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Contents

The Dinamic Square. Serge Eisenstein ........ 2
Notes on the Portuguese Cinema. Alves Costa .... 17
Stills and their Relation to Modern Cinema. Oswell Blakeston .... 20
The Theatre of the Future and the Talking Film. Zygmunt Tonecki .... 27
Brief History of Czech Motion Pictures. Karel Santar .... 34
Eye and Ear in the Theatre. Mark Segal .... 38
La Petite Lise. Jean Lenauer .... 44
Education as a By-Product. Clifford Howard .... 46
Strange Adventure of David Gray .... 50
The Future of the Amateur Film Movement. L. B. Duckworth .... 52
Educational and Cultural Film Commission. Mary Chadwick .... 55
My First Sound Film. Eugen Deslaw .... 61
Prelude to a Criticism of the Movies. Herman G. Weinberg .... 62
The New Kino. H. A. Potamkin .... 64
FEATURE ARTICLE.—As Is, by Kenneth Macpherson .... 71

Comment and Review. Notice to Readers and Contributors; International Review of Educational Cinematography; Oxford Film Society; News from Holland; Recapitulation; Borderline; Cape Forlorn; White Man’s Negro.

London Correspondent: Robert Herring
Paris Correspondent: Jean Lenauer
Berlin Correspondent: A. Kraszna-Krausz
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Hollywood Correspondent: Clifford Howard
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THE DINAMIC SQUARE

Suggestions in favour of new proportions for the cinematographic screen advanced in connection with the practical realisation of “wide film.”

This article is based on the speech made by S. M. Eisenstein during a discussion on “Wide Film” in Relation to Motion Picture Production Technique at a meeting organised by the Technicians Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, in conjunction with the Directors and Producers Branches, Fox Hills Studio, Hollywood, September 17th.

“It is possible that, at first glance, this article may seem too detailed or its subject not of sufficiently “profound” value, but it is my wish to point out the basic importance of this problem for every creative art director, director, and cameraman. And I appeal to them to take this problem as seriously as possible. For a shudder takes me when I think that, by not devoting enough attention to this problem, and permitting the standardisation of a new screen shape without the thorough weighing of all the pros and cons of the question, we risk paralysing once more, for years and years to come, our compositional efforts in new shapes as unfortunately chosen as those from which the practical realisation of the Wide Film and Wide Screen now seems to give us the opportunity of freeing ourselves.”

S. M. E.

MR. CHAIRMAN, Gentlemen of the Academy,—

I think this actual moment is one of the great historical moments in the pictorial development of the screen. At the moment when incorrect handling of sound is at the point of ruining the pictorial achievements of the screen—and we all know only too many examples where this actually has been done!—the arrival of the wide screen with its opportunities for a new screen shape throws us once more headlong into questions of purely spacial composition. And much more—it affords us the possibility of reviewing and reanalysing the whole aesthetic of pictorial composition in the cinema which for thirty years has been rendered inflexible by the inflexibility of the once and forever inflexible frame proportions of the screen.

Gee, it is a great day!

And the more tragical therefore appears the terrible enslavement of mind by traditionalisation and tradition that manifests itself on this happy occasion.
The card of invitation to this meeting bears the representation of three differently proportioned horizontal rectangles: \(3 \times 4: 3 \times 5: 3 \times 6\), as suggestions for the proportions of the screen for wide film projection. They also represent the limits within which revolves the creative imagination of the screen reformers and the authors of the coming era of a new frame shape.

I do not desire to be exaggeratedly symbolic, nor rude, and compare the creeping rectangles of these proposed shapes to the creeping mentality of the film thereto reduced by the weight upon it of the commercial pressure of dollars, pounds, francs, or marks according to the locality in which the cinema happens to be suffering!

But I must point out that, in proposing these proportions for discussion, we only reinforce the fact that for thirty years we have been content to see excluded 50 per cent. of composition possibilities, in consequence of the horizontal shape of the frame.

By those excluded I mean all the possibilities of vertical, upright composition. And instead of using the opportunity afforded by the advent of wide film to break that loathsome upper part of the frame, which for thirty years—six years myself personally—has bent us and obliged us to a passive horizontalism, we are on the point of emphasising this horizontalism still more.

It is my purpose to defend the cause of this 50 per cent. of compositional possibilities exiled from the light of the screen. It is my desire to intone the hymn of the male, the strong, the virile, active, vertical composition!

I am not anxious to enter into the dark phallic and sexual ancestry of the vertical shape as symbol of growth, strength, or power. It would be too easy and possibly too offensive for many a delicate hearer!

But I do want to point out that the movement towards a vertical perception led our hairy ancestors on their way to a higher level. This vertical tendencies can be traced in their biological, cultural, intellectual and industrial efforts and manifestations.

We started as worms creeping on our stomach. Then we ran horizontally for hundreds of years on our four legs. But we became something like mankind only from the moment when we hoisted ourselves onto our hind legs and assumed the vertical position.

Repeating the same process locally in the verticalisation of our facial angle too.

I cannot enter in detail nor is such entry necessary, into an outline of the whole influence of the biological and psychological revolution and shock sequential as result of that paramount change of attitude. Enough if we mention his activities. For long years man was shepherded in tribes on outspread endless fields, bound to the earth in an age-long bondage by the nature of the primitive plough. But he marked in vertical milestones each summit of his progress to a higher level of social, cultural, or intellectual development. The upright lingam of the mystic Indian knowledge of the olden time, the obelisks of the Egyptian astrologers, Trajan’s column in-
carnating the political power of Imperial Rome, the cross of the new spirit brought in by Christianity. The high point of mediæval mystic knowledge bursting upright in the Gothic ogive arch and spire. Just as the era of exact mathematical knowledge shouts its paean in the sky with the Eiffel Tower! And introduces the huge skylines assailing the vault of amazed heaven with armies of skyscrapers and the infinite rows of smoking chimneys or trellissed oilpumps of our great industries. The endless trails of wandering waggons have heaped themselves upon one another to form the tower of a Times or Chrysler building. And the camp fire, once homely centre of the travellers’ camp, has now paused to vomit its smoke from the unending heights of factory chimneys...

By now, surely, you will suppose that my suggestion for the optical frame of the supreme and most synthetic of all arts—the possibilities of all of which are included in the cinema notwithstanding the fact that it doesn’t use them!—is that it must be vertical.

Not at all.

For in the heart of the super-industrialised American, or the busily self-industrialising Russian, there still remains a nostalgia of infinite horizons, of fields, of plains and deserts. Individual or nation attaining the height of mechanicalisation and yet marrying it to our peasant and farmer yesterday.

The nostalgia of "big trails," "fighting caravans," "covered waggons" and the endless breadth of "old man rivers"...

This nostalgia cries out for horizontal space.
And on the other hand industrial culture too sometimes brings tribute to this "despised form." She throws the interminable Brooklyn Bridge to the left of Manhattan and attempts to surpass it by Hudson Bridge to the right. She expands without end the length of the body of poor Puffing Billy to that of the Southern Pacific locomotives of to-day. She lines up endless out-spread chains of human bodies (as a matter of fact—legs) in the innumerable rows of music-hall girls, and indeed what boundary is there to the other horizontal victories of the age of electricity and steel!

Just as, in contrast to her pantheistic horizontal tendencies, mother nature provides us at the edge of Death Valley or Majave Desert with the huge 300 feet height of the General Sherman and General Grant trees, and the other giant Sequoias, created (if we may believe the geography school books of every country) to serve as tunnels for coaches or motor cars to pass through their pierced feet. Just as, opposed to the infinite horizontal con-trendanse of the waves, at the edge of the ocean, we encounter the same element shot upright to the sky as geyser. Just as the crocodile basking extendedly in the sun is flanked by upright standing Giraffe in the company of the Ostrich and Flamingo—all three clamouring for a decent screen frame appropriate to their upright shape!

So neither the horizontal nor the vertical proportion of the screen alone is ideal for it.

Actuality, as we saw, in the forms of nature as in the forms of industry, and in the encounters together of these forms, we have the fight, the conflict of both tendencies. And the screen, as a faithful mirror, not only of conflicts emotional and tragic, but equally of conflicts psychological and optically spacial, must be an appropriate battle ground for the skirmishes of both these optical-by-view, but profoundly psychological-by-meaning space tendencies of the spectator.

What is it that, by readjustment can in equal degree be made the figure of both vertical and horizontal tendencies of a picture?

The battlefield for such a fight is easily found—it is the square—the space form of rectangle exemplifying the quality of equal length of its dominant axes.

The only and unique form equally fit by alternate suppression of right and left, or of up and down, to embrace all the multitude of expressive rectangles of the world. Or used as a whole to engrave itself by the "cosmic" imperturbability of its squareness in the psychology of the audience.

And this specially in a dinamic succession of dimensions from a tiny square in the centre to the all embracing of a full sized square of the whole screen!

The "dinamic" square screen, that is to say one providing in its dimensions the opportunity of impressing, in projection, with absolute grandeur every geometrically conceivable form of the picture limit.
From Eisenstein's latest film, shot in Mexico.

Le film le plus recent de Monsieur Eisenstein, tourné en Mexique.

Aus Mexico Photos von Eisenstein's letztem Film
(Note here 1: This means that dynamism of changeable proportion of the projected picture is accomplished by masking a part of the shape of the film square—the frame.

And Note here 2: This has nothing to do with the suggestion that the proportions 1:2 (3:6) give a "vertical possibility" in masking the right and the left to such an extent that the remaining area has the form of an upright standing strip. The vertical spirit can never thus be attained: 1st: because the occupied space comparative to the horizontal masked space will never be interpreted as something axially opposed to it, but always as a part of the latter, and 2nd: for, never surpassing the height that is bound to the horizontal dominant, it will never impress as an opposite space axis—the one of uprightness. That is why my suggestion of squareness puts the question in a quite new field notwithstanding the fact that vari-typed masking has been used even in the dull proportions of the present standard film size, and even by myself.—First shot of Odessa-stair in Potemkin.)

No matter what the theoretic premises, only the square will provide us the real opportunity at last to give decent shots of so many things banished from the screen until to-day. Glimpses through winding mediæval streets or huge Gothic cathedrals overwhelming them. Or these replaced by minarets if the town portrayed should happen to be oriental. Decent shots of totem poles. The Paramount building in New York, Primo Carnera, or the profound and abysmal canyons of Wall Street in all their expressiveness—shots available to the cheapest magazine—yet exiled for thirty years from the screen.

So far for my form.

And I believe profoundly in the rightness of my statement because of the synthetic approach upon which its conclusions are based. Further, the warm reception of my statement encourages me to a certainty in the theoretic soundness of my argument.

But the lying form of the screen (so appropriate to its lying spirit!) has a host of refined and sophisticated defenders. There exists even a special and peculiar literature on these questions and we should leave our case incomplete did we not pass in critical review the arguments therein contained for the form it prefers.

Rio Papagayo, Guerrero, Mexico.

THE DINAMIC SQUARE.

II

The memorandum distributed to us before this meeting (attached to this discourse as appendix) and brilliantly compiled by Mr. Lester Cowan (assistant secretary of the Academy) provides a brief and objective survey of all that has been written regarding the proportions of the screen and in some of these writings share a preference for the horizontal frame.
Let us examine the arguments that have brought different authors from different sides and specialities, to the same, unanimously acclaimed ... wrong suggestion.

The principle arguments are four:
Two from the dominion of aesthetics.
One physiological.
And one commercial.
Let us demolish them in the order quoted.

The two aesthetic arguments in favour of the horizontal shape of the screen are based on deductions deriving from traditions in the art forms of painting and stage practice. As such they should be eliminated from discussion even without being taken into consideration for the greatest errors invariably arise from the attempt to transplant practical results based upon the resemblance of the superficial appearances of one branch of art to those of another. (An entirely different practice is the discovery of similarity in methods and principles of different arts corresponding to the psychological phenomena identical and basic for all art perceptions—but the present superficially exposed analogies, as we shall see, are far from this!)

Indeed, from the methodological similarity of different arts it is our task to seek out the strictest differentiation in adapting and handling them according to the organic specifics typical for each. To enforce adoption of the laws organic to one art upon another is profoundly wrong. This practice has something of adultery in it. Like sleeping in another person's wife's bed... 

But in this case the arguments in themselves bring so mistaken a suggestion from their own proper dominion that it is worth while considering them to demonstrate their falsity.

1. Lloyd A. Jones (No 9 on the list) discusses the various rectangular proportions employed in artistic composition and gives the result of a statistical study of the proportions of paintings. The results of his research seem to favour a ratio of base to altitude considerably larger than 1, and probably over 1.5.

A statement startling in itself. I don't repudiate the enormous statistical luggage that was doubtless at the disposal of Mr. Jones in enabling him to make so decisive a statement.

But as I set about summoning up my pictorial recollections gathered through all the museums that I have so lately visited during my rush through Europe and America, and recalling the heaps of graphic works and compositions studied during my work, it seems to me that there are exactly as many upright standing pictures as pictures disposed in horizontal line.

And everyone will agree with me.

The statistical paradox of Mr. Jones derives probably from an undue weight placed upon compositional proportions of the 19th century pre-impressionistic period—the worst period of painting—the 'narrative' type of picture. Those second and third rate paintings, right off the progressive
highroad of painting development, and even to-day far surpassing in volume the new schools of painting, abundant even in the neighbourhood of Picasso and Leger as petty-bourgeois oleographs in most concierge offices of the world!

In this "narrative" group of painting the 1:1.5 proportion is certainly predominant, but this fact is absolutely unreliable if considered from the point of view of pictorial composition. These proportions in themselves are "borrowed goods"—entirely unconnected with pictorial space organisation, which is a painting problem. These proportions are barefacedly borrowed—not to say stolen!—from... the stage.

The stage composition each of these pictures intentionally or unintentionally reproduces, a process in itself quite logical, since the pictures of this school are occupied not with pictorial problems but with "representing scenes"—a painting purpose even formulated in stage terms!

I mention the 19th century as specially abounding in this type of picture, but I do not wish to convey the impression that other periods are entirely lacking in them! Consider, for example, the Hogarth series Marriage à la Mode—satirically and scenically in their "represented" anecdotes a most thrilling series of pictures... and only.

It is remarkable that in another case, where the author of the painting was, practically and professionally, at the same time stage composer (or "art director" as we would say in Hollywood) this phenomenon has no place. I mean the case of the medieval miniature. Authors of the tiniest filigree brushwork in the world, on the leaves of gilded bibles or livres d'heures (do not confound with hors d'oeuvres!), they were at the same time architects of the various settings of the mysteries and miracles. (Thus Fouquet and an innumerable mass of artists whose names have been lost to posterity.) Here, where, owing to subject, we ought to have the closest reproduction of the aperture of the stage—we miss it. And find a freedom entirely void of such bounds. And why? Because at that time the stage aperture did not exist. The stage was then limited far off to right and left by Hell and Heaven, covered with frontally disposed parts of settings (the so-called mansions) with blue unlimited sky overshadowing them—like in many Passion Plays of to-day.

Thus we prove that the supposedly "predominant" and characteristic form of the painting by itself belongs properly to another branch of art.

And from the moment in which painting liberates itself by an impressionistic movement, turning to purely pictorial problems, it abolishes every form of apertura and establishes as example and ideal the framelessness of a Japanese impressionistic drawing. And, symbolic as it may be, it is the time to dawn for... photography. Which, extraordinary to remark, conserves in its later metempsychosis, the moving picture, certain (eitai this time) traditions of this period of the maturity of one art (painting) and the infantilism of a following art (photography). Notice the relationship between Hokusai's
100 Views of Fuji and so many camera shots made with the so pronounced tendency towards shooting two plans of depth—one through another (specially Fuji seen through a cobweb and Fuji seen through the legs, or Edgar Degas, whose startling series of compositions of women in the bath, modists and blanchisseuses, is the best school in which to acquire training ideas about space compositions within the limits of a frame—and about frame composition too, which, in these series, restlessly jumps from 1:2 over 1:1 to 2:1).

This is, I think, the right point at which to quote one of Miles (1) arguments much more closely concerned with the pictorial element here discussed than with the physiological where it was intended to be placed. For Miles, "the whole thing (the inclination towards horizontal perception) is perhaps typified in the openings through which the human eye looks; this is characteristically much wider than it is high."

Let us suppose for a moment this argument to be true in itself, and we can even provide him with a brilliant example for his statement, one even "plus royaliste que le roi."—Still it won't help him!—But, by the way, the example is the typical shape of a typical Japanese landscape woodcut. This is the only type of standardised (not occasional) composition known, compositionally unlimited at the sides by the bounds of no frame, and typified in its vertical limit by a shaded narrow strip from lowest white to, at its topmost, darkest blue, rushing in this limited space through all the shades of this celestial colour.
This last phenomenon is explained as the impression of the shadow falling on the eye from the upper eyelid, caught by the supersensitive observation of the Japanese.

It might be presumed that, we have here, in this configuration the fullest pictorial testimony to the above view of Miles. But once more we must disappoint: in as much as the idea of a framed picture derives not from the limits of the view field of our eyes but from the fact of the usual framedness of the glimpse of nature we catch through the frame of the window or the door—or stage aperture as shown above—equally the composition of the Japanese derives from his lack of door frames, doors being replaced by the sliding panels of the walls of a typical Japanese house opening onto an infinite horizon.

But, even supposing that this shape represents the proportions of the view field, we must yet consider another remarkable phenomenon of Japanese art: the materialisation on paper of the above mentioned absence of side boundaries in the form of the horizontal roll picture born, only in Japan and China, and not ruling elsewhere. I would call it unroll picture, because unwound horizontally from one roll to another it shows interminable episodes of battles, festivals, processions. Example, the pride of the Boston Museum: the many feet long Burning of the Palace of Yedo. Or the immortal Killing of the Bear in the Emperor's Garden at Bloomsbury. Having created this unique type of horizontal picture out of the supposed horizontal tendency of perception, the Japanese, with their supersensitive artistic feeling, then created, illogical as it may be according to the view of Mr. Miles, the opposite form—as a matter of purely aesthetic need for counter-balance, for Japan (with China) is also the birthplace of the vertical roll picture. The tallest of all vertical compositions (if we disregard the Gothic vertical window compositions). Roll pictures are also found to take the form of curiously shaped coloured woodcuts of upright composition, with the most amazing compositional disposition of faces, dresses, background elements and stage attributes.

This, I hold, shows pretty clearly that even if the diagnosis of perception as horizontal should be correct (which should by no means be regarded as proved), vertical composition also is needed as harmonic counter-balance to it.

This tendency towards harmony, and perceptive equilibrium, is of a nature quite other than a different "harmonic" and "aesthetic" argument introduced by another group of defendants of the horizontal screen.

To quote Mr. Cowan's summary:

"Howell and Bubray (10), Lane (7), Westerberg (11), and Dieterich (8) agree that the most desirable proportions are those approximating 1.618:1, which correspond to those of the so-called "whirling square" rectangle (also known as the "golden cut"), based on the principles of dynamic symmetry which have predominated in the arts for centuries. For simplicity
the ratio 5:3 (which equals 1.667:1), or 8.5 (equalling 1.6:1) are generally advocated instead of 1.618:1. . . .”

“Predomination in the arts for centuries” should in itself be a cause for the profoundest suspicion when application is considered to an entirely and basically new form of art, such as the youngest art, the art of cinema.

Cinema is the first and only art based entirely on dynamic and speed phenomena, and yet everlasting as a cathedral or a temple; having, with the latter the characteristics of the static arts—i.e. the possibility of intrinsic existence by itself freed from the creative effort giving it birth (the theatre, the dance, music*—the only dynamic arts before the cinema, lacked this possibility, the quality of everlastingness independent of the art of accomplishing and by this means were characteristically distinguished from the contrasting group of static arts).

Why should a holy veneration for this mistaken “golden cut” persist if all the basic elements of this newcomer in art—the cinema—are entirely different, its premises being entirely different to those of all that has gone before?

Consider the two other denominations of the “golden cut,” denominations expressive for the tendency of these proportions: the “whirling square,” the principle of “dynamic symmetry.”

They are a moan of the static hopelessly longing towards dynamism. These proportions are probably those most fitted to give the maximum tension to the eye in causing it to follow one direction and then throw itself afterwards to follow the other.

But—have we not attained, by projection of our film on the screen, an, in actuality existing “whirling” square?

And have we not discovered in the principle of the rhythmical cutting of the strip an, in actuality existing “dynamic symmetry”? A tendency practically attained and triumphantly materialised by the cinema as a whole. And therefore unnecessary to be advanced by the screen shape.

And why the hell should we drag behind us in these days of triumph the melancholy souvenir of the unaccomplished desire of the static rectangle striving to become dynamic?

Just as the moving picture is the tombstone of the futuristic effort of dynamism in the static painting.

There is no logical basis for conservation of this mystic worship of the “golden cut.” We are far enough away from the Greeks who, in exaggeration of their extraordinary feeling for harmonic proportion used a proportion for their irrigation channels based upon some sacred harmonic formula, dictated by no practical consideration. (Or was that case one of war trenches?) I don’t remember exactly but I do remember that it was some

* The gramophone record, also a dynamic form made everlasting, has to be considered now as a part of the film,
practical enchanneling process determined by considerations purely abstract, aesthetic and unpractical.)

The imposition by force of these century-old proportions upon the month-young wide screen would be as illogical as was this Greek business. And, to finish with all this painting tradition if it be desired to establish the relationship of the screen frame to something else, why on earth not use for comparison the intermediary between painting and the moving picture—the postcard or the amateur photography?

Well, here we can insist that, at least in this field, justice is equally done to both tendencies!

By the mere fact that our pocket Kodak snaps with equal facility and accuracy whether vertical or horizontal shots of our kid, pa, ma or grandma, according to whether they are lying in the sunshine on the beach, or posing hand in hand in their wedding, silver wedding or golden wedding dresses!

The second aesthetic argument emerges from the domain of the theatre and musical show, and, as reproduced by Mr. Cowan, runs as follows:

“... another argument for wide film rests on the possibility inherent in sound pictures which were lacking (were they really lacking??—S.E.) in the silent pictures on presenting entertainment more of the nature of the spoken drama of the stage.” (Rayton (3)).

Conserving my usual politeness, I shall not say outright that this is the most terrific plague hanging over the talkie. I won’t say it, I shall only think it, and shall confine myself to an observation with which every one must agree, viz., that the aesthetics and laws of composition of the sound film and talkie are far off from being established. And to argue at such a moment, from this most doubtful indication of the laws of development of talkies, to consider the present misuse of the talking screen as the basis for a suggestion that will bind us for the next 30 years to come to a proportion fitting that 30 months misuse of the screen, is, to say at least ... presumptuous.

Instead of approaching the stage, the wide screen, in my view, should drag the cinema still further away from it, opening up for that magic force that is montage—an entirely new era of constructive possibilities.

But more of that later—as dessert.

The third distinctly formulated argument for horizontal proportion derives from the domain of physiology. It does not prevent it from being as wrong as those preceding. Dieterich (8) and Miles (1) have pointed out that the wider picture presents itself more accessively to the eye by virtue of the physiological properties of the latter. As Miles says:

“... The eyes have one pair of muscles for moving them in the horizontal but two pairs for moving them in the vertical. Vertical movements are harder to make over a wide visual angle. As man has lived in his natural environment, he has usually been forced to perceive more objects arranged in the horizontal than in the vertical. (!!!—S.E.) This has apparently
established a very deep seated habit which operates throughout his visual perception . . .”

This argument sounds very plausible. But its plausibility in large degree disappears the moment our research glides from the surface of the face provided with its horizontally disposed perceptive eyes towards . . . the neck. Here we could paraphrase exactly the same quotation in the directly opposite sense. For here the mechanism of bending and lifting the head as opposed to its turning movement from right to left provides for exactly the opposite conditions of muscular effort. The lifting and bending of the head (vertical perception) is carried out just as easily as eye movement from left to right (horizontal perception). We see that also in this case, in the purely physiological means of perception, the Wisdom of Nature has provided us with compensatory movements tending to the same all-embracing square harmony. But that is not all.

My example, as well as my counter-example has established another phenomenon of the perceptive auditor: the phenomenon of dynamism in perception. In horizontal dimensions of the eyes and vertical of the head.

And this by itself overthrows another of Dieterich’s (8) arguments:

“On physiological grounds that the total field covered by the vision of both eyes (for fixed head position), and also the field comfortably covered by the vision of both eyes, both approximate, a 5 x 8 rectangular form, although the actual boundaries of these fields are somewhat irregular curves . . .”

For fixed head position . . . but the unfixed head position has just been established and that argument thereby loses its force.

(By the way, the only really insuperably bound and fixed position of the head in a movie theatre is when it is at rest . . . on one’s sweetheart’s shoulder. But we cannot pause for the consideration of such facts, notwithstanding that they concern at the very least 50 per cent. of the audience.)

(To be continued.)

Serge Eisenstein.
NOTES ON THE PORTUGUESE CINEMA

A new Portuguese film was shown in December: *A Vida do Soldado*, directed by Anibal Contreiras, a documentary record of the life of Portuguese recruits.

Each physically fit man is obliged to go into the army at the age of twenty. Men from the provinces have to leave their families, their homes and their fiancées and go to Lisbon to carry out their military service. Many of them in all their lives, have never before left their little native village and their arrival in the city, their first contacts with big buildings, large avenues, the enormous traffic, the cars that cross the streets with such speed in many directions, the traffic policemen, all give many opportunities for picturesque and "tragic" events. Some days later they begin life at the barracks and then the various exercises start that will continue for weeks and months until the end of their military service.

It is this life that is recounted in the film by Anibal Contreiras. But I did not care for it altogether because it was full of errors and a disjointedness of rhythm. It is well photographed and if certain of its scenes are good cinema and successful, the montage has little unity. Nevertheless, we must remember that this is the first important work for which Anibal Contreiras has been responsible, and in a future film no doubt many of the mistakes of this will disappear.
It is strange that *A Vida do Soldado* should be the sixth big Portuguese documentary film to be presented during the past year. Portuguese documentary films belong to two classes: the purely documentary picture such as *Alfama*, *Nazaret*, or *Lisboa*, and the romantic ones such as *Maria do Mar*, *Castelo das Berlengas* and *A Vida do Soldado*, and they represent up to now, the best of our cinematographic production.

Portuguese directors ought never to leave this form of cinema, for the following reason. Countries with a limited production can never throw themselves into cinematographic realisations of super films, not only because large sums of money are needed, but particularly because of the non-existence of good and suitably equipped studios. For these countries pure or romantic documentary films are ideally cinematographic forms to employ, and those that have the greatest guarantee of an artistic and commercial success.

Portugal gives a good example of this, for as long as the Portuguese cineastes wanted to copy foreign countries and make filmed romances, they only achieved a possible picture on two or three occasions in several years. Now that they have realised their mistake, good films become immeasurably greater, in number and in value.

I wrote in my article which appeared in the December issue of *Close Up*, about *Maria do Mar* and *Lisboa* and in this I have mentioned *A Vida do Soldado*. There is also *Alfama*, an extremely picturesque documentary film showing an ancient, historical and popular quarter of Lisbon. Its director was Joas de Sa. For several days he walked all over the quarter of Alfama, seizing with his camera all the beauty and picturesque life of the place; its narrow and tortuous streets and bye-lanes, that wind in all directions, ascending here to descend there, in order to climb again further on; its peculiar and long stair-streets; its old and irregular buildings with flowing verandas, and the daily activities of its inhabitants.

Joas de Sa never permits us to remain three minutes in the same place; his camera follows this way, turns to the left, returns, moves to the right, looks at the top of one house, stops here to let us see a splendid view above the river Tagus, climbs to the garrets of the houses to show us the street; from the street makes us look at the windows, catching here a girl hanging linen in the sun on a wire between two verandas, there an old woman on the third floor insulting another who stands down on the other side of the street. And the camera continues its exploration, begun in the early hours of the morning, to finish only when the sun disappears into the sea.

*Alfama* is not a long picture but it is marvellously photographed and made very carefully, with splendid artistic and cinematographic intuition. Among the Portuguese cinematographic and purely documentary films, *Alfama* is certainly the best.

Alves Costa.
Perpetua, a woman of the people, discovered by Leitão de Barros, and given an important rôle in his film, “Maria do Mar.” She has played also in another Portuguese film, “A Vida do Soldado.”

Perpetua, femme du peuple découverte par Leitão de Barros et à qui l'on a confié un rôle important dans “Maria do Mar.” Elle a joué également dans une autre production portugaise, “A Vida do Soldado.”

Perpetua, eine Frau aus dem Volke, die von Leitão de Barros, entdeckt wurde und eine führende Rolle in seinem Film “Maria do Mar” erhielt. Sie spielte auch in einem anderen portugiesischen Film, “A Vida do Soldado.”

A scene from the Portuguese film, “A Vida do Soldado” (The Soldier’s Life), directed by Anibal Contreiras.

Une scène du film portugais “A Vida do Soldado” (Une vie de soldat), dirigé par Anibal Contreiras.

Two stills of scenes universally censored in "Greed," Erich von Stroheim's early masterpiece. None of the censored stills appearing in this issue have been previously published.

Deux extraits de scènes universellement censurées du premier chef-d'œuvre de Erich von Stroheim, "Les Rapaces." Aucune de ces photos censurées n'a été publiée jusqu'ici.


STILLS AND THEIR RELATION TO MODERN CINEMA

Rather playfully Silka said to me in Paris, "You talk of that picture, Construire un Feu, as if it were the latest novelty. Five years ago it was planned: two years ago it was finished. It took them a long time to find a cinema which would venture to put it on. Two years: or five years, because Claud Autant-Lara planned every shot in advance. Some of the drawings you can see in the lobby."

"So much," I answered, "for progress."
Construire un Feu was taken on normal stock. The Hypergonar stretched images, like a distorting mirror at a fair, so that more could be squeezed into the visual contents on the celluloid. In projecting one uses again the distorting mirror. The Hypergonar was employed, too, on the optical printer to place pictures of real action together with pictures of subjective action on the same film. Sometimes, parts of the celluloid were left blank to achieve new sizes of image outline. Parts which could be cut from black to white with amazing effect...

The hunter, out in the snow. Fire of twigs. The snow falls off a tree. Fire of twigs—gone! Matches gone. Tiny images cluster round the large... like... like grapes... like bees buzzing at the lattice of consciousness. Temperature 90 degrees below zero. Temperature 105 degrees below. No titles or sound. Swarm of image bees informing the shape of the principal image. Abstract thoughts, emotions, memories: the overtones and undertones pictured round the picture. A tale recalled of a fellow hunter who felled an ox and crawled inside the carcass after necessary adjustments. (No detail spared: these are thoughts of a simple hunter who has disembowelled many beasts.) The hunter thinks of his only companion, an alsatian. But the dog escapes in the tussle. The man thinks of those warmly in the hut, of hot soup turned by immense spoon. The dog (wedges of landscape) howls to the sky... Jack London's story, with one character, told in a new and vital image way...

What has this to do with stills? Stills and their relation to modern cinema. How?

Maybe this is the modern cinema part. The brilliant forecast by Claude Autant-Lara is not one of those highly charged reels which crackle when running through the projector. It is not electric flame, it is like... it is like a head of small flames turned in the darkness. (Oh! where now are the bees?) The images on the screen are panels, are spread (in rather sticky focus, it must be confessed) across the whole wall of the theatre; now tiny and single, now large and complex with thought expressions... If others had been as brave to face convention this is the form of film we might have been having for two or five years? Then stills would not have kept to 10 by 8. Alas, as so many highbrow producers, Mr. A-L. took no stills. (Some of the drawings you can see in the lobby.)

For art editors of film magazines it would have been a problem with white margins, heavy rules, spots and other salvations of page make up. Stills in strips, patches, groups, ovals: stills in immensity, stills in exact visibility!

I asked the opinion of a commercial still cameraman.

"In Hollywood," said Cyril Stanborough, "from 500 to 3,000 stills are taken for the exploitation of a super film. American publicists build up excitement, before the completion of a feature, by circularising thousands of attractive stills. Influential press critics are deluged with advance photos. A demand is created for a title. English supervisors deem 140 negatives an
ample allowance for one production. Things are different at the Twickenham Studios, but one large concern has been employing still cameramen at £3 10s. 0d. a week. Of course, English officials despise still workers because they do not get any publicity; not even on the trade synopsis, not even with the cigarettes by Abdullah and the gramophone by Columbia."

Mr. Stanborough seemed to be so worried about the present I had no chance to speak of the future, of oblong and oval, of great and little. However, I thought I might collect material for history-till-now (to borrow the expression of Mr. Paul Rotha).

"How," I demanded, "have the talkies affected the stills?"

The HOW, from Mr. Stanborough's viewpoint of production and never of innovation, is interesting.

"Stage folk, brought in to speak the new lines, are often tired on the floor after night work on the boards. Therefore, they sway in the stills."

I wanted to answer, "How ingenious of you to think of that first." Really, he was talking of his work, of everyday difficulties. That, unvarnished, is worth record.

"Before the silent cameras," he continued, "booths and lusty cables had to be shifted before the still camera could be put in position. By the time everything was ready the director was convinced that a whole library of stills had been taken. That is always the way, though. The director

Photo de "Flamme Blanche," un film de Charles Dekeukeleire.

Aus "Die Weisse Flamme," Ein Film von Charles Dekeukeleire.
Two scenes from "Greed," by censored and never brought to the
Deux scènes de "Les Rapaces," furent censurées et ne parurent
Zwei Szenen aus "Gier" von wurden und niemals zur Vor-

Photos: Courtesy of

is behind schedule. The still cameraman must snatch a few stills in the lunch hour. Artistes are tired; property-men, electricians and the rest are tired and bored and hungry and thirsty. Workmen, on nearby sets, produce excruciating noises..."

Ah! the troubles of a Mr. Stanborough may be over now that a new illuminant has been fitted to a reflex camera so that the release of the shutter sets off the flash which is noiseless and smokeless. The short exposure possible prevents blurring, "the extra flash of light being too brief to be recognisable by the eye." Although the professional still man is apt to miss the offering of fresh angles and be worried, when with a reflex, with the necessity of dodging reflectors, lamps and such like. He likes to stand on the holy ground where the ciné man stood. (Naturally for star-making, the still man should have his studio in which he can pose his portraits.)

It is too difficult to think for more paragraphs of stills as publicity. One would rather look at the stills and be done with them! Yet, stills can be, publicity stills can be, a record, a promise, a sharp thrill-stab. It is not earnestly required to know all that Manager X. at the Superb has done. One can pounce, at this point, on conclusions. That ordinary stills will continue to be used in the studio to help continuity of costume and the matching of lighting. That colour will trouble before stereoscopy. And that the ovals and panels will have to come FIRST from the avant-garde. (Already the still department is looked on with an economical eye—wastage in other departments being notorious; while Mr. Stanborough estimates that £80 will cover expenses of salary and material of his department for one film.)

Once John London asked me, "How would you get a character, were you writing such a scenario, from a country house to a night club?"

"I wouldn't," I replied. "I mean I wouldn't by rhyming mix and fade. I believe that the cinema has done something to time; given the right,
to people and events, to exist at the same time."

Mr. Stanborough, once having been introduced, threatens to persist. Without rhyming mix or blush, nonetheless, let me turn to something else, to stills as the free picture show. (When the sun gets on them in the glass frames! The commercial printer who, for a microscopic fee, thuswise washes and fixes). . . .

Rich man, poor man, taxpayer. They stop. Except those in a scurry of fur-ends (with a parrot half across the English Riviera) with objects tightly held in. (They who scurry don’t want entertainment on the bargain basement; they look to Olympus—for bargains!) Rich man, poor man, and, dashing for his label, CITIZEN; they pause.

How pleased to escape morning reality! (All those writers talk as if night was the only reality release.) Words wrung from a dish-cloth that has mopped the floor of last century’s morality class. Those infinitely drab, hair-in-elastic-bands, workaday mornings. Pause to regather a hope in large pupils that mirror, apart from studio lamps, desire for the hands-above-below-on-hips hussy. Yesterday’s game: the cards pinned to the velvet. Check: the moment he found her near the splish-splash fountain. MATE: the moment when the comedian pushed them both in: splatter-splish. Yesterday’s game. Sitting in the dark of the theatre with somebody else—maybe! Time plunder. Bringing back (because this subconscious stuff DOES make life possible) what we would remember.

Those, too, who have not yet been to this film. Mr. Drooping Shoulders, Mr. Lost Moustache (Mr. Blooming Knowall, as the cockney ones say, only it does not fit in at all here, but it is pretty), Mr. Go-to-Tit-Bits-for-your-scenarios type, studying the attitude of an eccentric knock-about. SUDDENLY, solemnly raising his bowler hat and balancing it sideways on his head while straightening his back with pride at the humour.

(Thrifty souls using the glass as a mirror.)
The free picture show of to-day, of yesterday?

In the trade papers, the story that Western Electric has finished another talkie truck for Lyons, for Shell-Mex, the story that the Middlesex Educational Committee has arranged for talking pictures to form part of the curriculum in Middlesex schools. A realisation—Daylight Projection and Daylight Screen. Cinema managers, henceforth, will they provide a moving poster display instead of the frame of stills? A kind of trailer run in a continuous projector on a daylight screen. This week, next week and attractions coming shortly.

From "The Merry Widow," by Erich von Stroheim. One of the censored scenes, of which this is the only still known to have been published.

La seule photo qui ait été publiée, à notre connaissance, des scènes interdites de "La Venne Joyeuse," de Erich von Stroheim.


Photo: Courtesy of Herman G. Weinberg.

(Instead of stills, a screen given to audience reaction? There was that trailer for the Keaton film with the laughs of ten men, sitting in a private projection room, scrambled on the sound track. Noctovision could give close up inspection of audience members seated in total darkness. A little bitter for future victims but FUN and NOVELTY. Out-LIFE-cadging the Russian enthusiasts!)

So and so: lopping off pieces of red tape. Stills in newspapers; stills outside theatres. Trying to do the job. Trying to catalogue. Trying to order a review under the title, Stills and their relation to Modern Cinema. Finally, lopping off one more piece of red tape. Stills and the Compound Cinema.

What fraction of a compound cinema scheme could any still suggest? For example, the student or disciple (whichever it is one is allowed to be by Mr. Seldes) of the Compound Cinema would take the Daylight Screen as an excuse to fill the auditorium with Holophane lights. At the Richmond Cinema the Holophane automatic control provides six hundred and seventy two sequences of colour lighting effects. All the lighting effects may be pre-set on a control panel. Instantaneous "black-outs" can be obtained by colour master switches. Of that the compound cinema bloke ought to be able to make a fine mental haggis!!

At some stage one must give up: put away the red tape with the type ribbon.

Oswell Blakeston.
THE THEATRE OF THE FUTURE
AND THE TALKING FILM

The development of the theatre after the war is looking for a perfection of technique, whose supremacy in every respect is a singular characteristic sign of our time.

It is the technique that gives to modern life its mark and style.

It plays the part of a sort of modern Dionysus, which brings to light a new kind of performance: the cinema with its dynamic element, time, unlimited space and pathos of movement.

The theatre with its verbal ballast and its routine does not correspond any more to the spirit of our time and the spectator satiated by "word" is thirsting for dumbness and for visual impressions; he begins to abandon the theatre for the cinema. "If all the spectators of the cinema do not visit the theatre, almost all spectators of the theatre are visiting the cinema" as Cl. Berton says in his interesting meditations about the modern theatre. (Nouvelles Littéraires of September 8, 1928.)

The theatre, though having perceived the competition of the cinema, this new mystery of the masses, has not itself immediately rendered account of the necessity to modernise and transform the grinding equipage of Thespis to a multicylinder limousine. It began meanwhile to take into consideration "the visuality" brought by the film in spite of the objections of the traditionalists.

The technique in its triumphal march penetrates to the stage, a multitude of stage-managers is rising, which by experimental means is aiming to build "the theatrical spectacle."
Their role is not limited by destroying the theatrical routine and the artistic bases of the ancient theatre, but their aim is to create or rather to "establish" a spectacle, that would be the exact reflection of time and its best expression.

As help to the reformers of the theatre come above all; the decorator, as constructor of the space of the stage* and the engineer-architect, who creates new conceptions of the construction of the stage and of the theatrical building.

The theatrical art is tending to get rid of the troublesome frames of the traditional "tri-lateral stage-box."

Hate for this narrow and inconvenient "Guckkastenbühne," as the Germans baptised it, inclined Reinhardt to leave the theatre, directing him to the circus and afterwards caused him to change the arena of the circus for "the open air" theatre festivals of Salzburg.

Meyerhold, who is known as an adversary of the traditional stage with its inseparable curtain, introduces his original stage-constructions in Earth is Rearing (Ziemla dybom) adaptation of Tretiakow according to Martinet’s piece The Night played in Paris by La Phalange Artistique. Also in Ehrenburg’s Trust D.E. and in Erdman’s Mandate, but he is not satisfied with that, for notwithstanding the interesting results he has attained, he feels himself very hampered.

The eruptive talent of the stage manager Piscator is tending to obtain the full expression of the construction of the theatre by mounting on the ordinary stage 6—7 little stages in a vertical direction, which are tied in the centre by a screen, creating in this manner a continuous performance of almost complete acting.

As an example of such a composition of Piscator we can cite Hoppla, wir leben (Hoppla, we are living), a play of Toller, at the Theatre am Nollendorfplatz in Berlin.

It was perhaps the largest possible exploitation of the traditional stage.

This method was already extremely used by L. Schiller, the stage-manager of the Polish Theatre in Warsaw, in Langer’s Peripheries and especially in the theatrical transcription of History of a fault by Stefan Zeromski in 42 pictures, which followed each other in an almost cinematographic rhythm.

The theatrical technique in the above mentioned gettings up, so characteristic in fundamentals of the aspirations of the modern theatre, helped greatly the audacious conceptions of the stage-managers.

Invading the theatre at first timidly, the technique was unable to destroy the traditional stage, but soon throwing out a compromise and wishing to stand at the height of the artistic success of the reformers, it became a powerful element in the modern theatre.

* So understand their role in the theatre: Schlepianoff and Popowa—the collaborators of Meyerhold, Wiesnin of Tairoff’s Kameryn Theatre, also Rabinowich. In Poland—the brothers Pronaszko.
Section of theatre, showing plan of construction and acoustics.

Section du théâtre montrant le plan de construction et de l'acoustique.

Schnitt durch das Theater der den Plan der konstruktion und akustik zeigt.

Sectional diagram of theatre with auditorium and stage.

Diagramme sectionne du théâtre avec auditorium et scène.

Skizze eines Schnittes durch das Theater mit Auditorium und Bühne.
Evidence of the progress of theatrical technique was found in the Exhibition in Vienna in 1924.

In the plans, sword-moulds and models, was struck a restless fantasy joined with a refined ingenuity. The essential characteristic was struggle with the traditional form of the stage, of the hall and of the theatrical building.

The curtain, jealously guarded for a long time, was suppressed by the reformers of the Russian theatre, at last this suppression provoked a distraction of the stage.

The inventors exhibiting in Vienna the sensational models don't introduce the curtain and they are tending to suppress the balustrade—this barrier which separates the hall from the stage, desiring in that way on the principle of uniting these till now separated parts, to efface the traditional limit between the stage and the hall.*

Thus in the "Railway theatre" of Kiesler the hall turns like a carousel round the "spacious stage" as in the model of Dr. Strnad where on the contrary we see the "circular" stage with the little stages surrounding the hall.

The stage is united completely with the hall.

These last years brought to theatrical building "Le Théâtre de l'Exposition des Arts Décoratifs" of the architects Perret and Granet a tripartite stage and the model of a theatre-circus of the German architect Gropius, who built especially for Piscato a moving arena with 3 stages.

These projects have been acknowledged as very advantageous for application of technique to the modernising of the theatre.

We have just heard of a new project of the theatre prepared for the painter Pronaszko and the architect Syrus.

The aim of these inventors was not only the realisation of the efforts of the architecture of theatrical technique, but also a trial of resolving the essential problems of modern theatrical art.

This model differs greatly from those of the existing traditional theatres. It is composed plastically of powerful blocks with great glassy surfaces and leans against a construction of steel and ferro-concrete.

It approaches the Greek and Japanese classical specimens in its simplicity and harmony deprived of every ornament.

It will be magnificent in its dimensions: the total will take up a space of 8000 m², the front in height of 50 m., which makes about 12-15 storeys.

Many entrances, elevators, moving escalators will facilitate the access and the immediate exit from the theatre in case of fire.

The hall will contain 3,000 seats. The same vault embraces the hall and the stage, creating a sort of a large shell of an ideal acoustic effect. (Lyon's method realised in the construction of the Pleyel hall in Paris.)

* We can notice an analogy with the tendencies of modern painting that passes from the easel—to the painting of space rejecting the artificial limit—frames; and tending to create a totality with the surrounding and to unite itself with the exterior world.
But the creative invention of the authors was particularly revealed in this new theatre by the construction of its stage.

It is composed of a motionless proscenium under which is placed the orchestra and two moving stages, resembling circular rings.

The very large moving rings do not turn, like the moving stages, round their axle, but surround the hall and circulate in one or two directions, which can be regulated by the stage-manager according to his wish.

Before the eyes of spectators stands a large stage on which pass the above mentioned moving rings that may be able afterwards to disappear under the hall where the scenery is changed. In such a way one realises the continuity of acting.

If we take into consideration that these moving rings possess little circular stages and traps, we can understand the possibilities the constructors of this model gave to the stage-manager for exploiting the movement of actors, extras, scenery, in every possible manner.

The stage gives us the maximum of dynamism: the circulating movement of the rings in two directions, the turning movement of the little stages, which are placed on the rings and the vertical movement of many traps.

The spectator "spoiled" by the cinema is looking for satisfaction of his visual impressions, so by ingenious placing of many luminous centres we can exploit in the model of Messrs. Pronaszko and Syrkus the effect of light in the highest possible degree. Light will cease to be an "illumination" for the spectacle and create an "atmosphere" but it will begin to collaborate with the actor and will become the most powerful element of the theatre.*

When the efficient motors put in movement the rings and the projectors begin to illuminate, we shall obtain not only continuity of acting, but also speedy succession of pictures will resemble in its dynamism a

* The luminous performances of Studio Art et Action de Paris and pantomimes of Loie Fuller prove to what curious results we can attain operating with light.
film and the theatre which enthusiastic people speak of as something condemned to death will become a talkie, and besides a coloured three dimensional film.

This is the question. What stage-manager will be able to exploit the dynamism of the stage, its acoustic and luminous conditions and to tie in an artistic total this synchronic and simultaneous amalgam?

The rôle of a stage-manager becomes very complicated. His endeavour will be the co-ordination of the composition of the structure in space and time.

It is not to be feared that these technical accessories and all this refined machinery will strangle the living word in the theatre.

Theatrical pieces of the future will be preferred by the quality of words and not by their quantity, for we need powerful and striking words, not verbal torrent.

Visual impressions produced by a mighty theatrical technique will never eliminate the Word but they will underline its value, rejecting exaggerated loquacity.

The development of the theatre of the future is in the coordination of the Word with great visuality!

If the theatre, like the film is tending to grow rich by means of perfection of technique, there is no reason for seeing in this competition with the cinema, for in that case the film serves as an accessory to the theatre.

The perfected theatrical technique of Andre Pronaszko and Simon Syrkus precedes and goes beyond dramatical work. This technique has as its principle the putting of the dramatic work into competition and the opening of new ways and means to its development.

Messrs. Pronaszko and Syrkus desire to give a stimulus which will enable the dramatic work to awake from its sleep, caused partly by want of "possibilities" of the traditional stage.

This project of a new theatre does not lose connection with reality, as happened formerly, but it opens considerable ways and possibilities for the composition, gives famous perspectives to the realisers of future spectacles for the masses, for which it is in the first place designed.

Technique considered as an inspiring idea gives the key to the dramatic authors and to the stage-managers for solving new problems of theatrical art and in this finds its end, because by itself it is unable to regain the theatre: we must have a dramatical work that will enable its whole application.

Zygmunt Tonecki.
A scene from the Czech film, "Tonischka," directed by Karel Anton, and featuring Vera Baranovskaya.

Une scène du film tchèque "Tonischka," réalisé par Karel Anton, avec l'interprète Vera Baranovskaya.

Vera Baranovskaya in einer Szene aus dem tschechischen Film, "Tonischka. Regie: Karel Anton.

Vera Baranovskaya in "Such is Life."

Vera Baranovskaya, vedette de "C'est la vie."

