented the results of monitoring studies in Chicago and Los Angeles, in addition to New York, and were under the general direction of Professor Dallas W. Smythe. The present study was conducted by the Purdue Opinion Panel, H. H. Remmers, Director, and Robert E. Mainer, Associate Project Director. In these investigations, the general procedure has been the same. A staff of trained persons monitor all the programs for a specified week (in the New York studies, a week in January); the programs are classified according to content (drama, information, variety, etc.); "primary" and "secondary" advertising is clocked; and the number and type of acts of violence are recorded.

In the present study, there are some minor changes in program classifications and in certain other aspects of the method; but there is sufficient similarity in procedures to make comparisons over a four-year period meaningful and to give a picture of what Professor Smythe in the earlier studies has aptly called the shape of the world as revealed on TV screens.

The most important difference between the present and earlier studies is the omission in 1954 of a category of analysis which was called "stereotyping" by Professor Smythe. The purpose of this category was to obtain a picture of the personality traits of characters portrayed on TV dramatic programs. Although this reviewer made some critical comments regarding Professor Smythe's use of the term "stereotype," his method for getting at the characterology of the TV world was ingenious; and that it

has been omitted is regrettable. No explanation is offered in the 1954 report for the elimination.

The accumulation of data from these surveys makes possible interesting comparisons of TV fare over a four-year period. Quite properly, the authors point out that great caution is needed in interpreting any differences in the percentages obtained in successive years as evidence for statistically reliable trends. Some of these differences may be chance rather than "true" variations. Here is a sampling of some of the more important findings:

(1) As in previous years, New York TV has remained primarily an entertainment medium. In 1954, entertainment-type programs occupied 77.7 per cent of all program time. The remainder of the time was divided between information-type programs (17 per cent) and orientation-type programs (4.9 per cent).

(2) Drama continued to occupy the largest proportion of the time given to entertainment and accounted for 46 per cent of the total weekly program time. The three largest subclasses of drama were comedy (11.1 per cent), crime (13.5 per cent), and western drama (7.1 per cent). In 1951, the proportion of time devoted to drama was 33 per cent; in 1952, 42 per cent, and in 1953, 47 per cent.

(3) Over the years, there has been very little change in the proportion of time in the so-called children's hours devoted to drama—the range has been from 55 per cent in 1951 to 57 per cent in 1954.

(4) During the study week, 7,065 acts and threats of violence occurred on New York TV screens. This is more than twice the total of 3,421 acts and threats monitored in 1953. Possibly some of this increase may be due to a more liberal interpretation of the criteria for "violence" by the 1954 monitors.

(5) Ninety-seven per cent of the violence occurred on "entertainment" programs.

(6) The highest frequency of violence was found in the comedy drama for children with an average of 66 acts or threats of violence per hour. It is interesting to note that children's comedy drama largely consisted of animated cartoons.

(7) Eighty-one per cent of the acts and threats of violence were committed by human agents.

(8) There has been little change since 1952 in the proportion of time devoted to advertising. "Primary" (that which interrupts the

program) and "secondary" (that which does not) together account for 18 per cent of the total program time.

(9) As in previous years, public-issue programs used a very small proportion of TV time. In 1951, it was 1.4 per cent; in 1952, 1.9 per cent; in 1953, 1.5 per cent; and in 1954, 1.8 per cent.

The report contains many additional details, some of them extremely interesting, but the foregoing gives the highlights of the TV picture. Whether they are viewed with alarm or complacency depends on what one expects the function of TV to be in a democratic society. The investigators' continued preoccupation with violence no doubt reflects the current concern with the supposed causal relationship between violence in the mass media and delinquency, especially juvenile deliquency. There is no clear evidence that such a specific relationship exists; and when Professor Smythe introduced this category, he was careful to point this out. The present report contains no such disclaimer.

* * *

There is a notable lack of studies which attempt international comparisons of the content of any of the mass media. For this reason, *Some Comparisons between British and American Television* by John T. Suchy (mimeographed and distributed by the National Association of Educational Broadcasters, Gregory Hall, Urbana, Illinois, no price given) is important. This report is a portion (two chapters) of a thesis entitled "British Television, August 12–25, 1953, A Content Analysis of Programs," which was submitted by John Suchy for the Master of Arts degree in Journalism at the State University of Iowa, and is now on file in the University Library in Iowa City, Iowa.

Mr. Suchy's research has additional interest because he applied to British TV the monitoring techniques developed by Dallas Smythe for the New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles monitoring studies. Chief differences between the American and British investigations were (1) the British study covered two weeks instead of one, (2) the study weeks in Britain were in August instead of

January, and (3) the British programs were monitored by one person—the author of the report.

The results of the study may best be summarized by quoting selected portions from Mr. Suchy's "Summary and Conclusions":

(1) Programs took more time on each of the seven New York stations for an observation week in 1953 than they did on the B.B.C. television.

(2) New York television had smaller percentages of many kinds of programs than did the B.B.C., but this does not tell the whole story. The actual times taken by New York programs were often greater because the total program time for all New York stations was much the greater. The New York viewer could see more hours of programs in almost every category than could the British viewer.

(3) A slightly smaller proportion of the B.B.C. programs were entertainment-type than were New York programs. Slightly larger percentages of the B.B.C. programs were information-type and orientation-type.

(4) The B.B.C. television programs were not required to fit into rigid time limits as were New York programs.

(5) There were no commercials or "public service announcements" on the B.B.C. television.

(6) The B.B.C. frequently televised public events, national ceremonies, parades, reviews, etc. This gave occasion for a remark: "It's easy to find the Queen these days; just follow the 'outside broadcast' television cameras."

(7) The B.B.C. had special daily hour-long transmissions for children and special regular programs for the very young, and for deaf children.