Vera Baranovskaya in "So ist das Leben."
THE BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CZECH MOTION PICTURES
(The Story of a National Industry.)

It was the engineer Krizenecky who, in the year 1898, brought from Paris to Prague the Lumière camera and produced the first Czech pictures. From the historical point of view it is interesting to note that these Czech comedies (Rendezvous at the Mill, The Hot-dog men and the Bill-sticker, Laughter and Tears) were shown in Prague simultaneously with George Méliès' effort, La Nuit Terrible, which many consider the first motion picture comedy of all.

Czech pictures, then, have an honourable tradition. But, alas, the early beginning was abortive and, for the next fifteen years, the Czech motion picture industry came to a standstill. The first Czech producing company, Kinofa, founded in 1910, could not, therefore, compete with the rapid advance of American movies. However, the photography of Kinofa's St. John's Streams was, many years after its production, awarded the first prize at the International Kinematograph Exposition in Vienna.

The whole pre-war epoch of the Czech pictures is little more than an historical curiosity and the names of actors, from the legitimate stage, who then appeared before the camera, are not to be found in the Czech pictures of to-day.

During the war the blockade of central powers gave birth to a flourishing film industry in Germany and Austria. It was a pity that Bohemia produced no enterprising financier to act as godparent to a similar native industry. The success of the first Czech pictures was not due to technical and artistic perfection but to the atmosphere of the time, when the national feeling was at its height. All that was Czech was welcomed with open arms.

A few names, which then appeared in Czech pictures, are, to-day, still connected with the industry: A. Nedosinská, K. Degl, Dr. J. S. Kolár and Joseph Rovensky.

In the July of 1918, W. T. Binovec founded the Welebsfilm. Many of the pictures they produced were naïve; a few had a fair artistic quality. This company was, also, the first to establish a serviceable if imperfect studio. Suzanne Marville, still a star in her own country, was the most talented of the Welebsfilm players.

Without experience, but with a great love for pictures, Vladimir Slavinsky made, in 1919, his début in film production.

The year 1920 saw the establishment of the A-B Studio. The name
is an abbreviation for the American Film Company and Biografia. The technical equipment was so poor that Dr. J. S. Kolár was forced to go to Berlin to make there his second picture, The Song of Gold.

Sidney Goldin, an American director, nearly put an end to the activities of the A-B Studio by directing a commercial and artistic flop, On the Mountains. Nevertheless, in the years 1920-1922 some 25 pictures were made; although the development was one of quantity rather than of quality.

Czech production literally died in 1923, a year of industrial crisis. Those who wished to remain in pictures were forced to go abroad.

The year 1925, however, again revealed a public demand for national pictures.

In 1926 Karel Lamac together with Theodor Pistek founded the other studio, Kavalirka; an adaptation of an exhibition pavilion. Their first picture was The False Cat.

Now, Czech directors had at their disposal two studios which, though not technically up-to-date, were sufficient encouragement for the production of average features. The year broke records: 39 pictures were passed to the censor. In the next two years only 31 pictures were produced; but these pictures were beginning to find a foreign market.

The famous Erotikon, which was screened all over Europe, was produced in 1929 by Gustav Machaty. The result was that 20 Czech pictures were exported to Germany in the same year. Czechoslovakia thus holding the second place in the scale of German film imports.

Two other great pictures were made at the end of 1929: Colonel Svec and St. Wenceslaus which received financial support from the Czechoslovak Government, costing about four million crowns. In spite of the fact that it was a patriotic picture, in which the well known Vera Baranovskaya appeared, St. Wenceslaus was not so successful as Colonel Svec in which the noble colonel sacrifices himself for the honour of his regiment.

Tonischka and Life Goes That Way were the silent pictures of 1930. Vera Baranovskaya played in both of them: in the first she was supported by Ita Rina from Yougoslavia and in the second by the Czech players, Theodor Pistek and Mána Zenisková.

At the beginning of 1930 the A-B Studio was equipped with sound apparatus. (Tobis.) The first Czech talkie was directed by F. Feher, When the Strings are Weeping. It was saved only by the excellent playing of the Czech violinist, Jaroslav Kocian. A talking comedy, though, proved a winner. A parody on the military system of the ancient Austrian Monarchy, it was produced by Karel Lamac with Vlasta Burian holding the title rôle in both the Czech and German versions.

S. Inneman produced a talkie, Fidlovacka, with the help of the Czech branch of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Karl Anton, the director of Tonischka, made the sound feature, People in the Storm with Hans Schlettw, Olga Tschekowa and Joseph Rovensky. This he followed with The Case of Colonel Redl; a talkie spy affair based on a novel by E. E. Kisch.
From the Czech nature picture, "Demanova" (the great stalactite cave in Slovakia), made by the cameraman V. Vitch under the direction of Ing. Brychta. An Electra journal production.

Photo tirée du documentaire tchéque, "Demanova" (intérieur d'une grotte de Slovaque avec ses stalactites) tourné par l'opérateur V. Vitch sous la direction de Ing. Brychta. Production Electra journal.

Aus einem tschechischen Naturfilm "Demanova" (Die grosse Tropfsteinhöhle in der Slovakei) aufgenommen von Kameramann V. Vitch unter der Regie von Ing. Brychta.

Vera Baranovskaya in the picture "Such is Life," made by Karl Junghans in Prague.

Vera Baranovskaya, dans "C'est la vie," tournée par Karel Junghans a Prague.

Vera Baranovskaya in dem Film "So ist das Leben" hergestellt von Karl Junghans in Prag.
For the coming year five Czech producing companies are preparing six talking pictures. The successful stage play, *Good Soldier Schweik*, will be turned into a talkie by *Gloria Films*, Mac Fric directing. S. Inneman has been assigned by *Sonorfilm* to direct *The Bag-piper of Strakonice*. *Gongfilm* announce *Janosik* and *Saturday* which is based on an original story by Gustav Machaty. *Oceanfilm* are at work on the picturisation of Jirásek’s popular novel, *Psyhlavci*. *Zdráhel-Film* announce *The Bartered Bride* in Czech, German and French versions.

These will be titles to note.

Recently a certain group of Czech film workers founded in Prague a motion picture co-operative society called *Cefid*. The chief aim of this society is to organise systematical production of Czech talking pictures and to demand financial and moral support of Czechoslovakian Government that a new studio should be erected in Prague on the grounds of the old silent studio, *Kavalirka*.

Czechoslovakian films have not yet said their last word.

*Karel Santar.*

(We believe that Czech films, by their vigour and striking values of composition, may be the next to receive the enthusiasm recently given, by the cinematic world, to the early Russian epics. *Close Up* was the first to signal the importance of *Erotikon* and to review *The Jungle of a Great City* and *Tonischka*. Czechoslovakia and Portugal, do they stand for to-morrow?"—EDITOR)
If Cleopatra's nose had been shorter, says Pascal, the face of the world would have been changed; and a trifling peculiarity of the human eye, its constancy of vision, has made possible the whole art of the cinema, embodied in an industry of world dimensions which, in the United States, ranks fourth in magnitude.

The eye is so constructed that it holds the impression of a movement a fraction of a second after the movement has ceased. This inexactness of vision blurs the sharp edges of images of successive movements into a sequence of coalescing images, giving the appearance of continuous movement; and a similar impression of continuous movement can be produced by a series of pictures consecutively projected on a screen, such that each picture shows a slight displacement in composition as compared with its predecessor in correspondence with a slight advance in movement.

Were the eye perfect in its response there would be no films such as we know; and in real life the images received by the eye would resemble

\[\text{Jenny, played by Lotte Lenja in "Die Dreigroschen-Oper."}\]
\[\text{Jenny, incarnée par Lotte Lenja, dans "L'Opéra de quatre sous."}\]
\[\text{Jenny, dargestellt von Lotte Lenja, in "Der Dreigroschen-Oper."}\]
\[\text{Photo: Tobis-Warner.}\]
our impressions of slow-motion film pictures, quickened into the actual speed of movement.

The addition to the film of sound, colour and stereoscopy does not disturb the fundamental reliance of the film on this visual imperfection, which operates like the notes of a piano when sustained by means of the pedal; with this distinction, that each visual impression in succession is sustained involuntarily by the eye for a fraction of an instant, whereas on the piano a number of notes may be held simultaneously for as long as the executant desires. The constancy of sound available in the case of the piano arises in the act of producing the sound, and not in the response of the ear, which unlike that of the eye is instantaneous.

No difficulty is experienced in combining aural and visual impressions unless the common source is so distant, as in the case of lightning, that the difference in speed of travel between the waves of light and sound becomes appreciable. Thus there is no consciousness of the discordant responses of eye and ear in witnessing dramatic representations in the theatre, the opera house, or the cinema; where apprehension is gained by the activity of eye and ear alone, without the assistance of the organs of touch, taste and smell. Touch and taste, it is clear, cannot be invoked by the arts of drama, but no insuperable obstacle prevents at least the limited utilisation of smell;

Rudolf Forster and Carola Neher in "Die Dreigroschen-Oper," directed by G. W. Pabst.
Rudolf Forster et Carola Neher dans "L'Opera de quatre sous," réalisé par G. W. Pabst.
Rudolf Forster und Carola Neher in "Der Dreigroschen-Oper." Regie : G. W. Pabst.

Photos : Tobis Warner.
which in fact is promised—or should one say threatened?—by a new invention reported from America.

The introduction of smell in the cinema or theatre, even if successfully achieved, is unlikely to affect the essential dependence of dramatic representation on sight and hearing; a dependence which has always existed and which seems destined to prevail until thought transference becomes established as a means of communication.

The dramatic arts have by no means equally ministered to the eye and the ear; on the contrary, the balance has recurrently shifted, favouring now the eye and now the ear. And this varying emphasis derives special interest for us from the circumstance that such oscillations, due to dramatic applications of science, have been taking place in our very presence, so to speak; and are still, as scientific invention progresses, in the actual process of occurring.

In the earliest times, when the potentialities of hearing were imperfectly realised so long as human articulation was groping towards the sharp definition of speech, primitive drama, it is to be surmised, relied on the eye rather than on the ear. And in fact the oldest reputed type of drama, the ritual dance, was essentially a visual presentation; though it was doubtless accompanied by significant cries and by rudimentary music.

With the gradual differentiation of the first crude utterances into complicated verbal forms drama was enhanced by speech, in song and poetry and later in prose. Thus in ancient Greece the early dance and mime drama developed into the plays of Sophocles and Euripides, in which mime and movement were subordinated to language. This tendency of hearing to encroach on the domain of the visual has extended to the point of usurpation, as in the modern discussion play, which consists mainly of dialogue divorced from action; and music, an integral element in Athenian tragedy, has been ousted from modern drama into the limbo of entr’acte entertainment. In opera, of course, it is the music which is dominant, words and visible movement being of secondary importance.

While the mimetic art of the primitive dance was already beginning to lose sway on the Athenian stage, it still enjoyed pre-eminence in Greece in pantomime and puppet play; it was restored to favour in Rome, which delighted in spectacular entertainment; suffered in the general decay of drama in the first centuries of the Christian era; flourished anew in the medieval commedia dell’arte, the Italian comedy of masks; and in modern times has survived in isolated representatives such as the wordless play, L’Enfant Prodigue, and in such debased forms as the harlequinade of the children’s pantomime, Punch and Judy, and the knock-about farce of the music-hall.

In quite recent times the visual element has been restored to the stage, in the spectacular productions of Max Reinhardt (who carried into effect the theories of Gordon Craig and Appia); and in the expressionist plays of Strindberg and his followers, who have re-introduced pantomime. Mime
Lotte Lenja as Jenny in a modernised edition of "The Beggar's Opera."
Lotte Lenja dans le rôle de Jenny, dans l'édition modernisée de "L'Opéra des Mendiant." Lotte Lenja als Jenny in "Der Dreigroschen-Oper."

Photo: Tobis Warner.
has gained a new lease of life in the Russian Ballet and in the film, both of which exalted the musical element and dispossessed speech. And now Diaghileff, who introduced the Russian Ballet in Western Europe, is dead and his talented company dispersed; and the pantomimic art of the cinema, for the time being at least, has been all but vanquished by speech in the all-conquering "talkie." Yet the film, as Mr. John Grierson (who directed Drifters) suggests, may provide a field of renewed activity for the marionette, which has indeed survived, but has latterly fallen on evil days; except in
Central Europe, where it has recaptured a remarkable measure of popular favour.

One form of drama, and that the most recent—radio drama—ministers solely to the ear. Owing its form to the special conditions of wireless broadcasting, it has no roots in history; unlike the film, which, equally a product of modern times, yet has a tradition going back to the earliest type of drama. Will radio drama succeed, like the silent film, in evolving its own artistic form? Or will a term be set to its struggle for self-expression by the consummation of television?

The issue is still in doubt, but already there are indications as to its outcome: the simultaneous sound and sight broadcasts of the British Broadcasting Corporation, the first of which took place only a few months ago; and similar developments in America, where a whole play, *The Queen's Messenger*, by J. Hartley Manners, was televised two years ago. Granted all their imperfections, these phenomena are portents of the time, perhaps not very distant, when in the wireless receiver, as in the cinema, spectacle and speech will once more be wedded and eye and ear be invoked together.

Mark Segal.
LA PETITE LISE

Jean Grémillon, the director of Tour au Large, Maldone and Gardiens de Phare, is already well known. His first talking film, La Petite Lise, has just been shown in Paris.

It is a good film; probably the first French talkie since Sous Les Toits de Paris that has not been an inept photograph of a still more stupid text or, as they call it now, dialogue.

Grémillon’s rhythm is slow, there is sometimes a danger that the spectator will find it too slow, but the rhythm is there and it is one peculiar to Grémillon himself.

And this is so rare nowadays that I want others to share my enthusiasm. Grémillon proves that he knows how to direct, that he knows how to create emotion by extremely simple means, and that he has already understood a possible and intelligent alliance of sound and picture.

So if the film is not entirely satisfactory this is not wholly his fault but that of the scenario, which lacks exactitude of continuity. Sometimes (at the beginning and at the end) it is the drama of the father and then again it is the drama of la petite Lise herself.

The scenario is possible. A man who has killed his wife out of jealousy, returns from prison. He finds his daughter, Lise, in Paris, who has become a prostitute, for nobody has looked after her since her earliest childhood. As a result of circumstances for which she is not responsible, she kills a moneylender, from whom she had hoped to get enough money to buy a garage with her friend in order to build up a new life with him.

The father hears of the murder. He decides to take the guilt upon himself and to return to prison in order that his daughter may be happy.

Grémillon makes use of a concise and clever dialogue, that is often very emotional.

Nadia Sibirskaiia is wonderful. This actress whose work has astonished us already in Menilmontant, has gained additional force through speech. Alcover is still too theatrical though the director’s restraining influence has made itself felt here also, and Grémillon now should certainly not be left unemployed. With a little more experience, Grémillon would be one of the best European directors. How very few of them there are.

Jean Lenauer.

Nadia Sibirskaya dans "La Petite Lise," le nouveau film de Jean Grémillon.

Nadia Sibirskaya in "La Petite Lise," einem Film von Jean Grémillon.

Photo: Pathé Nathan.
EDUCATION AS A BY-PRODUCT

All things work together for good. As self-seeking commercial industry through its by-products has contributed to the benefit of art and medicine, so is education to become the gainer through a recently created by-product of the ephemeral Hollywood film.

To a large extent visual education has been deserving of the same comment that Mark Twain offered regarding the weather—"Everybody talks about it, but nobody does anything about it." Now, however, something is being done about it. Hollywood pictures, it has been discovered, contain a vast store of hitherto unrecognised pedagogic material, which needs only to be dug out and segregated to be turned to genuine usefulness. And this the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences has undertaken to do.

Up to the present time the chief drawback to the employment of visual education has been the expense involved in making the type of motion pictures required for the purpose. While such organisations as the Eastman Teaching Films, and the Yale University Foundation which produced the Chronicles of America have pioneered with instructional pictures of the highest quality and value, the supply has been so limited and the cost so high, that comparatively few institutions have been benefited.

Yet all the while Hollywood has been turning out films which, despite the fact that they have been designed alone for the theatre, contain elements of definite value in the study of art, culture, history, literature, biography and other school subjects. Separated from the photoplay stories of which they form an incidental part, these elements are adaptable to classroom use as a most effective adjunct to textbook and lecture. Especially is this true of typical scenes of the life and customs of historical periods which have been reconstructed for the screen.

Aside from their prime utility as vivid, realistic presentments, these cinematic reproductions are fully as authentic as any customary textual descriptions and every whit as reliable as ordinary book illustrations, to say nothing of their immeasurable superiority in point of interest and impressiveness. No excuse or effort is spared by the producers in securing accuracy of detail in scenic and architectural background, as well as in costumes, manners and characterisation. Not only do the studios maintain thoroughly equipped research departments and libraries, but, also, in the making of any historical or "period" picture, specialists, scholars and authorities are called into consultation on each of the many and various details.

Whatever, therefore, may be the criticism of such pictures as photoplays, they are at all events as faithful to reality in their settings as money,
intelligence and care can make them, so that their educational worth in this respect is at once as evident as it is emphatic.

Blinded for the time by the fictional romances dominating these films, as well as by the Hollywood personalities associated with them, and led astray, also, by the theatrical auspices under which the pictures have been presented, educators and advocates of visual instruction have failed to realize that much of the very material for which they have been seeking is already in existence and obtainable at a cost far below that which would be entailed in the special creating of it.

However, this realisation is now dawning upon them, and with it has come the conviction that thousands of feet of usable and useful film are lying buried in the Hollywood vaults, merely awaiting resurrection and proper assemblage to make them available for the classroom.

When the project of thus turning such film to account was brought to the attention of the motion picture Academy, it was at once considered worthy of a trial. Under the sponsorship of the Academy's Committee on College Affairs an editing committee was chosen from local school officials, and the outcome of their initial endeavour has been the assembling of a film under the general title of *In the Days of Chivalry*. This consists of a total of 885 feet, comprising some thirty-five edited scenes or incidents from Douglas Fairbanks' eight-reel picture of *Robin Hood*, produced some ten years ago.

Already a large number of school and colleges throughout the country
have been supplied with prints of the film on a non-commercial rental basis. The film is designed specifically and exclusively for use in connection with regular classroom work. To this end no allusion is made to the names of the players enacting the rôles of the historic personages, nor is there any semblance of story or of dramatic development. The various scenes, as independent, representative pictures, are presented for the sole purpose of illustrating certain phases of medieval times, with especial reference to chivalry and to tournaments and the Crusades, while costumes, armour, accoutrements, architecture, castle life, social manners, and other incidental characteristic features and details are accentuated as pictorial aids to specialized study.

Accompanied by lecture and supplemented by discussion and collateral reading, this particular film as so far used has demonstrated not only its individual value, but also the complete practicability of the interesting venture which it represents. In view of this, therefore, we may shortly look for further films of the same kind, extracted from the refuse heap of Hollywood’s outworn and discarded photoplays.

**Clifford Howard.**

*(Note.—It is interesting to remember *Conquest.*)

*Carl Dreyer’s new film has a fantastic story, drawing its inspiration from the world of superstition and mysticism. Rena Mandel as Gisèle.*


*Der Inhalt von Carl Dreyers neuem Film ist eine phantastische Geschichte aus der Welt des Aberglaubens und Mystizismus. Rena Mandel als Gisèle.*

*Photo: Film-Production Carl Dreyer.*
"The Strange Adventure of David Gray." Carl Dreyer's new film, made without publicity during 1930 in an old abandoned chateau. A silent and talking version have been prepared.

"L'Etrange Aventure de David Gray." Le nouveau film que Carl Dreyer a tourné, sans battage préalable, durant l'année 1930, dans un vieux château abandonné. Version parlante et non parlante.


Photo: Film-Production Carl Dreyer.
THE STRANGE ADVENTURE OF DAVID GRAY

Carl Dreyer, the famous Director of The Passion of Joan of Arc, has quietly staged another super film during the year 1930: The Strange Adventure of David Gray. The film has been made by him for his own independent firm,* and is a fantastic story drawing its inspiration from the world of superstition and mysticism—an extraordinary sequence of events, seeming all the more strange from the fact that they take place in a modern milieu.

The atmosphere at once real and unreal, required by a film of this kind, could never have been created in a studio. That is why the scenery required for the film was sought for and found in nature. Nearly one half of the film had to be turned in an old deserted château: in the neighbourhood of Montargis an old château was discovered, in a dilapidated state and that had been uninhabited for many years. The director, the operator and the actors lived in that château for nearly two months. After a relentless search, everything required was found: the country-doctor’s house, an inn by the river, an old water-mill, empty, deserted factories. Two large lorries transported from place to place the electric generating plant that supplied power in sufficient quantity for lighting indoors. There are more than 40 different settings in all to the film. Fifteen per cent. of the film takes place in the open air, the remainder indoors. The only scenery that had to be made up was a cemetery. It was Mr. Herman Warm, the architect, well-known for his work in connection with Dr. Caligari and The Passion of Joan of Arc who supervised the setting up of the scenery.

Mr. Rudolph Maté, Mr. Dreyer’s collaborator of many years standing, whose remarkable photographs of faces in the Joan of Arc film, where no grease paint was used are well remembered by all, has also photographed The Strange Adventure of David Gray. He has tried to get away as far as possible from the luminous and realistic photography of Joan of Arc and to create an atmosphere in keeping with the strange and eerie setting of the film, to work along lines in absolute contrast with those followed up to date.

The taking of the pictures began on the 1st April and ended in the month of October. The cutting of the film is at present in full swing.

Both a talking and a silent version have been prepared. As regards the talking version, which will shortly be ready for sonorising, the spoken texts have been recorded in three languages: French, English and German. Moreover, the film comprises but very few texts. The silent version has been prepared with the greatest care, so that it should not only be on a par with the talking version but also equal through its technical construction the best silent films of the period preceding the arrival of the talking film.

The photographs in this issue are direct enlargements from the negative of the film.

* Carl Dreyer Film-Production, 42, Quai du Point du Jour, Billancourt, s/Seine—Paris.
"The Strange Adventure of David Gray." The stills of this film are direct enlargements from negative. The photography is by Rudolf Maté, whose remarkable camera-work in "Joan of Arc" will not soon be forgotten. Julian West as David Gray.

"L'Etrange Aventure de David Gray." Les photos de ce film sont des agrandissements de négatifs. La photographie est de Rudolf Maté, dont la prise de vues excellente dans "Jeanne d'Arc" n'est pas près d'être oubliée. Julian West dans le rôle de David Gray.


Photo: Film-Production Carl Dreyer.
THE FUTURE OF THE AMATEUR FILM MOVEMENT

What is to become of the amateur film movement?

Sound has brought it to the crossroads and there is no leader to point the way.

Obviously to produce sound films—even if they were intelligent and God forbid it if they weren't—is beyond the resources of most amateur societies. Is it, then, any use going on? If it is, and I doubt it, which road will they take—the hard way of experiment and originality or the easy descent of imitation, lingering in the pleasant valley of "let's-photograph-dear-grandmamma-on-the-lawn"?

Is it any use making films on sub-standard stock any longer? Have Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Metzner and the others really left us anything to do in silence? Apart, of course, from photographing drains upside down or getting new angles on kitchen sinks, which is no longer done in even the most advanced circles. (All Hollywood left us to do in silence, of course, is suffer. In talkies, even more so.)

It is a great pity that the Amateur Film League of Great Britain and Ireland died almost before it was born. Incidentally, I have never seen any reference in any film journal to its demise, which caused much heart burning in the breasts of the members of at least one society I know. Here, I think, is an appropriate place to mention it. I have been wanting to get it off my chest for a long time.

Club delegates to the first (and the last?) National Cine Convention held in London in October, 1929, unanimously decided to form the League with the object of unifying and co-ordinating the movement in the British Isles. What happened to their unanimity when they reached home is a mystery.

It was hoped, we were told in a circular, to place services at the disposal of clubs which would include a library for the interchange of films, a library of film books, an annual production competition, a technical bureau and other facilities.

Each society was asked to send a minimum donation of £2—"anything in excess would be gladly received and indeed welcome"—to set up a fund for working expenses.

I was very enthusiastic about the scheme and persuaded the society with which I was then connected to send two pounds. Some of the members were against it because the Society had only just been formed and we were very short of funds.
The receipt of the two pounds was acknowledged and then for a long time we heard nothing. *Amateur Films* had been chosen as the official organ of the Central Body (and how it became a body!?) and the first sign that all was not well came when that ceased publication.

We went on hoping, but heard nothing and finally, on the instructions of my society, I wrote the provisional secretary asking for information. He replied that he was afraid the League had died a sudden death, that the response to the appeal for donations had been very disappointing and that (he believed) the few pounds which were subscribed had been swallowed up in expenses.

He also gave me the address of the gentleman who had been elected chairman and I wrote twice to him asking for information, but I have never received any reply.

I do not know whether any other societies were similarly treated. If they were they have my sympathy. I was very sorry that the scheme had fallen through, but mingled with that sorrow was indignation at the way in which my society had been treated after responding to the limit of its resources.

"The Strange Adventure of David Gray."
"L’Etrange Aventure de David Gray."
"Das seltsame Erlebnis des David Gray."

Photo: Film-Production Carl Dreyer.
In view of this failure it is doubtful if any further steps will be taken in the near future to co-ordinate the activities of the many societies scattered throughout the British Isles.

The result is that they are leaderless, working independently of each other and more or less in the dark. In those circumstances how can they know whether they are progressing or marking time?

I wonder if these societies have solved the problem of social activities? Is their chief object seriously to make films in the hope of achieving something really worth while, or are they doing it just for the fun of the thing, so that the members can have a good time?

In my view nothing should be allowed to interfere with the serious business of a society. After all if one wants social recreation one does not join a film society, but a club.

Surely members should be enthusiastic enough about their work—and it should be looked on as work—without the aid of social intercourse. Or do they want dominoes and darts to absorb their superfluous energies?

I do not suggest of course, that things have reached such a pass, but no doubt many societies have had this problem to tackle and it seems to me that they are merely wasting their time if they do not concentrate on what should be their main function—to make films which contain the best that is in them all.

These two questions—sound and social—have put the movement in a peculiar position and between the two it seems unlikely that any work of real value will be done. I hope, however, that I am wrong.

Leslie B. Duckworth.
COMMISSION ON EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL FILMS

REPORT.

The Annual General Meeting of Representatives of Supporting Associations took place at Burlington House, in the Rooms of the Society of Antiquaries on November 28th, 1930, at 5 p.m.

The Report was divided as follows into five main sections, with subdivisions:

1.—Preliminary Work.

Under this heading were to be found summaries of the work carried out during this first year in connection with (1) Publicity, (2) Membership of the Commission, a matter which was discussed in detail later on in the proceedings. (3) Progress of the Appeal. It was reported that a grant had been made by the Carnegie Trustees, of the sum of £750 per annum for two years, on condition that an endeavour was made to obtain subscriptions to at least an equal amount from other bodies, and in June last a Deputation from the Commission was received by Sir Charles Trevelyan, President of the Board of Education, who showed the greatest sympathy and interest in the aims of the Commission. Further appeals for funds have been made subsequently and have met with an encouraging response. The need for funds became especially prominent during this year because of the necessity arising for obtaining permanent headquarters. (4) Offices, Staff, etc. Suitable premises were eventually found at 15, Taviton Street, and Mr. J. R. Orr, O.B.E., late Director of Education, Kenya Colony, appointed full-time Assistant Secretary. Before this time the British Institute of Adult Education generously lent their offices and the Royal Anthropological Society their Council Room for Meetings, etc., both of which Societies were duly thanked for their assistance.
II.—Progress of Research Committees.

Nine Meetings of the Commission have been held during the year, while each of the Research Committees meets monthly to deal with the subjects referred to it.

1. Committee No. 1. (Adult Education.)
   (a) An Exhibition of Mechanical Aids to Learning, both visual and auditory was held at the London School of Economics last September. This was found to be of high value as a means of achieving wider publicity.
   (b) The Cinema and Public Libraries.—The research carried on by Librarians of Public Libraries has shown the close relation between books asked for by readers and films publicly exhibited in any locality.
   (c) Information Concerning Film Craft.—Instruction regarding the making of films has been given in many districts and lectures arranged to explain the technique of film craft.
   (d) The Cinema and Vocational Training.—The Commission has endeavoured to co-operate with the industrial welfare societies with a view of making use of the Cinema in vocational guidance and in the training of young persons.
   (e) Social Institutes.—Appeals have been received from Welfare Committees for assistance in providing more suitable entertainment for young people than that which is usually available.

2. Committee No. 2. (Children and Adolescents.)
   (a) Research undertaken by this Committee has been carried out to obtain a census of schools possessing projectors of any kind.
   (b) Investigation of the Report of the Film Committee of the British Association on the principles governing the use of projectors in schools.
(c) With the assistance of the Federation of the British Industries a list has been made of non-theatrical projectors suitable for use in schools. An animated discussion took place in connection with this paragraph, upon the difficulties of obtaining projectors suitable for use in School Buildings, the exceptionally high rate of insurance of school buildings where projectors were used or about to be used, and the use of non-inflammable films. Several speakers made suggestions upon these points, that the Government be approached to make a grant towards insurance premiums, or for the prohibition of all films except those which were guaranteed non-inflammable. Opposition was here raised and it was shown that this proposal would substantially limit the number of films that would be thus procurable for the use in schools, which would be undesirable in the opinion of the speaker. Reply was made that professional research was at present being carried on to discover better and cheaper methods of production of non-inflammable film and of ways in which films originally made on ordinary film could be transferred to non-inflammable kinds for educational purposes.

(d) Educational Films.—A list of 200 educational films had been compiled by the Secretary of the Imperial Institute and is available upon application to the office of the Commission.

(e) Training in Cinematography.—Short vacation courses for teachers in cinema technique were being discussed, including the handling of projectors and films.

(f) Experimental Work in Schools, was providing supplementary evidence as to the value of the film as an adjunct to former methods of teaching. It was announced by Mr. Hoare, that in order to facilitate this work, the Western Electric Company had offered two portable sets, and the British

Congratulations! A scene from "Le Million," in which one can scent the typical René Clair manner.

Félicitations! Une scène tirée du film "Le Million," et qui est très caractéristique de la manière de René Clair.

Glückwünsche! Eine Szene aus "Le Million," aus der man die typische Art René Clairs genau spüren kann.

Pics : Film sungen Tobis-Paris.
Movietone Company had arranged a special School Gazette to be placed at the disposal of the schools, together with a projector, which would not only show their own productions, but also those of other firms. The Secretary of the Middlesex Educational Committee had permitted experiments to be carried out in the schools throughout that County. The Ensign Company had also offered two projectors for educational experimental purposes.

(g) Adaptation of School Buildings.—The Commission have invited Local Educational Authorities to consider in the place of new schools or reconstructed buildings the provision of electric wiring and other structural arrangements for the safe projection of films.

3. Committee No. 3. (Film Production and Technique, Distribution and Circulation.)

This section covered matter that also appeared in the reports of other Committees, i.e. the endeavour to establish closer relations between the film producing industry and the teaching profession; the improvement of the non-inflammable film, type and cost of projectors, and the introduction of a larger proportion of cultural films into the programmes of the public Cinema theatres.

4. Committee No. 4. (Foreign Relations and Documentary Films.)

The paragraph describing the work of this Committee again aroused considerable discussion, concerning the problems of the Customs and importation of educational films from other countries. Again an official of the Commission reminded those present that by the Finance Act of 1924, it had been arranged that scientific films could be brought into this Country duty free, provided that application were made for their introduction by the Royal Society who would undertake that the Society making the application were a scientific society and that the films were of an indubitable scientific character. It was therefore considered probable that education films could be obtained through the same channel, and that the Commission would be recognised by the Royal Society, by which means education or cultural films could be brought into this country readily and duty-free. It was suggested that a test case should be made. Mr. Whiteman, University of Agriculture, mentioned that films had been brought from Europe for use at the recent Poultry Convention without difficulty or expense. Another speaker gave the valuable information that a sub-committee of the League of Nations had been concerned with the same question of the exchange of Educational and Scientific Films, that a questionnaire had been circulated amongst all the countries most concerned, in which they were invited to give their views upon the subject. Should the general opinion be that the matter was of sufficient importance, it was probable that an international convention would be organised to deal with the subject in due course.

The Report also stated that the Colonial and India Office had shown willingness to co-operate, and that relations had been established with the International Institute of Educational Cinematography at Rome with a view to mutual assistance.

"La Fin du Monde," un nouveau film d'Abel Gance, d'après un thème imaginé par Camille Flammarion.

"Das Ende der Welt," ein neuer Film von Abel Gance, nach einem Thema von Camille Flammarion.
5. Committee No. 5. (Science, Medicine and Public Health.)

Enquiries have been directed to learned societies of all kinds concerning the present use of the film for scientific purposes, and co-operation has been effected with the British Social Hygiene Council, both in Great Britain and the tropics. It has been proposed that the Commission should assist with the formation of the proposed Imperial Film Library. The co-operation of the British Medical Society has also been sought.

III.—Section III. Co-operation with Other Bodies.

Of necessity, this section of the Report repeated much of the information already contained in previous sections.

The last business section of the Report was concerned with the appointment of Trustees, the subject of the resolution moved later by Mr. F. A. Hoare, to the effect, "That the Commission, in view of its increasing responsibilities be authorised to take steps for the provision of a constitution and the application for Trustees." The speaker pointed out that the present Commission, the existing members of which were re-elected at the present meeting, were in the nature of a temporary body, with an experimental function, but now, after demonstration of the interest in its aims and the generous financial support its appeal has aroused, there seemed an imperative necessity for the establishment of a permanent national body to carry on the work. The motion was put to the vote and carried unanimously.

Immediately before this motion Mr. Cameron presented the following resolution:—that the Members of the Commission be reappointed for the ensuing year, and be authorised to co-opt such additional members as may be found desirable. Following upon this motion, Mr. Macpherson, of the British Medical Association, asked for the original terms of reference regarding the inception of the Commission and appointment of its Members or Representatives. This was given by the Secretary, and then Miss Dawes, of the Head Mistresses Association, asked whether the additional members who were to be co-opted to carry on the work, were to be drawn from the associations already represented, or from other societies at present without any representation on the Commission, because her own association was at present without representation. The reply was that the additional members would be of all kinds, also independent members would be welcomed who had special knowledge or ability to place at the disposal of the Commission.

This resolution was seconded by Mr. Keay, and carried unanimously; after which, votes of thanks was passed to the Carnegie Trust, Sir Benjamin Gott, for all the arduous work he had sustained in connection with his association with the Commission, as well as for presiding over this Meeting, and to all others, who had so generously supported the Commission in the strenuous and difficult work of its first year.

Mary Chadwick.
MY FIRST SOUND FILM

In the beginning, the sound film dazzled and caught the public attention so much, that research and experiment into this new region, were quite forgotten. The mere fact of hearing voices from the screen, however uninteresting the sounds themselves were, sufficed to fill the imagination. Now all has been changed. Certain sounds recorded during an ordinary production of a news reel, add absolutely nothing to the value of the image, are too uniform. We are plunged into the already heard, into the least exciting of sound realism. It was as a remedy to this, to devote myself and to devote minds, to some experiments that I made, in utilising some sound and speaking trials of Paramount, Le Monde en Parade.

I wanted, in this film, to obtain a synthesis of noise and to change sound, which until now had been a simple matter of curiosity, into a lyrical or psychological factor. It was necessary to arrange sounds around images,

Celebrations in the studio of the painter, Michel (René Lefebvre), in "Le Million," a comedy from the original of Berr and Guillemaud. Scenario and direction: René Clair.

Réjouissances dans le studio du peintre Michel (René Lefebvre) dans "Le Million," comédie d'après l'original de Berr et Guillemaud. Scenario et direction : René Clair.


not upon any realistic basis (a horse passes, and the sound of its hoofs is heard) but in prolongations, amplifications or complete change of the spectacle of life. For example: while aeroplanes are seen wheeling in the sky, in one dimension, one hears all the sounds these flying machines makes, from the most ordinary to the most extraordinary, from the most warlike to the most peaceable. The picture, thus, means far more than it shows: the visible acquires the value of a symbol, becomes a bomb charged with a thousand violent and terrible possibilities.

On the other hand, the replacing of the realistic accompaniment of visual faits divers by an appropriate passage of music, is in several instances imposed. Perhaps the music is to the real noises what the Invitation au Voyage of Baudelaire is to a Baedeker; and, myself, I cannot see how the Baedeker prose could give the frisson of travel-fever to a reader bent on travel. Equally, the use of silence is sometimes imposed. There are images which absolutely demand silence.

This silence in the cinema sonore corresponds well enough to immobility in the action of the silent film; sometimes it emphasises the importance of a following scene, sometimes it is calming, forcing regret on account of the sounds so brusquely brought to an end.

There is great difference between sound in real life and the same sound registered. Psychologically, we often hear only very few of the actual sounds whereas these same sounds registered by the well-known mise en œuvre du hasard is received entirely by the ears. Whence the fatigue.

At the same time, certain sounds captured by the microphone, give us a music that is much superior to anything that our existing instruments can furnish. Mr. Darius Milhaud wrote recently that we were suffering from veritably a musical crisis. Have not all our instruments been used to the full range of their possibilities? It may be that the sound film brings a solution to this difficulty. I had ten sounds extracted from my film projected to a friend who is a composer. He only recognised and identified three. He thought the others were the result of unknown and new musical instruments. And there were no limits to his enthusiasm after the projection. "What marvellous perspectives for the art of to-morrow." I can still hear his phrase in my ears.

Le Monde will be presented in Paris in a new cinema on the Boulevards. Eugene Deslaw.

**PRELUDE TO A CRITICISM OF THE MOVIES**

Charlie Chaplin evades the o'er-reaching arm of the grotesque Kevstone Kop, hurling over the bal’cony, throwing a farewell kiss to the loved and lost one and beats it down the long street with his inimitable shambling gait accelerated into frenzied speed—hat, cane and shoes bobbing in fantastic
rhythm as the camera slowly rises out . . . this is the first manifestation of the American movie. Kaleidoscopically, reels and reels of unwinding film are projected on the white screen, reels of shambling hats, canes and shoes, fierce moustachios, pretty girls, vigilant “kops,” villains, valets, half-caricatures, these realistic phantoms, these grotesque exaggerations. . . Through all this senseless cruelty, this merciless opposition shambles the half-pathetic, half-humorous figure of the dapper little tramp who “apes” the swells and who with a twirl of his bamboo cane or a well-timed boot in the rear places them where they belong.

Buffeted, kicked-around, snubbed or disregarded, the little tramp, inarticulate and grotesque as a penguin, is a spectacle to be laughed at—so is a man falling down a flight of steps—at first it’s funny, but there’s something a little sad about it too. People are grown children who merely have lost the capacity to cry. If they cry at all, it will be with their heart at some mental torture or humiliation. Their sensitivity grows upon them in inverse ratio as their pre-adolescent unconcern dwindles and dies. The little tramp embodied by Chaplin is the sensitive human-being, full of vain conceits, pathetic endeavours and bragadocio, wthal still an amusing person, still a child of God. Human, all too human. . .

“In the beginning there was Chaplin. . .” so spoke Max Reinhardt once at a dinner in his honour in America which I attended. In Paris, in Berlin, London, Cape Town and Tokio, Chaplin is a universal figure, beloved, idolized, feted, known, remembered, recognised. What is recognised in him is the timeless symbol of the eternal roaming vagabond which we all become upon creeping out of adolescence even though we may be tied to hearth and home by family ties.

Maturity comes to people at different stages—to some early in life, to others, late. But what does maturity imply, before we go further? Nothing more than suddenly feeling one’s self alone in the world, looking out over the horizon of the future and seeing only the ever present cloud which is the shadow of death waiting, waiting . . . all else is chance, conjecture, probability at best. There is no certainty—and often we are a little afraid. . . The little tramp snatches at happiness, crumbs of kindness are thrown him, crumbs of condescension and tolerance. But he knows the world—he knows men and women for what they are and not for what they generally pretend they are. Deep down in his mental make up is a rich sophistication, a fount from which he draws upon to mimic their absurd antics, throwing them into strong relief—out into the cold bare light, stripped and ashamed. . .

But when happiness comes to the little tramp he is bewildered, puzzled, frightened and then ecstatic. He knows not what to make of it at first because it may be too good to be true. (Here we have another peculiar, yet trenchant observation. In moments of greatest happiness, the urge is not nearly so much for laughter as it is for tears. Schopenhauer did not err in
stating that evil is the positive force and good the negative one in this world. Moments of happiness are merely reliefs from long periods of depression.)

The art of Chaplin is limned with overtones which keep shooting off the gross material. It is this which keeps his work perennially alive and which is charged with the breath of life. The Keystone Kops will always chase him—just as the cruel urgency of life will keep after us all allowing us no peace and little rest—but he is fleet of foot and will beat it down the street—we too will try to escape—until the camera "irises out"...

HERMAN G. WEINBERG.

THE NEW KINO

Among the prophecies the enemies of the U.S.S.R. have broadcast—the wish being father to the thought—is the collapse of the Soviet kino. Similarly the Russian theatre, a lively process well-nourished at the roots, has been foredoomed in the fantasies of the foe. This is the aesthetic counterpart to the political cry of the present régime. But the kino, like the Union, lives on and moves into several categories beyond the primitive level of the American film. Although the energies of the Russian economy are to-day concentrated on the programme of industrialisation and collectivisation, necessitating a great reduction, for the moment, of activity in the cinema, I have seen five new films which deserve attention and praise: a record of 100 per cent. And these films were not selected for me. I walked in upon them quite casually.

_Perekop_ is the epic of the great struggle for the Isthmus joining Crimea to the mainland. It is an anniversary film. Ten years ago the Red Army drove out the white, Denikin and the hessians of the "self-determined" lands, Czecho-Slovakia, etc., subsidized by France, the marplot of Europe. The workers and peasants choked the neck of the bottle, and Denikin was cornered in the peninsula. As a film of commemoration and retrospect, _Perekop_ belongs, thematically, in the second period of the dialectic Soviet film. We may divide the Soviet cinema into two general "eras": pre-dialectic, and dialectic. The first is the _Polikushka_ era, of the plight of the individual, a cinema un-informed by the critical, marxist point-of-view. In this era may also be placed the historical film about a personality—the German influence—such as _Czar Ivan the Terrible_.

The films _Potemkin_ and _Mother_ open the dialectic era, which contains three periods: pre-October, October and contingent strifes (military intervention), and re-construction or towards collectivism. _Perekop_ is of the second period thematically, but structurally it is current in the present. That is to say, it derives its treatment from the new logic which has evolved from the basic first statement of the nature of the film as a process _built_ from the frames of the negative imprinted by the various instruments: actor, object, light, etc. The kino is a process serving a process, in the U.S.S.R.
"A Firm Character." A Sojuzkino film, directed by Yursev.

"Un solide caractère." Un film Sojuzkino, dirigé par Yursev.

"Ein Fester Charakter." Ein Sojuzkino Film, geleitet von Yursev.
In *Perekop*, Kalveridzé, a Georgian sculptor, utilizing the new logic articulated by Dovzhenko in *Arsenal*, has organized from dissociated frames an inter-relation at once social and structural. He has built a dramatic process re-enacting the intervention of the foreign powers and the counter-revolutionary attack of the kulak and the middle-class.

The film is not simply a picture of warfare. The physical struggle is set amid the conflict of class-interests, giving it its full social import. The film, in brief, is inferential and reflective, at the same time it is muscular in its battle-scenes. The relations between the battle and its class-nature are, when the fury of the battle is at its highest, not maintained as constantly as they might be. At such time the analytic logic of the structure is not re-rendered as a synthesis. A double failure is apprehended: the method is too intellectual for the muscular material, and the accumulative sense is injured. However, this is not a complete loss, for Kalveridzé balances it in part with a new sensitivity. Deriving from *A Fragment of an Empire*, shafts of light select details from the black arena. In *A Fragment of an Empire* these shafts were relatively static; in *Perekop* there is multiple play of light, moving columns and changing diagonals that etch and heighten the details, directing them incisively.

*Perekop* is an instance of the continuity of the Soviet kino. It shows...
the motility of aesthetic inventions and tendencies, propagation, fruition—the fluid health. The future of the Soviet kino is guaranteed by a continuous feeding from the roots up. The state school of the cinema at Moscow—the only university in the world training directors, cameramen, actors, scenarists—draws its students from the entire Union. These are educated, more than trained. They study sociology, art, literature, foreign languages, science, history of the cinema, theory, practice. Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Nikitin—the great actor of *A Fragment of an Empire*—teach there. The fruit feeds the root, the root feeds the fruit. We have already seen here in America, the product of this school in the first film of a student: Ilya Trauberg's *China Express*.

Another guarantee of the future of the Soviet kino is its several centres. Hollywood persists as a vested interest miles away from the critical centre of America. The Soviet film accords with the cultural autonomy of the

"All Right, Captain!" A comedy of naval life directed by A. Ivanoff for the Sojuzkino studios at Leningrad.

"A vos ordres, capitaine!" Une comédie d'action navale réalisée par A. Ivanoff pour les studio Sojuzkino à Leningrad.

various republics and peoples. Caucasian films, Georgian films, Armenian, Jewish, Ukrainian, Mongol . . from the areas of these films come the students of the cinema school and the new directors. There's Kalveridze, a Georgian; another Georgian is Mikhail Kalatozov (schvilli), whose social training began as an economist and cinematic as a cameraman. Kalatozov has just made his first picture as a creator. I saw it before the last touches. Pearl At tashev has written to me that the film has received a first class pass from the censor.

_Salt of Swanetia_ is an ethnographic film. It presents a new approach to ethnographic material. The Soviet Union utilizes the film documenting the lives of its minority people as a call to action in their behalf. Swanetia is the salt-less land in Asiatic Russia. It is a land of darkness and malaria and blood hemorrhages, a land where "death is a holiday and birth a sorrow." Tretyakov, author of _Roar, China!_, prepared the original scenario for the film. Kalatozov went at it in his own way. The difference seems to be one of stress. Should Kalatozov have stressed the quotidianal facts, or was he right in having constructed an experience on peaks of pathos? The choice having been made, we can view its execution. The ethnographic film has had its literal, factual day, it seems to me. We have awaited a non-fabricated, yet dramatic, enactment of the life of remote people. Not a simple-minded and charming _Chang—it exposes nothing_. But a film satisfying the social sense, a film making demands upon the active conscience. The romanticized document like _Chang_ concentrates a tale around a personality to the disadvantage of the evidences of native life. It is, like Flaherty's lovely lyrics, _Nanook and Moana_, too pleasant, too "open-minded." Kalatozov has uncovered the dramatic human heart of the evidences, without destroying the ethnographic value of the document.

Kalatozov has established his point-of-view at once in the bold image and stern grand angles. The film, in these, is related to Dreyer's _The Passion of Joan of Arc_, but being a film of immediate pathos, rather than one of objective tragedy, _Salt of Swanetia_ is a structure of greater liquidity and darker, more sombre tones. It is unrelenting in its exposure of the dread life of the Swans, exploited and hopeless, incarcerated by the mountains. The funeral of the tuberculosis victim is excruciating in its dire grief. The widow, dripping her milk into the grave, condemns the collusion of paganism and christianity conspiring against human happiness. "We will not give our milk to the grave," the women cry in revolt. The film calls, and we respond: "These people must be saved—roads and salt!" The last part shouting this slogan directly is a weak addendum—the entire film cries that convincingly enough. Yet perhaps we must be told that the response is acting, that a road is being built to lead Swanetia to the world, and the world to Swanetia.

Eisenstein has spoken of "the pathetic treatment of non-pathetic material." There is also the non-pathetic treatment of pathetic material. The question arises: shall pathos be stressed by pathetic treatment?
think Kalatazov has answered that. If the pathetic treatment conveys more than sympathy, that is; evokes a positive conduct, and if that treatment informs the film from beginning to end, it is valid. Ordinarily it is sentimentality to treat pathos with pathos; it is over-treatment. But from the opening with the first mountain-peak to the beginning of the epilogue, Kalatazov's attitude is constant in the structure. Such conversion of an idea into a form is the full process and achievement of art.

A curious film is another first picture, *Rubicon*, also un-released as yet, by a young Jew from White Russia, Vladimir Weinstock. The film is


"Le sel de Swanetia," documentaire pathétique réalisé par Kalatosoff pour le Goskinprom de Géorgie. Ce film est remarquable pour la qualité de sa photographie. Kalatosoff en a lui-même assuré la prise de vue et la régie.

really two films. The first part relates of a British sailor who is blacklisted for striking an officer. He ships with a Soviet vessel and the pronounced contrast in fraternity and consideration for the seaman turns him to the workers' land, which he serves by catching a fellow Anglo-Saxon, a "foreign specialist," red-handed at sabotage. Evidently, the second half of the picture was effected to serve the moment at hand: the exposure of the sabotagers, subsidized by the marplot and England, "the man higher up."

The film with all its faults, induced by the shifting of photographic treatment and the double-narrative, is a very reputable debut. Reminiscent at first of the French pictorial film, it overcomes this association with the effete by the handsomely firmness of its pictorial compositions and the validity of the character-types. The tradition is again educator: type is prototype. The film is imperfect, somewhat too detached for so elementary a statement of its social theme. This may be a result of a beginner's uncertainty. The merit of Rubicon is, however, a proof of the process.

While creating more highly evolved techniques, the Soviet kino understands that it must present a certain number of films of normal structure. Such a film is Life in Full Swing, with Nikitin. In a simple straightforward story of a shrewish husband, unobtrusively and with good folk-humour, a number of social ideals are conveyed. The evil of intemperance, the right of the woman to her own life, the nursery, community pride, the new architecture, the elimination of drudgery. The film is another of the genre-posters which, through the medium of an entertaining story, seek to establish a coincidence of personal with social morality. Humour is the sensible contact between subject-matter and audience. Self-criticism is the suggestive contact, which is carried away by the audience in positive conduct.

The Soviet kino neglects no medium. While the western world is titillated, gooseflesh and funnybone, by the simplistic scrawls and stereotype procedures of Mickey Mouse, calling them end-stops in the motion picture, the Soviet Union passes beyond insipid lycanthropy to an animated cartoon that contains an idea. As a first exercise in synchronisation, the Soviet kino presents an animation of Marshak's children's book, Post, a delightful story of a catapillar sent by mail around the world. The achievement is in the multiple character of the graphic, the lively sequence of images, the sportiveness, and the original integration of sound and image. As a first attempt, it already leaves Mickey Mouse in the cellar. The work of animation is Sehenovski's and the music—modern and varied—is by Deršenov. Words are incorporated as sound-music values in the musical compositions. The graphic is not simply crude line-drawings and dull wash, but an alternation of profile poster-illustrations, patterns in line, living images of humans as interludes, and even newsreel excerpts through the tourist's spectacles. The designs move in all directions, they alternate in diagonals, circles, as well as in the normal horizontals. Post matures the animated cartoon as a form, vindicating the charge that Mickey Mouse is rudimentary and inarticulate.

H. A. Potamkin.
FEATURE ARTICLE

AS IS

BY THE EDITOR.

In this time of world depression the cinema has been hard-hit. Like everything else, it quakes—sometimes more perceptibly than or in different ways from others. But all that has all this to it: world depression in the cinema need not unduly world-depress its followers, if depression means a disruption of the commercial formula. If the big vested interests weaken—if films seem even to "be killed"—that can well be the moment for the spread and popularisation of what each in his own way or in the way of his faith or ritual may choose to understand in the expression New Spirit.

The loggerhead tactics of opposing factions could and did produce only a dunderhead result—while paltriness and condonation of the rank were cardinal virtues of the Popular Screen, dear Lord—as though that were so fixedly the prize of the beastly little small-town tradesmen. But if cracks sneak in and out the cornices, and lay a gradual net of weakness in the name of world depression, the opportunity's there—yours or mine; somebody's anyway—to make the tottering structure valid to a modern world—the culture film, the intellectual film, the film of direct approach and certain impact. Hope for the cinema may come from its demise. The New Spirit will be this or that. We don't say Soviet any more when we talk about that. Though there alone is the urgency which makes stimulus to the thoughts you will carry round in your head—all day, and on any day—and there is a simple way of seeing a simple function of true cinema. A man will be thinking of life and his interest is presumably in it. Implying, of necessity, a working out of a problem—personal, impersonal, racial, universal, cosmic—if not of a problem, in any event a working out. Life is like that. It is the doing of this to get ready for the next thing, a shuffling and prevision, a readiness and an ambition. Of one sort or another. Cinema that deals with this—with the mental, the scientific, will come nearer to man's way of living, and so nearer to his interest and appreciation. In appreciation lies the secret of refinement toward—shall we say, for the moment, art? The Soviet directors alone—as a collective force—have recognised this, which is one of the sustaining principles of their "modernity." They take "the daily problem" to the cinema. So, in a rudimentary manner, did the domestic dramas. Even now a domestic drama with references to the social structure from which its complications rise, can be relevant. But quite early in the development of "screen art" references were discounted in favour of heavy insistence on the personal, the ubiquitous, the "I says to 'im and 'e says to me," philosophy of the—of the small town tradesman's wife, her tea-time chatter.
The Soviet directors were the first—or among the first—to break away from this cinematic amen. In other countries individual directors have done the same. Feyder, Dreyer, Pabst, Leitão de Barros, it would seem, in Portugal, J. Shige Sudzuki in Japan, René Clair and some of the independents. Antithetical to all this squats Hollywood, whose amen is to creeds of gold and gain. Creator, most certainly, of nothing, but possessor of the earth. Unless "world depression" really can do anything about it!

If the Soviet technique is no longer new, at all events it is the newest we have. But there is ground to be covered. The Soviet film is the election-hall film, and that, God knows, is important enough in man's mind. But elections, no matter how general, are not all "the currants in the bun." There are the sciences. There also is entertainment. In some real sense of the word. Not really the sorrows of a girl whose boy thinks she has sold her body to somebody else, and, by leaving her, leaves her no other alternative but to starve, which out of cussedness she does and that makes him believe her—but something which gladdens, not stultifies, the mind. Proving, for instance, the cussedness, rather than pretend in it essence of female chastity! Dear me, isn't it time for some such films? Essentially a film should be . . . should be witty! A "smashing indictment," Lord save us, isn't good enough. It only betrays the betrayer, like the kiss of Judas. People who want, who really want, smashingly to indict are bound to have indictible qualities themselves. Ridicule is a quick destroyer. We all know that. It isn't entirely a destructive thing. It is really an early stage of building, like many other carpings.

Films need to be carped at. Need an awfully firm hand. Need snobism. Need to be sneered at, that is to say, need standards of value, need slightly less bumptiousness and indifference on the part of those who make them and those who go to see them. For instance, we hear from America that "radio plays" are likely to kill films. That's not the first thing we have heard may kill them. Television may do so . . . you know all that! It may. So may radio plays. But nobody yet has made a film one half, one quarter as real as a moment from life—from standing, for example, anywhere in a street for five minutes and really using the eyes and ears. There is much better cinema all round us than may ever reach the screen. You might almost say that so far there have been NO films. Why then should they die? Why should they not just now, in the middle of trade depression, really begin?

The query may seem irrelevant. They cannot die. They cannot go on as they are. They will have to be changed. The public is not tired of films, but tired of stupefaction. Cinema must change and be thought of as stimulant, or stimulating dope. Not as narcotic and the pandering to brains turned off at the main. The brain turned off at the main is the brain that goes to the cinema. In time it grows tired of not working. Only fatigue need be recognised. Stimulant is what is needed. The thoughts men think. That is the secret of the art of films.  

KENNETH MACPHERSON.
COMMENT AND REVIEW

NOTICE TO READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS.

We are anxious to help readers who require information, but before writing to us, please read the following paragraphs, as we cannot answer letters dealing with these subjects.

We are not allowed to sell photographs that have appeared in Close Up. Readers desirous of obtaining actual photographs should apply direct to the firms owning the films. The name of firm or director is printed usually underneath the picture. Addresses of film companies are to be found most easily in the Kinematographic Year Book. (Your local cinema will probably have a copy.)

We cannot recommend any reliable film school nor can we advise readers as to the best way of obtaining employment in a studio. There is the State School of cinematography in Moscow but it is very difficult for foreigners to enter it. Readers who wish to work in films are advised to perfect themselves as far as possible in some technical branch before trying to obtain a position.

We cannot advise as to whether names selected for fictitious film stars in stories written by readers, would involve the author in libel proceedings or not.

For particulars of The London Workers and affiliated Film Societies, apply to R. Bond, 5, Denmark Street, London, W.C.2. The address of the Film Society is 56, Manchester Street, London, W.C.1.

We read carefully all manuscripts sent to us. We cannot be responsible for them though we will endeavour to return those not suitable if a stamped self addressed envelope be enclosed. International postage stamps can be obtained at any post office. But we would like to point out, to obviate disappointment, that our space is restricted and that we have many reports to print supplied to us by our foreign correspondents. Therefore it is seldom possible to print more than one outside article in each issue. We do not wish to discourage authors and wish we had more space to print many of the excellent articles we receive. But before we can increase the number of our pages we must double the number of our readers.

Otherwise we will endeavour to answer all reasonable requests provided that a stamped, self addressed envelope be enclosed in the letter.

Address all mail to London Office.
The general interest, in *The International Review of Educational Cinematography*, a monthly publication of the International Institute of Educational Cinematography, is increasing number by number because of the variety of the matter it treats and the accurate studies experts of undiscussed competency make on each subject.

Looking through the last three numbers we have received, we notice many articles worth while giving attention to.

In the December copy there are two articles, one by Mr. Albert Thomas, Director of the B.I.T., and the other by Professor Sante de Sanctis of the Institute of Experimental Psychology annexed to the University of Rome. These two articles are the preface and introduction to a study of considerable value which our Institute has published: *The Cinema in reference to Scientific Management of Labor.*

The same copy contains articles by Mr. Collette, the most notable personality of educational cinema, on: *Film Projection in Elementary Schools*; by E. W. Nack on: *Sidelights on the International Production of Fairytale Films*; by Mr. Moholy Nagy on: *The problem of modern cinematography: Its emancipation from painting*; and by Mr. James Corrie on: *Film propaganda on behalf of co-operation and agriculture in the Federated Malay States.* But the most important fact of the December is the first note of a new rubric which then began to appear, entitled *The Institute's Enquiries.* It contains the result of an enquiry conducted by the I.E.C., of Rome in schools of several countries and its questionnaires were filled by 200,000 scholars of different grades of instruction. The "Enquiries" are printed on special paper and are inserted in the Review so that they may be taken out if one wants to make a collection of them. December's enquiry was conducted on an interesting subject: *Cinema and visual fatigue.* In the following numbers the study will continue on the cinema in relation to corporal fatigue and mental fatigue.

In January's number the I.E.C. has also opened another rubric: *Studies and Enquiries* and there is a study entitled: *Children's responses to the Motion Picture: The Bagdad Thief,* by Mrs. Allen Abbott, made at Horace Mann School, Teachers' College and at Columbia University. This rubric, like the other: *The Institute's enquiries,* when detached, forms a distinct pamphlet.

We may also point out in January's copy *Motion Picture Education in Japan,* by Mr. Y. Mizuno; *Cinema and Theatre,* by Anton-Giulio Bragaglia; *Sound Films and International Co-operation,* by Mr. E. v. Lölhöfål; a quasi-fairytale, by Mrs. Eva Elie and various informative notes of high importance.

Very interesting in the February number is the scenario of *Æneas,* by Professor Fanciuillli, of the University of Pisa, an article of Professor Cavaillon on: *Propaganda against venereal pictures,* Censorship on pictures
with educational purposes, by Mr. Duvillard, and Cinema in reference to labor hygiene, by Mr. Strube.

The I.E.C. furthermore publishes the most interesting facts about cinema gathered from all over the world. In last month's number for instance those who are interested in the question may find valuable information on censorship in Russia, Japan and Turkey.

Attention may also be called on the rubric Echos and Comments for the variety of subjects treated.

A Film Society has been formed at Oxford and four performances have been arranged for the present season. Among the films selected are Potemkin, directed by Eisenstein, Uberfall by Erno Metzner, and Bed and Sofa by Room. Other films by Murnau, Galeen, Germaine Dulac, etc., are included in the programme. The society is allowed only to show films, and not to make them. The president of the society is Mr. H. C. Greene and it is hoped that the society may extend its activities in course of time.

NEWS FROM HOLLAND.

Various members of the "avant garde" in Holland have been able to continue their work, having received several new contracts.

Upon his return from the trip to Russia, Joris Ivens resumed work on photographing the Zuider Zee, chiefly upon the drainage of a part of this area and the work on the reclaimed ground. The title of his film is Neuer Boden, (New Earth).

He is working also at an advertisement film for the Phillips Radio Works in Eindhoven, Holland. It is expected that both these films will be ready in the spring.

H. K. Franken is making an advertisement film for the van Houten Cocoa Works at Weesp. He has also plans for other pictures.

Willem Bon has finished recently his new film, The Book, for the association of Dutch publishers.

Jan Hin has finished a film showing the working of a Sanitorium and is now preparing a film for the association of Women Students at Rotterdam.

There being no sound film industry in Holland, the "avant garde" has not yet experimented with talkies, apart from Joris Ivens, who has made one or two trials during the working out of the Phillips Radio Film.
A number of portrait photographers, of prodigious reputation, would soon be forced to admit defeat if they were ever so foolish as to undertake to produce "artistic" close ups with a motion picture camera. Their work is not really photography for they spend hours with the lead pencil building up the faces of their models. In fact they go to the length of taking negatives which will supply a mere framework.

Those who complain about these deft practices are generally the jealous ones. After all, money, in immense quantities, can be made from the game: the sitters are so happy to find that a man can be persuaded, by any means, to say such flattering things about their faces. The mischief is done when these portrait painters begin to influence the younger photographers. For the sake of the rising generation we believe the wielders of the lead pencil should be denied the title of photographers and given that of artists!

Talented Moholy-Nagy is one of those who is a little weak on his technique. He has made films, but we have never seen them. However, we saw his work in Malerie, Fotographie Film and now in the first volume of the new Fototek series (Klinkhardt and Biernann, Berlin). He is good at pasteage and photograms, yet he hardly deserves the magnificent translations of the captions...""Geometrizing clairobscure strukture."" "Photographic immediacy of the instant." "Dematerialised house." "Degrees of plasticity, of darkness and of abstraction."... Moholy-Nagy (with or without pencil) cannot compete with this superb translator of the original German. He faces a photo with its negative. He pastes (we like our word, pasteage) up long shots and close ups, adding a few lines to accentuate perspective. No: the translator IS the star of the book.

The second volume of the series is devoted to Aenne Biernann. Franz Roh contributes a long preface on The Literary Dispute about Photography. He reminds the reader that people objected to the photos of Daguerre as inventions of the devil (any ink to sling at photography)! And he discusses the objection that, as photography has similarity to modern painting and sculpture, the camera worker REJECTS instead of FORMULATES.

Aenne Biernann believes in real photos. She attempts to make ordinary objects look interesting: a lobster claw, hot water bottles, broken egg with reflection. Like Moholy she faces a large eye open with a large eye shut. Nevertheless, she has technique. The agate magnified forty nine fold is changed (unlike apples on a plate) to interest by the lens of the camera. There is a nice double print of a piano and strings. There are: the possessive chimpanzee with his arm round the girl; the conifer branch; the man and woman lying on the beach. The translator is less obtrusive.

The make-up of both volumes is by Jan Tschichold.

Other books in the series will be "consecrated" to: El Lissitzky, Police Photos, Photomantage, Kitsch Photos, Sport Photos, Erotic and Sexual Photos.
Omnibus (a collection issued by Der Galerie Flechtheim, Berlin) is a merry jumble from Paul Klee to Maillol. Many film stills including Bunuel's L'Age d'Or and Renoir's Die Jagd Nach Dem Glück.

Band In Attendance. The photos and drawings from Beaton's Book of Beauty were exhibited at the Cooling Galleries. We have been told the tale of the man who always grunted when his own tea parties were going well. Alas, Cecil would be far too smart to do such a pretty thing. As models, my dear, The Marquise de Casa Maury, The Jungman Sisters, The Queen of Spain, the Beaton girls... One can enjoy the chic as well as the photos although the photos are chic. (Osbert Sitwell wrote an appreciation for the catalogue.) There is no reason why à la mode work should not be worthy of attention. It demands a feeling for fabrics, cloths, textures, pearls. It demands skill not to blurr the heads too much into the background. It calls for skill in painting on balloons or stars. It calls for a

Oswell Blakeston.

Do you give critics three or four years to catch up with Borderline?
The Filmligia of Holland has presented Borderline.
Spain is viewing Borderline.
After London, Glasgow.
Even if they don't like Borderline they seem to want to see it.

Borderline promotes Discussion
Thought
AND (among the initiated)
ADMIRATION.
"He was one of the first to grasp the new principles of naval tactics, and to break away from the traditions of the old school."

This was said of Admiral Rodney after the Battle of Cape St. Vincent.

WE ARE ON THE THRESHOLD OF A NEW EPOCH

The Old School is not always wrong, nor are the new tactics invariably right. But the Age must have its head, and it is the province of responsible papers to record the movements of the day, to encourage creative effort, to support reasonable experimental work, to mould the Future, while tactfully reminding the Present of the Past by a judicious display of its greatest works. There is no reason why progressive ideas should be monopolized by revolutionaries: older papers, like the older men, their roots well grounded in tradition, should be the strongest supporters, as well as the keenest critics, of the new movements.

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CAPE FORLORN, ETC.

Cape Forlorn is proof that the cinema is not yet dead, it makes one wish to God it were. Before going to see it, one felt my God, Ian Hunter for Conrad Veidt. Afterwards one said, Thank God Conrad Veidt was not involved in the British side of the scandal.

The "heroine" of this B.I.P. proaction is Miss Fay Compton, who has had a somewhat lengthy career on the English stage, whither it is to be hoped she will return until her death or retirement. She will be more appreciated there, where the audiences appreciate the sort of thing she stands for. It is only just, however, to add that though her diction may have been taken directly from the stage, the inspiration for her gestures and expressions seems to have been derived from the screen—I allude to the incomparable performance of Miss Maria Jacobini in Gennaro Righelli's version of La Bohème, which it is safe to assume, served as a model for Miss Fay Compton's effort. It had hitherto stood in a class by itself.

The "hero" (Ian Hunter) is one of those clean-shaven Englishmen so fond of adventure (i.e. hunting (and shooting) tigers in India and shooting (without hunting) Indians in India). It turns out in this instance that he merely robbed an Australian building society.

The action takes place in a lighthouse, don't you know, and the sea appears at least twice. The action arises from the complications arising from the relations arising from there being two hefty young men about the place as well as the husband. One of them gets shot, but the really nice one, though he goes to clink for his building society activities, will soon get out (after the film is over), and come and see the heroine (all this after the film is over, fortunately).

Fragments of dialogue grow confused in my memory of the film, which will soon be obliterated. "He talks like a gentleman—and comes from a good family." "Your nice grey eyes—your hair—so fair and soft." (Fay to Ian.) "And that dog dared to TOUCH MY WIFE." "MISTER Kingsley from you, I think." "I don't understand." And so on.

It is full of coynesses and reticences which must puzzle any foreigner who does not appreciate the decency and restraint which never never desert an Englishman. (That is why there are no earthquakes in England. They would be quite inconsistent with the maintenance of the qualities mentioned).

Dupont is responsible for it, as for Atlantic.

The Regal booked it. In the same programme was Sous les toits de Paris (slightly cut), a musical interlude, Britannia, winding up with bars from Rule Britannia supplemented by the appearance of a revolting tableau vivant, the Regal News, a very large section of which was devoted to a singularly shameless militaristic display under pretext of rendering homage to Joffre (an excellent sketch of His career is to be found in the Daily Worker of January 5th, 1931) and Festival Russe (on the stage) which brought the house down, but was quite exhausted.

We are all tired, very tired of art in Heaven. 

H. A. M.
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WHITE MAN'S NEGRO.

Africa Speaks: a Columbia picture.

Part of the "white man's burden" is documenting "darkest Africa." The documents are more often fake than genuine, and when genuine avoid those details of African life that expose the nature of the "burden." The best African film is that made by Léon Poirier for the expedition sent out by Citroen, the Henry Ford of France. The American contributions have been usually saturated with the unauthoritative, the supercilious, the patronizing, the wisecracking: the Martin Johnsons' Simba, Burbidge's Gorilla Hunt, and this Africa Speaks, made by what I suspect to have been the never-existing "Colorado African Expedition." This film I suspect to have been assembled from a few "shots"—a couple exciting, like the leaping impala and the locust plague—most of them no more revealing than a visit to the zoo. The opening farewell dinner to the two "explorers" is very evidently a staged affair with actors from the age before cold-cream. The "explorers" themselves explored Africa by the Dunning process. They were mounted into the film and superimposed upon the scenes. That is evident from the sharp distinction between scene and men. There is too much verbal showing-off with the camera, and too much innocence and pose of knowledge by the guys. These two are most offensive in their enacted authority toward the Negroes, whom they would never dare to treat so in the veldt. Their conduct is a commentary on "the white man's negro." Lions roar and the white men boldly face the beasts with their cameras. The Negroes dive into a case, and hide. The goateed white man remarks upon a Negro: "He is tired. Tired, I-a-z-y." There is a perpetrated scene where a lion devours the chief's son. It is all too plain, by the way the camera is set to alternate between lion and lad, and by the way the devouring is handled, and by the sober acting of the ham-explorers, that this is fake. If it were not, the whites would need to face the accusation that they deliberately sacrificed a Negro for their nordic art. The locust plague is exciting, but I doubt its complete veracity. The locusts, in their voracity, would not have spared the tent and supplies of the men: these were imposed upon the actual scene. And the actual, I daresay, was multiplied once or twice for effect. The sounds are not bad, but they are sounds taken in safe quarters. I do not complain of this, for such sounds may, on the receiving end, be truer than "on the spot" recordings. But the whole film reeks with Hail Columbia! picture bunkum. The truest thing about this show is its proof that movie fans do not need love-stories, narratives, stars to attract and hold their attention. That's something the U.S.A. cinema will not admit.

H. A. P.
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Only at night when your chest is no longer sore and you feel you cannot sleep any longer, you get restless at cinema time and wish you were sitting in your usual seat, waiting for the lights to snap out and the other side of the world to blot responsibilities (shall I do this—ought I to do that) from the mind.

But you will have to catch the early bus in the morning if you are well enough to go out to-night.

If you cannot go to the movies let the cinema come to you. Why not read a cinematographic book, or what was happening to the films three years ago? If you liked Jeanne Ney you will probably like Gaunt Island. If you liked The End of St. Petersburg why not try Civilians? If you prefer... there is Extra Passenger. Or there are the bound volumes of Close Up.

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Contents

The Dinamic Square. Serge Eisenstein .......... 91
On the Mountains and in the Valleys. Karel Plicka ........ 96
Can Cinema be Taught. Oswell Blakeston .......... 100
On Film Patrol. Gordon Young ................. 108
Hollywood Review. Clifford Howard ............. 112
Before the Microphone of German Broadcasting. A. Kraszna-Krausz .......... 122
Berlin, April, 1931. Bryher ......................... 126
La Rêve du Poète. Stenhouse ....................... 134
Queen Kelly and Queen Victoria. H.A.M. ............ 136
Comment and Review. Search; News from Portugal; Personally about Percy Smith; A New Star; Cimmaron; Achtung Australien; Written on Seeing Proof; A Plan for Film Societies; International Review; Lotte Reiniger; Notice to Readers and Contributors.

London Correspondent: Robert Herring
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THE DINAMIC SQUARE

(CONCLUSION).

This article is based on the speech made by S. M. Eisenstein during a discussion on "Wide Film" in Relation to Motion Picture Production Technique at a meeting organised by the Technicians Branch of the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, in conjunction with the Directors and Producers Branches, Fox Hills Studio, Hollywood. The first part of this article appeared in our March issue.

Remains the last argument—the economic.

The horizontally extended form corresponds most closely to the shape left for the eye by the balcony overhanging the back of the parterre, and by the series of balconies each overhanging the other. The absolute possible limit of screen height in these conditions is estimated by Sponable (2) as 23 feet to every 46 of horizontal possibilities.

If we are to remain governed by strictly economic considerations—we might well allow that by using vertical compositions we should oblige the public to move to the more expensive forward seats free of overhanging balconies...

But another fact comes to our rescue—and this is the unfitness of the present shape and proportions of the cinema theatre of to-day for sound purposes.

Acoustics help optics!

I have not the time to examine references in looking up the ideal proportions for a sound theatre.

I faintly recall from my dim and distant past study of architecture that, in theatre and concert buildings, the vertical cut should, for optimum acoustics, be parabolic.

What I do remember clearly is the shape and the typical proportions of two ideal buildings. One ideal for optical display.

Let us take the Roxy (New York).

And one for auditive display.

The Salle Pleyel in Paris—the peak acoustic perfection hitherto attained in a concert hall.

They are exactly opposed in proportions to each other. If The Salle Pleyel were to lay upon its side it would become a Roxy. If the Roxy were to stand upright it would become a Salle Pleyel. Every proportion of the Roxy split horizontally into parterres and balconies opposes itself directly to the strictly vertical, receding into depth, corridor-like Salle Pleyel.
The sound film—the intersection of optic and auditive display, will have
to synthesise in the shape of its display hall, both tendencies with equal force.

In the days to come the sound theatre will have to be reconstructed. And its new shape—in intersecting the horizontal and vertical tendencies of "ye olden Roxy" and "ye olden Pleyel" for these new coming days conditioned by a mingling of an optic and acoustic perception—will be the one most perfectly appropriate to the dinamic square screen and its display of vertical and horizontal affective impulses.

And now, last but not least, I must energetically defy one more creeping
tendency that has partially triumphed over the talkies and which now
stretches out its unclean hands towards the Grandeur film, hastening to force
it, in yet greater degree, to kneel subservient to its base desires. This is
the tendency entirely to smother the principles of montage, already weakened
by the 100 per cent. talkies, which yet wait for the first powerful example of
the perfectly cut and constructed sound film that will establish anew the
montage principle as the basic, everlasting, and vital principle of cinematographic expression and creation.

I refer to innumerable quotations, quotations partially accepted even by
such great masters of the screen as my friend Vidor and the Great Old Man
of all of us—D. W. Griffith. For example:

"... Dance scenes need no longer be "followed" as there is ample
room in a normal long shot for all the lateral movement used in most
dances. . . ."

(The "moving camera" is a means of affecting in the spectator a
specific dynamic feeling, and not a means of investigation or following
dancing girl feet! See the rocking movement of the camera in the reaping
scene of Old and New and the same with the machine gun in All Quiet on the Western Front.—S.E.)

"... Close-ups can be made on the wide film. Of course, it is not
necessary to get as close as you do with the 35 mm. camera, but, compara-
tively speaking, you can make the same size of close-up... ."

(The impressive value of a close-up lies not at all in its absolute size,
but entirely in its size relation to the optical affective impulse produced by
the dimension of the previous and following shots.—S.E.)

* The actual reconstruction and readjustment of the now existing theatres, to adapt
them to new forms of screen, would cost (considered entirely independently of the artistic
value consequent upon any given kind of adaption) by estimate of the experts of the Motion
Picture Academy, about $40,000,000. But mechanical genius has found a way out. By
the method of first taking the picture on 65 mm. Grandeur negative. Reducing it so as
to confine it where desired to the limits of a 35 m.m. positive (not covering the whole field
provided in the smaller sized celluloid, owing to its different proportion), and finally throw-
ing it on to the screen by magnifying lenses, enlarging it in dimension, and transforming
its proportion in accordance with the wall of the cinema theatre. This same proceeding
could equally well be used for vertical composition which, as shown by the drawing, by a
very slight alteration of horizontal line could provide for the equally vertical, and then
(when reduced) would equally not surpass the dimension of the ordinary screen. Remains
to bewail the partial and every slight loss of the limits of the vertically composed pictures,
and that wail only for the worst balcony and parterre seats, and even there only a very
small loss,
"However, with the wide film very few close-ups are needed. After all, the main reason for close-ups is to get over thought (!!!—S.E.) and with the wide film you can get all the detail and expression in a full-sized figure that you would get in a six foot close-up with the 35 mm. film...

(Although preferring, as far as my personal tastes are concerned in screen acting, the nearly imperceptible movement of the eyebrow, I none the less acclaim the possibility of a whole body expressing something. However, still, we cannot admit the expulsion of the close-up—the fixing of attention by isolation of a desired fact or detail, a quality still unrendered by the mere means of providing the body with disproportioned increase in absolute size.—S.E.)

Close-ups, moving camera shots, absolute dimensional variation of figures and objects on the screen, and the other elements concerned with montage are far more profoundly bound to the expressive means of cinema and cinema perception than is intended by the task of the mere facilitation of viewing a face, or the "getting over of a thought" on it.

As we have proclaimed (and partly, with Alexandroff, tried to show in humble essay form in that so grievously misunderstood in its intentions piece of irony Romance Sentimentale)—with the coming of sound montage does not die but develops, amplifying and multiplying its possibilities and its methods.

In the same way the advent of the wide screen marks one further stage of enormous progress in the development of montage, which once more will have to undergo a critical review of its laws; laws mightily affected by the change of absolute screen dimension making impossible or unsuitable quite a number of the montage processes of the days of the olden screen, but on

From Eisenstein's last film turned in Mexico.

Instantané du dernier film tourné au Mexique, par Eisenstein.

Aus dem letzten in Mexiko gedrehten film Eisensteins.
the other hand providing us with such a gigantic new agent of impression as the rhythmic assemblage of varied screen shapes, the attack upon our perceptive field of the affective impulses associated with the geometric and dimensional variation of the successive various possible dimensions, proportions and designs.

And, accordingly, if, to many of the qualities of Normal Screen montage laws we must proclaim: "... le roi est mort!"

Yet with much greater strength we must acclaim with "vive le roi!" the newcomer of the hitherto unvisualised and hitherto unimaginable montage possibilities of Grandeur Film!

SERGE EISENSTEIN.

Santa Maria Tonantzintla, Cholula, Mexico.

From Eisenstein's last film turned in Mexico.
Instantané du dernier film tourné au Mexique, par Eisenstein.
Aus dem letzten in Mexiko gedrehten film Eisensteins.


Divine service under the open sky in ancient Slovakian ethnographical regions. From the Czech film, "On the Mountains and in the Valleys" of karel Plicka.

Le service divin en plein air dans une ancienne région ethnographique de la Slovaque : Tiré du film tchèque de karel Plicka : "Sur les monts et dans les vallées."


ON THE MOUNTAINS AND IN THE VALLEYS

(A picture of life of the people in the Slovakian countryside; 2500 metres.)

Essentially it is an ethnographical picture. The Slovakian folklore, however, is of so much poetic character that it is identical with the people's art.

Indeed, all that fills up the life of Slovakian people is sanctified with the spark of art. I sincerely and willingly admit that it was this very artistic character of Slovakian folklore that tempted me first to record folk songs and music and only later it has brought me to film work. I did not wish to make a dry documentary and descriptive picture but an artistic documentation which would preserve the flavour of the original as much as possible. This way of documentation is not, of course, in discord with reality, on the contrary, it is only the motive seen and felt in an artistic way that raises it to the full optical effect.
Mountain country that prevails in Slovakia, the political situation before 1918 and even other circumstances were the reasons through which the people in Slovakian villages preserved their traditional ways of living in full swing and almost undecayed to the present day. What is typical of the creative power of the natives is an unusual variety and many-sidedness: almost every parish has its own peculiarity and very often two villages in the closest neighbourhood differ essentially one from the other. Here, in the very heart of Europe, there still exists an ancient popular culture, archaic ways of home and farming, ancient national costumes are preserved, wonderful physiognomies are to be seen, it is here where old Slavism sings its last song.

I think the most satisfying discovery I put into my picture, are the plays of mountain boys which represent ingenious athletics and gymnastics. The boys have such a great abundance of them that they are beyond comparison. Though these plays are very funny and witty, they are more than mere plays: they are an involuntary and deeply serviceable training for life, as the beautiful but rough mountain scenery, which is the home of these boys, requires the people to be hardened and physically efficient. I shall go into details about them on the occasion of my next sound picture Pastorale, the day of shepherd children in the mountains, in which the most original of these plays will be set in a frame of a plot.


Scène campagnarde et traditionnelle, du film tchèque de karel Plicka: “Sur les monts et dans les vallées.”

A game of boys called “The Whip”
Un jeu d’enfants dénommé “Le Fouet”
Ein knaben spiel, genannt “Die Peitsche”

Shepherd boys at play
Divertissements de pâtres.
Hirtenknaben beim Spiel.


My picture was made possible through the direct support of T. G. Masaryk, President of Czechoslovakia, and through the ethnographical section of the Matice Slovenská. It was pre-viewed by different groups of artists and art schools and is scheduled for public showing in autumn of this year.

Karel Plicka.


**CAN CINEMA BE TAUGHT?**

Crashing into the movies by sofa-appeal.

Crashing into the movies by exploiting American manufactured tractors.

"Forward," as the titles used to say—still do in *The Pick of the Pictures*—in the old Russian propaganda films, "and onward." To make it quite clear: *forward and onward*.

Not one way, not two ways, but several ways of crashing!

Pause for classical jokes.

On the Day of Atonement there are no trade shows. AND. If you cry out "Sam" in Wardour Street every window flies open!

Why, thuswise, seek to crash into the Street of Celluloid?

Then, some people want to look like the goddamned creatures in the fan papers; they (the goddamned ones) complicate matters by all trying to look alike.

(Hugh Castle might have put it with more news sense. They gave up the filming of *The Creation of the World* because the public couldn’t tell the difference between Lon Chaney and an orinithorhynchus or giant centipede and line of hoofers . . . you know the light touch?)
Meanwhile, young men pour out of the Universities and DO hope to crash studio gates.

Pour out of Universities.
We have seen Universities on the screen. We have seen more than plenty of girls and boys behaving in, or on, a strange place, called "the campus," exactly as if they were on the boards of a revue stage. (American producers have used almost every setting at one time or another and backstage settings almost all the time.) But the Universities from which the young men come seem even more of a waste of time.

Are the authorities content that the cinema shall always remain a self educated industry?

Are the authorities content that graduates have to take the position of office boy?

A more practical education: a filmic one? (Not, this time, the question of education by films but the comprehensive education possible in making them.)

---

A game of boys called "The Hawk"; from the Czech film, "On the Mountains and in the Valleys."


Ein knabenspiel, genannt "Der Habicht." Aus dem tschech Film, "Auf den Bergen und in den Tälern."
Hundreds of enthusiastic young men come down with high hopes of entering the film world. Business, when all is said and resaid, is the first consideration of an industry. University applicants have no specialised knowledge: they are not trained how not to make a nuisance of themselves in the studio. The studio authorities may be aware that there is an energy to be capitalised; yet, at too great an expense.

A Chair of Cinema?
An idea?

Somebody once twittered that Close Up missed a lot of fun by not having an Answer Man. (Vivian de Vere was born in 1865 of Polish parents who were fond of telling Irish stories. \( \text{V. de V.} \) ran away from home as soon as she was old enough to understand Irish.) For Close Up, though, there would be but one question to answer; ‘‘How can I learn cinema?’’

There are many shocks in store for those who seek fame, adventure and a couple of hundred pounds a week!
The Cinema Academies?
Investigation?
A story?

Plucked Eyebrows glared at the journalist in search of copy. The Principal was not in. Yes, he could wait. I-mean-all-things-to-all-men walk, as skirt whisked round corner.

Parked in the reception room, the journalist filled in time by looking at pictures on the wall; oak-framed photographs of graduates in what were harnesses rather than dresses. (Ladies, in ill-fitting pseudo-Greek costumes, trying to show their curves and discovering they hadn’t got any.)

When the Principal arrived he looked, in that dilapidatedly uncanny way, like anyone else connected with the movies. (Superior creatures like cats even look alike when discovered in film offices.)

‘‘An unscrupulous woman has lured you to a tragic doom. She is a decoy for an opium den. . .’’

Tense silence while the journalist tried to look all that,
‘‘Star in three weeks. Your name in electric lights.’’
‘‘But I only came to look round.’’

Afterwards, pointing to a strange object mounted on a tripod, ‘‘Is that your camera?’’

‘‘Not,’’ the Principal confessed becoming candid for THE PRESS, ‘‘much of a camera, between you and I, old man. Alright for putting up in front of pupils. Gets them used to the feel of a camera. You know, old man: handle turns, but if you tried to pan, might collapse. Rather funny, eh?’’

(Journalists always were exacting people, wanting everything for the public’s money.)

‘‘Do,’’ the journalist managed, ‘‘you give technical courses?’’
‘‘We . . . er . . . arrange for them, old man.’’
Girls dancing beneath the Tatra Mountains. From the Czech film, "On the Mountains and in the Valleys," of karel Plicka.


Truth, so cynically called, in this country, the best policy.
Down the stairs of the wretched place the journalist stumbled. An absurdly irrelevant phrase beat in his mind: "The Fate of the Missionary was a great success in the Cannibal Isles; the audience simply ate it up."

Much the journalist had expected to find (otherwise he would not have gone) but he had not expected to find quite this (otherwise he would not have gone).

Buy a course and be sold . . . you know the light touch?
On the other hand there is a tragedy behind it, behind Cinema Academy. What solution can be found for the young men? Not, surely, a training before a collapsible camera?

Economically, England will soon be full of young men of all ages.

"Still the rainy season in Moscow!"

That was, once, the slogan of London’s bright young things.
Can Cinema be Taught is a double-edged title. Can the art of Cinema be taught and can the Cinema be taught art.
It needs teaching, also.
I remember:
The studio "char" who drank the developer in the thermos flask.
The assistant cameraman who said to the cameraman on location, "WE forgot to bring it!"
The boss with a hat on which a conjuror would have doted (it would not have mattered if the eggs did break inside it), and a coat which, if it had not seen better days, must always have had a pretty rotten time.

(Many true words spoken in jest; generally one borrowed from the latest comedy of the Marx Brothers . . . you know the light touch?)

I remember:
The studio hands who had to be up at dawn to catch the morning worm, or caught the morning bird instead.
The studio hands who had to stay past midnight to finish their job, or their job was finished.
The novices who were trained, possibly to sell vacuums (very empty) instead of how to make cinema: for it would never do for the assistant to learn too much of a game that is eighty per cent bluff.

Playing on a crooked level, keeping rules even if there are precious few of them?

Some of the literati of the film world can make pleasant marks on official documents; others, in such emergencies, are a shade shaky with the complicated cross stroke. Yes, sir, to this day! Ask who Mr. Shakespeare is and get an answer although the details may be vague. Ask who Mr. Aeschylus is and be told EXACTLY what you are!
The finger bowls are not to spit in.
I remember:
The movie stars who took more risks than their doubles; they went to their own premiers.
The supervisors who approached a von Stroheim to direct a one reel comedy.
The female studio correspondents who spoke of "bloom" and, in less inspired moments, of "roses."

Who will teach:
The Eternal Pilgrim, Chaplin, the way home?
The highbrow film groups that it is odd to show their audiences peasant films made for peasant audiences.
The proleterians, at the film meetings at the Russian Embassy, that it is unkind to criticise the consciously third-best clothes of the bourgeois.
The magazine reviewers that perfume cannot be mechanically recorded like sight and sound.

Who will teach the film fans that if the stars have made a hit with them, it does not follow that they will make a hit with the stars. (Chatting with Clara or Gazing at Garbo. "How do you do . . . I can't tell you how I admire your work . . . Mean to say . . . Admire your work." Why go on when one suspects many of such conversations, somehow.)

With talk one hears the commonplaces of parlance so many times more that they become so many times more commonplace.

Extra "raped" motion!
An exclusive censored scene from Stroheim’s “Merry Widow.” Published by courtesy of Herman Weinberg.

Une scène exclusive censurée de “La Veuve Joyeuse” de Stroheim. Publiée grâce à l’obligeance de M. Hermann Weinberg.

An abstract background from a recent advertising film by Francis Bruguière and Oswell Blakeston.

Un arrière-plan abstrait du récent film de publicité tourné par Francis Bruguière et Oswell Blakeston.

Ein abstrakter Hintergrund aus einem neuen Reklamefilm von Francis Bruguière und Oswell Blakeston.

(The show world simply cannot do without THEM: Zeigfeld and the tired business man make strange, and ominous, noises if anyone threatens to deprive the stage of THEM; the hearts of popular cinema patrons throb when THEY flit on the screen. The Americans call them chorines: there is no accounting for taste . . . you know the light touch?)

If you wish for a thing strongly enough, the mystics say, you will attract it towards yourself.

Who will teach?
BUT:

There is a difference between the leaf of the palm and its fruit—I mean when it is offered as a present, or thrown from roof tops.

(Jacque Cartiers’ voodoo dance in the King of Jazz was the first example of tonal montage; BUT, what a great picture All Quiet might have been if it had been presented without any cuts and with a slowly expanding screen.)

“Still the rainy season in Moscow.”

* * *

And I would be the last to say that cinema is over-mysterious.

We have had the magic lantern; not the magic projector or the magic recorder. It is the natural medium of a dynamic age (tut-tut).

It is easier to make an entertaining film than a picture of the same class. A second glance at the picture shows its weakness; the film is drawn away.

Children are taught (modern method) art appreciation by pasting up coloured shapes of paper. It is easier than drawing images.

The filmic avant-garde of Paris know well enough that the camera can provide images already made.

Naturally, a great film is as hard as any other great achievement. The architecture of the created and controlled is not the same as the talented assemblage of coloured paper.

Oswell Blakeston.

Ali, the fourhanded star of Ufa’s Educational Department, has two strange visitors.


ON FILM PATROL

The London Public Morality Council has been on Film Patrol, and at their annual public meeting, held at Guildhall on a sunny March afternoon, they told Youth all about it. Youth sat at the reporter’s table.

True, movies were not the only excitements of which the Council had to speak. The year had yielded many sorts of fun. The Bishop of London had found 22 books worth passing on to the Home Secretary; someone else had sent to Mr. Lansbury a list of things actually seen in Hyde Park; and 80 “daring nude or semi-nude” post-cards had been submitted to magistrates in the hope—vain, as it proved—that a prosecution would follow. But the real villain of every Councillor’s speech was a film villain.

The Duchess of Atholl, for instance, had done a round of suburban cinemas and though she had apparently encountered little liveliness, she still felt that local authorities ought to make more extensive use of their powers to censor pictures, even when Mr. Shortt had passed them. “You see,” she explained knowingly, “film actors have to be so much less subtle in their methods than stage actors, who have words to help them.” (Do tell us, Duchess, now that we have the talkies, will Gladys Cooper quite oust poor bluff Uncle Pabst?) The Duchess was backed up by the Rev.
Henry Carter (Wesleyan) and by someone called Mrs. Ogilvie Gordon.

But is was not until we came to the Council’s annual report that we fully realised how busy the film patrol had been. The story of its activities occupied 7½ pages, which may be summarised without comment as follows:

A DEPUTATION TO THE FILM CENSOR; (i) urged reverent-treatment of “Sacred Rites” and the exclusion of “scenes with criminal or bootlegging elements or riotous luxury”; (ii) urged Local Control of cinemas guided by voluntary censorship; (iii) asked if “A” films could be marked “Not Suitable for Children” and if those specially suitable for children could have some special category. Mr. Shortt pointed out his difficulties but gave a conciliatory reply.

A STATEMENT BY THE HOME SECRETARY was made (December 11, 1930) in answer to various questions in Parliament. He favoured the system of allowing Local authorities the final decision as to whether a film should be allowed or prohibited in their area “according to circumstances.”

THE CINEMA COMMITTEE, presided over by the Rev. Alfred Binks, dealt with reports on 599 films. “The Committee have been in constant touch with the censor on this all-important question of theme...
and tendency. They were assured of the censor's appreciation of the situation, that considerable sections of many films had been cut, and that such policy would be continued.'

A COMMUNICATION TO U.S. FILM PRODUCERS resulted in a reply "considered to be disappointing and unsatisfactory."

COMMENDED LISTS OF FILMS for family use are being issued to subscribers of 10/- a year.

CONDUCT IN CINEMAS found to be "grossly improper" was reported "with necessary details, to the L.C.C. and Police and has now been almost completely checked." (The Council also condemned the "unbecoming familiarity" seen between young people in public parks.)

Well, well. I'm no spoilsport (as the Bishop of London remarked) and I think it's nice that old people who can find no beauty or wit or stimulation in the movies can at least get a kick out of the pleasures of the young. But they mustn't become a nuisance, mustn't badger Mr. Shortt and M.P.'s and local big-wigs into new wholesale prohibitions, mustn't hound young lovers out into the streets. Or must they?

G. GORDON YOUNG.
From a new Czech abstract, made by two young architectural students, O. Vara and F. Pilat. This picture, showing the beauty of electricity, was inspired by the light studies of Zdenek Pesanek.


Aus einem neuen tschechischen absoluten Film, der von zwei jungen Studenten der Architektur O. Vara und F. Pilat hergestellt wurde. Dieser Film, der die Schönheit der Elektrizität zeigt, wurde durch die Lichtstudien Zdenek Pesaneks inspiriert.
HOLLYWOOD REVIEW

Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and now nothing will be beholden from them which they purpose to do. Come, let us confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech.

Self-assured Hollywood little recked what a genie of disruption it had unbottled when it let loose The Singing Fool. Today, amid the multi-lingual clamour of the talkies, it finds itself broken up into separate colonies, each with its own speech, its own people, its own interests. Hollywood is no longer Hollywood—the Hollywood of the movies which held dominion over the world by reason of its unity of language, the pristine Esperanto of filmdom. Now, indeed, is Hollywood become the modern Babel.
The sons of Abraham, who have heretofore confidently directed its destiny and the uprearing of its colossal tower of defiance, now stand aghast and bewildered amid the confusion of speech that surrounds them. Themselves lacking the mastery of so much as one spoken language, they impulsively seek to hold their threatened world markets by hiring translators and foreign actors to convert their product into a multiplicity of languages.

But it will not avail. *Min and Bill* ceases to be Hollywood when done into Spanish under the title of *Estrella Negra*, and with Marie Dressler and Wallace Beery replaced by Virginia Fabregas and Juan de Landa. It matters not that Senora Fabregas is acclaimed the Sarah Bernhardt of the Latin stage. Spain and South America may accept her as such, but the aura of Hollywood will never attend her.

The past year witnessed more than a hundred foreign-language versions turned out by the various studios. Spanish predominated, followed by French, German and Italian, with an occasional Hungarian, Portuguese, Swedish, Polish, Japanese, Jugoslavian, and Dutch. But the expected
popular response from the various countries was not forthcoming. Hollywood with its gift of tongues and its alien performers had lost its distinction, its glamour, its personality.

Nevertheless, not knowing what else to do, and in stupid unmindfulness of the changed psychological attitude of the outside world, the producers continue the wholesale importation of foreign talent—actors, directors, writers, translators—and Hollywood grows correspondingly more variant, more alien and more unfamiliar. I have before me at this moment a local film review with contributions in no less than six different languages, and

![Scene from "Olympia," a French all talking picture produced at the Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios under the direction of Jacques Feyder.](image)

devoted to the exploitation of players and directors who, although in Hollywood, are no more a part of it and no more familiar to the American film colony than if they resided in their respective native lands.

With few exceptions, neither Hollywood nor the United States sees the films of these foreign artistes. The only German pictures shown here are those that have been produced in Berlin. Of the score of German films
made in Hollywood during the past twelve months not one has been exhibited in America. Although Dita Parlo is here and has been featured in several of Warner Brothers' German productions, our only screen sight of her has been in the UFA film, *Melodie Des Herzens*, imported from abroad and shown at the Hollywood Filmarte Theatre.

![Image](https://via.placeholder.com/150)

*The same scene from "Olympia," this time Spanish version.*

La même scène du film "Olympia," version espagnole.

*Dieselbe Szene aus "Olympia" diesmal in der spanischen Fassung.*

Meanwhile the original American Hollywood continues on its habitual way. Having latterly exhausted the public's patience with gangster and prison photoplays, it has now turned by way of refreshing change to pictures of the big out-of-doors, with especial emphasis upon historical pioneer themes. The reception accorded *The Covered Wagon*, produced several years ago, demonstrated the popular national interest in this type of picture,
as exemplifying American hardihood amid the trials and dangers attendant upon the conquest of the primeval wilderness of the West.

That this particular film was not immediately followed by others of like kind was due to its lack of appeal in other countries—and, until lately, it was the financial response from overseas upon which Hollywood depended to make good its reckless waste and extravagances. Now, however, with the enforced narrowing of the market for English-speaking films, and obliged more intensely than ever to hold the American public, the producers are vieing one with another to meet the national demand for picturizations of Western frontier adventure.