(8) Drama was a popular kind of entertainment on both television systems. New York TV had a considerably larger share of its evening (adult) hours given over to drama than did the B.B.C.

(9) New York TV when studied by Smythe had nearly twice as many acts of and threats of violence per hour as did the B.B.C.

(10) Of all drama on both television systems, children's was the most violent kind, but New York children's TV drama had more than twice as many acts and threats of violence as did that of the B.B.C.

(11) Twelve of the B.B.C. acts and threats of violence—nearly a quarter of those in all British children's drama programs—happened during one episode of an American western serial film.

(12) Human agents caused far more violence than nonhuman agents

on both television systems, though accidents and acts of animals were responsible for greater percentages of violence on the B.B.C. television than on New York programs.

(13) As a weapon, the gun was less than half as popular in the B.B.C. programs as it was in New York TV. The club or stick and the whip (on animals) were used more often than the gun for committing the B.B.C. acts and threats of violence.

There are many other interesting comparisons. After commenting on the various favorable and unfavorable characteristics of the two systems, the author continues:

But aside from all of these things, the New York viewer, by judicious twisting of his dial among seven stations, could find in 1953 more program material of practically every kind than the British viewer could find on the B.B.C. In addition, television was available in New York at almost any time of the day. In London it was available a little over five hours daily.

* * *

The 1954 monitoring study of New York TV reports that during the study week 121.4 hours of program time were devoted to advertising. Whether this is too much or too little can be endlessly debated; but certainly, regardless of the amount of time they take, without commercials there would be no TV in the United States. A vast amount of energy, money, and some talent goes into their preparation. In that hilarious little book *The Relaxed Sell* (reviewed in the last issue of the *Quarterly*), Thomas Whiteside tells of the incredible goings on in that fantastic world of "flying beer bottles, zooming candy bars, exploding containers of breakfast foods, singing cough drops, and animated coffee cups." *The TV Commercial* (Hastings House, 41 East 50th Street, New York, 1954, $5.00) by Harry Wayne McMahan is quite a different sort of book. With a kind of relentless enthusiasm which leaves the reader almost gasping for breath, it tells "how to create and produce effective TV advertising." The book is beautifully illustrated, smartly written in a sharp staccato style, and printed on heavy paper with a minimum of text. Altogether it is a slick job. Mr. McMahan is obviously a dedicated person. Advertising isn't

just advertising. We learn from the Foreword (written by Leo Burnett) that the book not only points to a more efficient expenditure of TV commercial dollars, but "may be even to an improved commerical culture." The main purpose of advertising nowadays is to sell "I-D-E-A-S." In the old, bad days "you might have given a sample of cheese to interest some one in buying a goat"—apparently as an actual sample of what the goat could do. Now "in a more complex world," the woman buys the *idea* "that enriched flour means better health for her family," or the young girl buys the idea that the "home permanent will mean greater popularity for herself." There are, it seems, four basic "buying urges" which result in a "S-A-L-E." These are Self-preservation ("man wants food and shelter"), Ambition ("this is a secondary drive not as powerful but it does motivate buying"), Love ("sex motivates the cash register, as all cosmetics advertisers are aware"), and Economy ("*E* marks the start of Economy and the completion of SAL*E*").

Thus armed by psychological and sociological theory, analyses of the relative effectiveness of such TV advertising techniques as puppets, photo animation, singing jingles, station-break spots, etc., and many pages of photographs illustrating good and bad examples of TV commercials, the reader can scarcely fail to produce TV commercials that SELL.

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Staging TV Programs and Commercials by Robert J. Wade (Hastings House, 41 East 50th Street, New York, 1954, $6.50) is a much soberer book. It is a handbook for those concerned with methods and standard practices in the physical staging of TV shows. There are chapters on production facilities, scenic construction, TV design and scenic painting, properties, lighting, special effects, and graphics. On the whole, the style is easy and seems nontechnical. Amply illustrated, this book concludes with a list of suppliers of TV production facilities and equipment. The author has had experience in the commercial theater, has been on the N.B.C.-TV staff as art director, and is at present a free lance set designer.

In *The Concise Usage and Abusage* (Philosophical Library, New York, 1954, $3.50), Eric Partridge presents a shortened version of the older work. As a guide to good English, it is a supplement to Fowler's *Modern English Usage,* although it does not seem to have quite the polish of that latter wonderful book. All books of this sort make fascinating reading—as, indeed, do dictionaries—but when this reviewer is in a usage quandary, he never seems able to locate the particular reference that fits the case.

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Linguistics is one of the more esoteric departments of specialized learning. The language in which language is talked about bristles with difficulties for the layman. Yet his interest in the field is reflected by the increasing number of popular books on the subject. *Dictionary of Linguistics* (Philosophical Library, New York, 1954, $6.00) by Mario A. Pei and Frank Gaynor is (according to the dust cover) the first of its kind, and should be useful to all those interested in language study, even the layman.

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The Department of Information of UNESCO has issued *Bibliography on Filmology as Related to the Social Sciences* (UNESCO, 19, Avenue Kleber, Paris 16e, February, 1954, no price given). Compiled by Jan C. Bouman of the Institute of Psychology at the University of Stockholm, the book includes titles of journal papers, books, and book chapters. European as well as English and American sources are covered, and all titles are translated into English and/or French. What time span the compiler intended to cover is not exactly clear; the earliest title is 1922, and there do not seem to be any titles later than 1951. This is an excellent job, although, of course, there are omissions. It would have been useful if a certain number of titles in closely related fields had been included. For example, the methods and theory of content analysis—now an inescapable part of research on films—seems to be omitted entirely. A compilation of this sort is a truly colossal undertaking, and the author is to be congratulated for the beginning he has made.