In Fighting Caravans, Paramount depicts the story of those hardy frontiersmen who undertook the stupendous task of transporting thousands of tons of merchandise across fifteen hundred miles of plains, rivers and mountains to the newly discovered gold country of California. RKO’s Cimarron portrays the historic “land rush” when the Indian Territory of Oklahoma was thrown open to white settlement. Fox’s The Big Trail, like its companion picture, The Santa Fe Trail, dramatizes the blazing of a way to the Pacific for the civilization that was later to follow. In M-G-M’s The Great Meadow is picturized the heroic story of the settlement of Kentucky in the days of Daniel Boone, when roving Indians added their savage menace to the natural dangers of the wilderness. And in Stampede Paramount has filmed the thrilling adventure of the first cattle drive from Texas to Kansas over the historic Chisholm Trail.

In films of this type Hollywood is at its best. Dealing as they do with the primitive and the elemental, these spectacular pictures, aside from their dramatic historical interest, have a sweep of canvas, a sincerity of expression, a charm of scenic background and pictorial composition, which in large measure compensate for much else that Hollywood inflicts upon us in the name of art and entertainment.

And to this list of exceptional pictures, redolent of nature and expressive of the elemental humanities, must be added Ernest Schoedsack’s Rango. Wholly different in locale and theme and treatment, it none the less claims kinship on the ground of its picturization of the primitive. Otherwise it stands alone, not so much because of the unusualness of its background, but more particularly because of its novel characters and its unique, simple story—that of four natives of a Sumatran jungle, a tiger trapper and his young son and an old ape and his little son, Rango, whose lives (those of the humans and the simians) become interwoven through a fellowship of common interest engendered by the solitude and the hazards of their surroundings.

It is Schoedsack, you will recall, who, with his one-time fellow-explorer, Merian Cooper, gave us Grass and Chang. During the two-year interval following his Soudan picture, The Four Feathers, which Paramount egregiously effeminated with studio trimmings, he spent thirteen months in
A censored scene in Stroheim's "Merry Widow." This picture is published for the first time by courtesy of Herman Weinberg.

Une scène censurée de "La Veuve Joyeuse" de Stroheim. Cette photo est publiée ici pour la première fois, grâce à l'obligeance de Hermann Weinberg.


From "The Erl King," a French talkie which Universal are presenting in London at the Rialto Cinema during the special foreign season.

Instantané du "Roi des Aulnes," film parlant français présenté au Rialto Cinema à Londres durant la saison étrangère, par Universal.

Abel Gance takes the role of Christ in his "End of the World."
Abel Gance incarnant le Christ dans sa "Fin du monde."
Abel Gance stellt in seinem Film "Das Ende der Welt" Christus dar.

equatorial Sumatra gathering the material for his present picture, for which a bright mark must be credited to Hollywood under whose auspices it was made.

Then, too, there is Murnau's Tabu, recently released by Paramount. This is an idyllic film picturing the romantic primitive life of Bora Bora, one of the Society group of the South Sea archipelago. Exiling himself from Hollywood, where he was but scantily appreciated or understood, the creator of The Last Laugh and Sunrise spent a year and a half in this dolce far niente islet of the Pacific and devoted himself to a leisurely filming of this his last contribution to the screen.

Using his own funds, and thus completely independent of any commercial dictatorship, he made this picture in sympathetic collaboration with Robert Flaherty, to whom the world is indebted for those two cinematic classics, Nanook of the North and Moana. Out of a total of 250,000 feet of takes the charming photodrama of Tabu was created, with two native youngsters, Reri, the girl, and Matahi, the boy, as the leading characters;
and Murnau had only just completed the cutting of the film upon his return to Hollywood when he met his tragic death in an automobile accident.

Apologetically, Trader Horn may also be included in the list of exotic scenic pictures. While it contains much of characteristic native interest, particularly in its showing of the wild-animal life of Africa, it is overburdened with theatricalism and a conscious effort to be spectacular. Moreover, those who expect to find in it any of the naive flavour of the book or an adherence to Horn's simple narrative will experience definite disappointment, as well as bewilderment.

After having lain on the shelf in the Paramount studio for many years, Theodore Dreissèr's sordid and melancholy novel, An American Tragedy, has finally been dusted off and under the direction of Josef von Sternberg will shortly be transferred to the screen. It was seriously considered as a vehicle for Eisenstein during that director's misfit stay in Hollywood.

The latest Hollywood technical departure is the use of the supersensitive film originally designed for astronomical photography. Its application to motion-picture use, an achievement of the Eastman Kodak Company, has been hailed as "the greatest advance in the development of cinematic photography since the introduction of panchromatic film." The new film, which has had its first commercial tryout in M-G-M's John Gilbert picture, Cheri-Bibi, requires less light, develops clearer backgrounds, softer shadows and more natural colour values, and, in addition, makes possible many heretofore unattainable camera effects.

Whatever Hollywood may lack of savoir vivre, it must be given unqualified credit for commercial and practical intelligence. Its ever alert readiness to adopt any means of improving the mechanics of cinematography, irrespective of cost or initial difficulties, explains in large measure the secret of its preeminence in the field of picture production. Perhaps, therefore, we should deal softly with its cultural shortcomings. These may be overcome in time. Hollywood is still young, still growing, and, withal, immensely ambitious to be polite.

Not inappropriately, in this connection, Jacques Feyder has suggested that Hollywood inaugurate a system of personally conducted educational tours of Europe for the benefit of its callow American players and directors. A suggestion as ingenious as it is timely. Since the advent of the talkies the demand for short cuts to culture has steadily increased. French in ten lessons, the essentials of etiquette, the world's literature in a nutshell—these and other tabloids of education and polish are proving a present popular means of self-improvement among the elite of filmdom. And if there be any doubt of their efficacy, consider the recent public announcement issued in all seriousness from the studio of Buster Keaton, that, after an intensive course in German, coupled with a trip to Berlin, "Keaton now speaks the tongue of Goethe and Schiller."

Clifford Howard.
From a Czech nature picture, "Demanova," the great stalactite cave in Slovakia; made by cameraman V. Vich under the direction of Ing. Brychta. This picture was produced by Elektrajournal.


... H. Struna in a new Czech talkie by Gustave Machaty, "Night of Fulfilled desire."

H. Struna dans le nouveau film parlant tchéque de Gustave Machaty : Le nuit du désir satisfait.


"The Way of Enthusiasts," a film made by N. Ochlophoff whose "Sold Appetite" was shown last winter in Paris.

"La voie des enthousiastes," film réalisé par N. Ochlophoff, auteur également de "L'homme qui a vendu son appetit" présenté l'hiver dernier à Paris.

"Der Weg der Enthusiasten," ein Film von N. Ochlophoff, dessen, "Verkaufter Appetit" letzten Winter in Paris vorgeführt wurde.
BEFORE THE MICROPHONE OF GERMAN BROADCASTING

A. KRASZNA-KRAUSZ: I know how unprepared you were, elected follower of Lupu Pick, President of the "Dachorganisation der Filmschaffenden Deutschlands EV." I also heard you emphatically tell to the congregated delegations that you were unable to settle any programme at the moment. You said: one should leave you a break of two or three weeks. During that time you wanted to visit the members' assemblies of all the associations directly allied to the "Dacho," such as the unions of the authors, the directors, the cameramen, the architects, the composers, the actors, the sound-experts and production managers; to make yourself acquainted with the wishes and moods of the singular parties participating in film-work. You wanted to form your programme according to the transverse section of your collected impressions and so present it to a new assembly. Consequently you will not be able either to tell your programme to-day—three days after your election and here—I know that too well. But here is something else. You will be able to talk fundamentally about problems, surely already treated by you at a time when a leading participation in their solving had not yet been your immediate task—but concerning which you must have been in active relation ever since. In future it will not less depend upon your fundamental relations—for they show your intentions—than upon the opinions of the various members, whose confidence in you has been shown so demonstratively, and who alone will prescribe for you the technical conditions and the tactical measures of the ways which the "Dacho" will have to follow during the course of the years.

G. W. PABST: The answer is simple. My fundamental relation to the principal problems is almost like the one of my predecessor, of the first leader of the "Dacho": Lupu Pick. You know: Lupu Pick's initiative in founding organisations of the film-workers rose from that Congress in Paris, which had been convened from the "Institut für geistige Zusammenarbeit" in the frame of the League of Nations, in 1926. At this congress the mistakes which a process of production developed during stormy commercial prosperity must make, became evident for the first time. During such a process the originators of mental-creative work were (and are) not able to decide sufficiently for themselves. They are used as material nearly always. This vitiation in the organism of film-industry was only too often manifest in the resulting production, and violently and justly attacked by the critics. Besides there were effects ensuing from that faulty system of an industry, which, while not manifest to the public, are the true reason, why the film though possessing the favour of the masses, often leaves unsatisfied its most passionate friends.
Lotte Lenja in "The Threepenny Opera." A study by Hans Casparius.

Lotte Lenja dans "l'Opéra de quat' sous." Etude de Hans Casparius.


Rudolf Forster and Carola Neher in "The Threepenny Opera" by Pabst. An exclusive photo by Hans Casparius.

Rudolf Forster et Carola Neher dans la version allemande de "L'Opéra de quat'sous" de Pabst. Photo exclusive de Hans Casparius.

Rudolf Forster und Carola Neher in dem Film "Die Dreigroschenoper" von Pabst. Ein Exclusiv-Photo von Hans Casparius.
A. Kraszna-Krausz: I think, that I have understood you rightly, if I suppose that you are thinking of the disposition peculiar to the film-industry, to satisfy by quantity every demand, every new possibility, every prosperity immediately. By the highest possible number of films, plots, names. Or by mechanized repetition, intensive and extensive use of nearly the same film-motif, similar titles, of the same plot and a single name.

G. W. Pabst: You are right. The film ought to make a better use of its material; to select the motives and people, from the masses floating to it, and keep those productive for ever, instead of abusing and killing the success of a person or a motif by hundredfold repetition—as it is done to-day.

A. Kraszna-Krausz: Now I think we are discussing the main problem. The public of course remembers only the staterooms, in which the actors of this or that film walked about in nonchalant fashion. In the appraisal of the audience there are the stipends which one star, selected from hundreds, gains (if it is true). It has only the motor-car in view with which almost every actor has already been photographed as advertisement. But it does not know anything of the sorrows, which also the successful one has to fight between two employments. Nor does it know anything of the brevity peculiar to film-careers.

G. W. Pabst: That's how it is. In consequence of the ill-proportion between the power of people available, and the limited number of workdays, most of the persons working on films are not able to procure economic reserves for themselves. Then whole crowds are thrown into the streets by a crisis, such as resulted from the change from silent to sound-films. These people deprived of work and bread, desolate and hopeless, become ready to take any job. So the competition becomes sharper, and the natural consequence is a depression of the level.

A. Kraszna-Krausz: That does not sound encouraging. The general economic crisis seems to be superposed by a wrong industrial organism in this case, which has as effect a cultural crisis of a whole branch of art. But can this special situation not make us hope for a special solution of the questions concerned with the matter?

G. W. Pabst: May be. But the industry has got a certain individual perseverance, that's to say, its young traditions will always be in the way of reforming ideas (and it is the young traditions which are the most powerful ones). The state too looks on our matter still rather passively, several young officials of the ministries in charge of the matter however form a pleasant exception. It is of importance to state that the continuity of our development depends only on the people partaking in film-work. The history of cinematography will have to show that the industry represented by its firms, changes the sign-boards, colours, directions and money-owners; the steady element of the film, and of its trade, however, is represented by the staff of artists. Consequently the initiative for changing the situation can and must arise only from the people working on the production of films.
A. Kraszna-Krausz: You are talking of an initiative. Besides the aims, do you also see the paths over which the initiative could be led?

G. W. Pabst: Ways—no! But rather distinct directions. It is understood that the artists and technicians of the film should claim the same social insurances as the workers of all the other industries. But it is of decisive importance to determine the relations between the film-author and his work. The rights of the poet and the composer have been legally settled long ago. But the social question of the film-worker remains unsolved as long as the film is the exclusive property, that is to say: “goods” in the hands of the manufacturer and his renters. Unsolved also the question of its responsibility towards the public critic and the art itself.

A. Kraszna-Krausz: What you have just said might perhaps be summarized as follows: the determination of the legal situation of the film-workers must lead to a settled material position. That only can form the fundamental of a working system, conscious of responsibility.

G. W. Pabst: Indeed—there is already enough responsibility taken by the person who works on films. He is responsible to the audience that whistles after a failure. To the critics, who object only to him. To the manufacturer who will not employ him any more. Certainly the manufacturer may lose money, but the film-worker loses his existence. Behind that there is nothing for him. Who will be surprised to hear that the number of those who take a chance on an unusual film-production decreases daily?

A. Kraszna-Krausz: It seems to me that the history of an art can merely consist in taking chances. There is, however, a difference between chances and chances. One might risk a poem, a short story, perhaps a novel, also a drama, even a symphony. In the worst case they remain in the drawer of the writing-desk. One might die from hunger with that method, but even become immortal—in case the drawer is opened after several years.

G. W. Pabst: But we film-people cannot work for writing-desk-drawers. For we need money and machines already as supposition for our production. And if the money does not favour the Shakespeare of the film, his “Hamlet” remains unwritten. For studio and apparatus are locked for him.

A. Kraszna-Krausz: Dangerous system. Just in that moment that might decide the future of the film. And when it does not seem improbable that this future will be decided in the German studios.

G. W. Pabst: You are right. Once already, eight years ago, Germany was able to determine the development of the silent film. Then Germany like the whole rest of the world succumbed to the American film. Now for the second time the fate of the European film is lying in the hands of Germany. France, England have succumbed afresh to American money. Russia has not yet succeeded in finding a productive attitude to the sound-film. America’s production however has driven into a blind alley, out of which the way will scarcely be found alone, Germany is uncommonly enabled by its literary and musical past to determine the shape of the sound-film of to morrow, if . . .
A. Kraszna-Krausz: —if the German industry will not be Americanised in spite of all that. If the Russia of the silent film won’t remain eternally the “Mekka” of the German critics.

G. W. Pabst: —and if the German film-workers will at last determine their fate—and with it the fate of the German film—all by themselves.

A. Kraszna-Krausz: And it is YOU who has to care for it now.

BERLIN APRIL 1931

I am back in Berlin and that means always a reawakening of life. For it is the most stimulating city, intellectually, in Europe, perhaps because the new buildings express outwardly modern thought. Other cities try to hide or stem the current of progress but here interest is expressed in visible terms; the city exterior has accepted thought in spite of the inner reaction which, friends tell me, is sweeping Germany back, particularly in education, towards old unprogressive methods.


The new line of the windows suggests the horizon, adventure and exploration. They are wide, built for light. The old vertical line was stern, like long standing patient lamps. These houses are born of impatience with non-achievement and with the dwellers in gloomy buildings whose near-sighted plans ended in crisis and war. The air is so sharp it must have blown in from fishing fleets and ice. The rhythm is swifter though the season is later; trees that were in full flower in Switzerland are only in bud here.

It may be true that this is colour of the surface. There are hints now and again of reaction underneath. But at least we must be thankful for the present beauty of Berlin, for the use they have made of light against so electric a sky, the definite blue, the many shades of orange and of yellow, from the kino lamps to the buses, from the moon to the searchlight of the wireless station, picking out tree-lined streets.

There are first the cinema advertisements to be studied. Voruntersuchung is running at the Gloria Palast, directed by Siodmak, whom Close Up readers will remember for his work in Menschen am Sonntag. The Ufa Palast still has City Lights, but the first sound film of Fritz Lang is expected there shortly, and has Wagner for cameraman. There is Pabst's Drei Groschen Oper across the road, Earth in several cinemas, in the Kamera and locally with, strange mixture, an American comic film. Ariane with Elizabeth Bergner is being shown up the road and the German version of Anna Christie is everywhere. A new Russian film is announced and in the film papers are particulars of the special night showing arranged by the Deutsche Liga fur Unabhängigen Film, of Kenneth Macpherson's Borderline.

So arrangement of the days becomes a puzzle, for how are all these films and many people to be seen, when there is so little time available?

* * *

Of the films fitted into the first week unquestionably the Drei Groschen Oper is the most important. The first point that the observer must record, is Pabst's amazing range: Westfront 1918 was sociological and hard. Jeanne Ney was lyrical, this film is dark. Underworld, a word never used throughout the film, is present in every shot. There is not a suggestion of daylight, not in the docks nor the streets not in that tawdry would-be regal procession, which records in six shots the futility of such processions, anywhere in the world. Pabst is becoming a miser over length of scene (not shot); he is for form only and will hardly allow the thought words as it were, so determined is he to make visible the skeleton under the most complex processions of life.

I do not think I have seen anything so corrupt and therefore because no excuse nor alleviation is permitted, so moral. His condemnation beats on the mind as the half light beats on the eyes. Unnecessary to repeat the story, it goes back beyond the English version of The Beggar's Opera, to the folk
Types appearing in "The Threepenny Opera," by Pabst. Mr. Casparius, whose work is familiar to "Close Up" readers is going to Canada to make films as well as photos. One of his contracts is with the Canadian Pacific Railway.

Quelques types révélés par "l'Opéra de quat'sous," de G. W. Pabst. Mr. Casparius, dont le travail est si connu des lecteurs de "Close Up," est parti au Canada dans l'intention d'y tourner des films et de prendre des photographies. Il est engagé en outre dans ce but, par la Canadian Pacific Railway.


Tales known to every English child, Jonathan Wild, highwaymen, dark streets, rats, beggars and terror. For this reason it was a little disconcerting to find the period shifted a hundred and fifty years in date; to hear typewriter and telephone and to see early Victorian dresses. These details jarred against the stubborn memories of childhood, for the story will be to English people always, a part of the eighteenth century.

Uncompromising material; Pabst has made of Polly an unscrupulous darker sister to Wycherley's Fidelia. Motives are allowed to tangle like the shadows and courage becomes no virtue contrasted with the swarming misery of beggars and of thieves. Yet the film has throughout the beauty of certain effects of fog, or of a street, in itself and by daylight unremarkable, but suddenly lovely seen at night through a railway arch.

Particularly the dock scenes will remain in memory. Nor is there sense that the recording imposed limitations; it would seem as if Pabst were less hampered with sound than without it. The long fluid shots where the city is seen as if through a telescope give a new idea of cinematographical distance. This is not a picture with dialogue or with songs, but simply a complete whole, a film.

English people must not confuse it with The Beggars' Opera. The English and German versions are a pole apart; the English was intended always as amusement. The German form is bitterly realistic and applicable to to-day.
The name of R. Siodmak, director of Voruntersuchung, is well known to readers of Close Up, as many photographs from Menschen am Sonntag and an article on the film, appeared in the magazine during the spring of 1930. It will be remembered that he made this film with a couple of friends, and with chiefly non-professional actors. It had a deserved success among intellectual audiences but was less popular in the provinces or in outlying kinos. Its success, however, led to his being given this new sound film to direct for the Ufa, based on the problem of the pre-trial examination of prisoners and its consequent opportunity for “third degree” methods.

The story is quite simple. A student is falsely accused of murder; he is questioned day and night until he finally agrees to confess to anything the police desire so long as they will let him sleep. He has given a key, possession of which might clear him, to a friend, the son of the examiner. The father suspects that his son is implicated and is driven by the torment of this thought to try to force the student into confessing his presumed guilt. Clues lead to the arrest of the friend. Other clues lead to another innocent man. It is only after many days that information from an unexpected quarter leads to the arrest of the man who had actually done the murder.
And the examining officials are left with the knowledge that they had condemned beforehand in their own thought, innocent people who were cleared merely by accidental chance.

It is a well made film with some excellent moments but it has only to be compared with the Drei Groschen Oper for the difference in quality to become apparent. There are no undercurrents of motive. It is quite straightforward. But it does not possess the sincerity of say the earlier Russian films, no doubt because the "box office" had to be considered. Just where a scene might pass from mere story to indictment, the tension is weakened, and suggestion of a "happy ending" is brought forward. This is probably not the fault of the director. As far no doubt as he was allowed he used his material well and did not sacrifice his sense of cinema to sound. There is no reason why this should not be a popular success with English audiences.

What can one write about Ariane? It is said to have made more money than most other films this year. It has popular appeal. The technique is appallingly old-fashioned, and one device, that of hearing dialogue whilst watching a blank screen, is repeated over and over in a most tiresome manner. The film depends entirely upon the reaction of the audience to Elizabeth Bergner. And this again depends upon the person being either very simple or an experienced psychological observer. For each of her gestures can be interpreted two ways: simply or as the reflex of an involved psychological process not to be understood unless the key to the language is known. She is the Colette of the screen. The apparent simplicity of the story will please many, a few will be amused at the slight suggestion of parody she contrives for those who understand it, and a great number will be irritated. From a purely cinematographic point of view the film is not important.
There is a sharp division of opinion in Berlin as to the merits of Das Lied vom Leben. The film was originally made as the record for some hospital of a Caesarian operation. It was made with sound and the various directions during the course of the operation are distinctly given. Then for some reason, it was decided to add a story and make it into a symbolic record of marriage and birth.

The film has been condemned on thematic grounds by a certain section of the press, which is absurd, as it is a record of what is happening in the world every hour, countless times. It is a pity that prejudice and almost tribal superstition still persist in possibly the most important event of life; it is not generally recognised for instance that in many countries of Europe matters pertaining to child-birth are left to the least gifted of the medical students and that little incentive is given to research into new methods. So that any film that will arouse public interest is of value educationally for the whole world.

But Das Lied vom Leben fails somehow in its treatment. It has become neither a propaganda film for the study of the subject, (one is badly needed) nor is it art. The photography is clear, there are some lovely shots of animals, giraffes feeding and the slow crawling giant tortoises, but the general effect is of an unrelieved cruelty, the sunshine is poor compensation for the insistence upon pain. The director, A. Granovsky, has come to the film from the theatre, and the text and songs are by Walter Mehring, whose plays and poems are fairly well known in England. Because of its subject the film deserves to be seen, but in spite of its earnestness there is a lack of perception, one side only of the problem is shown and the insistence upon surgical instruments is so great that presently the mind fails to record the human side at all. It is probably not possible to mix scientific record and personal reaction, in story form. It is said, of course, that the censor made so many cuts that the original intention of the picture has been entirely altered.

Borderline by Kenneth Macpherson, was given its first German showing at the Rote Mühle, at a special midnight performance. The performance began with the screening of a part of Germaine Dulac’s film, The Mussel. This was described as an experiment in a psycho-analytical film and had moments of great interest. It was however, a pity that the film could not have been shown in its entirety, as occasionally the symbolism was a little difficult to follow. Borderline, which created somewhat of a furore, pleased the press and a large section of the audience. A few however objected on political grounds, that if the negro problem were to be presented, it should have been done more directly and with a mass, rather than with a single individual. As a matter of fact, the “negro problem” was not presented as such, so that the objection is not very valid. Others found its deliberate tempo slow. This was probably correct for Berlin, where the rhythm of life is swifter, that anywhere known to me except New York, but it is not true for England, and Borderline is an English film and should not be a copy of
German or Russian methods. The press in particular were enthusiastic about the photography and lighting. It will be shown also by film groups in some of the other cities of Germany.

The new sound film by Fritz Lang is announced shortly but I shall have left before it is screened. And I was unable either to see the new Otzep film, which critics here say is excellent. Of the twenty or more pictures I have seen however, unquestionably the *Drei Groschen Oper* is the finest. American talkies have practically disappeared from the German kinos and most programmes are filled now with sound films made in this country.

Bryher.

*Charles Dekeukleire's "White Flame."

"Flamme Blanche," de Charles Dekeukleire.

Charles Dekeukleire's "Weisse Flamme."
LA RÊVE DU POÈTE

Jean Cocteau : Michel Arnaud : Camera : Péral.

The poet. The wound on his hand becomes a mouth; a real life mouth in his hand. Semi close-up. Rub left breast, rub right breast . . . left breast. Hand descends. Suggestion. A Czech-film-lust-expression and a . . . star. The female statue then commands: "Enter into the mirror" (souvenir of Heaven in "Orphée") and hou! a synchronised Auric blast and the mirror becomes water.

HE floats away into the Cocteau beyond.

HE arrives at a quaint hotel corridor. Peeps through keyholes. Room 19, a Chinaman. Room 21, little girl learns how to fly, sticks to ceiling and pulls long noses at her professor—cinematic Peterpan. Room 23, the Hermaphrodite's haunt. Outside, a pair of shoes, one male shoe, one female. A couch. BONG (an Auric crash) a foot appears. BONG, another foot. BONG, an arm. BONG, a head. In fact, the being. A little black flap in significant position is lifted to show the words: "DANGER A MORT." Sound technique! At end of corridor HE shoots himself.
Part 3. Boule de Neige. (Enfants Terribles.) Little boy. Killed. Blood, blood, blood! from mouth. A nigger, nearly naked and with wire wings lies on boy. Sound accompaniment: a long buzz on one note. Nigger turns negative to fade completely out. The old house’s balconies are the boxes of a theatre. Elegant audience watch HIM and HER playing cards next to little dead boy. “You’re lost if you have not the Ace of Hearts.” The required card is taken from the left hand side of boy. YES, symbol! Nigger hand steals card and HE shoots himself again. A chimney falls to the ground as in Prologue. FIN.

Merely impressions.

* * *

AU PAYS DU SCALP the film taken by the Marquis de Wavrin during his long voyage to the sources of the Amazon, has not at the time of writing been presented.

It is certain however that the Marquis, above all a celebrated explorer and ethnologist, has made a film in which all artifice has been avoided.

The “clou” of the film is the ceremony of the scalp. Whereas in the documentaire Chez les Mangeurs d’Hommes one never sees a man being eaten, I feel sure that the scalp scenes in the Marquis’ film should be of interest— I have even handled some of the actual scalps which now adorn the Marquis’ mantelpiece! The flesh of the victim’s face is removed from the

Scalp from the Marquis de Wavrin’s film, “The Scalp Country.”

“Au Pays du Scalp.” Film du Marquis de Wavrin.

Ein Skalp aus dem Film des Marquis de Wavrin “Das Land der Skalpe.”
cranium and is boiled and modelled before the eyes of the victim’s wife. It is then filled with hot gravel and white sand. This process repeated regularly for several months causes a gradual shrinking of the tissues. Finally, the curious trophy, reduced to the size of a fist, goes to decorate the murderer’s belt. These uncommon decorations are known as Tzan-Tzas.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

QUEEN KELLY AND QUEEN VICTORIA

Stroheim is an Austrian director in Hollywood. There are, we know, numbers of foreign directors in that great capital of the world (excluding Russia), but Stroheim’s film life, unlike that of the others, began and still continues there. His work is thus exempt from the unhappy faults of the great uprooted and transplanted. His films give no hint of the stormy conflicts (or rows) we are told he has with his companies.

Stroheim’s position being unique, his work is no less so. Impossible to find for it a nationality. In the list of films appended to the Cahier Special of Le Rouge et Le Noir devoted to the cinema, he is put among the Germans. This, presumably, because he is “Von” and “Stroheim.” Russia, an imaginary Russia, pre-revolutionary with post-revolutionary resources, would probably be a little, if not much, nearer the mark.
However, it is individualist and capitalist Hollywood that has enabled Stroheim, broken loose from national ties, to find expression (though as far, at least, as the audience is concerned, incomplete expression) for his personal visions. At the present day, there is probably no place in the world where he would find himself more free. Can one not say that if there were, Stroheim would have found his way there. Granted that in Films, Facts and Forecasts there are attributed to him remarks of a nature calculated to upset the minds of the most ardent of hero-worshippers, romantic or otherwise. They choose to find in them but a natural and pardonable resistance.

Stroheim's officer triumphs over miserably foolish wives and pathetically blind husbands, and in doing so displays (exhibits) every weakness and meanness and cowardice of which a man can be capable. He becomes the man you'll love to hate, and as Stroheim knows what he is about, he is the man whom Stroheim wants you to love to hate. A terrible and violent fate is reserved for the villainous officer, ergo Stroheim is Victorian in his morality, meting out a super-punishment to a super-villain. However, this excessive zeal in blackening his screen incarnation and devising (with what loving care) hideous punishments for him, plus the fact that this same villain is made the central dominating and triumphant personality of the dramas enacted, points to impulses of which the late queen was certainly not aware.

Merry-go-round is perhaps the most frankly brutal film ever made. (The inspiration for this work is plainly Stroheim's, whatever may have been the respective contributions of him and Julian to the production, as to which accounts appear to differ. Incidentally, one may be forgiven for referring here to the report of an interview (!) with Eisenstein in Film Weekly (!) of the 25th March, 1929, in which that director is said to have mentioned this film among several American pictures he would not forget. One suspects it was hardly with a desire to show life in the raw that Stroheim regaled his audience with the sight of George Siegmann crushing Mary Philbin's foot beneath his own until the tears ran and followed it up with the cinema's classic rape scene (Siegmann and Philbin) notable for its wholly gratuitous violence and intensification of the antipathetic aspects which any such scene must hold. The film is packed with scenes and incidents of a like nature. Decidedly Merry-go-round is pure Stroheim.

Merry Widow (merrily merrily) is described in The Film Till Now as "a movie version of a popular musical comedy in the Ruritanian manner, complete with princesses and monocled lieutenants, flashing sabres and pink roses." What you noticed, however, was that it was complete with cripples. In fact, many of the scenes in Merry Widow yielded not at all in audacity to those of his other pictures, and doubtless that is why Atkinson (now of the Daily Telegraph) once described it, I believe, as "the vilest of all vile films" or in words to that effect. To think that a Lehar operette should have been metamorphosed into a characteristically Stroheim film!
In *Greed*, Stroheim took a tougher, more resisting material, with the result that the signs by which we had learned to recognise his favourite patterns were less evident (the mutilation of the film doubtless contributed to the same end). Nevertheless, *Greed* was Stroheim’s master-work, inhuman in its ferocity, unrealistic in its elaboration of nightmare. Not a realistic film, with a moral about the worthlessness of money, or an exposition of the disastrous consequences of a particular obsession. Briefly, in turning *Greed*, Stroheim was not setting down a reality which he felt obliged to face, but rather elaborating a personal vision, which haunted him, urged itself imperiously forward, with the results we know. That, in doing so, he should have gone to a story not of his own invention is only to be regretted, as making more complicated the task of approximate valuation.

*Wedding March* (as we saw it) relaxed a bit. It was more sentimental, but apart from that, the butcher (with all his rhythmic chopping of meat) was but a pale reflection of Siegmann’s circus bully, Fay Wray’s “innocence” was sophistication compared with that of Mary Philbin. All the same, a reflection is a reflection, isn’t it? And there was the scene with Zazu Pitts limping down the aisle and you weren’t allowed to help noticing it because she limped *all* the way down the aisle. Meanwhile *La Revue du Cinema* (April) publishes a “still” from the second part of the work which repays careful study.

It is said that Stroheim will remake in sound *Blind Husbands* and *Merry-go-round*. And why not? What could be more fitting? The talkies have rendered any excuses for Stroheim not developing, for giving himself over to the work of repetition. People will visit the “new” films with unabated interest.

H. A. M.
Further scenes from Carl Dreyer’s “Strange Adventures of David Gray.”

Quelques scènes, encore, des “Étranges Aventures de David Gray,” réalisé par Carl Dreyer.

Weitere Szenen aus Carl Dreyers “Das seltsame Erlebnis des David Grey.”
I am a newcomer to the cinema.
Past numbers of Close Up conjure up strange names and wonderful films which are now merely memories. I know nothing of such historic films as Waxworks, Doctor Caligari's Cabinet, Seventh Heaven. Paul Leni is but a name to me.
Therefore I live for revivals.
Present talkies mean nothing to me, I am but dimly conscious of the existence of Hallelujah, but it is the dim world of the past that entrances me.
And, so, for the sake of others and myself, here is a list of London cinemas which if watched carefully may revive some of these shelved masterpieces.

THE FORUM, (Temple Bar 3931.)
Villiers Street,
Strand.

STRAND CINEMA, (Temple Bar 5061.)
Agar Street,
Strand.

ROYAL, (Western 6044.)
175, Kensington High Street,
Kensington.

NEW GAIETY, (Paddington 5716.)
5, Praed Street,
Paddington, W.2.

GAIETY, (East 4038.)
73, East India Dock Road,
Poplar, E.14.

At the Forum I have seen Giant Harvest and Men of the Woods. Here also I obtained a publication called the Kinema Guide, which will help the seekers after silence.
At Lisbon, a new picture: Tragédia Rustica (Rustic Tragedy), has just been presented. This is the first Portuguese cultural film, and shows the dangerous effects of the carbuncle.

Of course, Tragédia Rustica is not a cinematographic master-piece, but as it is designed for the education of uncultured country men of our villages it deserves all our sympathy.

Side by side with the scientific part of the picture, which is very interesting, a short and ingenious story has been woven around it to create interest, but unfortunately this anecdote has spoiled a little the whole.

Alves da Cunha, a great and well known Portuguese tragical actor of the stage, was the director of this picture and its only performer.

Another Portuguese film has been shown: Nua (Nude), directed by the French metteur-en-scène Maurice Mariaud. It is without any doubt a bad picture. The scenario, the mise-en-scène, the acting of nearly all the actors, are wrong and old fashioned. Nua has a single merit: the leading-girl, a débutante with natural intuition and valuable qualities, named Saur Ben-Hafid.
Both the pictures, Tragédia Rustica and Nua are silent.
We expect to see the first Portuguese sound film, A Severa by Leitão de Barros, in the first days of June. The expectancy is unsurpassing.
Henrigne Costa is also achieving his historical picture: A Portuguesa de Napoles performed by Maria Sol Heloísa Clara and Antonio Pincheiro.
The sound-cinema has conquered Portugal. Nearly all the picture-palaces in Lisbon, Oporto and Coimbra are equipped for the new form of the cinematographic art, and many of the other towns are following the example. We see, presently, the best and most recent foreign pictures without any delay. Le Million by Clair, for instance, was presented at Lisbon at the same time as it was shown in Paris.

A. C.
PERSONALLY ABOUT PERCY SMITH.

Lives there a man with eyes so blind that he never has rejoiced to himself that the *Secrets of Nature* are no secret to Miss Mary Field and Mr. Percy Smith...

There is a story, related by Miss Field, of the day she consulted Mr. Smith on the most expeditious method of ridding an old hay loft of a certain pest.

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The female of the Pug-nosed water-flea-antennae highly developed for swimming. The shell serves as a protection for the eggs (several are visible) and later for the young. This is one of the commonest species of the group. From a "Secrets of Nature" picture by Percy Smith.


"If I think anything is a pest," answered Mr. Smith, "I make a film about it; then it becomes beautiful."

And Miss Field felt rebuked as if she had been reproved for talking in church.

The patience and energy of Mr. Smith are so extraordinary that few can hope to take them as criteria. When he was a child, this ardent nature lover crept from his home, after safely being kissed good-night, in order to study the habits of spiders in the marshes. Morning found him literally frozen to the ground. He remembers how astonished he was when he tried to return home and found that he could not move!

It is the same undaunted spirit which has produced the *Secrets of Nature* in the wee garden-conservatory-studio at Southgate.

Mr. Smith uses oxy-acetylene for lighting his microscopic studies. At first, he used to prepare his own gas cylinders; however, he discovered that he was getting air mixed with the acetylene and, being rather worried, he asked a friend the explosive values of the mixture.

"What unit," cried the friend, "do you want me to work in—rows of houses!"

But ever the tireless Mr. Smith persisted. Often, he has wired in triumph to his colleagues at Welwyn, "Got it the forty second time!"

It sounds a little like D. W. Griffith!

A complicating factor in the life of Mr. Smith is that his pictures are constantly disclosing slight misjudgments of men of science; a fact which does not please the learned men mightily or make the scripting of the picture easier. After *The Frog*, Mr. Smith wrote to the greatest authority on the subject in England to ask him why tadpoles pause before leaving the jelly-like substance which holds them as black specks. Back came the answer, "Tadpoles do not pause." With a faint smile, Mr. Smith invited the emphatic professor to witness his film of tadpoles pausing.

"I think," he suggested quietly, "they just want a rest."

Frequently, too, there is little authoritative literature covering subjects treated in the *Secrets*. For instance, tomes have been written on how to kill the garden pest known as the Dodder, but, for *The Strangler*, the harassed director wanted to germinate it!

"I started in films," Mr. Smith once confessed to me, "because I took a photograph of a bluebottle's tongue: I tied the little beggar up and fed him with the tip of a needle. Some friends showed my picture to a producer. He was so delighted that he gave me a camera, some film stock and told me to go out and do my best. The camera worked at f.6. and, as the tripod was rigid, holes had to be dug in the ground if a close up of an insect was to be secured! But, if you don't copy other people's methods, or if you can’t, you get new ideas. Accepted societies for research use the same terms, standardise their thoughts. I feel that, if I had money, I should go to the talkies more often and do less work. If I had spent more than ten and six..."
on my lathe I am sure that I would have sent out complicated work to be
done by trained instrument makers.’’

‘‘What,’’ I had demanded, ‘‘did you do before capturing the blue-
bottle?’’

‘‘For fifteen years I worked in a government office. I spent my lunch
hours reading in the British Museum and my spare time in suggesting labour-
saving devices.’’

‘‘How,’’ with a flash of intuition, ‘‘they must have hated you!’’

‘‘All for twenty-five shillings a week! The worst job was the endless
copying out of a certain form. I smeared some paste round a cocoa tin,
borrowed a roll of a particular kind of thin paper and reproduced hundreds of
forms by dropping the roll down a lift shaft! Still, I lived to be thankful
for the methods of a government office. During the war I was an official
photographer. Only the fact that an order arrived an hour late saved me
from being blown up, by a phosphorous shell, with the rest of the crew of
a certain cruiser. On one occasion an aeroplane charged right into my lens.
The red hats wanted to know why my photographic document did not show
what happened afterwards. Oh! I’ve learnt my lesson! When the Educa-
tional Board came to watch a demonstration of my work they filed in stiffly,
the most important at the head of the procession, and, automatically, stood
in a semicircle. I knew that I had to address my remarks to the man at
the top!’’

Apart from his genius and his humour, there is a tender side to Mr.
Smith’s nature. Miss Field told me that she considered it a most touching
sight to watch Mr. Smith and his assistant covering up tiny plants with
blankets for the night!

APPENDIX.—Miss Field works at the British Instructional Studios,
not at Southgate. Her job is to edit Mr. Smith’s pictures and to write the
dialogue.

‘‘My effects depend,’’ she said to me, ‘‘on perfect synchronisation. I
have rehearsed with my voice till I know exactly how long he takes to utter
a phrase. I don’t allow him to do more than take his cues from the screen
while he is recording; if he tried to follow the screen he would put emphasis
on the wrong words.’’

‘‘The music is specially composed. And we do German and French
versions. Patriots may be glad to learn that I have proved, by painfully
cutting negative, that the legends about French and German being more
precise languages than English are basely false.’’

‘‘And speech has made all the difference to the commercial success of
the series. But let me tell you of our first effort at talking... For days we
rehearsed! Our idea was—this is to be the best we can give; therefore, we
put a brand new lamp in the recording apparatus. The report came from
the laboratory that—there was nothing on the sound negative! Again we
Finally, late in the night, we discovered that the new lamp had not been screwed right home! But imagine those hours of waiting!"

O. B.

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A NEW STAR.

There are not many actresses who can stand in a set and look as if they had a right to be there. Most of them have no idea "how to put up a show." Asta Neilsen, Greta Garbo, Catherine Hessling, Valeska Gert: these are among the magnificent and now . . . Dorrie Dene.

Dorrie has come to the screen through the music hall. In the music hall there is a quality of light on the face that is never found in pictures. Dorrie can stand in that light and look the centre of things. She is a performer in every best sense of the word. Push some of the blondes of the screen under the lights of the music hall and see how long they can hold an audience! Dorrie has a superb "audience-projection" whether in music hall or cinema. And Dorrie has a voice.
"I was trained for opera but I didn't let that trouble me. I took engagements on the halls where I could find an outlet for my sense of fun. In those days, I was slimmer than I am now and people used to speculate on whether I was a man or a woman. It was my deep voice which confused them!"

Dorrie's eyes sparkle when she tells a story against herself. She loves making herself ridiculous, and audiences, all over the country, love her for doing it.

"As a fan," I told her, "I find it great news; as a journalist, I am compelled to admit the fact that you love your public is not terribly good copy."

"But," she protested, "it's a terribly good public. I remember two sweet but prim old ladies who engaged a box for a week of matinées while I was playing the Alhambra. At the end of the week they came round to see me. However, I was dreadfully busy and was forced to send my pianist to see them. 'How is Miss Dene?' they asked anxiously. 'Well,' Reggie answered, 'to tell you the truth she is very angry at being second turn.' 'Still,' sympathised the old dames, 'she can't always expect to be first!'"

"Some of my fans are worried because I am built for comfort not for speed. Kind people often write to warn me that the prop roller I use in my act is deceiving me and that I ought to try some other cure. Why, when I was touring in South Africa I allowed myself to be used as a side show at a charity bazaar—Dutch farmers had to guess my weight. Goodness! ever heard the Chinese National Anthem?"

But have we a British producer to make just that kind of film?

O. B.

G. F. Noxon, the editor of the Cambridge review *Experiment*, is making a short film on Cambridge life for B.I.F. and Wardours. The title is yet unsettled. Mr. Noxon is being assisted by Stuart Legg.

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**PARAGRAPH APPEALING FOR DR. BARNARDO'S HOMES.**

We are asked by Mr. Basil Johnson, Mill Corner, Marsham Way, Gerrard's Cross, for information concerning any theatres or halls with projectors, to hold from 200 to 2,000, within 150 miles of London, which he wishes to hire for one night this year (NOT Sundays) to give an All-Sporting Show. Every penny taken at the Show goes direct to Dr. Barnardo's Homes. Will those knowing of such accommodation please communicate direct with Mr. Johnson.
"CIMMARON."

Cimmaron is America’s greatest contribution to the screen since the talkies began. Did you read Edna Ferber’s book? If so you could envisage it as a film. Here was an epic story, so immense in its sweep that it cried out for film treatment. A living, dynamic drama as big as the world itself.

History in the making. Yancey Cravat the pioneer. Indian blood in his veins, first in the Oklahoma land rush, first in the Cherokee strip stampede. A dreamer, quoting Milton. A man of action, denouncing in flaming editorials the Government that robbed the Indians of their birthright. A social rebel, fighting the political corruption of his time. His bitter hatred of social injustice and hyprocracy. His melodramatic defence of Dixie Lee, scourging the puritans with just that necessary touch of exaggerated sentimentality. The killing of the “Kid,” last of the great outlaws, and his wife’s indignation when he returns the rewards heaped upon him. “I did not kill him for that.”

The frenzied land rush on the Oklahoma territory. April 22nd, 1889. Free land. Two million acres of it. Settlers, adventurers, pioneers from all America, waiting for the starting signal. In waggons, on horseback, on foot and even on bicycles, a roaring stampede of humanity. A new town, a new state, a new country in twenty-four hours.

And as the reels of celluloid unfold, we watch Oklahoma grow throughout the years. Law and Order, respectable citizenship, skyscrapers, automobiles, chambers of commerce and Sabre Cravat elected to Congress. And through it all moves Yancey, ever restless, ever pioneering, ever fighting graft, ever defending the Indians until at last he dies in a manner typical of the man, killed while trying to save his comrades in an oil field disaster.

For two hours the film runs on. Not a foot of it can be cut. From the opening land rush sequence to the final fade-out on Yancey’s statue immortalising in bronze the living flesh and blood, Cimmaron holds us.

One does not look for technical imperfections in Wesley Ruggles’ film. They are there, but what does it matter? America has made a great film, great in theme, great in conception. It will not please those comfortable people who gathered at the trade show and tittered every time some demand was made on their intelligence—the people who applauded vigorously when British Movietone at 11.30 p.m. showed them coming into the theatre at 8.30 p.m. How quaint that a man who pioneers should refuse his share of the money graft and the political graft that follows. “Quite impossible, my dear!”

No, Cimmaron is not for them. Which, perhaps, is the best possible justification for Cimmaron.

R. Bond.
ACHTUNG AUSTRALIEN!
ACHTUNG ASIEN!

A Documentary Film by Colin Ross.

Space without People—people without space, this is the leading thought and subtitle of the film, turned by Colin Ross on his trip to Australia, China, India, and New Zealand, which he undertook accompanied by his family. First to Australia: Cities on the coast, towns such as they are in America, skyscrapers, city-traffic. But it is not the towns, in which the explorer is mostly interested—a few flashes merely—and we already see the big old Motor-car, overloaded with luggage, which is going to lead them to the centre of the continent, right through from South to North. What strikes you most, is the absolute lack of human inhabitants; the car drives for miles without meeting any traces of people. Only once before reaching the coast they meet nomadic tribes, who receive them with a solemn dance, which we do not only see, but hear—as they synchronized it in Berlin, months later.

From Australia the explorer leads us to China, and that is perhaps the best part of the film, strong and convincing in the consequent execution of the Idea: people without space. The earth is not large enough to carry the crowds, so the towns must extend over the surface of the water. Hundreds of boats, one close by the other with clusters of human creatures hanging on them, Kulis, children doing their hard work for the scanty needs of their primitive lives.

And on it goes to India. The river, the burning of the dead, palaces, temples, Gandhi speaking, the little son of Mr. Ross riding on elephants—that's nearly all! The pictures are so beautiful, that one sometimes feels inclined to say "Not so quick, we want to see more of that," but the variety of what is shown to us in this film is so great, that a few glimpses must be enough within this frame.

The following shots are taken on islands in the South Sea, Papuas, canoes, lake dwellings, interesting from the ethnographical standpoints. And here also—as in the scene of the aborigines in Australia—we do not only see them dancing and talking, we hear them. And unfortunately we do not hear them, but someone talking in Europe. We were told by someone who had actually been in those regions and knows the aborigines, that the sound produced by them is quite different from the sounds synchronized. Now I'll leave it to you to judge, whether sound film is really an advantage in this case.

The last station of this journey is New Zealand, the country of geological wonders and contrast, with its steaming, bubbling geysers and vast glaciers.

It has already been said that this document was turned as a silent film and that it was synchronised later. It was synchronised mainly with a
lecture which Colin Ross himself delivered on the different subjects we see. Colin Ross has an agreeable voice, and presents his information in a nice, often humorous way. We hear things from him which the silent film alone would not be able to teach us. But if we look at the film from the artistic point of view, it is very doubtful whether the effect has not been diminished by the accompanying words. And besides it must not be forgotten that nowadays listening to a long coherent speech in a sound film means still a strain.

The little son of Colin Ross is certainly endearing, and it is amusing to hear him say his jolly words. But by these shots the film somehow becomes the record of a family excursion, which interferes with the planned intention of showing the geopolitical tensions of space and people.

Trude Weiss.

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WRITTEN ON SEEING PROOFS.


The Successful system of spiral binding is maintained and the covers and wire are conveniently thicker.

Munkacsi is the big name this year. Note his field at the bottom of a page with clouds covering the rest of the page. You cannot miss his actuality snaps of the motor-cyclist piercing mud, or the footballer landing on his head. Nor the niggers bathing.

Anne Biermann is represented by the feet of the Pantheon and white flowers. Zuber’s linen on a line balances his bridge and Outerbridge’s cone and eggs was originally called Hermaphrodite. The composition of Umbo’s Plage is interestingly annoying, whereas his houses at night appear like a cascade. There are two pages of Beaton, but Havinden’s Sand is not at all out of place. The churchy interior of Von Bucowitch is a curious contrast to the astonishing light effect of Kertesz. Tabard has a road in negative, and also a wheel; he showed a wheel last year too. Parry’s theme this year is rubber gloves. Finsler has played prettily with cake papers, and the woman leaning forward is certainly one of Steichen’s most powerful, but Bayer’s Baby is not his best. Effective is Grass by Landau . . . though Munkacsi remains the name. “Toute la bande” have taken photos of the same model and once again Laure Albin-Guillot (if included) does not excel. There are other and others, and even others that one should mention. On the whole a tone of more sobriety. There is no preface by Waldemar George.

Charles E. Stenhouse.
A PLAN FOR FILM SOCIETIES.

I wish to propose a plan by which I think it may become possible for the smaller Film Societies in this country to see the best films produced abroad which so often never come to England. (Pandora’s Box is an example which comes to mind.) Hitherto it has been quite impossible for most societies even to dream of importing films from abroad because of the immense expenditure involved. Customs duties alone usually, I believe, come to between £30 and £40, and the other expenses would come to quite as much again. This is, of course, too much for any one society to pay (for the purposes of this article I am excluding The Film Society). But if this amount was divided up among a dozen or more societies it would be a different matter.

I therefore wish to suggest that the smaller film societies should occasionally join together to import some outstanding film from the continent. The officers of the Oxford University Film Society would be willing to undertake the business of importation and distribution.

I had formed this plan before reading Mr. Duckworth’s article in the March Close Up, and I would like to set at rest the minds of anxious treasurers by saying that there would be no need for any preliminary donation. The total expenditure necessary on any one film would be ascertained before any further steps were taken, and the sum would be divided proportionately among the societies taking part in the scheme, a society of thirty members paying, of course, considerably less than a society of three hundred. This does not pretend to be more than a draft scheme, and there are doubtless many difficulties in the way which I have not thought of. Here are some which have occurred to me:

1. Retitling. It seems to me that this would usually be unnecessary; most people have some small knowledge of French and German at least.

2. The length of time the films would have to be in this country and the extra expense involved. This could only be settled by negotiation with the foreign renters.

3. Talking Films. Soon there will be no silent films worth importing. Perhaps this difficulty could be got over by the members of those societies which show their films on private premises becoming honorary members of the nearest society using a cinema equipped with Talking apparatus.

If enough societies take part I do not see why this scheme should not be a success. Will those who are interested communicate with me at Merton College, Oxford.

Hugh Carleton Greene.

(President Oxford University Film Society.)
The International Review of Educational Cinematography contains an interesting series of articles in its May issue, of which the following is a synopsis:

Reports to the Council of the League of Nations on the work of the International Educational Cinematographic Institute by Sig. GRANDI, Minister for Foreign Affairs and Dr. KRUS.

A. EHRLER—Cinematographic technique and school films.

L. M. BAILEY—The 16 mm. film and labour rationalisation.

G. T. HANKIN—The cinema and education in international politics.

F. JUER-MARBACH—Language-teaching and the spoken film: Grammar.

A. KOPETZKY—Cinema, opidiascope and the rationalisation of teaching.

L. CIMATTI—A cinema enquiry among 2,800 Piedmontese schoolchildren.

Mrs. ALLEN ABBOTT—School test on "The Thief of Bagdad" (concluded).

THE INSTITUTE'S ENQUIRIES: Teachers and the cinema.

F. HOFFMANN—Practical teaching by sound film.

INFORMATION.

HERE AND THERE.

Readers may obtain this Review from the International Cinematographic Institute, via Lazzaro Spallanzani, I-A, Rome, published in the five official languages of the Institute: English, Italian, French, German and Spanish.

SILHOUETTE FILMS

The silhouette films of Madame Lotte Reiniger are well known in England, though more use might be made of them on purely educational programmes. It is a pity that any child should miss the delightful lions from the Dr. Dolittle film, or the donkey in her present picture. To be invited as I was, to her studio to watch her actually at work, was to repeat in an adult world, the excitement a child experiences, when taken for a rare and long expected visit to the Zoo.

First of all I was allowed to play with the donkey, a wonderful beast cut out of black paper who careered at will across the flat glass table. The heroine was mislaid but there were three robbers, quite unmistakable robbers, a maid with an audacious nose and behind on another table, several fabulous landscapes. A tree moved, the donkey kicked, and above the table there was a camera to record the story, when the moment came and the heroine was found again. But I was not surprised to be told that Madame Reiniger had made her first films near a school, where children rushed between classes into her studio, to see each day "what had happened next."
But what amazing patience and sureness of conception are behind this story. It is so easy in theory to think of children crowding into a workroom, and so very different when it really happens, for the average child is apt to pull to pieces or destroy the very object of most interest to it.

There was a sketch book on another table that contained a rough drawing for every scene in the film in process of construction. Desire to arrange and re-arrange the silhouettes is not allowed to break the creative form of the picture in any haphazard way. First the sense of reality must be established, Madame Reiniger told me, and only afterwards is it possible to pass over into a purely fantastic world. The completely untrue story presents no interest.

The film upon which she is working at present is a second one in the series taken from the Commedia delle Arte. Many readers of *Close Up* will remember the first one, *Ten Minutes with Mozart*, that was shown by the London Film Society last December. It will have a sound accompaniment of course and it is hoped it will be ready in early summer. From the silhouettes and drawings that I saw, it should certainly be most successful.

---

**NOTICE TO READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS.**

We are anxious to help readers who require information, but before writing to us, please read the following paragraphs, as we cannot answer letters dealing with these subjects.

We are not allowed to sell photographs which have appeared in *Close Up*. Readers desirous of obtaining actual photographs should apply direct to the firms owning the films. The name of firm or director is printed usually underneath the picture. Addresses of film companies are to be found most easily in the Kinematographic Year Book. (Your local cinema will probably have a copy.)

We cannot recommend any reliable film school nor can we advise readers as to the best way of obtaining employment in a studio. There is the State School of cinematography in Moscow but it is very difficult for foreigners to enter it. Readers who wish to work in films are advised to perfect themselves as far as possible in some technical branch before trying to obtain a position.

We cannot advise as to whether names selected for fictitious film stars in stories written by readers would involve the author in libel proceedings or not.

For particulars of The London Workers and affiliated Film Societies, apply to R. Bond, 5, Denmark Street, London, W.C.1.

We read carefully all manuscripts sent to us. We cannot be responsible for them though we will endeavour to return those not suitable if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed. International postage stamps can be obtained at any post office. But we would like to point out, to obviate disappointment, that our space is restricted and that we have many reports to print supplied to us by our foreign correspondents. Therefore it is seldom possible to print more than one outside article in each issue. We do not wish to discourage authors and wish we had more space to print many of the excellent articles we receive. But before we can increase the number of our pages we must double the number of our readers.

Otherwise we will endeavour to answer all reasonable requests provided that a stamped, self addressed envelope be enclosed in the letter.

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Only at night when your chest is no longer sore and you feel you cannot sleep any longer, you get restless at cinema time and wish you were sitting in your usual seat, waiting for the lights to snap out and the other side of the world to blot responsibilities (shall I do this—ought I to do that) from the mind.

But you will have to catch the early bus in the morning if you are well enough to go out to-night.

If you cannot go to the movies let the cinema come to you. Why not read a cinematographic book, or what was happening to the films three years ago? If you liked Jeanne Ney you will probably like Gaunt Island. If you liked The End of St. Petersburg why not try Civilians? If you prefer . . . there is Extra Passenger. Or there are the bound volumes of Close Up.

What was happening in 1928, when talkies were not even on the horizon? When did television begin to disquiet the market? Or if your eyes feel too heavy to read why not turn over the photographs in Close Up or look at the stills published in Film Problems?

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## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Film Form. Serge Eisenstein</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Performance. Dorothy Richardson</td>
<td>182</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes from America. Herman Weinberg</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Preliminary of Film Art. Zygmunt Tonecky</td>
<td>193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Film Recording. Dan Birt.</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain General Conclusions. L. Duckworth</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Little Stories. O. B.</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Coming Revolution. Clifford Howard</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As Is. Kenneth Macpherson</td>
<td>220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Season's Retrospect. A. Kraszna-Krausz</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Films. C. E. Stenhouse</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hollywood Code. Bryher</td>
<td>234</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment and Review.</td>
<td>239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>News from Czechoslovakia; Book Reviews; Third Alarm; Ufa releases 22 Talking Educationals; Notice to Readers and Contributors; The Academy Cinema; Reviews in Brief.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**London Correspondent:** Robert Herring  
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THE PRINCIPLES OF FILM FORM

by
S. M. Eisenstein.

(Translation by Ivor Montagu.)

According to Marx and Engels
The dialectic System is only the conscious reproduction of the dialectic flow (Existence) of the external events of the world.

Thus:
The projection of the dialectic system of things
—into the mind—

167
—into abstract shapes—
—into thoughts—
yields dialectic thought-methods—dialectic materialism

PHILOSOPHY.

And similarly:
The projection of the same system of things
—into concrete shapes—
—into forms—
yields

ART.

The basis of this philosophy is the dynamic comprehension of things:
Being—as a constant Becoming
from the interaction of two contrasting opposites.
Synthesis constantly arising
in the process of opposition between Thesis and Antithesis.
In the same degree the dynamic comprehension of things is basis also for
the correct understanding of Art and all Art-forms.
In the realm of Art this dialectic principle of dynamic incarnates itself in

CONFLICT

as the fundamental basic principle of the substance of every Art-work and
every Art-form.

For Art is always Conflict

1. In accordance with its social function.
2. In accordance with its substance.
3. In accordance with its methodology.

1. In accordance with its social function—
   For:
The task of Art is—the bringing to light of the conflicts of the Existing. By the awakening of conflicts in the observer. The emotional forging of a correct intellectual concept by the dynamic collision of contrasted passions.
The formation thus of correct perception.

2. In accordance with its substance—
   For:
   In its substance it consists of a conflict between Natural Existence and Creative Impulse. Between Organic Inertia and Purposive Initiative.
Hypertrophy of the purposive impulse—the principle of rational logic—
—causes the Art to freeze to a mathematical technicalism.
   (A landscape becomes a blue-print, Saint Sebastian becomes an anatomical map.)
Hypertrophy of organic naturalism—organic logic—drowns Art in formlessness.
Because:

The limit of organic form
(the passive Existence-principle) is NATURE.

The limit of rational form
(the active Production-principle) is INDUSTRY.

AND:

On the point of intersection between
Nature and Industry stands ART.

1. The logic of Organic form against
2. The Logic of Rational form.

Yield in collision (conflict) the
Dialectic of Art-form.

The interaction of the two engenders and conditions Dynamism.

(Not only in the space—time sense—but also in the purely conceptual
field. I regard the appearance of new concepts and percepts arising in the
conflict between usual appearance and special representation, as exactly a

dynamic occurrence—the dynamisation of the perception—a dynamisation of the "traditional apprehension" into a new apprehension.)

The degree of distance determines the intensity of the tension.

(See, for example, in Music the concept of interval. Here there can be instances, where the distance of separation is so wide that it leads to a shattering by breakage of the singleness of the Art apprehension. The in-capacity to be heard of certain Intervals.)

The spacial form of this dynamics is—Expression.

The tension-stages are—Rhythm.

This is true for every Art-form, indeed yet more, for every form of expression.

Similar is the conflict in Human Expression, between conditioned and unconditioned reflexes.

And exactly similarly is the same true in every field, in so far as it can be comprehended as an Art: thus, for example, Logical Thought also, considered as an Art, shows the same dynamic mechanics:

"The intellectual life of a Plato or a Dante becomes in high degree conditioned and nourished by his pleasure in the simple beauty of the rhythmic relation between rule and example, between kind and individual."

(G. Wallas, "The Great Society.")

So also in other fields, e.g., in speech, where the sap, liveliness and dynamism arise from the irregularity of the detail in relation to the rule of the system as a whole.

In contrast is the sterility of expression of the artificial, altogether regular languages, as, for example, Esperanto.

From the same principle is derived the whole charm of poetry, the rhythm of which arises as a conflict between the metric measure and the distribution of accents, confusing this measure.

Even a formally static appearance is capable of comprehension as a dynamic function dialectically, as is imagined in the sage words of Goethe, that:

"Architecture is frozen music."

To a comprehension of this type we shall return later.

And just as, in the case of a single ideology (a monistic viewpoint) the whole, as well as the least detail, must be penetrated by the one single principle—

So there ranges itself with the Conflict of Social Conditionality, and with the Conflict of Substance Existing, the same Conflict-principle as keystone of the Methodology of Art.

And here we shall consider the general Art-problem directly in the individual example of its highest form—Film form.

The Shot and Montage—are the basic elements of the Film.
MONTAGE

The Soviet film has established it as the nerve of the Film.
To determine the nature of Montage is to solve the specific problem of the Film.
The film-makers of old, (thus the theoretically quite antiquated Lev Kuleshov), considered Montage as a means of bringing something before the spectator, in describing this something, by sticking the separate shots on to the other like building-blocks.
The movement in each shot and the consequent length of the pieces is then to be considered as rhythm.
A conception entirely false.
The determination of a given object solely in accordance with the nature of its external flow; the valuation of the mechanical sticking-together process as a principle.
We must not describe such a length relationship as rhythm.
From it there results a measure as opposite to rhythm, properly considered, as the mechanical-metric Mensendick system is opposite to the organic rhythmic Bode school in matters of bodily expression.
According to this definition, shared as a theoretician even by Pudovkin, Montage is the means of unrolling an idea on the shot separate pieces (The Epic Principle).
According to my opinion, however, Montage is not an idea recounted by pieces following each other, but an idea that arises in the collision of two pieces independent of one another. (The Dynamic Principle).
"Epic" and "Dynamic" in the sense of methodology of form, not of content or action).

As in Japanese hieroglyphics, where two independent ideographical signs ("Shots"), placed in juxtaposition, explode to a new concept.

Thus:

- Eye + Water = To weep
- Door + Ear = To eavesdrop
- Child + Mouth = To cry
- Mouth + Dog = To bark
- Mouth + Birds = To sing
- Knife + Heart = Sorrow

(Abel Rémusat: "Recherches sur l'origine de la formation de l'écriture chinoise.")

A sophism? Certainly not!

For here we seek to define the whole nature of the principle and spirit of the film from its technical (optical) basis.

We know that the phenomenon of movement in the Film resides in the fact that two motionless images of a moving body following one another in juxtaposition "flow" into each other—in one movement—after being shown in a small enough time distance.

This vulgar description of what occurs as a blending has its share of responsibility for the vulgar comprehension of the nature of Montage quoted above.

Let us examine more exactly the course of the phenomenon we are discussing, how it really occurs, and draw conclusion from it.

Two shot immobilities next to each other result in the arising of a concept of movement.

Is this accurate? Pictorially-phraseologically yes.

But mechanically the process is otherwise.

For, in fact, each sequential element is perceived not next to the other, but on top of the other.

For:

The movement-percept (or feeling) arises in the process of the superposition upon the received impression of the first position of an object—of the becoming-visible new position of the object.

Thus, by the way, arises the phenomenon of spacial depth, as optical superposition of two surfaces in stereoscopy.

From the superposition of two measures of the same dimension always arises a new, higher dimension. As in the case of stereoscopy the superposition of two not identical two-dimensionalities results in a stereoscopic three-dimensionality.

In another field:

A concrete word (a designation) set by the side of a concrete word yields an abstract concept. As in Japanese, (see above), when a
material ideogram set in juxtaposition to a material ideogram connotes a transcendental result (a concept).

The contoural incongruence of the first picture, already penetrated into consciousness, and the now actually being accepted second picture—the conflict of the two—engenders the movement-feeling, the percep of the flow of a movement.

The degree of incongruence conditions the impression-intensity, conditions the tension, which, in conjunction with that following, becomes the real basic element of the peculiar rhythm.

Here we have, temporally, what we see arise spacially on a graphic or painted surface.

In what consists the dynamic effect of a painting?

The eye follows the direction of an element. Receives an impression, which then collides with that derived from following the direction of a second element. The conflict of these directions builds the dynamic effect in the apprehension of the whole.

I. It may be purely linear: Fernand Léger. Suprematism.

II. It may be “anecdotal.” The secret of the marvellous mobility of the figures of Daumier and Lautrec resides in the fact that the various anatomical parts of the body are represented in spacial circumstances (positions) temporally various.

(see, e.g., Lautrec’s “Miss Cissie Loftus.”)

Logically developing the position A of the foot, one builds a
Maya Indians, the oldest race on the American continent. Yucatan. From the film expedition of S. M. Eisenstein, G. Alexandroff and E. Tisse to Mexico, 1931.


body position A corresponding to it. But the body is represented from knee up already in position A + a. A cinematic effect is here already provided by the motionless picture. From hips to shoulders is already A + a + a. The figure seems alive and kicking.)

III. Between I. and II. lies primitive Italian Futurism.

"The Man with Six Legs in 6 Positions." (Between I. and II. For II. obtains its effects with retention of natural unity and anatomical integrity. I., on the other hand, with pure elementary elements, but III., although repudiating naturalism has not yet pressed forward to the abstract).

IV. It may also be of ideographic kind. Thus the pregnant characterisation of a Sharaku (Japan—18th Century). The secret of his utmost raffiné strength of expression lies in the anatomical and spacial disproportion of the parts. (II. might be termed temporal disproportion). This is discussed by Julis Kurth ("Sharaku"). He describes the portrait of an actor, comparing it with a mask:

"... While the mask has been constructed according to fairly accurate anatomical proportions, the proportions of the portrait are simply impossible. The space between the eyes comprises a width that makes mock of all good sense. The nose is almost
twice as long in relation to the eyes as any normal nose would dare to be, the chin stands in no sort of relation to the mouth. . . .
The same observation may be made in all the large heads of Sharaku. That the master was unaware that all these proportions are false is, of course, out of the question. He has repudiated normality with full awareness, and, while the drawing of the separate parts depends on severely concentrated naturalism, their proportions have been subordinated to considerations purely ideal.” (Pp. 80, 81).

The spacial extension of the relative size of one detail in correspondence with another, and the consequent collision between the proportions designed by the artist for that purpose—result in the characterisation of—the comment upon—the represented person.

Finally—Colour. A colour tone imparts to our vision a given rhythm of vibration. (This is not to be taken figuratively, but actually physiologically, for colours are distinguished from one another by the number of their vibrations).

The adjacent colour tone is in another rate of vibration.

The counterpoint (conflict) of the two—the received and the now supplanting vibration rates—yields the dynamism of the apprehension of Colour-play.

Hence we have only to make a step from visual vibrations to acoustic and we stand in the field of Music.
From the domain of the spacial visual,
To the domain of the temporal-visual.
Here the same law obtains. For counterpoint is, in Music, not only the composition-form, but paramountly the factor basic for every possibility of tone perception and differentiation.

It may almost be said that here, in every case we have cited, we have seen in force the same Principle of Comparison, making possible for us, always and in every field, definition and perception.
In the fluid image (the Film) we have, so to speak the synthesis of these two counterpoints. From the image the spacial and from music—the temporal. In the Film, and characterising it, occurs what we may describe as:

**VISUAL COUNTERPOINT**

The application of this expression to the film opens up several straight lines to the problem, indicative of a sort of Film-Grammar.

In fact a syntax of Film externals, in which the visual counterpoint con-
ditions a whole new system of external forms. And for all this:

As Basic Preliminaries: The Shot is not an
Element of Montage.
The Shot is a Montage
Cell (or Molecule).

In this sentence is the leap of the dualistic division in analysis:

From: Title and Shot
And: Shot and Montage.

Instead of this they should be considered dialectically as three various
form phases—of one single expressive task.

With single characteristics, conditioning the singleness of their construc-
tion laws.

Interdependence of the three:

A conflict within a thesis (abstract idea)—
1. formulates itself in the dialectics of the Title.
2. projects itself spacially in the interior conflict of the Shot.
3. explodes with increasing intensity in the inter-shot Conflict-
Montage.

In full analogy, once more, to human-psychological expression.
This is—Conflict of Motive. Comprehensible equally in three phases:

1. Pure verbal utterance. Without intonation. Speech expres-
sion.
2. Gesticulatory (mimic-intonational) expression. Projection of
the conflict onto the whole externally active body-system of man.
"Gesture" and "Sound-gesture." (Intonation).
3. Projection of the conflict into the spacial field. With the in-
creasing intensity, the zig-zag of mimic expression expands, in
the same distortion formula, into the surrounding space. An
expressive zigzag, arising from the space-cleavage of the man
moving himself in space.

Herein lies the basis for an entirely new comprehension of the problem of
Film-Form. As example of Conflicts one may instance:

1. Graphic Conflict
2. Conflict of Planes
3. Conflict of Volumes
4. Space Conflict
5. Lighting Conflict
6. Tempo Conflict, etc., etc.

(Here each is listed by its principle feature, its dominant: of course it is
understood that they occur chiefly as complexes, dovetailing into one another.
As with Shots, so, correctly, with Montage).

For transition to Montage, it suffices for any example to divide into
two independent primary pieces.
How far the conception of Conflict leads in dealing with Film-forms is indicated by the following further examples:

7. Conflict between a Material and its Angle (attained by spacial distortion through camera position).
8. Conflict between a Material and its Spacial Nature (attained by optical distortion through the lens).

and finally

10. Conflict between the whole Optical Complex and some quite other sphere.

Thus does Conflict between Optical and Acoustical impulses produce:

*The SOUND FILM*

Which is capable of being realised as

Visual—Sound Counterpoint.

The formulation and consideration of Film appearance as forms of Conflict yields the first possibility of devising a *single system* or *visual dramaturgy* covering all general detail cases of the problem.

Of devising a dramaturgy of visual Film-*form* as precise as the existing precise dramaturgy of Film-*narrative*.

S. M. Eisenstein.

Zürich, 2/11/29.

Translator's Note.—The translation was made at Beverly Hills, Hollywood, 2nd November, 1930. For discussion of the word montage see translator's note to S. M. Eisenstein's "The Cinematic Principle and Japanese Culture" *transition* (Paris) May, June, 1930.
CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE.

Narcissus.

Discontent may be rooted in the contempt of one who believes mankind to be on its way to a better home and thinks, or most oddly, appears to think, that he honours that home by throwing mud at this. Or it may be just the natural mysterious sense of incompleteness haunting those for whom at times, haunting even those for whom all the time, life is satisfying beyond measure. More generally it is the state of having either lost or never fully possessed the power of focussing the habitual.

From this kind of discontent, escape by flight is impossible. Another house, another town, country, planet, will give only a moment’s respite, for each in turn, and each with more swiftness than the last, will close in and become odious while, perversely, those left behind will mock the fugitive by revealing, with an intensity that grows as it recedes further and further into the distance, the qualities that once had charmed him.

It is customary to account for this distressing experience by the part
played by distance, to say that distance lends enchantment and to talk of the transforming power of memory.

But distance is enchantment. It is a perpetual focus. And escape from the obstructive, chronic discontent we are considering the state of deadness to the habitual, whether that habitual to good or bad, is possible only to those who by nature or by grace have the faculty of ceaseless withdrawal to the distance at which it may be focussed.

Some kind of relinquishment is implied: an abandonment of rights that reproduces on a very humble level the saint's salto mortale. Something of the kind must take place before surroundings can be focussed. It may be enforced. By illness, for example. The sick man, recovering, returns from his enforced detachment to a world transformed. But his freshness of vision is for a while only, unless his experience has taught him the secret of withdrawal. Or by a disinterested observer, through whose eyes what had grown too near and too familiar to be visible is seen with a ready-made detachment that restores its lost quality.

An excellent illustration of the operation of this casual gift is afforded by the story of the man who grew weary of his house, put it up for sale and, soon after, reading in his newspaper amongst descriptions of properties on the market a detailed account of a residence whose enumerated features, attracting him more and more as he read on, presently forced upon his attention the fact that it was his own house he was contemplating, was filled with remorse and telephoned to the agent to cancel the offer.

And what has all this moralising to do with the film? Everyone knows that amongst its thousand and one potentialities the film possesses that of being a mirror for the customary and restoring its essential quality. But must we not, to-day, emerge from our small individual existences and from narcissistic contemplation thereof? Learn that we are infinitesimal parts of a vast whole? Labour and collaborate to find salvation for a world now paying the prices of various kinds of self-seeking? And, for the re-education of humanity, is any single instrument more powerful than the film that is here offered merely as a provider of private benefits?

True. But the everlasting WE who is to accomplish all this remains amidst all change and growth a single individual.

Even so, is this so obvious mirror-focus quality a point worth insisting upon in relation to an art that has now passed so far beyond photographic reproductions of the familiar and, in so far as it remains documentary, registers—if we except Dziga-Vertoff and his followers engaged in directly representing anything and everything without selective interference beyond that dictated by the enchanted eye—only "interesting" or " instructive" material?

I believe it is immensely worth making and insisting upon. I believe that mirroring the customary and restoring its essential quality is and
remains the film’s utmost. Remains Borderline’s utmost as well as that of The Policeman’s Whistle.

An early "animated picture," a little fogged and incessantly sparkling, of a locomotive in full steam making for the enchanted spectator, a wild-west film complete with well-knit story on a background that itself is an adventure, a psychological drama all situations and intensities, a film that concentrates on aesthetic beauty or on moral beauty, an abstract film that must be translated by the mind of the onlooker, a surréaliste film produced by the unconscious alone, all these, every imaginable kind of film, talkies included in their utmost nearness to or distance from stage-plays, reduces or raises, as you please, the onlooker to a varying intensity of contemplation that is, in a way that cannot be over-estimated, different from the contemplation induced by a stage-play just because, whatever the ostensible interest of the film, it is arranged and focussed at the distance exactly fitting the contemplative state.

And this not only because it is a finished reproduction that we are seeing, so that part of our mind is at ease as it can never be in the play that is as it were being made before our eyes in a single unique performance that is unlike any other single performance, and the faculty of contemplation has therefore full scope, but also because in any film of any kind those elements

"Enthusiasm" (Symphony Don-Bas) a sound-documentary film by Dziga-Vertof for Vufku.

"Enthousiasme (symphonie de basses du Don) documentaire sonore réalisé par Dziga-Vertof pour la Vufku.

"Begeisterung" (Symphonie Don Bas) eine Tonfilmreportage von Dziga-Vertof für Vufku.
which in life we see only in fragments as we move amongst them, are seen in full in their own moving reality of which the spectator is the motionless, observing centre.

In this single, simple factor rests the whole power of the film: the reduction, or elevation of the observer to the condition that is essential to perfect contemplation.

In life, we contemplate a landscape from one point, or, walking through it, break it into bits. The film, by setting the landscape in motion and keeping us still, allows it to walk through us.

And what is true of the landscape is true of everything else that can be filmed.

Dorothy M. Richardson

Overheard at Tell England.
" My dear, those Turkish soldiers* look like British extras."
" Ah! that’s their cunning!"
* The "Turkish" soldiers were Maltese civilians.—Ed.

Photo de "Pierement," film d'une seule bobine, de G. J. Teunissen, synchronisé par Tobis.

G. J. Teunissen is making a series of single reel sound films for the international market.

The first one, called *Pierement*, shows a large Amsterdam Street Organ at work in a poor neighbourhood in the old part of Amsterdam and the effect this instrument has on the people. This film was synchronised by Tobis of Epinay sur Seine last July and will be released in September.

The second one is called *Sabbath* and shows the Jewish quarters of Amsterdam going into the Sabbath.

The third one was taken in the Port of Amsterdam.
NOTES FROM AMERICA.

The occasion of the presentation of Pabst’s Westfront 1918 (retitled Comrades of 1918) at the Little Theatre, an avant-garde house in Baltimore, embroiled me in another battle with the Maryland Censors on its account. It seemed that they demanded the elimination of the episode where Karl comes home on furlough to find his wife with the butcher boy. Why? “It was immoral.” Didn’t they see that there was a purpose in showing this? “There can be no moral purpose in showing something in itself immoral.” (Italics mine.) Didn’t they see that they would destroy the whole meaning of Karl’s disillusionment if they took it out? “How so?” (Time out here while I attempted to explain this point.) Such is the whole meaning of censorship that here is what happened. While sitting through the appealed screening of the film, (after my fight in its behalf) one of the censors said, “You don’t have to show the wife and the butcher boy on the bed” (in the scene where Karl commands him to kiss his wife and the boy in sheer fright bends over the bed and kisses her against her will). I answered, “Very well, I’ll take out just where the butcher boy actually kisses the wife on the bed.” And the censor said, “There you are.” And thus the American moviegoer was once more saved from the contamination of insidious Continental moral aberration by the sagacity and perception of the censors.

Another case in point is that of the obstetrical film made by Edward Tisse at the Women’s Hospital in Zurich—Birth. It showed the evil effects of illegal practitioners to whom countless unknowing girls and women come for aid. It was a sincere plea for sane and sanitary methods in obstetrics and gave one a feeling of respect and admiration for the miraculous skill of the obstetrician. Birth, the commonest of all occurrences, never ceases to be the most wonderful. This was the sum total of the film’s message. It was a propaganda film, propaganda for health and hygiene. It was virtually banned by the Maryland Censors on the grounds of “immorality”—that it was “obscene and intended to degrade and corrupt the morals of others.” It was, they said, not entertaining for the layman. To which the judge (before whom the case was brought to trial) contemptuously replied, “Since when is a censorship body supposed to judge whether a film is entertaining or not?” The censors, who had ordered 62 eliminations in the film, were called “prudes” by the court which returned a verdict in favour of the exhibitor. Even H. L. Mencken, who rarely concerns himself with movies, had his say in a long article in the Baltimore Sun wherein he derided the censors for laying themselves open to such merited abuse.

While cases like these are the rule, and by no means exceptional, the Maryland Censors have licensed a film called: The Road to Hell, an old
German production retailing the lurid story of the traffic in women existing between points in Europe and Brazil and openly flaunting the excitement inherent in female prostitution. The newspaper advertisements of this film taking especial care to state that it is FOR MEN ONLY—LIVING MODELS ON THE STAGE! (Perhaps a real honest-to-goodness prostitute in the flesh?)

All movie advertising in America, with few exceptions (these exceptions are almost wholly confined to theatres showing European product) is indecent, frequently obscene and most always vulgar. A glance at the prospectus issued by each of the big film producing companies, Paramount, Metro, Fox, Universal, wherein they outline their next season’s product for the exhibitor, brings to mind all too trenchantly that either the mass of movie-goers, who are to determine in the long run whether a film is a box-office failure or not, are a pack of swine and must be catered to in this manner, or that the press agents for these companies are told to do just that by the producers who are underestimating the common sense and decency of the masses. All of Will Hays’ moralizing and so-called “cleaning up of the movies” has gone for nought. Picture after picture comes with its furtive salaciousness, accompanied by ballyhooing more fit for a circus side-show.

America, having passed through a fad of musical films, mystery films, society dramas and western “horse-operas” is now in a fever of gangster films. Many sharp, biting and expertly cinematic examples of this new urge have emanated from Hollywood, notably The Street of Chance, The Doorway to Hell, Quick Millions and The Public Enemy. This is the sort of thing Hollywood can do better than anyone else. The sharp staccato Milestone has developed in The Front Page, one of the most brilliant examples of sarcasm in all screen history, is typical of the zest, earthiness and sheer “guts” Hollywood has at its command which no other film makers, save the Russians, can duplicate.

The “bad man” of the American movie has “grown up” mentally and become “refined.” He dresses immaculately, speaks as they do in books, has manners and is quite a gentleman. Gone is the moustachioed caricature of a decade (or even less) ago.

The sameness of the pseudo-modernistic interiors in almost all the Hollywood films has become extremely tiring on the eyes. One is always under the impression that the film being viewed is merely a continuation of one seen several nights ago.

Sixty percent of the action in Hollywood films (outside of the gangster variety) consists of people sitting around talking to each other. The only relief is when someone dramatically gets up to impress a point and walks across the room. The other forty percent is consumed by people coming in and out of doorways.

If the success of such excellent films as Le Million, Sous les Toits de
Paris, Tabu and several others could only prevail upon Hollywood to turn their attention to similar films how much happier we would all be!

Still, maybe it is too soon to hope for a cinema renaissance in America. Though the foreign films have found a large and appreciative audience, that audience is not yet ready to be assimilated by Metro, Fox, Paramount et al. Pabst’s Dreigroschen Oper was a box office dud in New York. By the time this reaches Close Up, Norma Shearer in A Free Soul will be the raging sensation of New York.

The silent version of Queen Kelly, von Stroheim’s ill-fated venture with Gloria Swanson which was never released in America, will soon reach Europe in an attempt on the part of the producers to retrieve something of the million dollars purported to have been spent on it.

For temperamental reasons, both on the part of Miss Swanson and Herr von Stroheim, the film was never finished. It contains, I am told, a wonderful performance by the little heard-of Seena Owen and an entirely new type of rôle for the very glorious Swanson. It is set in pre-war Berlin and Potsdam.

Stroheim, incidentally, has been relieved of the assignment to direct a talking version of his first silent picture, Blind Husbands. He is being considered for a part in a mystery drama, The Sphinx Has Spoken, with the provision that if he likes the story he will be allowed to direct it.

That other “von” of the American movie scene, Sternberg, has completed the filming of Dreiser’s An American Tragedy. The contract Dreiser has with Paramount calls for his official approval of the film before it is released. He has already disapproved of the script von Sternberg and Samuel Hoffenstein prepared of his novel and vows he will not let the film be issued unless it does his novel justice. He liked very much Eisenstein’s script for the filming of An American Tragedy which Paramount for some
reason known only to themselves would not sanction. However, there is no question that the film will be released on next season’s schedule. It is already being sold to exhibitors on the block-booking system. It is a film which Europe will await with more than usual interest.

There is a rumour current that American interests are backing Eisenstein’s Mexican film.

Man Ray’s *Etoile de Mer* and *Coquille et le Clergyman* have both been rejected by the New York censors. As was also Erno Metzner’s *Uberfall*. *The Blue Angel* was so butchered by the Pennsylvania censors that Paramount decided not to show it in that state.

Just as Hollywood has become a veritable babel of the movie world with foreign talkies running riot in all the studios, so has New York suddenly become the show window of foreign movie product. There have been German (of course!) French, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Yiddish, Swedish and Hungarian talkies presented within the last few months.

Herman G. Weinberg.

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*From a new film by Lotte Reiniger. The devil wishes to remove Harlequin’s dead body to hell.*

*Du nouveau film de Lotte Reiniger : Le diable désire emporter le corps d’Arlequin en enfer.*

*Silhouette aus einem neuen Film Lotte Reiniger. Der Teufel will den Leichnam Harlekins in die Höle befördern.*
Matahi in "Tabu," a film of the South Seas by the late F. W. Murnau in co-operation with R. J. Flaherty. Photographed by Floyd Crosby.


1. Irzykowski—Balazs;
2. Creative camera and creative montage;
3. The film vanguard;
4. Film in regard to Painting and Music;
5. The Soviet Film;
6. The Tone Film;
7. Film in the theatre.

1. Irzykowski—Balazs.

At a loss, we are on a cross-road. The sudden irruption of the tone-film which caused technical progress, has checked the development of art. The summary of what has been done up to the present in the sphere of motion-pictures, is becoming particularly actual; it will allow not only realisation of the foregoing stages but will permit us to compile a preliminary to facilitate discernment of the directory indexes for the future roads of film-art.

While considering and discussing the preliminary of film, we must not overlook the Dziesiata Muza (The tenth muse), a book by a renowned Polish critic, Karol Irzykowski, who has created not only a basis for the theory of film-art, but who, thanks to a clear-seeing criticism, has indicated a road for its future development. We are particularly struck by it when "confronting" Irzykowski with Balazs, the author of the book published recently Der Geist des Films (The spirit of the film),* which may be considered as the best and most ample analysis of film achievement up to the present day.

2. The creative camera and creative montage.

We are witnesses of the formation of a specific "optical culture." Parallel to the development of the visual technics (film, the light on the stage, modern photography, photo-montage) has developed the technics of "looking." The film has refined and trained our sight; we have learned to perceive fugitive situations; we perceive at once the tiniest details and understand in a moment the symbolic significance of the pictures; we know how to "think optically," to create associations of ideas and optical metaphors.

The rapidity of development of "optical culture" is confirmed by old motion-pictures. A period of ten years reveals the earlier film as comically naive, irrespective of its most tragical contents. A theatrical piece seen even after a ten times longer period does not impress us as anything so old fashioned as, for example, a film of 1915. When the visual impressions enrich, the technic of looking improves also, and changes the sensibility of the spectator.

The rôle of the creative camera consists in absorbing the vision and consciousness into the orbit of events of the rapidly moving pellicule, whereby the camera "leads" the spectator's eye, showing not only new distances but likewise new points of observation in dependence on the function of the objective. Balazs sees in this fact something entirely new and characteristic of this art.

In his recently published dissertation entitled *Iskusstwo Kino* (Kino
art) Kuleshov formulates this property of the camera in basis of the quantitative difference of the points of view in the cinema and in the theatre. Whereas the spectator in the theatre, from any seat in the auditorium, sees a different projection of the scene, the spectator in the cinema sees from all seats the very same.*

The rôle of the creative camera has established that it shall not confine itself to illustrating novels or a literary scenario, but create its own form. The camera catches with precision the slightest nuances of mimic expression, knows how “to read between the lines,” reveals states and processes going on in the world we see, which were formerly concealed from normal sight.

The question of the creative camera is intimately connected with montage, which becomes creative only when we find out something that in the celluloid strips taken separately, is not to be found.

Montage is the creator of film reality, it is the language of the film regisseur where the element is not a word but a picture. Literary style and montage are thus akin.

Of single situation-scenes filmed at different moments and in various places, the regisseur, thanks to montage, constructs and “creates” a new film-space and a new film-time, being in no relation to the “photographed reality,” i.e. to real time and to real space.

Pudovkin understands the montage of a film as an association of the elements of time and of space, i.e. he treats the film as a composition of motion.**

Montage that solely realises the course of action for the sake of its own understanding, does not take into consideration the significant force and power of association, which the modern film regisseurs see as the actual and creative rôle of montage. For example: Hans Richter (Filmgegner von heute, Filmfreund von morgen) states that an association in the film means the connection of a series of visual sequences in basis of their affinity of form, rhythm or contents. Such an association comes forth either by joining typical contrasts or by resemblance of shape and of gestures.

By evoking an association, the regisseur typifies the peculiar and individual phenomena. Such an association, as maintained by Richter, may be a means to creation of enlightening effects; it may alter the essential contents of things, secure new values, and impart to the film a significance previously not possessed. In this association, he asserts, the elements of the speech of the film and the instruments of film poetry are contained.

Eisenstein’s theory of the “intellectual film”† which consists of the

* (I very much question this. In fact, I am certain it is not so. A film can assume a whole scale of different significances viewed from different parts of the Theatre—Ed.).

** That postulate of time and space set forth by Pudovkin in regard to the film is nothing particularly new in the sphere of modern art. In plastic arts this postulate was realized from the initiation in painting of futurism (Boccioni) and of cubism (Picasso), whereas in modern architecture it is known as functionalism, i.e. coordination of architectural composition in space and time.

† Eisenstein’s article “The Fourth Dimension in the Kino.” (Close Up, March and April.)
shaping of the spectator's thought by forcing him to reflect in a definite direction, ascribes to the montage association a great rôle for inciting comparisons, for inducing to react, for formulating conclusions; suggests to the spectator the necessity of solving certain problems in one particular and no other direction. In this way even the economical problems in the "intellectual" films (The General Line, Turksib), in spite of their descriptive quality, become for the spectator dramatic conflicts in which he vividly participates. There arises a new category of film, "montage essays" as described by Balazs. To the complex of problems contained within the limits of montage, belongs the "rythmisation of film," the question of adjustment of consecutive successions of single pictures and the deriving necessity of rhythm—visual rhythm.

The rhythm of montage, according to Balazs, may obtain its own independent value, equal to that of the musical rhythm, whereby its relation to the plot may be very distant and irrational. For example, landscapes, that have no dramatic content may secure an optical rhythm, in which is to be found its specific and individual "level" apart from the content.

"Tabu," the last film of F. W. Murnau.
"Tabou," le dernier film de F. W. Murnau.
"Tabu," der letzte Film F. W. Murnaus.
From "Tabu."
Cliché de "Tabou."
Aus "Tabu."
Balazs makes an analogy with music, i.e. with melody and with the text connected with same, being of opinion that the spheres of pure rhythm and of pure subjectiveness may be mutually in counterpoint relation, and as regards pictures with a strong dramatic action, the motion within these pictures and the motion of the pictures themselves in their montage "shuffling" may possess different rhythms which are being mutually submitted to each other in counterpoint manner; for instance, a landscape in which nothing moves and nothing "happens" may be set into a furious rhythm: then the rhythm of the montage is not the expression of the subject itself but that of the director's temperament and of the camera too. This pure rhythm of montage is adapted by Soviet film specialists (for example, The sentimental romance), and with a special liking by the French vanguard. However, exaggerated devotion to this method involves certain danger owing to the fact that the rhythm shaped for its sake and quite independently, renders the contents of the film obscure and accentuates its optical and musical part, leaving to the dramatic one a secondary place.

This problem has been analysed by Irzykowski, but according to him, cinematography will start only then when the scenes showing landscapes are put together according to some dramatic, or, at least, a lyric and musical idea; when they will form a gradation "crescendo" or "morendo" in such a way for example that one part will impress us as a promise and the other as a fulfilment or a disappointment. But this requires again, though in a small scale, the construction of contents.

And so while Balazs referring to the sphere of music wants somehow to adapt counterpoint to combine in parallel the contents with the visual part, Irzykowski, according to his monistic point of view regarding contents, sets it forth as the chief and only postulate.

3. The film vanguard.

The camera and montage technics having acquired a great perfection in independent shaping, have caused a tendency to part with fiction in film and to reproduce an absolute, impersonal reality, deprived of "plot," i.e. a tendency to shape a pure film by exclusively filmic means.

Singular objects in the so-called absolute films, thanks to the deforming actions of the camera and the montage, differ much from what they are in everyday life and lose their usual daily character and aspect. The object thus deformed is often transformed into an odd phenomenon, assumes imperceptibly a new form, becomes a symbol. The reality latent in itself represents not the given state of facts, but exclusively determined optical impressions. Balazs gives a definition: "an object taken out of time and space and also of any causality, becomes a vision; then we are in the sphere of an absolute film." The régisseur endeavours to distil an optical essence of phenomena—as if Kant's "Ding an sich" were transferred to the territory of film.
In the films Berlin of Ruttman, Montmartre of Cavalcanti, in the films of Man Ray there is no reality, no space, no time and no causality; abstract psychic visions give purely visual associations. In the nearly absolute film of Richter, Inflation, we see continually repeating phenomena of banknotes, haggard faces, incoherent glances, oscillations of the rates of exchange, suicides and money. No "played" scenes, no plot and no narration is to be found here; they are replaced by visions. They have, however, a certain connection of theme which is not to be found even in the surrealist films. The absolute films lack solely causative continuity and logical development of phenomena. Single pictures are connected with each other not logically but psychologically—logic is here merely a means to facilitate understanding, its aim being psychological interpretation.

But while in the absolute film the theme and the psychic process in which the theme unfolds, have an equal value, in the surrealist films of the French vanguard, the isolate psychological process with fantastic hallucinations and visions, constitutes the exclusive content and theme (Un chien andalou).

Surrealistic films, which are distinguished by visual qualities endeavour moreover to suggest to the spectator that their quintessence consists in the processes and associations going on in the subconscious, to induce him to absorb the film from the psycho-analytical point of view.

Freudists at least group these phenomena, trying to catch causative connections, whereas the producers of surrealist films content themselves with the exclusive reconstruction of automatic, uncontrolled, psychic conditions.

To the category of the vanguard film there belongs also the abstract film initiated in 1917 by a Swedish painter Viking Eggeling.

The abstract film is based on mobile abstract forms, on moving lines and levels; ideas of abstract painting transferred to the function of the film.

The tendencies of the vanguard film aiming at the construction of the "cinematic film" had been foreseen by Irzykowski at a time when such films were hardly known. Nevertheless his diagnosis is so to the purpose that I quote it in toto: "In the attitude towards the cinema, and also other arts, is manifested an exaggerated tendency to purification, i.e. a tendency to remove from those arts alien elements and to base them solely on their proper qualities. This is rather a laudable tendency, for it proves that people begin to think with us, but not to the end. To emancipate the cinema from the theatre, from painting, literature, to attain 'pure cinema': all right—this is what I desire too, and what I speak about. But it does not mean that the cinema must be cut out of the whole of life and made sterile. A theorist may in his laboratory examine the isolate cinema, whereas a creative artist cannot give up the shaping of a vivid entanglement of phenomena which belong formally as if to other arts. The difficulty is: to catch the flame."

Balazs, when appreciating the creative experimental work of the
talented pioneers of the vanguard film, comes however, to the conviction that such films cannot form an isolate category of cinematic art, but ought to be adapted as "inlaid" parts in "normal" films. Balazs degrades them to a secondary role, not seeing in them any social advantages. Irzykowski, as a pioneer of the battle for content in the film, propagates the idea that the film bereaved of content will not "drive out" the "concrete cinema," i.e. films full of content deriving from the so-called "real world." We have too many reckonings to settle with this world to give up the pleasure and renounce the pride of making it confess in yet another art.

(To be continued.)

 Zygmunt Tonecky.

THE PRINCIPLES OF FILM RECORDING

In order to appreciate the possibilities and limitations of any art-form, it is necessary to have some knowledge of "How it is Done." When, however, it is a question of engineering principles it is hard to obtain any kind of explanation between a "Popular Triumphs of Science" and a highly technical treatise. That is why I am going to give you an outline of film recording, talkie synchronising and talkie cutting which, I hope, will show you wherein lie the possibilities and limitations of the Sound Film.

It is time that more people thought about the possibilities of recorded sound unembarrassed by the presence of recorded sight. I shall begin, therefore, with the recording apparatus.

The aim of film-recording is to photograph sound. Thus we must start with a clear conception of the nature of sound. The nature of sound at one point. The point where our ear is.

Sound at a point is a rapid alternation in the pressure of the air at that point between a pressure above and a pressure below normal.

The sound is not the pressure of the air; it is the changes taking place in that pressure.

The pitch of a sound depends on the frequency of these changes.

A high frequency—that is to say, a large number of complete alternations from high pressure to low pressure and back again in each second, gives a high note. Conversely, low notes are of low frequency.

I hope I have not laboured the point too much, but once this fundamental fact has been grasped, all the essential principles of sound recording are within easy reach.

Photography, as its name implies, records variations in light. We wish to record variations in air pressure. The problem is to make the changes taking place in the air set up corresponding changes in the light from a steady source.

This cannot be done directly; we have to use changes in an electric current as an intermediate stage.
Two ways of approaching a bell, as different as the ages of those who ring them. "Tabu."

Deux types de sonneurs de cloches, dont l'âge est aussi différent que les moyens d'action. "Tabou."

Zwei Arten, sich einer Glocke zu nähern, so verschieden wie das Alter derer, die sie läuten. "Tabu."
A microphone is a device by means of which changes in the pressure of the air at the point where the microphone is placed, cause corresponding changes in an electric current flowing in the circuit in which it is connected. We use a microphone as the first stage in sound recording.

Therefore the nature of a microphone provides us with our first set of possibilities and limitations.

The microphone is not so accommodating as the human ear. The area over which it is sensitive may be divided into three zones. If the source of sound is within a few feet of the microphone (the 1st zone) it is more sensitive than the ear would be at the same distance. If the source of sound is outside this range, but within a few yards (the 2nd zone) the sensitivity of the microphone is about the same as that of the ear. Beyond this range (the 3rd zone) the sensitivity of the microphone is considerably below that of the ear. The boundaries of the zones are clearly defined. Their size is of course dependent on the type of microphone.

The zone principle is true of all types of microphone.

For this reason it is necessary to consider the position of a microphone with respect to the source of the sound to be recorded.

It is on this peculiarity of the microphone that its possibilities and limitations depend.

The limitations are obvious, the possibilities hardly explored at all, and then mainly in some American dance records. In these records very effective use is made of the unnatural balance obtainable when one instrument plays very quietly in the 1st zone with the rest of the band playing in the 2nd, as is the case whenever Ed. Lang takes a single-string guitar solo, from "Washboard Blues" (with Red Nichols and his Five Pennies. Brunswick). Too, "Walkin' the Dog" (with Eddie Lang's Orchestra. Parlophone), and with Chester Hazlett's sub-tone clarinet (with Paul White-man's Orchestra. H.M.V.). The sub-tone clarinet, which is an ordinary clarinet played in an extraordinary way, is barely audible "in the flesh."

The next stage in the recording of sound is the first amplifier and mixing panel. The changes in the electric current flowing in each microphone circuit are separately amplified, the degree of amplification being controlled on the mixing panel by means of a separate knob for each microphone circuit. After the mixing panel the changes from each microphone circuit are fed into one common circuit, so it is here that the recorder controls the balance between his various microphones.

The possibilities of intelligent mixing (as in Blackmail, where a normal door-bell was gradually invested with a more-than-normal significance on the panel) are most considerable.

Between the mixing panel and the second amplifier is a loud-speaker, on which the recorder hears the balance he is getting with his panel. The second amplifier then increases the balanced changes until they are large enough to be fed to the sound camera.
There are three main recording systems in use today; Western Electric, Klangfilm and R.C.A.

In the Western Electric and Klangfilm cameras a steady source of light is focussed to a narrow slit on the film, which is wound through the sound camera at a steady speed (1 1/2 ft. per sec.). Between its source and the focussing lenses the light passes, in the Western Electric system, through a "light valve." Changes in the electric current fed to this "light valve" cause corresponding changes in the amount of light that it allows to pass. Therefore the strip of film moving in front of the lenses is acted upon by a light, the intensity of which varies with the variations in the electric current. In the Klangfilm system the place of the "light-valve" is taken by a Kerr cell between two pairs of Nicol Prisms. The effect is the same. In the developed film the changes in the electric current will be represented by corresponding changes in the density of the sound-track.

In the R.C.A. camera a steady beam of light falls on a mirror from which it is reflected through a slit on to the edge of the film strip. The mirror is moved by changes in the electric current fed to the camera, so that a larger or smaller area of the film strip is acted upon by the light, the area varying with the variations in the electric current. In the developed film the changes in the electric current will be represented by corresponding changes in the dark area of the sound track. The rest of the track will be clear.

The sound is reproduced from this record by running a positive print, taken from the negative made in the camera, past a steady source of light, which is focussed to a narrow slit across the sound track, at a constant speed (1 1/2 ft. per second). The amount of light passing through the film varies with the density of the sound-track (or with the area of clear film in the track, if it was recorded on the R.C.A. system).

The light passing through the film falls onto a photo-electric cell. Changes in the light falling onto a photo-electric cell cause corresponding changes in an electric current flowing in the circuit in which it is connected. These changes may either be fed, through an amplifier, to a loud speaker, where they will cause similar changes to take place in the pressure of the air around it (sound), or they may be fed to the mixing panel of a recording plant and re-recorded. Re-recording is known as dubbing.

If you have followed me so far, you will now have a foundation on which to build your theories on the use of recorded sound. Before proceeding to the wedding of sound with sight, however, I will give you an indication of the possibilities of dubbing.

Not only may a single sound-track be re-recorded, either at the same, or at a different sound level, but several tracks may be run at the same time and mixed on the panel, while sound may be added from the floor (we did this constantly in Windjammer and Tell England). Two tracks, taken separately, may be dissolved one into the other; fades may be made; sounds
can be distorted by running them through the projector faster or slower than the speed at which they were taken. (This was how we obtained the background for the trench raid and the low-frequencies for the blowing up of "Clara," in Tell England.) It is also possible to add any degree of artificial echo from an echo room (the guides at the crevasse in Avalanche, English version of Stürm über dem Mont Blanc), and to alter the balance of frequencies with a frequency control.

Intelligent microphone placing, mixing and dubbing have begun to make their appearance, but we are still waiting for the D. W. Griffith of the microphone.

Except in the case of news-reels, the sound is recorded in a separate camera from the sight. The sound camera and each of the picture cameras is driven by a 3 phase electric motor of the same design running off the same source and in the same circuit, so that, once they are under way, they all run at exactly the same speed. It remains only to provide some mark by which the sound track may be put in synchronisation with the picture ("mute," now-a-days) strip.

In the Western Electric system a hole is punched in the film in each camera gate. All the motors are then started together, by a special switch-


L. H. Struna dans le film parlant tchèque de Gustave Machaty : "De Samedi à Dimanche."

gear covered in patents. The punched holes provide the synchronising marks.

At the beginning of each sound-track there is this starting mark. At the beginning of the mute from each picture camera turning on that scene, is a corresponding mark. If these marks are placed together the sound will be in synchronisation with each of the mutes.

Klangfilm provide a synchronising mark at every foot. A neon lamp in each camera photographs footage numbers in morse on the edge of the film.

R.C.A. use 2 black and white boards hinged together at one end. The two boards are held in front of the picture cameras and near the microphone, and are clapped together after the cameras have started. The moment of impact, which is very easy to find both in the mute and in the sound track, provides a synchronising mark.

Sound film is cut on a synchroniser—a row of sprockets fixed to a shaft which can be rotated by a handle. For the cutting copy separate prints are made of the sound and mutes, and these are threaded each over a sprocket in such a way that their synchronising marks are all in line. The sound is thus in synchronisation with each of the mutes, and, as they are all moved together by turning the handle, they are kept in synchronisation throughout their entire lengths. Since the sound is on a separate film the sound taken with one scene can be made to overlap another scene; mute, not taken with the sound, may be cut into a scene; sound may be cut in to run with a mute with which it was not taken; dissolves and fades may be made in both sound and mute; where several angles have been taken on one scene simultaneously they can be cut on the synchroniser to one sound track (the sound perspective is corrected later, by dubbing).

The fundamental difference between the stage and the screen lies in the fact that, unlike a man in the audience who from his fixed seat watches a fixed stage, the camera can choose what it will look at, from what angle it will look, and from what distance. It is essential that the microphone also should have this freedom. It is not always possible to record all the sound we want as we want it, or to exclude all the sound we don't want, if the sound is recorded at the same time as the mute; but it need not be so recorded.

Von Sternberg, in Morocco gave us cars that crept silently into the picture (as well bred cars can do, but it was the first talkie in which they had not made a noise like a vacuum cleaner, which cars don't). He also gave us troops marching in silence, and symbolised the sound of troops on the march by giving us the beat of a single drum. Adding sound to a mute taken without it is called Post-Synchronisation.

The mute to be post-synchronised is run on a projector driven by a 3 phase synchronous motor. The screen is in the recording studio. Microphone placing is unhampered by lighting, camera position or anything else,
and, with the exception of speech, which is seldom satisfactory when post-synchronised to lip movement, it is not difficult to obtain perfect synchronisation.

Should ordinary post-synchronisation be out of the question, owing to the multiplicity of exactly synchronised sounds to be added, recorded sounds may sometimes be cut to the mute "by eye." For the V. Beach and Anzaac landings and the trench raid in *Tell England*, which were taken without sound, we recorded and made a library of such noises as Big Explosions, Little Explosions, Shell Screams, Rifle Shots, Bullet Whizzes, Machine Guns. We took the mute, already cut by the director, and cut the sound to it. When we saw a rifle recoil we cut in a rifle shot, when we saw a man duck we cut in a bullet whizz, and so on. Then we made a synchronised print of this and dubbed it, adding a background from another projector and voices from the floor.

When the cutting copy is finished to the editor's satisfaction (or, more usually, before) it is shown to those who control its fate on two synchronised projectors, sound on one, mute on the other. But when at last it is passed, after cutting and re-cutting, for public consumption, and the negatives have been cut to match it, synchronised prints are made, with the sound and mute side by side on the same film.

Now the sound-track has to move at a constant speed through the sound-head of the projector, but the mute has to move intermittently through the mute head. The sound head therefore is not alongside the mute head, but below it, and the sound is printed 19 frames ahead of the picture with which it synchronises, so that they may each be in their respective gates at the same time.

You have followed a sound vibration from microphone to projector. I can take you no further.

Dan Birt.
CERTAIN GENERAL CONCLUSIONS.

"It is to be understood clearly that these answers are the free work of the child," is the reassuring statement introducing the recently published report of the Birmingham Cinema Inquiry Committee, which contains a vast amount of information about the effect on children of the cinema.

"No assistance was given," it is stated. "No difficulty was found in getting the children to write or to talk about 'the pictures' for, as one teacher commented, 'It is extraordinary how excited and interested children become the moment 'the pictures' are mentioned.'"

The report covers the period from April, 1930, until May, 1931, and cinemas in which children were chiefly present were attended regularly for nine months. "Investigators sat with children, talked with them, and watched closely the effect of films upon them."

In addition a number of simple questions were distributed and circulated by heads of schools and leaders of clubs. The committee also invited, and received, expressions of opinion from groups of young people or adults, while a detailed classification was made from a total of 430 reports dealing with 285 films and four programmes of Saturday afternoon entertainments.

Certain general conclusions can be made from the answers submitted. It is evident that the majority of the children questioned visit the cinema
on the average at least once a week and that comedy films are most popular with adventure and detective films a good second.

One boy of 11 who goes twice a week wrote: "You have them on your mind all the time," while a girl said: "You seem to get a mania for going." Replies to the question "Why do you like going?" submitted to 1,439 Birmingham children, ages 8 to 14, come under three main headings—For Interest, For amusement, and To pass the time.

"For thrills and excitement" ran these very closely, while of a group of 38 girls, aged 11, 20 of them, surprisingly enough, "like war films best," and 19 boys said they preferred "Murder, war, and Chicago gangster films because they are so thrilling." Forty-four children said they go to the cinema "to learn something," while many children said "to see other countries." "For beauty," was the reply of one boy, aged 13.

Nearly all the boys objected to love films, but many girls wrote that their favourite films were "fighting for love." "An arresting feature," says the report, "is the recurring emphasis upon crime, war, and what they term 'fighting pictures' and 'frightening pictures.'"

Two groups of girl guides voted in this order:—

Ages 7 to 10. Murder, Comics, No others mentioned.

Ages 10 to 16. Cowboy, Murder, Love.

The Commissioner added: "One child said she would show me how to strangle people."

Many boys said that pictures taught them "how to fight" and "how to shoot," while numbers of children said they were frightened by films with Chinese in them—Hollywood version.

Many children found that films, particularly when coloured, tired their eyes, while of 1,439 children, 349 replied that pictures kept them, or children they knew, from sleeping afterwards. "I find that talking in your sleep shows up more after going to a picture that has crime in it," wrote one child.

The headmaster of one school wrote: "One boy had to be taken out of the cinema when Atlantic was being shown. This film has caused many children in the city to have nightmare." Adults have been known to be similarly affected.

Few children seem to have learnt anything from the pictures, though one bright boy wrote: "I have learnt many things. If I see anything I have not seen before I am bound to learn, whether it is bad or good." Among the amazing variety of answers received to this question were:—

"Ways and customs of many lands." (From many children).
"What important things are going on in the world."


"That America and the people in it seem to be always full of life and enjoyment."

"American slang." (From dozens).

"I have learnt to what a low degree a human can sink, and the faults of life."

"How to vote peace during war."

"That cleanliness makes a lot of difference because you very often see people going to the dentists on the pictures and when you see what he does it makes you feel you want to keep them—(the people or the teeth?)—clean."

"Never to take a big risk."

"Not to lie as you are often found out."

"How to be aware when I am out at night."

"That actresses do not wear enough clothes."

"When children see war pictures many of them want to be soldiers."

"One good thing about pictures is that a law has been passed that certain pictures must only be seen by people of 16 or over. Yet anybody can see that there must be something bad in the picture if only the adults can see it."

"They put nasty posters on the walls to call people in. Posters are like magnets and people like needles."

Many children write that they have learnt about love and how to make love. One says: "Women without any clothes are love stories." Oh, Hollywood!

A girl of 12 said: "Love pictures are teaching children very young," while a boy said he had learnt how to shoot through his pocket and another how to choke wild animals!

Among the films classified as "Satisfactory" are:—


"Unsatisfactory" films include:—


Conflicting reports were given about *The Love Parade*, *General Ginsberg*, and *The Blue Angel*. The last named was the subject of many protests. The President of the Committee was Sir Charles Grant Robertson, M.A., LL.D., C.V.O., Principal of Birmingham University who, in a foreword, says, "It is clear we have lit a candle which will not be put out."

"We are not prohibitionists, cranks, or killjoys," he adds. "We believe that this great instrument which modern science has given us can be, indeed is bound to be, tremendous and inexhaustible source of recreation and education.

"For this very reason we are determined to persist in our endeavour until the abuses and dangers—intellectual, physical, and moral—particularly for children and adolescents, which at present make what might be an instrument of good into an instrument of incalculable and irreparable harm, have been extirpated."

Leslie B. Duckworth,

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TWO LITTLE STORIES.

**Moral**: An angel, finding herself hard pressed for cash, called, in a vision of blinding light, at Lady Dearlove’s London residence on the eve of one of her notorious parties. The angel hoped that she (or was it he?) might be able to secure an engagement, for a personal appearance, at a high figure. The butler, without moving a muscle of his exquisitely composed countenance, asked if the angel was able to sing and dance.
Indiscretions are good for journalists, and there is a stage at which we become tired of being told that people have another side, when we want for ourselves to see. Therefore, instead of waiting to reach the Sophie-Tucker-young-old age of a Beverly Nichols to reveal, let us, at once, tear a flustered page from the diary.

Photos in Close Up have made most familiar with the sturdy exterior of S. M. Eisenstein. He looks the part of a great man: that is so restful after all the mental acrobatics we generally have to go through to link insipid people with vigorous, artistic product.

On his first European trip, we met Eisenstein.

The first thing he said to us was, “I do hope the shops are shut because I ought to go shopping: that terrifies me.”

Overtones: close up of governess (reproduced only the other day in Experimental Cinema) with eye shot out, in Potemkin.

The “brutal” Russian director really was delighted when we offered to assist. He begged us to brave salesmen and buy him a pair of pyjamas. Afterwards, he insisted on opening the parcel in the streets.

“Oh!” he moaned, “they are the wrong colour, they make me look far too old. Now I will always hate you!”

Overtones: solemn English reception for the great director with young cinéastes looking as self conscious as movie actresses pretending to play the piano and covering the base notes proceeding from the treble with a pleading smirk.

Every Russian director who has visited England since the revolution has been intent on viewing Limehouse. (Opium dens, sudden flash of angry knives, off stage screams? Not far away, slippery yellow lichen on stone, the docks, bales of cotton, casks of wine, plumes of smoke, shanties, posing and massing of tugs, barges and other small craft, glimpses through “artistic” bridges?) Anyway, Eisenstein asked us to take him there. Whatever he had longed for, he politely pretended to be photographically interested in the battered shapes of dust-bins clustered outside some of the meaner houses. He went to the length of finding sociological entertainment in odd garments on washing lines. He gave the dreary streets the interest he was supposed to find in them: but not a single Chinaman did he see. Hours of trudging brought us to the doors of a low tavern. A mechanical piano was playing. A dog was behaving in the manner of stray dogs. In such a pub, the man whose films have been banned on grounds of brutality—asked for ginger beer. “We of the party do not drink.” And a little later, “We of the party do not smoke.” Then, so sweetly, to revive the myth of the callous one, in case we should be disappointed, he began to take a great and detailed interest in the habits of the stray dog!
The backslider returns the stolen tableware in the night.

The gang leader's first encounter with his new home. 
Première rencontre faite par le chef de bande, dans sa nouvelle habitation. 
Die erste Begegnung des Bandenführers mit seinem neuen Heim.
The Eisenstein we knew bought books on magic in Charing Cross Road and spent his evenings at the Brixton Roller Skating Rink!

II.

Scene: cabaret.
Characters: travelling companion of Hollywood's most exotic star and friends.
Charming friend of wonder star: "Do you know, if I projected my voice I could be heard above the orchestra and conversation?"
Neighbour: "Why, I never knew you were a singer!"
C.F.: "I'm not: I do bird work!"
Neighbour: "B..i..r..d w..o..r..k???
C.F. (going into trance): "How I love classical music. Kreisler's prelude, for example, is magnificent, I think: I do a lot of hard and fast bird work to that. I sit for hours at my piano, doing bird work. In New York, I gave a recital with five hundred birds and, do you know, not one bird sang out of tune."
Neighbour (dazed): "Good heavens! how do you account for that?"
C.F. (triumphantly): "Natural artistic ability of the birds!"
Somehow to us that seems to be the whole of Hollywood! O. B.

THE COMING REVOLUTION

According to the weatherwise, Hollywood is doomed; and the self-righteous are accordingly awaiting the cataclysm with a satisfaction no less fervent than that with which Jonah looked forward as an eye-witness to the destruction of Nineveh.

To the old-timer, however, this ominous angury evokes no more serious reaction than an indulgent smile. He has heard it before, many times over, during the past twenty years. Through the same tolerant providence that spared Nineveh and denied the reverend Jonah his anticipated fireworks, Hollywood has been permitted to continue and to flourish. For all of its iniquities and profanities, there abides within it a saving element of virtue; and, because of this, the present threat of its elimination from the map will again prove but an extravagant blast of windiness.

But at the same time, while Hollywood itself is destined to endure, the thrones of its long-reigning autocrats have never been so shaky as they are today. The advent of the phonofilm, four years ago, saved them from a
then threatened collapse. The popular response to this exhilaratingly novel departure served as a timely prop. But no more than a prop. It did nothing to reinforce the crumbling foundations. And now that talking pictures have become a commonplace, and the seduction of curiosity is gone, the public is again yawning and refusing to be cajoled into the indiscriminate payment of tribute for the maintenance of Hollywood's great I-ams.

Unfortunately for the cinema overlords, no further novelty is at hand to sustain their wasteful régime. Television is still in embryo. Stereoscopy has failed to materialize. Colour and wide film, which a year ago were heralded with characteristic flamboyance, have proved a melancholy fizzle. And thus the grand seigniors of Hollywood find themselves in a situation that is something a good deal more than embarrassing. They have been in tight fixes before, but never one like this, fraught as it is with unmistakable signs of enforced abdication.

In other words, their high and mighty activities have become restricted, almost without warning, to the sole business of making pictures—and it is no wonder they are scared. The cinema's present-day demands for art and intelligence have become altogether too much for them. The talking film, on which as a nine-days wonder they cashed in so handsomely, has turned upon them transformed into an exacting genie with whom they are starkly unable to cope.

Such hokum as served them in the past to offset their native incompetence has ceased to function. Fabulous publicity, circus hyperbole, phallic innuendo—in short, any ad captandum—sufficed neatly in the old days to pull in the crowds. But today these meretricious lures are met by the once gullible Phillistines with a sceptic shrug or a sophisticated arching of the brows.

Nevertheless, as illustrative of the present desperation, one of the major producing companies is preparing to spend a cool hundred thousand dollars in a pyrotechnic advertising of each of its super-supreme, triple-X, knock-'em-cold, transcendentally unparalleled pictures scheduled for production during the coming months. Of course, it will avail little or nothing, save to emphasise the roistering extravagance and ineptitude of those who continue to believe themselves divinely commissioned to direct the destinies of Hollywood.

These imperious showmen are incapable of learning. They imbibe nothing from their hired brains and talent. Prodigality, mis-management, stupidity are still in the saddle and still glorified as badges of kingly power and defiance. "Didn't ve gross tree million tollar on Diana's Bridal Night? Den vot you kickin' about? Sure, it cost a million! Ve ain't no tightwads!"

What, therefore, does it avail to suggest reform to these bumptious potentates? If two and a half years are required to make a Trader Horn, including a twelve months expensive sojourn in Africa, only to have the
company return and stage the wild-animal action in Hollywood, that's no outsider's business. To make it so is nothing short of lèse-majesté. If Charlie Chaplin, under the cloak of asserted genius, consumes three years and seven hundred reels of film to produce an out-moded silent picture of scant inherent merit, that again is nobody's business, except the near Sir Charlie's.

And still less may we question so minor a detail as the importing of a P. G. Wodehouse to grace a studio roster as a famous author, at a salary of a hundred thousand a year with no work attached. Not that the humourous Mr. Wodehouse is either incapable or unwilling to lend a hand at manufacturing a scenario, but, tut, tut! of what use is his ability to Hollywood? Any hack at two hundred a week can write a scenario.

Or why comment on the payment of a measly twenty-five thousand to
a Booth Tarkington, to secure his name on a film as the writer of its dialogue? It makes no odds that neither the story nor the photoplay is his, nor does it matter that the dialogue has already been supplied by a studio scenarist and that Mr. Tarkington is asked merely to look it over and justify the use of his name by a here-and-there change of a sentence.

That's Hollywood under its existing rulership—the same mentality that has persistently dominated the films and prostituted their potential art and social value. But its day is inevitably drawing to a close. The one-time clothing merchants and button-hole makers who with Semitic astuteness foresaw and materialized the commercial possibilities of motion pictures as popular entertainment, and who rode to wealth and power on the wave of public response to their enterprise, have now reached the ultimate limit of their control. And they themselves are bewilderedly aware of it, yet at the same time incapable of comprehending the true cause of their impending downfall.

Even were the cause explained to them in words of one syllable by anyone fearless enough to face them, they would dismiss the explanation with arrogant scorn. Indeed, that has been their very response to a recent frank analysis of the present situation, wherein their responsible shortcomings and unfitness were charitably pointed out to them. It helped not a whit that it was done by one of their own privy councillors, Thomas Gedney Patten, one-time official associate of Will Hays as head of the producer's organisation. In a noteworthy, not to say startling, interview published in the Los Angeles Times he outlined the status and the needs of what he termed might well be "the greatest force for good in the world—motion pictures." But they are fated never to attain this end under their present dictators, because, to summarize the reasons as set forth by Mr. Patten—

Only one or two per cent. of the films turned out of Hollywood are worth serious consideration.

Too many relatives without fitness are given places of responsibility in the studios.

The high producers have reached their limits—a fact which they themselves distractedly admit, though laying the blame to conditions rather than to themselves.

The persistent tendency to make pictures for the 14-year-old-intelligence standard, ignoring the existence of an educated and enlightened public, and unable, moreover, to serve it if they would.

Lack of succession; no second generation in training to carry on the work to a wider use; no one to pick up the torch, such as it is, and hold it aloft.

Too much flaunting of tremendous fortunes made over-night, inducing envy, reprisals and a wrong concept of picture financing. And—too much "know-it-all" on the part of everyone.

These are not newly revealed truths. Every clear-headed observer has
long known them; but there is an arresting significance in this public declara-
tion of them from a source so close to the inner shrine. And when this
same authority—a man likewise high in the councils of national finance
and business—proceeds to outline a means of ridding Hollywood of its
incubus, his utterances on this score may be accepted as oracular, if not
actually based upon immediate knowledge of plans already in the forming.
At all events, Hollywood may confidently look forward to a revolution
—without movie gunfire, however, or brimstone from heaven. A revolution
far reaching in its results, but effected with no more hubbub than the willy-
nilly moving out of mummery, and the orderly, predestined moving in of
civilised intelligence. As foreseen by Mr. Patten, the overthrow of the
present dynasty will involve some such fundamental changes as—

The taking over of the whole industry by the financial giants of the
American business world and its complete reorganisation on a sane, normal
basis.

Pensioning off the present movie magnates and installing in their stead
men of proven ability, capacity, and vision.

Making fewer and far better pictures, under the guidance of an intelli-
gent appreciation of the world import of the cinema and its rightful possi-
bilities. Cutting down fantastic salaries. Eliminating senseless rivalry
and flamboyant advertising, and altogether doing away with the hum-
buggery that now wraps the entire industry in a mantle of shoddy make-
believe.

As already intimated, Hollywood possesses within its present self-
redemptive element of virtue, a leaven which but awaits recognition and
opportunity to serve as a regenerating agency. Culture, art and genius
have been lured in abundance to the cinema capital, but, for the most part,
only to be rebuffed and denied, or, through the exercise of the same insolent
boorishness, exploited as a catchpenny show.

The men and women who have brought to Hollywood these graces of
refinement and talent, already constitute a not inconsiderable colony. Despite their snubbing and general ill treatment by the movie moguls and
their upstart satraps, they have elected to remain, finding satisfaction and
enjoyment among those of their own kind, and biding the eventful self-pro-
duced downfall of the vulgar to bring their rightful appreciation and their
appropriate place in a sane and civil Hollywood.

Clifford Howard.

British film magnate interviewed after Berlin visit:—
The Germans have got a new idea. It's all this quick cutting. Now
I always have said myself that if you see the same shot for three hundred
feet you get a bit tired of it, but it's these thirty foot flashes . . . !
A photo-montage by Kenneth Macpherson of stills from the new “Philips Radio Film” of Joris Ivens.

Une photo-montage de Kenneth Macpherson, sur “stills” du nouveau film “Philipps Radio” de Joris Ivens.

Eine Photomontage Kenneth Macphersons von Filmphotos aus Joris Ivens’ neuem “Philips Radio-Film.”
OF a recent German book of portraits,* a Berlin critic complained that a washerwoman looked like an aristocrat: that by selecting the angle at which the face, the camera and the light should be placed, the faces could be, and had been, transformed to the whim of the artist.

Life is strange indeed: many have extolled the "one" virtue of cinema—of the film camera—as being a possibility (if not a facility) of effecting certain emphases or stresses which give an illusion of transformation, of "moulding" objects to a more subjective or unconscious inference.

This, in the way of common talk, is sufficiently true for everyday use; nevertheless not wholly true. A human brain can construe the material, the objective in many ways, not excluding the ghostly and the hoped-for. Indeed, the ghostly and the hoped-for (and the feared) are often solely "real," and life "as such"—as rule-o'-thumb routine—takes either second place or no place at all.

Reality—a catchphrase—could hardly be otherwise. As human flesh and blood is commonly considered "more real" than the skeleton beneath, certainly more real than the "soul," the "spirit" and those other starry definitions for the unconscious; so by the very law of paradox which plays so rampantly with our lives, the expression "flesh and blood" has grown to mean a kind of allegory, something mystic—as, in fact, Humanity, with a capital H transcends in sentiment and sentimentality its sole constituent—people with a small and insignificant p.

With cinema, what is true is not that the camera or the "director's intention" or both, can be responsible for the references signalled to this or that member of an ultimate audience, but that the references are created solely within this or that member of the audience—not collectively (though collective emotional response is a force of which we must be constantly aware, and do our best to harness if we will) but as varying degrees of reciprocation in individuals. What is significant to one will pass unnoticed by another. The director and cameraman may aim at definite responsive stimulus, on the assumption of which they build their plan, they can calculate and estimate—and nowhere better than in a film of masses—infected of mass hypnotism and auto-intoxication. But a similar aim will be less certain of successful achievement in films where implication is the principal tension—"suspense," for example has a more or less established formula, as have the other cinematic stimuli—"romance," "pathos," "violence," "fear," and so on.

But with the increase in subtlety, objectivism is gradually replaced by

symbolism; one is embarking on an expedition where experts only can be of use. As I see film, the coastal fringes have been examined, paddled in, bathed in; piers have been built, casinos and bandstands, there are the well-known promenades, there are urban district councils and their by-laws—which some of us would willingly, alas, make immutable already! There is something neat and respectable about it,—having "toyed" so much with big ideas, it reminds me rather of Mrs. Rosita Forbes and her "pilgrimages." But what I do see as the valid province and territory of film is an unexplored one,—a few bold pioneers have cut a way into the hinterland, a few more have gone out in frail craft on uncharted seas. Film has a tinkle-tinkle about it, which sometimes comes over one in waves; it has skirted its own reality. It is full of assumption and swank, but underneath knows well enough the kind of ignoramus it is, doling out casual fondants.

Where films have stood their ground, where they have been strong enough to look away from their invalid's esplanade,—they have been like falling stars, solitary and indicative only insofar as they perhaps excited interest among those who might have desired to follow them. By all this talk I mean that there has been too much chit-chat about art and sociology—and not enough quiet engineering. You could take the theme of the film Turksib as an example of the kind of organisation and purpose which should go to opening arterial roads for the film; and as an example of exactly the kind of doggedness which it has never known. You could take the article by Eisenstein in this issue as the blue print of a future highway. It is the forward drive that is so difficult. You do some dynamiting, levelling; it seems stupendous. But usually it is only another area—a site—which has been made; to become swiftly a parade-ground.

* * *

It is impossible for the director to say "I have done this, and those who see the film will feel this and this." In its most complete form the film can be but an index: that is its true function.

The greater part of a film is that which takes place, not on the screen, but in the mind of the beholder.

And it can be quite externalised and in narrative form, as, for example, a news-reel record of the Prince of Wales arriving or embarking somewhere. In a London West End theatre this event, not in itself overwhelmingly exciting, and often very badly photographed, will beyond all else provoke a torrent of applause. Other countries, with the possible exception of the Dominions, for which I am unable to answer, find no pulse set in agitated commotion by the event, and if a lone pair of hands starts clapping in the dark, you will know they belong to a Britisher. I remember when Graf Zeppelin was first brought out, I saw a film of it in a Berlin Palast. Deutschland uber Alles was struck up by the band, and instantly a transfigured audience pressed entrancedly to its feet, and when it was all over went on applauding in a transport. It was very moving.

“Visages.” Trois reproductions tirées de “Physionomies d’inconnus” ouvrage de Helmar Lerski.

There seems to be a superstition, however, that people and objects have an aspect which alone is real; one aspect and one only. That if a camera tilted cunningly, or a face compellingly lighted makes "a washerwoman look like an aristocrat," then the cameraman is altmodisch, he is suffering from a decadent and played out traditionalism.

One has to ask oneself, and then anyone else who will listen: What is to be the arbitrary definition by which one shall know the aspect of a face, an idea, a world, which is valid to "modernity"?—which will guarantee that a washerwoman shall look like a washerwoman and nothing else as long as she lives? Is there not a dangerous whiff of the esplanade and the bath-chair in this funny arbitration?

One has to ask oneself also, what might the distinguishing features of a washerwoman be? Is she to be a convention or a person? Must she be scrappy and sud-bespattered and over forty-five or fifty-five or sixty-five? Or not? May she never transcend the washtub, her face be never anything but steamily puffy and pink? Or may it?

To me it doesn't seem fair!

According to our Berlin critic, however, it would appear that the virtue of film is the vice of photography. Holmar Lerski has done wrong and serious wrong in finding distinction—and something else perhaps not instantly definable—in the face of a washerwoman. "Aristocratic"—that word! The woman I think he means carries a fine enough and dauntless head. But why "aristocratic"—which seems to have been used with a class connotation, which is altmodisch if you will?

*Köpfe des Alltags (Heads of Everyday)* is a book that appealed to me strongly. I like its gradual sonorous deepening, or piling up, which you will. Turning the pages is to enter a world of dreamy speculation, of weltgeist, of strange intimacy. Here is sorrow grown finally laconic. Not the less imminent because of its submission. A kind of fen-land, bleak, massive and mysterious.

There is something that arrests in the so examinable detail of these heads, something almost telescopic, nearness that seems to be about to topple on you. They tell their own tale, there is stress without bias; Helmar Lerski has not "just run around with a Kodak," but has made observation sensitive and illuminated, leaving finally, through the wilful drama of lighting and tonal quality, the faces to find, like water, their own level of expression.

. . . . . A mouth that out-thrusts generosity and lust in contrast to the indrawn ambush of eyes habitually wary; eyes as wish-wells; eyes recording past, so they have become mute and rather meaningless like memorials. Here is a face stark-striped by meanness to essential diagrammatic rudiments: conscious impotence, the down-drawn, tight-edged mouth, determination to belittle and envy as goads to self defeat. Follows
the mournful idealist, bespectacled, "an intellectual,"—he too has gazed at life with pity and a dream of helping. His corduroy communist's coat is the badge of his yearning to dismiss oppression, to advance his mental programme to the actual.

"Finding their own level of expression," these faces have often noble and sublimated qualities. The effect is far-reaching and entire.

The photographic quality is magnificent. The answer, if any be needed, to painted portraiture—a horrid pastime and anachronistic now as a tandem bicycle.

What is established is clear definition of the physionomical-psychological accord; a blending of visible and "invisible," so that rather more than character delineation is there. In the "planetary"—the telescopic—

quality I have mentioned lies perhaps a rather significant truth. That these faces, more than normally abstract, intimate and unconcerned, as far as scrutiny carries effect,—are like the faces we studied as children, when faces were stranger, more to be wondered at, stared at, explored, than at any other time in life. Perhaps part of the secret of this intimacy—part of the mystery and power—is sealed in this fact. We have access to these personalities as only children have, and knowledge or experience trailing in wake, strikes odd echoes, so that there is a winging between present and past. The "unremembered" is like an electric sky-sign which occasionally flashes across the conscious, leaving a sense of expectation, wonder and unrest.

Added to which is inevitable appreciation of the slow unfolding, the exploration, the documentation and swift discovery—here is cinema at its best. There is, for once, enough of life and of movement in the inferences here exposed.

The portraits are not enlargements, so they are without the blur and gentleness enlargements are apt to give. Pores of the skin, cracked lips, hairs in the nostrils—these are part of the purpose and reality.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

A SEASON'S RETROSPECT

Berlin, July, 1931.

It is perhaps not a specifically German phenomenon but here at any rate it can be followed in particularly distinct forms: namely that much assiduity, tenacity and strength are spent in building up systems, organisations and laws, to change suddenly into discussion, criticism, counter-struggle, at the very moment things had been brought to a final issue.

A few years ago, when sound films began to be an urgent problem, all the important patent rights were by degrees collected into a syndicate,
thereby protecting Germany against the invading apparatus of the American electro-groups. The sensational wave of sound films and talking films from the U.S.A. was thrown back by the hurriedly built up barriers of German patents. While all the west European cinemas were filled to overflowing by Al Jolson and his specious followers, they were not allowed to enter Germany. Here the syndicated patents had brought a lull in which the German electro-industry swiftly invented apparatus, helped to build studios, created the first German sound-films.

After a few months the U.S.A. were no more ahead in technical, mechanical and professional development than Germany, which was enjoying the same rights as her American competitors. Representatives of the German patentees participated in the discussions in Paris, fixed a reasonable distribution of markets and arranged an exchange of technical experience.

Almost at the same time that these agreements were made, fixing a limit for the scope of commercial action of the American and German electro-trusts, a law was passed in Germany covering methods for the restriction of film import and export.

The import of foreign films was limited by quota according to statistical experiences in connection with the real demand for films, and also in connection with an estimate for her own possibilities of production.

According to this law, the most important points were those which deter-
mined—on a cultural basis—when and on what conditions a film might be considered as a German production. These two measures, the centralisation of sound-film patents and the creation of new contingent regulations, have governed the economic and cultural development of German sound films. Therefore, at present, they are vehemently criticised—but unjustly.

It is indisputable that every infringement on the growth of an art by the State and by Capitalism, must cause restriction and injustice, and cut off the possibilities of development. However, if one takes the now existing economic order, with its fight for power, as a matter of fact, then one will hardly be able to deny the positive effect of the patents and contingent for Germany. The influence of the American film on those of Germany and equally on part of the European market, has been broken. For several weeks last season no American film was released in Berlin. Only those of special interest, e.g., The Great Gabbo and The Wedding March by Eric von Stroheim, Hallelujah by King Vidor, The King of Jazz with Paul Whiteman, All Quiet on the Western Front,—could be shown, and even these did not always meet with a warm reception. The German versions of the American films resulted in actual failure, both with the Press and public. Thus the financial influence of the American distributors, and Hollywood’s influence on film mentality, were broken down. The German sound film was left to its own development.

* * *

This development, divorced from the pseudo-international pattern, from sugary uniformity, from stucco façade concealing emptiness, could not always achieve successful results. Only the levelling effect of Hollywood had been abolished, that standard, which in the time of the silent films, had been the automatic result of the type, direction and level of the American world supply. Since, with us, these standards are no more,—these cuttings from the fashion magazines—we now have deviations—not always with an upward trend, but downwards too, quite naturally.

The newly independent German production has turned toward the national treasure-trove of folk comedies, and dug out heaps of military comedies with their Kasernenzauber* of pre-war days—the romance of uniforms of yesterday, and the rough jokes at which one will laugh the more, they being old friends. These have found almost everywhere a friendly public, especially among the petty bourgeoisie, whose desire for very thorough amusement and for political sentiments, was gratified. Drei Tage Mittelarrest (Three Days C.B.), Der Schrecken der Garnison (The Terror of the Garrison)—these were the most famous and successful from the point of view of the public and the box-office, and in spite of the advanced summer season, one of them is in its fifth or sixth month at one of the larger cinemas in the centre of Berlin.

* Kasernenzauber, literally barracks-charm—an untranslatable word! Herr Kraszna-Krausz means the story-book glamour—the Strauss-waltz eroticism of the bogus military film of the old mid-European Empires.—Ed.
Predominant in these films is always to be found a type of comic actor, which, for some time, has been represented by Felix Bressart: a long, thin, clumsy fellow, whose undoubted qualities of acting in the corset of a never varying fashion, will be certain to be soon destroyed.

But what else shall the man do? Shall he refuse the daily increasing offers from film companies, which, encouraged by his last success, hope for the same success from the same conditions? They engage him, exploit him, use him up, and soon not even his name will be left.

He is not alone in his fate; the fate of the majority is such. Blown by the trade like a glittering soap bubble into the midst of public interest, one hand steals from the other, until the bubble bursts. Nothing remains, one is not even sure if there has been anything at all. At most a little glitter, afterwards hardly to be recalled.

The star hocus, this casual cultivation of names for marketing, drifting to their own inflation and through it perishing—has not yet reached its final end. The situation has only been shifted. Instead of being recruited from the plage, the sports fields, or the revue footlights, stars are now taken from the stage—already equipped. The most famous and approved celebrities are taken, and with them the whole atmosphere of the German theatre.

*  *  *

It is quite natural that the tradition, culture and technic of the German stage, which has been favoured with special devotion, especially during the last decade,—should have had a direct influence on the German sound-film, even if its most outstanding creators and contributors had not been sought after for the new art,—which, of course, they were.

Not only our well known actors, but—with almost greater avidity—the famous stage directors, were given a trial with the films.

Results were nearly always interesting if negative.

Scenarios were created according to literary subjects, performed by theatre artists and directed by Routiniers of a different order of expression. The spoken word, not having been a means of filmic expression up to that time, in most instances remained dominant. Discord arose. Speech and image could hardly ever keep pace. Sometimes a word was able to manage a certain situation quite simply, plainly and quickly, so that the image—accustomed to visual limitations—tediously extended the action. (Drei Tage Liebe—Three Days’ Love—by Heinz Hilpert.)

Sometimes the picture demanded the usual tempo in successive scenes, but the dialogue caused delay (Der Mann der den Mord beging—The Man who Murdered—by Kurt Bernhardt).

But even in instances where it was possible to balance such differences of tempo by carefully filing down the manuscript and by ruthlessly cutting the finished work (Ariane, with Elizabeth Bergner by Paul Czinner), a super cultivation of theatre acting—successful only in this one case—was
achieved: a most subtle preserve without any possible taste of its tin container, a comestible with relish that fills the stomach but does not stimulate. Something played out. Nothing pregnant of future.

To the present time none of the more important stages in the development of the sound film were determined by people to whom what is new in the film—that is sound—was something already familiar, and the film itself something new; but by those to whom the film itself meant something established, and to whom the new factor—sound—was previously unknown. The important directors of the silent film became the important directors of the sound film.

With his criminal drama “M,” Fritz Lang has given a classic example of the fact that the laws which governed the silent film, the laws concerning the disposition, structure and rhythm, need not be changed when applied to the sound-film. Here was to be seen distinctly that the sound film only
increases the number of those components in which we count for example, motion, camera-angle, montage, etc.—that it enriches the possibilities of combinations of these factors in an extraordinary degree. In itself, however, sound is hardly more important than any single factor just mentioned, it means only a new colour on the palette, not a change of all the painting materials.

Fedor Ozep, the young director, who but recently has come from Russia, applied sound in the film of Dostoieffsky’s *Brothers Karamazoff* in this sense, that is, by avoidance of any restriction of the technic of the silent film. Sound, whether speech or music, serves only to intensify the visual progression.

In G. W. Pabst’s *DreiGroschenOpfer*, sound has a life of its own, bearing the same rights as the film. This was, of course, because of the subject, in which music played an important part. Very interesting were the experiments—and in lighter subjects also—to take music as an element of composition of actual film-structure. The operetta, which quickly secured itself a place in the beginning of the development of the sound-film, was shaped and moulded so long that it was somewhat freed from the rigid succession of musical numbers, warblings and dances, and found with the help of occasional self-irony and more or less distinct parody a form of film song-comedy with which one can be pleased.

The number of people who make or are able to make experiments, has become very small. Since a camera and some film rolls and a few enthusiastic persons are no longer all that is needed to turn out a film, but there must be licences, patent-difficulties, sound-film apparatus, the so-called avantgarde has become somewhat silenced. Seldom, and by chance only, a work appears which owes its origin to uncommercial initiative which deserves special appreciation.

There is the film of Alexis Granovsky, the Russian stage director. Its name is *Das Lied vom Leben (The Song of Life)*, and it was made as a silent film and post-synchronised with music and songs. The quality of synchronisation produced by this “emergency technique” became an art principle for films in general. In one place—a broad succession of scenes of a breath-taking extended caesarian operation—intensity reached its one climax. Here, by the technique of cutting, it was possible to give the appearance of that synchronisation, against which this film is otherwise only superficially fighting.

Walter Ruttmann, in continuation of his first sound-film work, this year brought out a fantasy of Schumann, *In the Night*. Certain musical motives cause certain visual associations which are intensified or which die away according to the intensity of the music.

While Ruttmann’s pictures, if fantastic, are taken from nature, Oskar Fischinger chooses for similar compositions small abstract white lines, arranged in rhythmic rows, lines swinging on the dark background of the
melody, to the chords, to the rhythm, to the tempo; entending, mingling, exploding, dying away.

* * *

That's what it looks like, that's what we look like. There are still people ready to make experiments sometimes,—in consequence of their standing apart from the film industry, or of their peculiar position within this industry, where—now as ever—Ufa is dominant.

There are also other firms not lacking in sound impulses even nowadays. Whether, in view of economic conditions, these impulses are likely to last any time, is doubtful.

While these unsteady conditions prevail,—now as before, grotesque though it may seem, the only promising factors remain the concerns of the patentees and licence holders, Tobis and Klangfilm. The next stages in the development of the German film industry depend on whether they and the capitalists will take an interest in it, and on the utilization of the patents which have been bought by the capitalists. And if, after the solving of the economic crisis, anything remains or not of the German film, depends on their desire to continue the work and to utilize their patents.

A. Kraszna-Krausz.
TWO FILMS

ARCHITECTURES D'AUJOURD'HUI by Pierre Chenal, special music by Albert Jeanneret.

Chenal has accomplished the difficult task of making a film of movement with static modern architecture without resorting to the soulless methods of the Skyscraper Symphony school. Chenal is sufficiently un-French to be objective, sufficiently French not to miss lyrical beauty.

From churches by the Perret brothers the film swings to streets by Mallet-Stevens and then to a modern town at Pessac near Bordeaux. It pictorialises the theory that an aeroplane is a machine built to fly in, a motor-car is a machine built to drive in, therefore a house should be a machine to live in. Thus follow, of course, three houses built by Le Corbusier. The house at Garches has very long windows to ensure the maximum of light, Chenal catches the movement of a modern car in the drive. At Ville d'Avray, we see a house built in the midst of nature, where trees, terraces and gardens form an esthetic whole—a moment's gymnastics symbolise freedom. At Poissy the house is on stilts to prevent humidity, and the Solarium is the way to sun and good health.

Diminuendo: the narrowest old street in Paris. Delightful to look at but not to live in. Crescendo: Corbusier would destroy the old centre of the town and turn Paris into an immense park with glass skyscrapers elevated at every 400 yards. Climax. A Corbusier model skyscraper photographed in the sun against a natural background—a poetic and objective glimpse into the future.

Chenal is his own cameraman and works entirely with a Kinamo; the reproduced stills are unretouched enlargements from his actual films, the precise and delicate realisation of which are as pleasing as the subjects so carefully chosen.

* * *

BATIR by Pierre Chenal with interesting synchronised music by Albert Jeanneret.

The methods used for the construction of a house are shown in detail. All the raw material is shaped in the work-shops and has merely to be erected on the spot, thus what was previously a work of years becomes a work of months. "But" as Chenal himself says and shows, "the official 'architects' stick upon this splendid steel framework their awful stone ornaments and thus reduce the size of the window frames." Watching upon the screen the new Berlitz school in Paris, an example of this "ruined" modern architecture, I recollected that when this monstrosity was being built last year, I had thought on seeing its hideous pillars on a lorry outside, that these were being removed from a previous building in order to clean up Paris—instead of which . . . .
From Chenal’s film, “Architectures d’Aujourd-hui,” with special music by Albert Jeanneret, brother of Le Corbusier, by whom this house was designed. Photo exclusive to “Close Up.”


From Batir, also by Pierre Chenal, with music by Albert Jeanneret.
De “Bâtir,” oeuvre de Chenal, également, avec partition de Albert Jeanneret.

It is amongst the factories, garages and office buildings that one comes across the most representative modern work to be seen to-day in France, if one excepts the minute number of millionaires’ houses so well depicted in Architectures d’aujourd’hui, and the climax of Balir is a number of exciting views of the foremost large French modern buildings.

By the careful choice and the refined style of his two films, Chenal teaches a lesson which words can never stress to such a point.

C. E. STENHOUSE.

THE HOLLYWOOD CODE

During the past year an insidious danger has invaded cinema, expressed most fitly by the excellent word Germany has found for it, kitsch. Kitsch does not mean any bad film, but one that, having apparently artistic pretensions, is as shallow as any commercial film, once the surface technique is stripped away. Originally students of cinema laughed at it the most, but through an extraordinary combination of events, kitsch and not art, is becoming the pre-occupation of the critics, and its conception of cinema is forcing experiment from the film.

To understand what has happened it is necessary to retrace past history.

At the time of the making of the first sound film, the Russian cinema had conquered Europe. It was a popular as well as an artistic success, and it forced makers of commercial pictures in Europe to raise the standards. Hollywood films became worse and more difficult to sell. The French imposed a quota. To defend their European and profitable market, the Americans remembered talkie patents left in drawers and laboratories. With the sole object of retaining European supremacy they forced the talking picture on the silent screens of the world.

The talking film was destructive, although it opened new possibilities. Contrary to expectation, Germany, France and other European states used the language barrier to re-establish native products on their screens. American films are becoming unknown on the continent, but this has had the curious effect of forcing young cinema critics especially in France to a worship of Hollywood, largely because it is as hard to see now an American picture as it used to be to see uncensored Russian films. Because they are unknown they are invested with glamour. In England on the contrary, the standards have again been lowered because by virtue of language, the American production has re-established itself more firmly while the foreign film, that was winning a place for itself at the end of the silent era, has almost disappeared from the screen. Young England and young France then turn westward, not because of an artistic standard, but because of pressure of exterior event.
A house on Lake Geneva designed by Hermann Henselmann, a brilliant young German architect, whose designs for a Folk-theatre with many uses for film, we hope to publish in our next issue. Photos: K. Macpherson.


Ein Haus am Genfersee, entworfen von Hermann Henselmann, einem glänzenden jungen deutschen Architekten dessen Entwürfe zu einem Volkstheater mit vielen Möglichkeiten für den Film wir in unserer nächsten Nummer zu veröffentlichen hoffen. Photos: Kenneth Macpherson.
There is no corrective influence from Russia because to date few Russian sound films are available.

But wherever Hollywood has been accepted, there has been a definite lowering of the standards of cinema. For Hollywood (if we except comic films) can produce kitsch magnificently but cannot produce art.

Those who are interested in cinema may be divided roughly into two groups: some say that it is movement and light, that what is photographed is unimportant, and that it is the way it is done that matters. These minds correspond to the grammarians of literature, and Hollywood with its wealth of technical development has won over this group easily. Logically, however, the group should belong rather with the avant garde of Paris; their ultimate achievement should be in the creation of abstract forms.

The second group, while interested in technical development, are concerned with film as a group of units, of which light is one, photography another, the story a third. They require these units to be co-ordinated into expression of an idea or group of ideas. At its highest, in the silent days, this group produced films such as Ten Days, Mother or Turksib.

The English cinema student will find however that practically no sound films of the second group are at present available for English screens. (The few that have been made are foreign.) He is forced to concentrate upon technique and gradually his critical perceptions become blunted through a continuous diet of Hollywood patent foods.

But, it will be asked here, what is this extreme danger of Hollywood? The stories are boring, but do they matter? Will not all intelligent people laugh at them? Is it not better to study the American gangster than not to go to films at all?

But this is a great part of the danger. People laugh the first few times, then (for we are all lazy) the intelligence becomes blurred, until even the rebel tends to accept insensibly the Hollywood code.

And acceptance of the code means that no serious problem may be filmed.

Hollywood has brains. It is like a good advertisement. A man would not be able to get five hundred pounds for a poster unless he had grasped the fundamental conceptions of human desire and response. Only civilization was not built nor discoveries made, through acceptance of easy and immediate gratification.

An animal is hungry, sees food and eats it. It does not think of famine or winter. Cave man began to think, began to store, began in that manner to build up the present age.

Hollywood insists that its films shall not violate the code of the pre-war era. Success is symbolised in bigness, in gilt; an idiot child is better than no child, co-operative feeling between the sexes is forbidden least it should lessen the power of illicit eroticism. The avalanche, the famine, must be subordinated to sex appeal. That this code was responsible for
war and the present economic crisis, must remain unstated. The cause in
the studios of course, is always lack of mother-love.

Consider for instance, how Hollywood would have made Potemkin. The story by this time, must be familiar to all. Sailors on a Russian
battleship refuse to eat meat covered with maggots. The doctor pronounces
the food edible, men are to be shot for their complaint, in the ensuing
mutiny their leader is killed. The townspeople, curious, indifferent and
sympathetic, are shot down by Cossacks; the battleship sailing as it believes
to death, sees instead the red flag appear on the masts of opposing ships.

What would America have made of such a story?

Maggots certainly would not have been permitted. Instead we should
have opened with a sailor’s bar, with plenty of females in sex-appeal pro-
moting dresses, and a cheerful song. The doctor need be little changed, but he would have had sinister designs upon the heroine who would of
course, have survived the perils of the underworld because of her love for
an old father-mother-grandparent or young brother-sister-orphan-child at
choice, helped by the patent-enamel body paint into which American stars are dipp.
The leader of the mutineers would watch the doctor’s advances, laugh, remember in a cut-back his old mother, knock the doctor out, pat the girl out of his way and sit down and drink. The doctor not being in uniform, would leave muttering, in sinister camera dissolves. Through the Odessa mists, the mutineer and the girl would discover love at first sight, to be broken apart at the first kiss clutch, by the memory of the sailor’s waiting comrades. The heroine, jealous, would wander to the steps. Then, Hollywood is wealthy in ideas as well as cameras, there are at least three directions open to the story. Simple love, the sailor is accused falsely by the doctor, is about to be shot, but is rescued as the sheet drops, by a comrade or the girl; romantic drama, the sailor is an officer disguised as a mutineer in order to discover some treacherous plot to overwhelm the ship; or a play of gangster life, the ship is loaded with alcohol, and the doctor and the mutineer are leaders of two separate bootlegging establishments. But the end of all the stories must be the same: a triumphal bridal procession down the Odessa steps, Cossacks in front with bayonets decorated with orange blossom, sailors behind, the folk songs of the world, and on the edges, children with doves. The difference between this story and Potemkin, is the difference between kitsch and art.

Next time a Close Up reader visits the cinema we suggest that he tries to turn the American story, into the story an Eisenstein could have made, and he will understand, by this process, better than by any written description, exactly why the tinned ideas of Hollywood are so dangerous.

(To be continued.)

Bryher.

COMMENT AND REVIEW.

CLOSE UP SENT BY POST.

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NEWS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Mr. Julius Schmitt, representative of United Artists in Prague, has an intention of producing two great national and biographic pictures on his own account. One of them will show the life of Karel Havlicek Borovsky, a Czech revolutionary poet, the other will be the picturisation of the life of Bedrich Smetana, the famous Czech composer. This last picture will show also the great national events of his days, as the premiere of Bartered Bride in Prague, 1866. The scenario of Karel Havlicek Borovsky, which will be directed by S. Inneman, has been written by J. Neuberg and F. Tichy. The picture Bedrich Smetana will be produced in October under the direction of Gustav Machaty.

* * *

Mr. Mac Fric, young Czech director who is now collaborating with Karel Lamac in Paris, has signed a contract with the society Gloria-film to direct its new sound and talking picture The Good Soldier Schweik, which will be produced in Prague in the early autumn of this year.

* * *

Mr. V. Wasserman, who is responsible for almost all the scenarios of Anny Ondras' pictures, has gone to Paris to prepare there in collaboration with Karel Lamac the scenario of a new Czech and German talking picture of Vlasta Burian, You Should Know Hadimraska. Karel Lamac will be the director of this picture to be produced in Prague in August.

* * *

The society Sonor film has produced an industrial and educational picture called Steel—the material of future. It shows the complete production of steel as well as the development of architecture from its primitive beginnings to the most modern steel construction of the palace of the mining society "Bánská a hutni" in Prague.
BOOK REVIEWS

*Het Linnen Venster*, C. J. Graadt van Roffen (W. L. and J. Brusse).

*Ca, c’est du Cinéma*, Georges Altman (Les Revues).

*L’Art Cinématographique* (Vol. 7) (Alcan).

"The discovery of the film has had numberless consequences which have become perceptible in the most divergent spheres of man’s activity, in art and science, economy and education, legislation and government, religion and politics." Thus the introductory sentence of the introductory volume to a new series of monographs by Dutch cineastes which are to deal among other subjects with the films of a particular country (Russia, Holland, France, Germany, America) or of a particular type (absolute film, comic film). Like *Close Up*, the books will approach the film as an art, and if they are all as fully and effectively illustrated as this one (the stills occupy almost as much space as the text, and, most excellent idea, are employed to illustrate it) they should prove well worth acquiring even by those who claim they do not know a word of Dutch (a claim which they could never establish).

*Het Linnen Venster* has no other purpose than to introduce the series, and we cannot complain if in the first pages we have to follow the interactions of the art, the industry, and the public (this is the least admirable part of the book), or learn once more to observe the distinguishing marks of the various art forms, particularly as the lesson has been more carefully prepared than usual and brought up to date. As we read on we find that the author possesses a sure sense of values and the ability to cope with his unwieldy (because so vast) material, which moreover he treats with a freshness and sincerity generally lacking in film literature.

The material of the cineaste lies everywhere. He can take it as he finds it, he can arrange it for his purposes or he can make it himself (cartoon film). But when he has photographed events, he has got no further than mixing his colours or collecting his stones. What remains to be done? "Montage, the magic word was found and the ice broken." And so once more to the narrative montage of Pudovkin and Eisenstein’s conflict-montage.

The actor is ONLY material. This follows from the nature of the film itself, and the argument is pressed to its logical conclusion with disastrous consequences for the later Jannings and the star system in general. He mentions elsewhere Chaplin, Bancroft and Garbo as examples of "the unrivalled artists" who work at Hollywood. (It is, of course, not the artists, but the use to which they are put which is to be condemned.) The comic film was the first to treat man as material, not so much that the film demanded this, but because the nature of the comic required it, and thus the comic film was the first real film-form. But with the introduction of montage, the comic film no longer stood alone in this respect.
Recently a group with M. de Miré as director, and Messrs. Lucas and Lachowksi as cameramen, spent three months in the regions of Mont Blanc to turn a film of skiing and winter climbing. Now being mounted, it bears the provisional title, "Snow."

Une équipe composée de M. de Miré, metteur en scène, MM. Lucas et Lachowksi, opérateurs, est demeurée récemment trois mois dans la région du Mont-Blanc pour tourner une bande relative à l'alpinisme hivernal et au ski. Actuellement terminé et monté, ce film porte le nom provisoire de "Neige."

Kürzlich verbrachte einen Gruppe mit M. de Miré als dem Regisseur und den Herren Lucas und Lachowski als den Kameraleuten 3 Monate in Mont-Blanc-Gebiet, um einen Ski- und Eistouren-Film zu drehen. Nun, nach der Montage, trägt er den vorläufigen Titel "Schnee."

Décor. Two ways are open to the cineaste. Either he must go to reality for it, or he can ignore it altogether. The first alternative was adopted by the Russians, the second by Dreyer in Joan of Arc. The value, however, of a film like the Niebelungen saga is not to be denied. The fault of Lang and Company lies in their assumption that pictorial beauty could by itself bring artistic liberation to the film. But there is no reason why pictorial composition should not be of value to the film, though it may not be indispensable to it. Beware of theory! It so often fails to square with the facts!

The author deals soberly and necessarily somewhat briefly with the film in its social aspect, and has some interesting comments to make on the present tendency of the film artist to concentrate on the documentary film. The spielfilm belongs to a later more developed stage of cinematography, one which it has not yet reached.

The book deserves consideration not only for what it gives and for what it promises, but also because it may very well be that the chief contribution of Holland to the cinema, in spite of Ivens, Franken, Ankersmit, lies precisely in the field of criticism.
We speak of the cinema, but unhappily there are two cinemas. There is the cinema "rêve aux prolongements infinis, le reflet violent de la vie, l'exaltation de la passion, la satire, la révolte même et l'explosion qui peut bouleverser une foule" and there is the cinémato-mensonge cinématographique whose outstanding qualities are BASSESSE and LACHETE, the cinema which is created for the delectation of 250,000,000 dehumanised beings, insulting aux pauvres, insulte à la vie même, the cinema of Will-Hays-Hugenberg-Aubert-Kuchenmeister, with its odious police-prelate morality. It is this cinema which M. Altman describes and condemns in the 260 pages of Ca, c'est du cinéma, with a vehemence equalled only by his enthusiasm for the other. The best chapter is the one on the news-reel; where he comments: Ne désespérons pas, avec la couleur naturelle qu'on annonce, de voir vraiment les trois couleurs et le rouge des kepis, tandis que vibrera la Marche Lorraine et qu'avec le relief, s'arrondiront vraiment les ventres d'officiels!" But it is description, not analysis, and some of the material he uses suggests problems which cry for analysis.

L'Art Cinématographique Alcan continues to expand, and No. 8 will be Le cinéma Russe by M. Altman himself. It can hardly fail to be a vast improvement on No. 7 which is Le cinéma en France, en Italie, en Amerique. M. Boisyvion deals with France in 28 pages of pathetic bleat over the inferiority of its cinema, with continual reminders of "notre génie" and that "quand même"... Two quotations give the measure of this "essay." "La France est pour ainsi dire le seul pays où l'on peut produire du film en liberté" and "... Marcel L'Herbier qui, avec Rose France ouvre la route aux poésies de l'image." It is not stated whether the Archbishop of Canterbury was present.

Emilio Ghione writes of the Italian cinema, a subject of passionate human interest. He directed or acted in more than 100 Italian films, but he has received his due punishment in the form of an obituary written by M. Didier Paix included in this volume, sentimental to the point of nausea. When next you find yourself involved in a heated discussion on the causes of the decline (sic) of the Italian cinema, you can make thinly veiled hostile allusion to the Union Cinémato-mechique Italiane and profit by the general confusion to escape to the nearest pub.

M. Ferri Pisani gives an entertaining account of the development of the business that is the American cinema, a satisfying picture of bluff and corruption.

H. A. M.

On Charing Cross Road there are some compact new film books. Amateur film makers can feel very important with: Der Amateur-Tonfilm by Freidrich Kuplent, Der Titel im Amateur Film, by Helemuth Lange and Wie entsteht ein Amateur Film, also by Lange. Three little booklets, all
published by Photokino-Verlag, Berlin, devoted to "the cause." Another film series comprises twelve Monografien über Filmkunst, published by Brusse of Rotterdam. Abstract films, Russian films, etc., all illustrated with film strips.

There are some straight photos in the new issues of the excellent American annuals: Annual of American Design, Annual of American Advertising Art. This year Hellmuth Mayer, instead of Max Burchartz is splitting in half a head. Plus some new tricks. For example, it has been discovered that the paper they put round chocolate boxes gives a superimposition effect with a single exposure. These little things mean a lot to still photographers, you know!

O.B.


When one says that this book about the film stars of yesterday, to-day and to-morrow perhaps, is all that one would have hoped, perhaps enough has been said. In such a book how many would tread clumsily dangerous ground; by being unduly firm in outlook make mortal enemies of many readers. Perhaps there is no being more sensitive than the star-fan, and nobody more fervent. Analogy between star worship and the chivalry of legend is patent enough to raise the former to a level of poetic licence.

What considerable numbers, in defence of their star, are ready to sacrifice friends and even family perhaps. A form of abstract homage so apart from sentimentality as to partake of a borrowed sheen of purity!

Should one write hastily that so and so is an insufferably bogus bore, if no tangible lance is run through one's gizzard by some irate champion of her charms, it is because the ways of extermination have only grown more organised and far less wholesome.

On no too tender corn has June Head dropped impatiently a brick, nor has she soured sweet milk with acrimony—and that bids fair to become the rarest of gifts. The book is a joy for all; its laughter is tonic and its opinion sane, appreciative and mature. Who, for instance, could resist such a paragraph as:

"I recently came across a photograph cut from a newspaper dated 1918, which represented two portly figures in fancy dress. The faces were hidden, being blemmed in a hearty kiss, but the lady was wearing a tarboosh from which a switch of hair protruded rigidly like a horse's tail, and the lower part of her body was wrapped in a striped bath mat, while the male figure to which she clung wore a knee-length skirt, laced leggings, and a pearl string about the brow. On consulting the legend beneath I discovered it to be none less than Theda Bara, in Cleopatra."

And,—a moment later—
"One remembers Theda Bara now as a squat, determined looking woman, with quantities of untidy hair, who had once acted under the alarming name of Theodosia de Copette."

There is varied and extensive information for all. It is—perhaps particularly in its chapters dealing with the past—something more than refreshing, it is definitely tonic; and that that tonic is the laughter of swift recollection makes it not at all malicious. A book of charm and common sense.

K. M.

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*Shepherd boys in the Czech film "On the Mountains and In the Valleys," by Karel Plicka.*


*Hirtenknaben aus dem tschechischen Film "Auf den Bergen und in den Tälern" von Karel Plicka.*

*Charlie Chaplin* by William Dodgson Bowman. George Routledge and Sons, Ltd. Price 2s. 6d. 142 pages.

Every cinéphile has his opinion of Chaplin (strange, isn't it, that it has never been *the* Chaplin) and not every one publishable. Mr. Bowman spends pages on the ways of genius: how Chaplin follows a fever of work with days of depression and thought. He goes all out, too, on the "tenderness and pathos" even if he does regret the "blemish" of the "Rabelasian touch."

Heavens! Isn't it time that somebody gave a few final words on the Chaplin myth? Saying, "Now look here, folks, probably this man is one of those individuals in whom hyperthyroidism and hypothyroidism are mixed. That would account for the cyclic moods and purposes. As for that pathos stuff, what about trying a little X-ray on the thymus?"

O. B.
A lot of cinema ritual still remains a mystery to the cinéphile. One reads that the Leicester Square Theatre is fitted with the Berliner Acoustic system, and what about that? It happens that portions of the theatre walls are covered with discs of wire mesh. These discs are hidden by porous plaster which permits the passage of sound so that the discs can freely vibrate. The correct amount of sound is absorbed and the rest reflected to its correct position which has been predetermined. That is only a tiny item among the mysteries of acoustics. All fans will surely find much instruction in Talking Pictures and Acoustics by M. R. Balbi (foreword by Sir Oliver Lodge) which is published by the Electrical Review, 4, Ludgate Hill, London.

The Life and Adventures of Carl Laemmle, by John Drinkwater. Published by William Heinemann.

Mr. Drinkwater does not believe in "various outside the works!" No appetising oddments for him but one sound dish served with English sauce. In the best biographical manner Uncle Carl is given roots—a childish enthusiasm (one root) for cockchafers in the neighbouring fir-plantations and (another root) crisp business letters written at the age of fourteen. Continuity (of the best biographical manner) is maintained by an exciting middle book section, Carl’s fight with the gigantic Trust. The book fittingly closes with character appreciation; Uncle Carl, the whitest man in the film industry; Uncle Carl who would not let a rodeo be staged in one of his films, not because he felt for the animals but for the cowboys! Indeed, it is the sort of book that would be passed round at a Jane Austen tea and called "very handsome" by all present.

There is almost half a chapter about Mr. Drinkwater himself.

O. B.

Below the froth and glitter of Hollywood there lies a sub-stratum of solid, intelligent materiality. While the butterfly actors flash and caper in the sunlight of publicity, a corps of unsung technicians are daily toiling in the studio laboratories to engineer the intricate mechanism upon which the screen puppets of today are signally dependent.

Only now for the first time, through the publication of a book but recently off the press, has the public at large been afforded an opportunity fully to appraise the work and the importance of these men, and to find recorded in one compact volume an authoritative and enlightening exposition of the scientific technique of audible film production.

Recording Sound for Motion Pictures is a symposium. Its twenty-four chapters are written by as many different authors, each a ranking expert or authority in his particular field. Together they cover every phase and detail of the subject, from the abstract science of acoustics to the practical modus operandi of sound recording and projection.
The compilation is in large degree technical, as befits its purpose, but at the same time it is not beyond the ready understanding of any intelligent and interested layman. The following chapter headings, chosen at random, will serve to indicate the scope of its subject matter, as well as the value of the work to those who would be informed on the scientific principles and the mechanics of present-day cinema production:

The Nature of Sound; Recording Sound on Disk; Recording by RCA Photophone System; Recording by Movietone System; Sound Recording by the Light Valve System; Transmission Circuits—Theory and Operation; Dubbing; Laboratory Technique; Editing and Assembling of Sound Pictures; Acoustics of Theatre and Studio; Illusion of Reality in Sound Pictures; Photographic Requirements of Variable-Density Recording; The Western Electric Reproducing System; Practice and Problems of Sound Projection.

No small part of the book's worth and attractiveness lies in its numerous illustrations. Diagrams and photographic reproductions accompany the text in generous profusion throughout the more than four hundred pages. A further incidental feature of interest is an appended glossary of motion-picture terms, with especial reference to photography and sound recording.

*Recording Sound for Motion Pictures*: Edited by Lester Cowan for the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. Published by McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York and London. Price, $5.00.

Received, for review in our next issue:


The August number of the International Review of Educational Cinematography,* which is the first number dedicated exclusively to the cinema and agriculture, contains an interesting number of features, of which the following is a summary:

**Introduction** . . .  (Note by the Management.)
**Alberto Conti** . . .  Brief notes on agricultural cinematography.
**Prof. A. Missiroli** . . .  How the cinema can develop country-side hygiene.
**Information** . . .  The cinema used as a means of agricultural propaganda in the Cuban Republic. Country-side cinematography in Soviet Russia.

**Enquiries made by the I.E.C.I.** . . .  Teachers and the cinema. (Continuation.)

*Obtainable from the International Educational Cinematographic Institute (League of Nations), via Lazzaro Spallanzani, 1—A Rome.
The Summer number of *The Hound and Horn* contains an interestingly angled document on the late F. W. Murnau by Kenneth White. Mr. White has some new things to say and knows how to say the old things so that one feels pleasure in recognising old friends. There are six photos from Murnau’s best films including *Tabu*.

O. B.

**THIRD ALARM!**

A new Ufatone-cartoon, showing a most comical burlesque on a conflagration in the animal world, has been completed by the successful Ufa cartoonist, Peroff. All animals, from the frog to the hippopotamus, from the crow to the elephant, are seen in crazy action. The conflagration is caused by love and jealousy. Trying to extinguish the flames, the elephant fills his trunk from a petrol barrel. The water of a nearby pond finds it impossible to cope with the dancing flames, so it simply joins the dance. The Teddy Bear finally proves master of the situation by roping a passing cloud and thus extinguishing the fire. Of course, the result is a big flood of which jealous Mr. Hippopotamus makes use to drown the enamoured Mr. Teddy and his lady love, a rosy and roundly dame from the pig family.

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**UFA, NEW YORK, RELEASES TWENTY-TWO TALKING EDUCATIONALS**

NOTICE TO READERS AND CONTRIBUTORS.

We are anxious to help readers who require information, but before writing to us, please read the following paragraphs, as we cannot answer letters dealing with these subjects.

We are not allowed to sell photographs which have appeared in Close up. Readers desirous of obtaining actual photographs should apply direct to the firms owning the films. The name of firm or director is printed usually underneath the picture. Addresses of film companies are to be found most easily in the Kinematographic Year Book. (Your local cinema will probably have a copy).

We cannot recommend any reliable film school nor can we advise readers as to the best way of obtaining employment in a studio. There is the State School of cinematography in Moscow but it is very difficult for foreigners to enter it. Readers who wish to work in films are advised to perfect themselves as far as possible in some technical branch before trying to obtain a position.

We cannot advise as to whether names selected for fictitious film stars in stories written by readers would involve the author in libel proceedings or not.

For particulars of The London Workers and affiliated Film Societies, apply to R. Bond, 5, Denmark Street, London, W.C.1.

We read carefully all manuscripts sent to us. We cannot be responsible for them though we will endeavour to return those not suitable if a stamped addressed envelope be enclosed. International postage stamps can be obtained at any post office. But we would like to point out, to obviate disappointment, that our space is restricted and that we have many reports to print supplied to us by our foreign correspondents. Therefore it is seldom possible to print more than one outside article in each issue. We do not wish to discourage authors and wish we had more space to print many of the excellent articles we receive. But before we can increase the number of our pages we must double the number of our readers.

Otherwise we will endeavour to answer all reasonable requests provided that a stamped, self addressed envelope be enclosed in the letter.

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THE ACADEMY CINEMA.

The silent film having been solemnly and officially pronounced dead by the Mighty Ones and discussed as a vague relic of a dim and distant past, the Academy Cinema in Oxford Street deliberately chooses the bankruptcy route in midsummer and commences a season of silent films. And, what's more, gets away with it. Full houses every night during a run of Earth made even the Trade Press take notice, and the populace followed it up by liberally donating their cash at the box office for Turksib, St. Petersburg, Drifters, The General Line, and many others.

A programme that includes The End of St. Petersburg (Russia’s best) and Drifters (Britain’s best) is apparently considered equal in importance to the new and glorious Elissa Landi and various assorted tarnished ladies.

Of course, it's all wrong, but can people be blamed for getting a little tired of the strained artificialities, the ever-so-smart dialogue, the banal plots, and the 101 per cent. Western Electric recording of the “current attractions?” A gold plate is nice to look at—sometimes—but some of us are more concerned with the food, and perhaps we may be excused for preferring the vital purpose of Earth to the soul-searching of the glamorous heroines who don’t mean a thing to anything or anybody.

R. Bond.
ZEPPELIN OVER THE ARCTIC

British Movietone's record of the Zeppelin's flight is interesting for several reasons other than the polar survey it embodies. The British newsreel men were the only screen journalists allowed on board, so their film is both exclusive and authorised; the scenes showing Leningrad and detachments of the Red Army helping to refuel the ship are the first pictures taken by a foreign organisation in Russia with Soviet permission, and much of the land in the Arctic claimed as British was found from the air to have been ice that had vanished. The film shows, among other things, the landing near ice-breaker Malygin, which had Nobile on board, and the dropping of food and mail at an isolated wireless post at the delta of the Yenissei river, where there were only six men and women at this most northern Soviet outpost. Atmosphere, as the crew in the airship begin to don Arctic clothing, is good, giving the excitement, the work and the swift change into a world of other laws and emergencies, and Dr. Eckener speaks. The film was being shown in London on August 6th, though three days earlier it was not yet on in Germany. This was the first time a sound-camera had been part of a polar expedition's equipment.

R. H.

Some more books of the series Die Bücher des Lichtspielvorführers.

(Published by Wilh. Knapp, Halle (Saale), Germany.)

The small green booklets of this series dealing with the problems of the projection of films are already well known to us. We like the clear way of their explanation, beginning with the elementary principles, their being popular in style but not injuring truth nor accuracy. There are twenty to thirty tables and diagrams in each book and photographs of the different types of apparatus mentioned in the course of the explanation. The structure of all the books is a similar one: the first chapters give a short introduction into the theoretical side of the problem, the greater part is devoted to practical, technical questions. Most of the booklets recently published deal with the projection of sound-films. The price is 1.-RM. or 1.20 RM.

There is:


"Gleichrichter" are rectifiers, apparatus which change and transform the usual alternating current into a quality which is needed for the lamps of the projector. This is done by means of valves—a very important chapter for film-projection.


This number is the most important one, I should say, because it deals with the fundamental principles of the sound-film in general and consequently appeals to a larger number of readers. Everyone can understand it with a bit of intelligence, interest and comprehension of technical institutions. We are interested to hear that the first essays on sound-films were made five years only after the invention of the silent film, we see a picture of Edison's phonograph, and on it goes the "electric" sound. Light-sound, needle-sound, magnetic sound, they are all treated in special chapters, and so are Makro- and Mikro-projection, as well as the synchronisation.

Vol. 7. Der Verstärker und seine Bedeutung, Von Ing. Werner Hasenberg.

Amplifiers, another "special" subject. Theoretical foundation is given only as far as absolutely necessary, for "who has ever asked, that the driver of a motor-car should know the specific weight of the oil he uses?" says the author. But as the questions are most complicated ones, the author tries to help by two general chapters on sound and electricity.


How to attend the sound-film apparatus forms the contents of the last number of the books for the film-operator. It gives a survey on the difference types of sound-film projection, needle-sound and light-sound, describes the various accessorrial machines, the amplifiers, loudspeakers, etc. There is a chapter and many photographs, sketches and diagrams on the installation of the sound-film equipment in a cinema. Special "laws" are given for handling of machines with needle and with light-sound, we are told all about the control. The last pages are devoted to the different possible disturbances concerning the quality of the sound, and the author endeavours to enumerate the probable reasons and the ways how to get rid of them.
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Only at night when your chest is no longer sore and you feel you cannot sleep any longer, you get restless at cinema time and wish you were sitting in your usual seat, waiting for the lights to snap out and the other side of the world to blot responsibilities (shall I do this—ought I to do that) from the mind.

But you will have to catch the early bus in the morning if you are well enough to go out to-night.

If you cannot go to the movies let the cinema come to you. Why not read a cinematographic book, or what was happening to the films three years ago? If you liked Jeanne Ney you will probably like Gaunt Island. If you liked The End of St. Petersburg why not try Civilians? If you prefer . . . there is Extra Passenger. Or there are the bound volumes of Close Up.

What was happening in 1928, when talkies were not even on the horizon? When did television begin to disquiet the market? Or if your eyes feel too heavy to read why not turn over the photographs in Close Up or look at the stills published in Film Problems?

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The still opposite is from *The Way into Life*, a Meshrabpom film by N. Ekk
NOVEL INTO FILM: A CASE STUDY OF CURRENT PRACTICE

A platitude persists that the movie, being a distinct medium, has its own way of telling a story, and therefore should be permitted the freedom to use it. No one will dispute this too simple and broad defense. But when it is used ambiguously as the countenancing of Moby Dick's conversion into The Sea Beast, one may charge the defense with bad faith and betrayal of trust. The platitude becomes a demagogic sophistry.

The question involved in the conversion of a social novel into film is one of the treatment of an experience in which "society has an equity."*

* Dreiser has, in conversation with me, granted that "equity" to a novel as exotic as "Thais"; but I choose to confine it strictly to our common right in any re-incorporation of what the social entity, or any living part of it, has apprehended texturally.
The fight for the integrity of this experience is a not a personal one, nor even for the rights of authorship. It is a struggle against the debasing of the intellectual and social level of an experience.

In 1926 Paramount purchased the film rights to Dreiser's *An American Tragedy*. Will Hays, acting as the junction between one self-protective agency—the church—and another—movie, achieved the temporary shelving of the novel. In the half-decade Paramount has had over 1,800 days to consider the nature of its problem. But Paramount, being a medium of middle-class society to affect the social attitude, resolves the problem of film-making into that of dispensing the cultural minimum—a maximum of illusions or evasions to assure a minimum of dissent.

The technique of minimisation is most drastic where a critical idea is concerned. In 1922, James Oliver Curwood sued the Affiliated Distributors for infidelity to his story, *The Poetic Justice of Uko San*, appearing on the screen as *I Am the Law*. The Court decided:

"I take it that, while scenery, action and characters may be added to an original story, and even supplant subordinate portions thereof, there is an obligation upon the elaborator to retain and give appropriate expression to the theme, thought, and main action of that which was originally written."

Frank Packard sued Fox on the film-version of *The Iron Rider*, and the Court sustained him, saying:

"No person has the right to hold out another as the author of literary matter which he never wrote."

In these instances there was no question of the lowering of a social idea. Both Curwood and Packard were purveyors of the cultural minimum. The question involved was purely a monopolistic one, of property rights. But when Upton Sinclair sold his friend, Ben Hampton, the film-rights to *The Moneychangers*, in which Morgan is accredited with the panic of 1907, and the film appeared as a Chinatown dope traffic tale, the monopolistic question was answered to Sinclair's disadvantage. Sinclair was not in accord with the cultural minimum and its dispensers.

The case of *An American Tragedy* is subtler, more acute and therefore more insidious. The defense insinuated immediately extraneous biases to prejudice the Court against the plaintiff: his high regard for the Soviet Union, the "Bolshevist affiliations" of S. M. Eisenstein, whose original scenario Mr. Dreiser favoured. The New York Supreme Court has decided to the disadvantage of the socially critical idea. It has, in other words, decided negatively, for the cultural minimum.

A film, like any other work of art, is initiated in experience, converted through performance and conveyed as experience. The initial experience of *An American Tragedy*—the theme—is contained in Mr. Dreiser's "ideographic plan" of his novel:

"It was to be a novel which was to set forth in three distinct social, as well as economic phases, the career of a very sensitive yet not too highly mentally equipped boy, who finds his life in its opening phase painfully hampered by poverty and a low social state, and from which, because of his various inherent and motivating desires, he
seeks to extricate himself. In his case, love and material comfort, as well as a foolish dream of social superiority, are his motivating forces.

"Part One of my book was purposely and particularly devoted to setting forth such social miseries as might naturally depress, inhibit and frustrate, and therefore exaggerate, the emotions and desires of a very sensitive and almost sensually exotic boy most poorly equipped for the great life struggle which confronts all youth.

"Part Two particularly was planned to show how such a temperament might fortuitously be brought face to face with a much more fortunate world which would intensify all his deepest desires for luxury and love, and to show how, in the usual unequal contest between poverty and ignorance and desire and the world's great toys, he might readily and really through no real willing of his own, find himself defeated and even charged with murder . . .

"Part Three of the book was definitely and carefully planned to show how an inhibited, weak temperament, once in the hands of his dreams, and later the law, might be readily faced by an ignorant, conventional and revengeful background of rural souls who would, in their turn, by reason of their lacks and social and religious inhibitions and beliefs, be the last to understand and comprehend the palliatives that might have, but did not, attend the life of such a boy, and therefore judge him far more harshly than would individuals of deeper insight and better mental fortune."

The first and second yellow and white scripts, prepared for Paramount by Samuel Hoffenstein and von Sternberg omitted entirely the first part of this design and the end. When produced and presented, the film has a beginning and end, makeshift "equivalents" for the processes of An American Tragedy. The picture is, as Ralph Fabri has said, "no 'American Tragedy,' not even a local one, not even a small personal tragedy." Seldom is the thematic conception of An American Tragedy even palely present in the film. When it does show itself even faintly we are led to suspect its right in a film that has no constantly informing theme,
Photographic studies made by Hans Casparius during his film and photo expedition to Canada.

Etudes photographiques obtenues par Hans Casparius au cours de son expédition cinéphotographique au Canada.

Photographische Studien von Hans Casparius, die während seiner Film-und Photoexpedition nach Kanada entstanden.
no intellectual social idea up to that level. Every repeated social incident—a murder or a marriage—contains an inference, a principle, a theme. It is the operation of a social process. Therefore, in the presentation of such an incident in some expressive medium—novel or film—the theme may be detectable. Whether it shall be there intrusive in a banal plot or structural in a thorough realisation of the thematic conception depends on the artist. The occasions when it is given faint recognition in the Sternberg work may be due to the grudging concessions made to Theodore Dreiser. Paramount altered isolated scenes to agree with Mr. Dreiser’s viewpoint, thereby unwarily confessing to the existence of a theme. But Mr. Dreiser, upon seeing the whole job, recognised the subterfuge. Though these isolated scenes were dimly theme-informed, the unit-structure lacked thematic motivation.

The lack of good-will on Paramount’s part goes back to the treatment accorded Eisenstein, first assigned to the conversion of the novel into film. Paramount has said Eisenstein’s scenario was too long and that the U.S. Authorities didn’t want the Soviet director to remain. In answer to the second alibi, we may note, first, that the associated directors of Hollywood didn’t want Eisenstein around, perhaps because he was too great a pace-setter. But, we are told, the Eisenstein scenario was too long. We may reply that the objection to a long scenario or a long film is itself arbitrary, and that, the Eisenstein scenario is flexible enough to be modified to incorporate the theme in the normal-length feature-film. But Paramount did not want to exploit the theme. Sternberg has admitted that Dreiser did not ask for a mere fidelity to the incidents of the novel. And ironically enough, what Sternberg has given us is the bare legend, the fable. He has given us the newspaper account of the case of People v. Gillette, Dreiser’s initial material.† Eisenstein, the sequence of whose scenario parallels that of the novel, transcends the mere recital of the narrative and achieves An American Tragedy within the compound of sound and sight that is the motion picture today. His structure is constantly informed by the conception, An American Tragedy. In Sternberg’s work we do not experience the milieu of the boy and his evangelical family. We are not allowed to know the process that evolved him and the girl Robeita. We see Sondra solely as another movie doll playing the usual rôle of an upper class favourite. But what is the social-psychological operation within Sondra that fastens her to Clyde? These people are only digits in the Sternberg chronology, digits never vitalised. After the rejection of the Eisenstein scenario, Dreiser and H. S. Kraft had made suggestions that

† The attorney for the defence, Judge Lynch quel nom!—has maligned the novel as a bad transliteration of the recorded case. Strange then, commented the plaintiff’s attorney, that Paramount should have paid $138,000 for the rights to data available to any newspaper reader. Lynch’s insolence has a tangent in the argument of disparagers of Dreiser who assert that the author, to prove the integrity of his opposition, should have returned the $138,000. This would not have helped matters, and moreover our interest is not in the mere personal ethics involved, which are not absolute but variable.
sought to inject more of the motility of the theme into the film. The claim of the defense that it has "equivalents" for the necessary moments of relationship does not hold on inspection. The equivalents are only verbal statements, not commensurate values. So literal, so naive, so unimaginative are our movie-makers, they cannot see, lack all docility to learn, that a statement is not a proof, it is not a process. Nor can they claim that a 6 or 8 or 10 reel film cannot re-render the process of 700,000 words. The film is a progressive medium aspiring to intensiveness. It is an evolving medium, developing from the simple metric structure to the overtonal. Eisenstein has written upon the nature of this evolution and the consequent cinematic categories. The overtone is no mystery. It is achieved within the structure of the film, through the intensive within the progressive.

The picture has been called "lively." We do not ask that a monument bounce like a rubber-ball. But the film is lacking in all resilience. It is not leavened by an idea, it is dismal, tedious, aimless. How completely Sternberg has missed the import of the theme is evinced by the introduction of the picture. Before the story opens, there are repeated shots of water disturbed by a thrown object. And throughout the picture the captions are composed upon a background of rippling water. Sternberg saw the major idea of the matter in the drowning. How lamentable! The drowning is the physical climax of the process; it is not the informing idea. And the film, lacking a process, lacks a climax. The drowning is the sum total. I need not urge how banal and antiquated a tedium is this self-conscious device of anticipating the act even before the film opens.

The district attorney, played by Irving Pichel, is as relevant as the falsifying script and direction will permit. A glance at Eisenstein's scenario suggests what Pichel's rôle might have revealed. That scenario unalteringly insists upon the political nature of the controversy between the defense attorney and prosecutor, ulterior to the immediate case against Clyde. The entire trial is conveyed in the film, not for what, in its own instance, it reveals of the theme, An American Tragedy, but as blatant showmanship of the self-conscious order.

Whereas, in the original Paramount scripts the boy's history begins with his work as foreman in his uncle's collar factory, and the presented film goes back to Clyde as bellboy, Eisenstein's scenario sets the lad as a child in the drab mendicant sanctimony of street evangelism. Paramount asserts it has an equivalent for this in the film, when the boy, running away, goes through the mission—a glimpse never related to the boy. The integrated organism of the boy in the mission, and the mission in the boy, we do not perceive, therefore the process is really never begun. We do not feel the attempt, the dream, of the boy to rend this integration. Eisenstein, however, sets the process off atmospherically, suggestively, emotionally:

Darkness.

The low inspired voice of a woman is heard rising and falling in the sing-song of a chanted sermon. Gradually there mingles with the voice the sounds of the city and the
noises of the street. The siren of an ambulance—the anxious ringing of a street-car. The characteristic cries of newsboys. The tooting of automobiles. Gruff music through radio horns. With the ever-increasing sound of the various noises, views of the city flash upon the screen. Views that express a well-defined contrast. The infinite contrast between the chant of the sermon and the life of the city.

And the woman’s voice continues, exalted, speaking of the harm of drink, of the horror of sin and the love of Jesus Christ. A small thin chorus follows the voice of the woman as she starts singing the 27th hymn:

"How sweet is the love of Jesus."

As yet we see neither the woman whose voice is heard nor those who sing with her.
Of the many indifferent passers-by, there are one or two who listen to the sound of the song—persons slow their walk and look in the direction of the hymn.

A group of curiosity-seekers gathered at the corner of a narrow street, they are busy watching.

The crowd watches, pitying. Various of its members speak of them in varying ways. Some mock them: “You’d think they’d find a better racket than this.” Others pity them. Yet others patronize them—

Finally—the street missionaries. An old man with thick grey hair; a woman, large, heavily built; and their children, two little girls and a boy of about seven—CLYDE GRIFFITHS. It is they who were singing the Psalms.

One woman wishes to know why they drag their children along with them. And a second woman clinches the comment by adding: “Better for them to be sent to school.”

The children, uninterested, listless, devoid of enthusiasm, their eyes astray, sing their hymns of praise while their parents try to gather alms from the little group of curiosity seekers. No alms is given.

The bystanders disperse, and the missionaries, folding up their music, pick up their small organ and move into the cavernous darkness of the towering narrow streets.

Seven-year-old Clyde, sensitive and ashamed of his surroundings, looks no one directly in the eyes.

The family of missionaries move slowly down the street. “I think they were kinder to-day,” says the mother.

They approach a dingy, low-built old-fashioned building, over the door of which hangs a sign, “Bethel Independent Mission.” The rest of the family disappears within the small doors of this building and only Clyde remains on the threshold. He hangs back because the street urchins are making fun of him and his family—because he irks to answer them and pay them out for their mockery. But no words come to him, and with a typical movement he shrinks into himself.

We find the character of the child described in relation to other children; his sister Esta (entirely omitted in the Paramount version) is also portrayed:

... she peers through a stone gap between the houses onto the street, alive, bathed in light. Clyde sits down beside her as though hypnotized, as though enchanted; the children stare at this tiny piece of life, listen rapt to the sound of an old waltz, the strains of which float up from an unseen restaurant. They look, listen and dream.

They are placed within the mission, its melancholy almost morose oppressiveness, in which the only glow is the mother’s exaltation, a glow, however, that obscures her children’s plight. The discord is enhanced—symbolised—by the conflict between the restaurant music and that of the mission. In the film the father is mentioned, but only verbally and vaguely; in the scenario he is present to establish further the setting for the child’s life. The film omits the elopement of the sister; the scenario includes it—it is important. There we have Clyde Griffiths.

In the film Clyde gets a big tip as bellboy. He utters an appreciation. But the tip is momentous to Clyde. Eisenstein builds the proportions of the incident within the formative experience of the boy by a technique we may disproportion. The literal folk of Hollywood follow what’s in the patent narrative. Eisenstein has other resources. It is a rhythmic procedure he introduces. The stature of the incident, its content, determines the particular proportion he will allow. He does not build his film in a simple arithmetic or geometric progression, chronologically. He breaks up the rudimentary ratio and introduces a voice from without that will effect instrumentally the sense of the boy’s exultation.
The man . . . takes a 50 cent. piece out of his vest pocket and gives it to Clyde. Clyde cannot believe it. He is numb with astonishment. To look at the garters the man turns on the light, and with the click of the switch the room suffuses with brilliance, as the glow of happiness suffuses Clyde’s face.

"Fifty cents."

An unknown voice is heard screaming it, and a smile almost of exaltation brightens the whole face of Clyde.

"Fifty cents."

. . . still louder screams the strange voice, and together with the cry the orchestra is heard playing a wild, happy march. As though at High Mass, the music peals forth, and the hotel resembles a mighty cathedral. Like an organ swells forth the huge proud volume of music and a tremendous chorus of human voices rends the air asunder behind the whole small being of the youthful Clyde clapping in his fists his 50 cent piece.

And as the screen fades and grows darker, so the mighty notes of the music grow fainter and their sound slowly fades—

And there rises the images of the poor mission hall and the sound of its congregation singing psalms.

Clyde runs through the mission hall into his room, closing the door behind him.

This is disproportion—a non-literal process. In the relevant symbol of the cathedral-anthem is the disproportion, the extramural introduction, which interprets the proportion of the tip to the humble delights of Clyde. In the succession of the threadbare mission is the colliding image which binds the organism that is Clyde to its source.

Later we meet a similar construction. In the scenario, as in the film, the immediate inspiration for the plan to drown Roberta comes from a newspaper account. But—the Sternberg version seeks to impress this inspiration by the newsboy’s ad tedium repetition of the headline. Actually this attacks the audience without exposing the process within Clyde. Nor is the image of an overturned boat and a straw hat more than an excerpt. Eisenstein exposes the process by constructing it:

ACCIDENTAL DOUBLE TRAGEDY AT LAKE PASS
UPTURNED CANOE AND FLOATING HATS REVEAL
PROBABLE LOSS OF TWO LIVES

He reads it at first mechanically, without comprehending it.

"The girl’s body has been found, but remains unidentified. As to the man, he has not yet been found. Fifteen years ago in this spot a similar accident occurred, and the body was not recovered."

Clyde finishes reading the article, throws the paper off the table, turns out the lamp, and sits wearily down on the couch. And suddenly he hears a whisper:

"And what if Roberta and you—"

And in the dark corner, he imagines he sees an overset boat. Jumping up Clyde turns on the light.

He sits down on the couch again, nervous and shivering, he picks up the paper he has thrown away, and re-reads the article. And while he is reading it with wide-open eyes, the whisper from afar gradually creeps up until it forms the word "KILL."

In a strange, gradual way, the phrase spoken by the whisper forms and forms until at last it pronounces the whole word: "KILL! KILL!"

And from this moment the action begins to work along the line of thoughts of a distracted man, leaping from one fact to another, suddenly stopping—departing from sane logic, distorting the real union between things and sounds—all on the background of the insistent and infinite repetition of scraps of the description in the newspaper.

In this scene, in which the idea of murder is born to Clyde, he acts separately from the background, which keeps changing after him, either dashing in a mad tempo when
Photo: Prometheus-Film.

"Le chemin de la vie."  Un film sur l'enfance russe abandonnée, par Nikolai Ekk.  
Photo: Prometheus-Film.

"Der Weg ins Leben."  Ein Film von den heimatlosen russischen Kindern, von Nikolai Ekk.  
Photo: Prometheusfilm.

the background is slow, then falling when there is no reason to fall, then unsteady on a rock, then transformed into stone-like motionlessness in the midst of a busy street.

With the aid of the technical use of transparencies, this effect of the inharmonious actions of Clyde to his surroundings can be attained. Around him is first his room, then a street in busy movement, or the lake, or the mean dwelling of Roberta, or the summer residence of Sondra at Twelfth Lake, or the machines in the factory, or running trains, or the stormy sea, in each setting of which he moves, his movements being discordant with the scene.

And the same with the sounds. These are likewise distorted. And a whisper becomes the whistle of a storm, and the storm cries out "Kill!" or the whistle of the storm becomes the movement of the street, the wheels of a street car, the cries of a crowd, the horns of motor-cars, and all beat out the word "Kill! Kill!" And the street noises become the roar of the factory machines, and the machines also roar out "Kill! Kill!"

Or the roar of the machines descends to a low whisper and it whispers again: "Kill! Kil!!" And at this moment a pleasant, unemotional voice slowly reads the newspaper article: "A similar accident occurred fifteen years ago, but the body of the man was never found."
And at the climax of this symphony of madness, Clyde jumps out of this nightmare hell, perspiring, disheveled, excited. He runs to the telephone booth and calls up Roberta. Through the phone he speaks to her in a hoarse voice.

"This is Clyde."

Not every single element in this process is of itself novel. But novelty — *nouveau* — is what a Sternberg seeks, and it comes forth antiquated enough. Eisenstein has constructed a relevant process that accumulates into "This is Clyde," a poignant clause.

He tries to put tenderness into his voice, but in his effort there is too much affection. His voice, through the phone, sounds loving and soft; it seems unbelievable that a man in his state of frenzy could be so kind.

The expressionistic disproportions—dissociated images re-associated within Clyde—co-ordinate the event with the state of mind, and—this is the important thing—collecting as a process, they participate in the total structure of the film, which is present in the very last passage quoted. The construction recurs, it is rhythmic and dramatic, when Roberta and Clyde are together. In variation, it is in the court scene. Filming this scene, Sternberg, intent upon violences, stages the row-boat of the tragedy in the courtroom. Eisenstein, realising where to stress, avoids what would sensationalise the pitch without exposing the tactic. Sternberg makes a hullabaloo of the incident where a spectator yells "Hang him!" It appears as horseplay rather than as an exhibition of the hostile rural temper. The film hasn’t prepared this temper. Having no process wherein to function, it’s violence without elucidation. Eisenstein brings the boy’s environment into the case, and stresses the minds at work—the rural antipathy, the political play of the prosecutor. The character of Roberta’s parents, fanatics, is in the scenario but not in the film.

The original Hoffenstein script terminated with the mother’s faith in the boy’s innocence. The film terminates with the boy confessing his guilt—he might have saved Roberta. Eisenstein brings the boy to his death—that is his terminal. And swings back to the beginning, the mission. Cause and effect tie up the process, which will be repeated again in other lives.

Blackness and quiet.
A sharp crackle and the sharp light of an electric contact—and again quiet—again blackness.

Grey smoke rises against the dull sky and loses itself in the quiet air.

A tall chimney, a roof; the camera descends past the windows and balconies of the mean building, and the lower descends the camera, the stronger sound the voices of a little choir singing psalms.

In a dirty lane by a mission, surrounded by a crowd of curiosity-seekers, to the sound of a harmonium, some street preachers are singing, as at the beginning of the picture. There they stand, but now the hair of the mother is white as snow, the father is old and ailing, and Esta is grown to a sickly woman, and, instead of Clyde, is her little seven-year-old son.

"How long since you wrote to Mother?"

... says a notice by the entrance to the Mission.

"Everybody’s happy"

... sings the white-haired, broken mother. Pitifully wheezes the harmonium and the strains of "Everybody’s happy" fade distantly as the scene Fades Out.
Reading this end as it stands here alone, one might find it sentimental, but since it refers back to an early scene, since it insists upon the outcome and continuousness of the tragedy, its social nature, in the film rendition it would have concluded the inevitable process.*

Superior as this scenario is to the Paramount film, there are still within it indications of concession to the reigning mood, concessions, to be sure, kept at a distance from too ready hands. The scenario, I take it, is a vivid suggestion of the completer thing Eisenstein would have made of An American Tragedy had he filmed it—and under more self-respecting control than that of Hollywood.

For Paramount never intended to respect the integrity of the idea it bought. The Justice trying this case has put the legal stamp on the subterfuge of the movie. He has given high judicial authority to the Hays Code and the cultural minimum. Is this precedent? Although the defense argued that the Sternberg film was the equivalent in its medium to the Dreiser novel, the Court supplemented with a blessing that contradicts the defense, which the Court has upheld:

In the preparation of the picture the producer must give consideration to the fact that the great majority of people composing the audience before which the picture will be presented will be more interested that justice prevail over wrongdoing than that the inevitability of Clyde's end clearly appear.

The Judge has corroborated the charge of the plaintiff that instead of an indictment of society, the picture is a justification of society and an indictment of Clyde.

In strict orthodoxy the Court places the responsibility on the "public," and so evades responsibility. This lofty dictum ties up with the dedication that introduces the film: to the men and women who have done so much for youth. Probably by giving birth to them.

H. A. Potamkin.

* This conclusion is different from the cliché (prolog-epilog tag) of "Street Scene" where the children resume their play after the murder—"life must go on" or some such platitude. It is organic and "emotional rather than merely sentimental."

The following demonstration of the progress of higher learning and the advance of literary knowledge in the backwoods, is culled from an American Middle-West newspaper:

"The scenario of the Iron Mask, the film produced by our great Douglas Fairbanks, has been the inspiration of a French novelist, named Alexander Dumas, for one of the episodes of a long novel called The Vicomte de Bragelonne.

"The only reproach we can make against the novelist is that he has interpreted a little too freely the passionate intrigue of Douglas's film.

R. B.


THE HOLLYWOOD CODE

II

Since the first part of this article was written, the situation in England has completely changed. So dangerous has the position become that it is possible that the film as an art-form will die out, for the way is made infinitely easier for Hollywood to impose its standards on the English market. Foreign films have to face risk, the heavy import duties, and the question of re-making a picture because of the language barrier. Owing to the crash of the pound, Americans can pay the duties at comparatively little cost and show their films with English dialogue, immediately.

Unfortunately the English industry has preferred to copy American formulas rather than evolve a character of its own. With few foreign films for comparison the Hollywood code will dominate British pictures. And in three or four years' time, the public will drift in consequence to more stimulating amusements than the cinema.

Confirmation of this reached Close Up office from an unexpected source, in a letter from one of the best known critics on the popular press. "I
"A Beach Idyll." The cameraman is Gérard Perrin. The scenario is by Jean Levens. Assisting Henri Stork are Pierre Vandervoort and Léon Lévy.


have ceased going to the cinema for pleasure," he says and "indeed the position of the film societies is pathetic. Their existence at the present time is potential rather than actual." And these two sentences summarise the present situation and the danger of the Hollywood code.

Hollywood has no room for the experimental mind. It might destroy the formula. But after a time its audiences become surfeited with static spectacle and drift away in search of other amusement. How many of our readers know that the middle classes in the States neither go to films nor do they discuss them, any more than we should in England, discuss an amusement park or swings at a fair. They go to the theatre (witness the much higher standard of the American stage) and leave the cinemas for children or the unskilled, whose parents probably could not talk English. If they go, it is in a spirit of rebellion, as a young Englishman of the same class might go to a boxing match in a poor district. But a Californian for example, reacts quickly and forgets easily. If the movies become monotonous he will drop them for a time but one day he will give them another chance. A Londoner continues going longer from sheer habit, until one day he makes up his mind he is bored and will never watch the screen again. So that it is much more dangerous to impose the formula on England, where there is already a huge wastage of potential audience.
The cure is the development of the institution for which Hollywood has no place, the film society. A film movement produces new material and new workers. Look at René Clair, or Epstein, or any of the French directors doing important work; all of them came from the avant-garde movement of 1920-1926. So did Dreyer. The Dutch and Belgian groups who made short documentary films on cheap cameras with ends of stock, four years ago, have made their work known across Europe and are most of them working in commercial studios. The industry has swallowed up many of the men who made Mennschen am Sonntag. Karel Plicka, a schoolmaster, has interested hundreds in Czechoslovakia.

For no studio training can ever be so efficient as the training given by being a member of a small independent group, producing films with little money. Oddly enough, it is the film society that is collective, and the studio worker that is an individual. For in a studio there will always be somebody else to take responsibility, and there is not the discipline of having to count in advance the cost of every separate shot. It may be possible to learn one thing in detail, but not to get a rough grasp of the whole, as the member of an independent group does, changing from script to camera, from acting to the lights, by turn. The avant-garde is the training ground for future directors, camera men and electricians, but it is in England almost non-existent. The few who film copy the commercial product.

Yet if cinema is to survive it will be only through a few groups refusing to visit the commercial kinos, and working out their ideas, as Kuleshov did, on paper. They will have to be more avant-garde than the French in 1927, more cut off from equipment than the Russians after the revolution. They will have to attack the formula and not tolerate it; they must learn to walk out from pictures that however technically perfect are based upon false ideas. They will have to make scraps of film that every commercial producer would refuse and project them on kitchen walls before small groups determined to tear them to pieces. Yet in the end an English cinema might evolve that would probably (like René Clair’s films) make a lot of money. But it can come only through being based on thought, on the expression of the problems of the day, and not through elaborate equipment or the repetition of the formula that is driving Americans from cinemas throughout the States, and makes the producers look more and more to England as their only profitable market.

Bryher.

Une vaste mise en scène du film : "Le Congres Dause," une superproduction Erich Pommer dont on dit grand bien, réalisée par Erik Charell pour Ufatonz. Photo: Ufa.

BE BRITISH

Let us, cry the English critics, have an English film for a change. Well, an excellent idea, we have not yet had one; but they then begin to tell us what they mean by an English picture, and it is always something about the English countryside, to which Mr. John Grierson has added the English coal mine, the English shipbuilding yard, the English dock, and all the other English items likely to appeal to the Empire Marketing Film Group, a body who apparently own a cutting room but no camera. Now let us look at Hollywood.

We have seen The Devil To Pay, a film about England, story and dialogue by an English author, leading actor an Englishman, made in Hollywood. It is as typically an American product as The Street of
Chance, a story about America, by an American, leading actor American, made in Hollywood.

We have seen The Front Page, made in Hollywood by a Russian director with the brisk and purposeful cutting of the best Russian films, but made in America for Americans, and even if the story had not been about America it would have been unmistakably an American film.

Most American films are highly polished, but I have seen badly photographed films, films with sets that didn’t look like a million dollars, every kind of film, from America. They have all been unmistakable.

So it is not story, background, technique or polish that gives a film it’s geographical label. It is purely a way of looking at things, a thought process set up by the thing seen. And so we get back to the question of Montage.

As long as English directors do not shoot their pictures to a previously conceived cutting plan, even if they are not going to cut them themselves, as long as English directors are divided into two classes, one of which cuts “so as not to use any of the shots showing M——-’s bottom, old boy” (actually heard in an English studio) and the other, the Grierson or Metrical school, which cuts entirely to the tape measure, we can not have such a thing as an English picture because we can not have such a thing as a thought process. The straight cut, in which two visual images (or, now-a-days, two sounds) “explode,” to use the words of Eisenstein, “into a new concept,” is the only way of expressing an idea on the screen, and without it’s use we are reduced to a statement of fact as bald as a
builder's estimate. Unless each shot collides with the next to give birth to an idea in the mind of the audience, which has been the only justification for a cut since D. W. Griffith "discovered the close up," a film can have no spirit, national or of any other kind. America, Germany, Sweden, and of course Russia, all produce films reflecting the way of thinking of their country because they all understand the essentials of film making, whatever we individually may think of the stories around which they make their films, or the purpose for which they are made.

But there has not yet been an English film.

Dan Birt.

ENGLISH TELEVISION

The cinema has not been at a standstill in London this autumn. We have had City Streets and Tabu; a peculiar Polish sound-film at the Academy, and two Russian sound-films, The Blue Express and Eisenstein's The Silver Lining, as well as some bad German talkies. There are five news-reel theatres, as well as a talkie-revival house. There has been an exhibition of film-stills. . . . But even so, for those who watch, the real advance is to be found in television.

The advances coincide with Roxy's visit to London. Says Roxy, "I'm fed up with saying how much Radio City will cost. I'm fed up with saying it's the greatest thing in the world. In fact, I don't want to boast." Says Roxy, it will cost twelve and a half million dollars. Says Roxy, in effect, when I thought of those seventy thousand American soldier boys "lying in funny positions in their cots," I just had to give them each a wireles set . . . and they are doubtless among the regular patrons who make up the thirteen million people who have entered the Roxy cinema in four years. Says Roxy, "I am, after all, a kind of a human person," which latter quality enables him to feel "I know you. You can't fool me, you in this little isle. I know you." Roxy says a lot, but not very much about television, which is going to play such a part in his acres-big Radio City. Why should he? He is only talking at a press-luncheon; they know him. The most he can do is live up to his legend, in the hope they will pass it on to the public. And most of them do. . . .

Well, English television cannot compete with Roxy in statistics. We have no hotel here, with each room equipped with a televisor. Our papers do not give a whole page to television, as did the New York Sun on August 22nd. But things happen. The programmes improve; there are other things than vaudeville to look in on—Swedish singers, illustrated
talks, a cartoon which is now a regular feature. We now have long-shots as well as close-ups, and this has let us have dancing—ballet, acrobatic and buck. Also, a four-round boxing match. But more important than this, there is a new series of transmissions in the ordinary B.B.C. programmes. This means, not only that one can look-in at more convenient hours, but also that what one looks-in on are the B.B.C. performers as they do their stuff. Hitherto, we have had only such artists as the Baird Company could
get to Longacre, and it is no secret that most of the money available went on experiment, not on programmes. If the B.B.C. co-operation works, we should soon be able to see as well as hear some of the important people. It is in any case of great importance to television that the B.B.C. is now more friendly on the subject of wave-lengths and programme hours. The Saturday afternoon transmission of sound and vision seems to be a regular feature, which is important as most televiewers are at present amateurs, who are at work most other times of the week.

Mr. Baird has also invented what he claims to be the most brilliant light source yet found for television. This, the Modulated Arc, which I saw demonstrated, certainly gives a more brilliant as well as bigger picture, but it seems that there will soon be a rival in the field, who will upset all the just-formulated theories. Mr. G. W. Walton has for nine years been working on a system which he now calls Scophony. This needs only one channel for both sight and sound signals, and the channel required is moreover only one-fiftieth of that needed for normal broadcast transmission. This matters, because one of the great obstacles is the difficulty for finding sufficiently broad tuning bands, and the other systems in use all need two such bands. The scanning disc, as used by Baird, locates each separate point in a picture in time and space; Mr. Walton eliminates time. He has also been led to invent a new type of photo-electric cell, which allows a very high degree of definition, and a light control device at the receiving end which replaces the Neon tube. His work has not yet been publicly seen, and so Mr. Baird's Modulated Arc remains the best light-source actually shown; one of its advantages is that it gives a black-and-white picture. But both of these inventors meet on one point—they bring the day of televised talkies appreciably nearer. That day will come, and that is why it is worth following what may seem such trivial details as the facts that one can now see the B.B.C. dance band or that the image in one's televisor shows a larger field. All these are steps in the nickelodeon stage of television . . . things happened quickly after nickelodeons. If the B.B.C. continues hand in hand with the Baird Company, perhaps we shall not have to listen to Mr. Rothafel so much.

R. H.
From "Before Daybreak," a film directed by Teinosuke Kinugasa, dealing with the social revolt which occurred in Japan in the 16th century. Production: Shoshiku Kinema Co.


Aus "Vor Tagesanbruch." Regie : Teinosuke Kinugasa. Der Film handelt von der sozialen Revolle, die sich im 16. Jahrhundert in Japan ereignete.
From "Before Daybreak," a film directed by Teinosuke Kinugasa, dealing with the social revolt which occurred in Japan in the 16th century. Production: Shoshiku Kinema Co.


BEFORE DAYBREAK

A Japanese film by Teinosuke Kinugasa

The name of Teinosuke Kinugasa will perhaps be remembered by the careful film critics in Europe and America as the director of Under the Shadow of Yoshiwara, a foreign version of an old Japanese picture that was released three years ago in Japan under the title Juijro, which means Crossroad. Juijro, full of splendid and gorgeous camera-technics never before realised in Japan, gained him a reputation. It was a memorable masterpiece in the history of Japanese films, I admit. Before Daybreak, the first production since his return home from a few years' trip through the European countries, was shown during the 1931 season in Japan, and
created a big sensation among the critics, if not among the average spectators.

What distinguishes this film from *Jujiro* is the fact that Kinugasa has given up his "dazzlingly beautiful" scene composition in favour of montage, wherein the dazzlingly beautiful is more of a hindrance than a help. That is to say, in *Jujiro* he aspired to the beautiful depiction of individual scenes or sequences, while in *Before Daybreak* he aimed at a cinematic reference to the conscious significance of its filmic raw materials (the cuts or scenes). This fact is an evidence of much progress made since the issue of *Jujiro* in 1928. There appear in this new production many evidences of Soviet technique, no doubt influenced by the Soviet films seen while abroad.

Just as solemn and conscientious is the mental attitude evinced in the making of *Before Daybreak* as in *Jujiro*. However, taking the least generous viewpoint, it is, despite his conscience, his efforts and passion, a gross failure, mainly due to wrong directorial treatment. The failure is assigned to the following causes:

(1) To me it seems he has decided that montage is an abstract theory of film construction which alone is of universal validity, defying such margins as states or societies or classes in its application. Thus he
regards Soviet methods of montage equally as the basis of Japanese films. Which is erroneous.

First of all, Kinugasa must understand that Soviet methods have been established in accordance with peculiar Soviet ideas, social, economical and racial; never wholly to be identified with those of other countries. I am confident, with David Platt of Experimental Cinema, that to superpose the special technique developed to propound an idea on American or European (or Japanese) films today without a corresponding change in the social basis, will not make films any better or worse than they already are.

(2) The second cause is his incapability to grasp the idea of montage as the method of building up a totality, not partial structure. Thus, Before Daybreak, although cinematic and well-mounted so far as its sectional ideas are concerned, is not successful from the viewpoint of its structure as a whole. With such stress on sections, and his failure to consider the sections in relation to the whole, the episodes and details emerge independently, and with intensiveness, it is true—only to make obscure the very points on which he had intended to lay the greatest emphasis. Because of its fierce intensity, sustained throughout the entire film, most spectators, native and foreign, must tire before the end of its two hours’ run.

(3) The third cause: that the material content of this film is not in line with the corresponding artistic form. The completely realistic manner, full of energy and intensiveness, used for the purpose of expressing the sentimental matter which fills the body of this film, is unnatural and unconvincing.

Japan, 1931.

YASUSHI OGINO.
“The Torch.” A Shoshiku Production.

“La Torche,” film de la production Shoshiku.

“Die Fachel.” Shoshiku Produktion.

Miss Yoriko Hanabusa in “Ashes,” a Nikatsu Production.

Melle Yoriko Hanabusa, dans “Cendres,” production Nikatsu.

"The Torch" A Shoshiku Production.

"La Torche," film de la production Shoshiku

"Die Fackel." Shoshiku Produktion.
"The Torch."  A Shoshiku Production.

"La Torche," film de la production Shoshiku.

"Die Fackel." Shoshiku Produktion.
JAPANESE CINEMA

The Japanese film director and actor, Katsumi, recently showed me his latest film in a Berlin projection room. This film, in which he played the main rôle, told of the downfall of a Samurai who fought against the reigning Shogun about two centuries ago. The plot developed slowly and was punctuated by innumerable captions, until after about 6,000 feet a tremendous fight broke out between the Samurai and (apparently) the whole assembled bodyguard of the Shogun. This ended in the hero’s suicide after an incredible struggle against overwhelming odds. Although the movements were extremely interesting both in their details and in the way they followed through, yet it was clearly impossible to expect a European audience to tolerate anything so long. In fact, I was quite at a loss how this film could be adapted for the European market.

A few weeks later I received an invitation from Katsumi to a Sunday morning performance of this film in a small west-end cinema, where it was to be privately shown to the Japanese colony in Berlin. As I came into the cinema, I was given a printed slip containing a synopsis of the film. At the side of the screen was a lectern where Katsumi stood.

The film started. At the same time Katsumi began a running commentary to the preliminary titles in the normal explanatory tones of a narrator. The Samurai were strolling about on the screen. Silence. The actors conversed with each other. The voice began again, no longer in explanatory, everyday tones, but using the guttural utterance of the Japanese classical theatre to provide an exact accompaniment to the various actors’ conversation. Then a long caption, unaccompanied perhaps for half its length. Then some monotonous instrument like a guitar began to play, continued through the following scenes and stopped suddenly in the middle of a scene. The film continued. Silence. Then, the quiet explanatory voice of the speaker. A humorous remark elicited a titter from the audience—apparently some personal allusion of the speaker’s. Presently the voice became pathetic, continued so through scenes and captions, and then suddenly stopped dead. Silence. More music. Single plucked notes with long pauses in between. Another conversation in the deep guttural style of the classical theatre, very carefully synchronised with the film and the various actors, who were made to speak sometimes high, sometimes low, clearly, confusedly, slowly or quickly, according to the context. Silence again. On the screen the chief of Shogun’s bodyguard vainly interrogated his daughter whom he had sent to spy on the hero in order to convict him of treason. She was in love with the hero and attempted to persuade her father that she had been unable to discover anything. The old man had now shot his last bolt. He sat there for some time, alone, motionless. Suddenly a gesture—and a man’s shriek.
The girl rushed back into the room and flung herself on her father. He tried to free himself in order to reach his sword. His daughter tried to prevent him. The same terrible shriek recurred everytime the old man made some violent effort. At last his daughter broke down, gave him the required information and betrayed her lover. Light guitar music. It was all very thrilling. Finally came the fight, which was accompanied, partly by an exciting rhythmic figure that rose and fell, partly by the solemn declamation of some text that was probably well known to all the Japanese present.

A movie had suddenly been turned into a talkie by the extraordinary art of the speaker, the restrained but subtly differentiated use of different kinds of elocution, and the persistence of the transparent monodic, nearly always unisonal, music. This music had no resemblance to the illustrative music usually to be heard in the European cinema; it ran counter to the action on the screen in a kind of dialectical counterpoint. (For instance, doleful music usually accompanied gay scenes on the screen; quick and lively music, slow sad scenes.) The restraint with which this was carried out made for clearness, lucidity, excitement, variety. The subtleties of
tone often lent scenes which had dragged in the projection room an extraordinary tension.

This is the way in which films are shown in Japanese cinemas. The idea of an announcer and a completely independent musical accompaniment is foreign to us, and so we can hardly hope to import Japanese films with any success, since, in spite of adaptation and revision, some passages would still remain too long and deliberate in tempo, and (apart from that) the film sequences are not such as are customary according to the unwritten convention between public and producer here in Europe.

Perhaps that is now quite different with the actual Japanese tonefilms. But, however that may be, there is no doubt that the old conventional Japanese cinema is more fertile and nearer the ideal tonefilm than the occidental custom of relying on purely psychological, imitative and illustrational means in film production. Almost the only really impressive occidental films have been those which eschewed imitation and naturalism (cf. certain scenes in the Marx Brothers' film, Animal Crackers, in René Clair's Le Million and Lubitsch's Monte Carlo, e.g., the scene where the heroine leans out of the express and sings a song, accompanied by a chorus of reapers in the fields through which the train is rushing south, without a trace of the usual railway noises so beloved by most modern film producers, or ordinary realistic scenes in the same film, where the hairdresser, the lady's-maid and other characters suddenly break into (sometimes concerted) song, accompanied by full orchestra). The producers of nearly all occidental films of any value today have given up the attempt to imitate

"The Torch." A Shoshiku Production.
"La Torche," film de la production Shoshiku.
"Die Fackel." Shoshiku Produktion.
actual reality—that is to say, to enrich the optical content of their films by clothing it with a realistic imitative layer of tone—in favour of a purely formal union of picture and tone. Soon this oriental custom, formerly so foreign to us, will have become a common convention, and it is to be hoped that it will be used with such understanding and restraint that the picture will not lose its own characteristic harmonics in a roaring tone accompaniment such as is habitual in our films today.

At the present moment I am attempting to collate several Japanese films of value, to subject them to a kind of cross-section montage, and to give them a tone accompaniment on the lines I have mentioned above. The resulting film will be ready towards the end of this year. **Carl Koch.**
THE FIRST RUSSIAN SOUNDFILMS

Berlin, October.

We have had to wait for them till now. For many months, more and more news had come, stating that this or that well known Russian director had begun to work on his first sound film. Pudovkin among the others. But this news always dwindled, or suddenly it was said that the film which had already been discussed would be issued as a silent one, contrary to rumours.

Obviously they have had considerable difficulties with regard to technique. Soundfilm apparatus and soundfilm patents could not—in spite of their significance in cultural matters—be counted among the necessary machines for production and the raw materials for which money was provided according to the five year plan. The equipment for production of soundfilms had to be built, developed and finished in all details, no matter how difficult, according to Russia's own ideas, her own experiences, with her own means in her own workshops, within her own Russian foundries.

As a basis, the four-year-old experiments of Tager and Schorrin were used. Improvements, constructional changes and ways and means were
suggested by the one or two American or German apparatus which had come temporarily to Russia. All that took a certain time. It lasted until the first installations were ready for use; until by degrees the massive rigidity of construction was lost, until freed from the limitations of the studio, they adapted themselves to the Russian love for the image of nature.

* * *

It lasted until the first Russian soundfilms—not including Eisenstein and Tisse’s Romance Sentimentale (The Silver Lining). Firstly because this film was not financed by Soviet money, but by a West European concern, secondly because it is a product of French not Russian technique, thirdly because its content, its quality, its music and its tang of the Russian soil, are enveloped by a quite different aroma, somewhat Parisian. Fourthly, convincing forms of soundfilm expression were found, but this remained only the expression of very lyric, very personal feelings. (And it is the quality of lyrics in their most personal manifestation and deepest efficacy, to overflow the widest boundaries. Purest poetry, purest film-poetry too, has been torn so far from its roots that one can no longer perceive its national origin. Further, the Romance Sentimentale is not a Russian film but a human one. In spite of its slight over-pointedness, skittishness, formalism—and because of it.

* * *

And the next Russian soundfilm we saw—the first to come from Russia—Dziga Vertoff’s Enthusiasm, is indeed no less over-pointed, skittish and formalised but less masterful and sustained. Vertoff is one of the most radical theorists of the Soviet film. He was one of the first to reject the studio, artificial light, the composed, the theatrical, and retired to outdoor photography, sunlight, to the real, the untheatrical.

He, it was, who preached loudest for the documentary film as a form of art, even as the only form of art, whose fundamental basis—available only to this particular art form—is reality which must take its filmic shape from camera angles and montage of scenes.

But with all the attraction, advancement and intensity of his idea, Vertoff remains one of those stimulating—individually perhaps deplorable—thinkers, who have discovered their task through driving a breach into the wall of a thousand doors, through their ability to discover a new path to the city of art with its thousand accesses—and whose fate is fulfilled in waging a fierce struggle that every approach should lead only to the one lane, and that every gate should indicate the one little door as the sole entrance.

Theorists mostly love their theories more than fathers love an only child. Rather than change their theories to fit the world, they would seek to change the whole world to make it fit their theories! Vertoff, also, has wages fierce, vehement and desperate battles with his material and his instruments (i.e., reality and the film camera) to give practical proofs of his ideas. In this he has failed. He had failed already in the era of the silent
film—by showing hundreds of examples of most cunning artistry in turning: acrobatic masterpieces of optic jigsaw, brilliant conjuring of filmic association—but never a rounded work, never a clear, proceeding line. His great efforts of strength in relation to detail did not leave him breath for the whole. His arabesques totally covered the ground plan, his fugues destroyed every melody.

Since the advent of soundfilms that has become worse. Sound has added a new material to the old. A new object with which one can play, which can be made to glitter, with which one can fall in love. Sound becomes the new lover, for whose sake all others must retire. On and in the sound is laid the principal stress. Sound is now the cord—a rough cord on which the separate pearls are strung.
Voices like fanfares tell in Dziga Vertoff’s film of the enthusiastic work in Don-bas.* The shots are no more important than illustrations. If one is ignorant of the Russian language, soon one must become tired and indifferent, let pass the avalanche of even the most impressive shots. And those who can understand will soon miss the sense of a compact, interesting and enthralling course—perceiving the discrepancy between the primitive spoken words and the brilliant illustrations. These pictures—pictures of conquered churches, of a forest of new chimneys, of belching foundaries, boiling metal, cranes, mine-trucks, mountains of coal—these pictures tumble over one another, disperse, lose their effect. The whole work is by no means a document of the most gigantic part of the work of the five year plan; at the highest, material concerning it. A drawerful of wonderful sound photographs which have not been put in order.

* * *

The Way into Life—by Nicolai Ekk—the second Russian soundfilm to come to Germany, gives a closer, more thorough impression, and is clearer in its attitude.

While in Vertoff’s Enthusiasm the drums of labour in Don-bas, the joy of work brought into acoustic and optic rhythm, with its lack of action and distinct connections and in its abstract demonstration, are senseless, militant, faschistic—Ekk’s story of The Way into Life of the Besprisonis (i.e., the uncared-for children), shown in the hands of a new, free art of education, acquaints us with a very impressive, typical part of Soviet work. In spite of the fact that the lesson he teaches neither follows a straight line nor keeps to one plane of narration, of logic, of performance, of style.

It is a characteristic first work in a new material, brave and nervous. New ways are discovered with joy and with verve, but almost too many ways at a time. Ekk’s The Way into Life stands in exactly the same relation to the great Russian art of the film as Karl Fröhlich’s Die Nacht gehört uns (The Night is Ours) once stood to the German art of the film. Both have touched dozens of new possibilities, but neither could create the new form.

The German press greeted Ekk’s film—the first picture of new Russia after a long pause—with distinct joy, enjoying the change.

The German directors who had invited Ekk to a discussion in their club, listened with benevolent sympathy to the enthusiastic, idealistic, pathetic verve of their young Russian colleague. They listened to him as older, more experienced people listen to younger ones when they talk of their plans and hopes of life.

But mostly it is like that. Life as experienced by the older ones, and life as meant by the one with the plan, is different. One is of yesterday, the other of tomorrow. That which was implied by the audience in the directors’ club was of Western Europe—that of yesterday.

A. Kraszna-Krausz.

* The Don Basin.
CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

THIS SPOON-FED GENERATION?

When, not so very long ago, Everyman’s earth was motionless and solid beneath his feet, his immediate concerns were apt to fill and close his horizon. He knew, dimly and forgetfully, that his world, inhabited by foreigners as well as by the English, was engaged in hurtling through space at unimaginable speed and had possibly heard that the solid part of it was but a thin crust. But he thought in terms of solidity, and his universe was a vague beyond that mattered but little in comparison with his personal beyond, the stable world of daily life whose ways he knew and whose unchangeability.
Each generation, it is true, has had in turn to experience the break-up of a known world. The remotest historical records yield anathema, that might have been written yesterday, on modern noise and hustle, on new-fangled ideas and the perilous paths pursued by the ignorant young; and wistful longings for the good old days.

But until to-day Everyman remained relatively self-contained, and could plan his life with fair certainty in a surrounding that could be counted upon to remain more or less in place. Himself, his house,
street, town, nation, all were stable; and beyond these secure stabilities his imagination rarely wandered.

The normal moral shocks awaiting him came gently. They were called disillusionments: change and decay, the loss, with age, of the sense of personal stability and personal permanence. But the solid earth remained unchanged, and one of the consolations of the elderly sane was the enchantment, growing in proportion to their own detachment, of the distant view of life, focussed now for the first time and free from the fret of immediacy, taking on an ever more moving beauty and intensity.

But to-day, it is not only that science from whom had come the news of the tumultuous movement of everything, has begun to doubt the sufficiency of its methods of approach to render any exact account of the ultimate nature of reality, but also that its news, all the latest news, that to-morrow may be contradicted, is now common property almost from the moment of its arrival.

Everyman lives in a world grown transparent and uncertain. Behind his experience of the rapidity and unpredicticability of change in the detail of his immediate surroundings is a varying measure of vicarious experience of the rapidity and unpredictability of change all over the world, and a dim sense that nobody knows with any certainty anything whatever about the universe of which his world is a part.

A new mental climate is in existence. Inhabited not only by those few whose lives are spent in research and those who are keenly on the lookout for the results of further research, but also in their degree by the myriads who have been born into the new world and can remember no other. Uncertainty, noise, speed, movement, rapidity of external change that has taught them to realise that to-morrow will not be as to-day, all these factors have helped to make the younger generation shock-proof in a manner unthinkable to the majority of their forbears.

And more than any other single factors (excepting perhaps Radio through which comes unlocalised, straight out of space, music with its incomparable directness of statement, and news forcing upon his attention the existence of others than himself and his relatives, friends and enemies; and knowledge, if he have the taste for it, and a truly catholic diversity of stated opinion) has the Cinema contributed to the change in the mental climate wherein Everyman has his being.

Insidiously. Not blatantly, after the manner of the accredited teacher, is the film educating Everyman, making him at home in a new world.

And this it is, this enlightenment without tears, that makes so many of those who were brought up under a different dispensation cry and cry without ceasing against both Radio and Cinema as spoon-feeders of an Everyman who becomes more and more a looker and a listener, increasingly unwilling to spend his leisure otherwise than in being entertained.
Up hill and down dale we may criticise both Radio and Cinema. Nothing is easier. Nor is it other than desirable that the critical faculty should play freely upon these purveyors of Everyman’s spiritual nourishment. But it is surely deplorable that so many people, both good earnest folk and the gaddfly cynic, should be so busy in and out of season with the parrot-cry of “spoon-feeding”? Deplorable that the Cinema, in the opinion of these pessimists, should be the worst offender. Radio, they declare, is sometimes, astonishingly and inexplicably, turned on as an accompaniment to occupation. But to “the pictures” everything is sacrificed; home, honour, mind, heart, body, soul and spirit. So they allege.

Is there an atom of justification for these wild statements? Do they not melt like morning mists before the sunny power of even half as much imaginative attention as the navvy may give to the average picture-show?

Cut out good films, instructional films, travelogues and all the rest of it. Leave only the average story-film, sensational or otherwise, the News Reel and the comic strip. Judge, condemn, all these, right and left. Is it possible to deny, even of this irreducible minimum of value, that it supplies to the bookless, thoughtless multitude the majority of whom do not make even that amount of unconscious contact with aesthetic and moral beauty that it is implied in going to church, a civilising influence more potent and direct than any other form of entertainment available in their leisure hours, and sufficiently attractive to draw them in large numbers? Is a man spoon-fed the moment he is not visibly and actively occupied?

Is there not a certain obscenity, a separation of the inner spirit from the outer manifestation thereof, in regarding pictures we despise and audiences we loftily look down upon in their momentary relationship as we imagine it to exist in the accursed picture-house? Should we not rather set ourselves the far more difficult task of conjuring up the pre-picture outlook on life of those who make no contact with art in any form, and then try to follow out in imagination the result of the innumerable gifts of almost any kind of film, bestowed along with it, unawares, and therefore remaining with the recipient all the more potently: the gift of quiet, of attention and concentration, of perspective? The social gifts: the insensibly learned awareness of alien people and alien ways? The awakening of the imaginative power, the gift of expansion, of moving, ever so little, into a new dimension of consciousness?

Surely those positive cultural activities are more than enough to balance the much-advertized undesirabilities and to disqualify the verdict of “spoon-feeding.”

The scaremongers would perhaps cease to wail if the film-fans, deserting the cinemas, battered down the closed doors of museums and picture-galleries and spent their evenings in silent contemplation not of lively human drama, and lively human nonsense and the living news of the
changing world, but of the immortal frozen records of the things of the spirit that are unchanged from age to age.

Has it occurred to them to reflect that film-audiences, popular picture audiences, growing by the bread they have eaten, are maturing, are themselves cultivating and improving the medium from which they have drawn life? And that these audiences seen in the bulk, disregarding single, exceptional individuals, are much more capable of appreciating the wares of museum and gallery than were, in the bulk, their pictureless predecessors?

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON.
is made out on paper, put into an envelope and handed over to the café proprietor. Thereupon each goes his own different and undetermined way. A few hours later, great distances separate them.

Title. THE DAY FOLLOWING.

The OTHER MAN transacts big business in a big office.

SHE takes a sunbath on a desert beach.

HE sells trinkets in a central street of a great town.

Title. YET ANOTHER DAY.

The OTHER MAN fishes in a dirty part of the port.

SHE shoots pots to pieces with a revolver, in a garden.

HE wanders among the dense crowds of the town.

Title. MEANWHILE.

The town. The country. The factory. The station. The street. . . .

Title. THE THIRD DAY.

By HIS, HER and the OTHER MAN'S watches it is three o'clock. The town clock marks the hour of three. The three persons arrive at the same time at the table of the café. The OTHER MAN takes out of a portefeuille sheets of folded paper containing plans relating to big business undertakings and companies, banks, etc. SHE, disconsolate, and with several unpaid bills. HE, a mechanical toy. . . . But the bet subsists and is still unsettled. Discussions. Nervousness. They call the café keeper and tell him to bring the envelope. They examine the paper.

Title. THE SIGNATURES WERE FALSE.
Arguments. Is the café keeper guilty? Scandal. The café keeper throws them out. Get out you fools!

Title. AN EXPERT IS STILL DELVING INTO THE MYSTERY.

Still nature in the foreground (close up) and fish-globe with a large fish swimming round.

The End.

(We hope we shall have the opportunity to see this film.)
CHECK UP ON TECHNIQUE: NUMBER TWO

Who ever reached the back of the mind of a stranger when speaking to him in any tongue other than his own? A translated novel is a distilled novel. Esperanto, at the moment, is without inflection, has no sound imagery. The truth is that language has so much imagery inherent in the sound that it is AN ECHO OF RACE MIND. There is only one universal film to be made: a film of the lore of earth elementals. (A universal film finding visual content in the patterns of the laboratory: not as a doctrine but as an imaginative possibility. Urge behind the beautifully planned crystal being the design urge of the artist? Hooey? But why not imagine it rather than missing something? It links, maybe, onto what Jung called "universal consciousness." Sounds would be cosmic, earth-rotated.) Switch back to Close Up's editorial to Vol. 7 No. 6. "With the establishment of the talking film, the world situation with regard to films was completely altered. Whereas, during the period of silent films, world distribution was fluid, now films are becoming more and more tied up within national limits." It is not, therefore, of any deep significance that portable sound projectors are being issued by various firms. The development of sound technique to be recorded as history (since the last survey in Close Up, Vol. 7. No. 3.) must be confined to perfecting of method. The wider circulation of films within national limits cannot, when so much material has to be sifted, be held as important as the improvement of apparata. That talkies were shown on the Scarborough Flier, that the Russians are selling a projector for sound films at £100 . . . these things must be left unsaid: even so, the work of selection will be arduous. . . .

RCA sponsored an ingenious method of cutting out all the sound track except that which actually contains signals. A black and white band run side by side on the sound track: sound makes the bands wave into each other. Small modulation of sound leaves a large area of white; any dirt, grain or abrasion on this white margin is responsible for ground noises. RCA now black out the white margin, following the envelope of the sound band. This process is accomplished with the aid of an amplifier operating a light valve whose output is so slow that it is inaudible. The light valve exposes "more or less of the track according to the average intensity of the sound being recorded at any given moment." RCA are, also, doing excellent work with experimental microphones. In their official statement they claim to be working towards an ideal directional microphone analogous with the human ear.

Western Electric have their own Noise Reduction Equipment. With the Western Electric system, when a sound track (positive) is run through
the reproducer, the "noise" from the photo-electric cell depends upon the amount of light reaching it. Thus, the problem is to reduce the light falling on the photo-electric cell as much as possible when small sounds are being reproduced, but proportionally to increase it for the reproduction of louder sounds. Western Electric accomplish this by recording a negative sound track which is very light in the silent portions, but which becomes much darker with the increase of sound intensity. Additional recording apparatus required consists of one amplifier and one noise-reduction-control-panel.

Gastone Frediani has invented a method of recording without photo-electric cells. The sound is photographed directly onto the edge of the film. The band of photographed images of sound is made of fine particles of silver possessing more or less electrical conductivity. The grid circuit of the first low-frequency amplifier is electrically connected with the film by means of a device of two electrical contacts, in the form of metal drums, placed at a certain distance from each other and electrically insulated. Since the film need not be transparent for the success of this system, it has been suggested that it be made of oil-cloth or paper. H. von Madaler has a system of recording mechanically, exactly like a gramophone record. Engraving is done in celluloid instead of wax. The record can be immediately replayed and reproduced 250 times without loss of quality. Another interesting, if irrelevant, idea in recording, is the multiple sound track reproduction on film of radio programmes. The length of film is limited to 128 feet with loops running continuously between two magazines. A revolution completed, the mechanism moves slightly across the face of the film so that an adjacent track can be recorded. (This may squirt PANIC into the gramophone business for operatic selections have been recorded in parallel tracks on 16 mm. films.) A 128 loop of normal stock
"Lenin's Address," a film for children directed by V. Petrov for Sojuzkino.

"L'allocation de Lénine," un film pour enfants, réalisé par V. Petrov pour Sojuzkino.

"Lenin's Ansprache" ein Film für Kinder. Regie: V. Petrov, für Sojuzkino.

with six tracks lasts an hour. Mihaly has shown the press an apparatus for recording and reproducing sound on 16 mm. stock: B. T. H. demonstrated an apparatus with a similar aim at the Radio Exhibition. So that makes up a nice bundle of all right for the amateurs! And now to the Bell Telephone Laboratories where a method of absolute time keeping has been invented. A clock synchroniser can be run with an error of a possible one-fiftieth or one-hundredth of a second per day. Technically this accuracy is obtained by "a tuned circuit employing a quartz oscillator." Thanks to this invention, a whole crop of new methods of sound recording are certain to be due for the next Check Up.
"Silent Sound" is coming into use for effects: whistles, for instance, have been filmed in a manner impossible to hear with the human ear. Engineers report that high notes recorded audibly are unreliable: electrical production ensures mathematical correctness. Simply: rapid alternations of electrical currents passed through a light valve vibrate it to desired frequency.

Wide Film opened the question of running independent sound systems. With Realife, the picture was taken on 65 mm. stock and issued to exhibitors on the standard 35 mm. The picture took up the whole of the stock and a separate film had to be provided for the sound track. It was the old story of exhibitors hardening against extra cost. Such a pity! Wide Film being so exciting, giving freshness with the new image outline to old situations. The new ultra violet recording might save the position: the full width of the film being used for the sound track which is superimposed over the image.

Miscellaneous:

The laborious production of speech without a speaker: words being drawn onto a cardboard roll and photographed. It took a hundred hours to draw the sound track of four words! But what a future for strange dramas in which monstrous (drawn) voices speak!

COLOUR. Mr. S. R. Wytcherley and Mr. Thorne Baker invited the press to see a new British colour system in which the stock is used as a light filter. It is a three colour process: minute colour squares having been printed onto the stock. The light passes through the base before reaching the emulsion: emulsion behind the red squares is reached only by red light, behind the green squares if affected only by green light, behind the violet squares sensitive only to violet. The important points about the system are: that the cost of the colour print is little more than that of black and white; and the colour print is optically obtained in one printing. 

Kodak Research Department have devised a method of double toning for films so that shadows and half-tones can be distinguished. "Commencing with a black and white image on positive motion-picture film, it is possible to colour this differently by purely chemical means so that the hue of the shadows is different from that of the half-tones while the highlights remain perfectly clear." Potassium alum is removed from the single-solution, iron-toning bath: half-tones, thereby, being converted to white silver ferrocyanide, shadows alone being blue toned. Now, if the film is dipped in a basic dye, the half-tones assume the colour of the dye. Paramount have been working on a three colour process (additive) which is said to cost 4½ cents a foot as compared with the old cost of 8½ cents a foot. Meanwhile, Mr. Olaf Bloch, of the Royal Photographic Society, has declared that the future of colour photography lies with other light sensitive materials than compounds of silver, and that some electrical means will probably be employed to record impressions which can be transferred to paper. Of course, directors of colour films will continue to take full
advantage of their medium by sprinkling lurid sets with gleaming objects and strangely making up their artistes.

Definitely, colour will benefit from the triple speed "pan" sponsored by Kodak. It has an amazing sensitivity to red and green. Studio lighting can be reduced two thirds: while it will be possible to photograph colour images without intense illumination. In Chéri Bibi, a close up was taken with only the light of a match. Other improvements with regard to film stock include the promise, by Professor Goldberg, of a practically grainless film formula. It is possible, with Professor Goldberg's film, to reduce the photograph of a book page to an area one-hundredth of a square millimetre and later to re-enlarge it to normal size. Dr. Miller Hutchinson, too, claims that he has eliminated grain without damaging the negative. The limit of frequency recorded on sound films can be raised, by the good Dr. Hutchinson, to more than 12,000 per foot. "The simple expedient of flattening the grain after the picture is taken is the basis of the new process: this is done chemically before the sensitisers are made solid by the hypo bath." Monsieur Lumière, the veteran film inventor, has been working on metal stock. . . .

A lot of new projection gadgets and trick screens have recently been demonstrated. The rubber-like screen was much publicised. A triple layer of porous material formed the older type of screen: there was no clear passage for the sound waves. On the other hand, the single layer rubber screen has about 100 holes to the square inch. James Bryson brought forward a method of splitting the projected image and recombining the two images on the screen. Some jarring yellow rays were held to be removed and grain was supposed to have been diminished. Soundproof portholes for projection rooms were put on the market. A high intensity projection lamp caused a great stir: the arc controlled by a magnetic circuit, the whole brilliance of the arc being concentrated at the most effective optical point.
High intensity is needed to offset porous screens; but conversion to high intensity is a costly procedure. The demand for more and more light has actually resulted in the production of synthetic diamonds in the projection-carbon's crater. Mid-intensity illumination arrived to reduce amperage: low intensity lamps are now able, after the expenditure of five shillings or so, to produce high intensity illumination on the screen. Small adapter chucks will fit to existing lamps (whether horizontal or angle arcs) so that a range of carbons, which possess all the characteristics of high intensity carbons, can be substituted.

American architects are considering the reversal of the auditorium slope towards the rear of the theatre instead of towards the stage. They wish to do away with the idea that some seats are better than others. Possibility of unexpected acoustic problems arising out of the application of this plan will be met by variety of building materials, such as the new asbestos praxboard. English experiments attempt to deliberately distort the sound output in the theatre with electrical filters in order to compensate for distorting effects of the hall (two blacks making a white!).

STEREOSCOPY. Here the stereoscopic stills! A lined screen is used in the plate holder: parallel black lines drawn on the opaque black coating on the rear side of the glass plate. The photograph is taken by moving the camera in an arc round the object: at any instant the camera forms a photographic image only of those parts of the plate that lie immediately back of the transport lines. Dr. Ives showed a highly expensive screen of glass rods reflecting light back in the direction from which it came. A large number of pictures, originally made from different view points, are projected on the screen; so that, with a large enough number of projectors, any observer, no matter what his position, sees a separate picture with each eye. George and John Berggren used a screen of crushed glass and a camera with a double lens acting on the same principle as the human eye. Their camera, they say, is capable of photographing scenes at a distance of five miles! "Such scenes," they add, "would be projected on a huge screen!"

The sophisticated public used to gasp when the avant-garde painted a close up on rubber, stretched the rubber to bursting point, and wound the camera backwards. Today, such simple joys are no longer possible: no more melting the transparency on a lantern slide and recording the merry fun. The public has transferred its interest to the scientists. Film travels at 2,160 miles an hour: 40,000 pictures a second! For such super speeds the camera has no shutter: successive pictures are made by intermittently illuminating the object being photographed. Complete organ without pipes! Stuart Davis jokingly suggested this to me when films first appeared on the horizon: recorded tones played through amplifier—now a fact. Marvels of the photo-electric cell! Even for turning on the street lamps after dusk, testing cigarette paper, the growth of bacteria in solution—sideshows to film wonders! . . .
Television on a screen 10 feet square. Television in colours by Mr. Sanabria the inventor of the new lamp. Formerly, neon lamps required a minimum of 140 volts; Mr. Sanabria's lamp (the gas heated inside so that it glows with a more powerful light) requires but 20 volts and responds, therefore, to weaker signals. And the television experts have evolved a system of recording feature films in a series of bands almost identical in appearance with a line spectrum: 5,000 feet of film can be recorded on a length of film not longer than 50 feet.

WHILE—

Mr. Cecil Hepworth knows how to stretch negatives in order to adapt the old silents for talkie synchronisation!

Oswell Blakeston.
REFLECTIONS

Director Benito Perojo, after a year's sojourn in Hollywood, summed up his observations with the statement that both European and American films would be bettered if each country's product were to adopt the distinctive merits of the other. "I firmly believe," he elaborated, "that a type of film drama which combines the best qualities of both would be greater than either type is now. A strong story, such as Europeans demand, dramatised to the quick tempo that makes American pictures so popular, might sweep any audience off its feet."

The super-film. Eugenio offspring of Europe and America. Truly, an engaging prospect; and withal so easy of attainment. Indeed, so easy, so simple, so obvious, that one is prompted to ask why somebody—Sr. Perojo himself, for instance—does not go blithely ahead and do something about it.

However, the humour of this recipe for a superior breed of cinema lies not so much in the naïve seriousness of its offering as in the fact that it has been doing active service for the past quarter of a century. The cinema has grown up on it; has taken its character from it. If no audience has yet been swept off its feet by a conjugation of European strong story and American pep, it is only because cinema audiences are consistently steady on their feet. Films are already as super as international adaptations and combinations can make them.

That Hollywood concededly dominates the cinema world finds explanation in its superior acquisitiveness and adaptiveness; its superior readiness to adopt the ideas, the talents, the inventions of others and combine them smoothly with its own. It has made itself cosmopolitan. All things to all men. Its films carry with them the influence of the numerous foreign elements that have contributed to its development and success. Without in the least affecting its high self-esteem, it frankly admits its indebtedness to Europe. In the free-for-all international game of give and take, it has taken more of art and craft from across the water than all the other nations together have taken from it.

American films indeed owe much to Europe. The very art of cinematography had its beginning in France. It is from there that Hollywood derived its elementary cinema technique—its double exposures, its fades, its dissolves, its overlaps. The first American trick movies were patterned after Melies' films of magic from the Theatre Robert Houdin in Paris. It was Pathé Frères who showed Hollywood how to make comedies. Their Max Linder was a revelation.

The quick tempo which impresses the European observer as characteristic of Hollywood films is but a persistent remnant of America's Gallic inheritance. Those early French divertissements quite took one's breath
From Pabst's new sound-film, "Kameradschaft." A Nero Production.

Cliches de "Kameradschaft," nouveau film sonore de G. W. Pabst. Production: Nero-Film.

Aus Pabst neuem Tonfilm "Kameradschaft." Ein Nero-Film.

away. Veloce. That alone describes them. Hollywood mimicked them for a time, but could not endure the pace. Nevertheless it took its cue from them — action, movement, acceleration, presto. Out of them evolved the American type of cinema hilarity—Mack Sennett comedies. And born of their face-smearing custard pies came the American successors of Max Linder, male and female—Chester Conklin, Mabel Normand, Ford Sterling, Flora Finch, Harold Lloyd, Charlie Chaplin, and so on and so on; an extravagant number of them in true American style.

Again, it was Italy that set Hollywood on its way to become the producer of the world's greatest film spectacles. Caberia, Julius Caesar, Quo Vadis came to the Western continent as marvels of cinema capabilities, and left their spectators here gasping with astonishment. America's then boasted saga, The Life of Buffalo Bill, in 2,500 feet, faded into puny insignificance beside these multiple reels of tremendous drama, vast multitudes of actors, and stupendous backgrounds. Hollywood at once caught their inspiration, their lesson of possibilities, and forthwith there followed Judith of Bethulia, The Birth of a Nation, Intolerance, and Civilisation, the vanguards of Hollywood's march to pre-eminence in the field that Italy had uncovered.
In the later development of the cinema Hollywood gleaned much from Germany. Its ingenuities of cinematography, its twists of dramatic construction, its effective use of symbolism were seized upon and adapted to American mode. *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, The Last Laugh, Variety* are typical of the Teutonic innovations and departures that set Hollywood agog. Each in turn was a challenge and stimulation to the Western producers. No attempt, however, was ever made to equal any one of them in its particular field of craft and novelty. As entities they were not for the American masses. Nevertheless each of them was rich in pickings.

England? Russia? So far Hollywood’s only draft upon either of them has been confined solely to personalities. British pictures have yet to impress Hollywood. Up to this time it has seen in them nothing but a mild and pendular reflection of itself. As to Soviet films Hollywood is of two minds. They are starkly rudimentary, uncouth, childish, reminiscent of the American cinema of twenty years ago, in their technical crudities and psychologic registrations. They are profound, incomprehensible, oracular, the avant-coureur of a new, dynamic, sociological force. But it matters not to Hollywood which of these antipodal appraisals may approximate the truth. It has no use for the Russian output any way it looks at it.

Clifford Howard.

*From Pabst’s new sound-film, “Kameradschaft.” A Nero Production.*

*Clichés de “Kameradschaft,” nouveau film sonore de G. W. Pabst. Production: Nero-Film.*

*Aus Pubsts neuem Tonfilm, “Kameradschaft.” Ein Nero-Film.*
From Pabst's new sound-film, "Kameradschaft." A Nero Production.

Clichés de "Kameradschaft," nouveau film sonore de G. W. Pabst. Production: Nero-Film.

Aus Pabsts neuem Tonfilm "Kameradschaft." Ein Nero-Film.

THE PRELIMINARY OF FILM ART

II

Film, Painting and Music.

In the already discussed categories of the vanguard film we notice evident analogies with the tendencies of modern painting, the ideas and problems of which are almost fully conveyed within the province of film art. It is a fact worthwhile mentioning that the propagators of such films are prevalently painters.

Generally in the theories concerning film art there prevails an erroneous idea that the film has very much in common with painting.

These frequent analogies of the film with painting, (met with among many film theorists) though in principle entirely erroneous, have their own foundation, being based on the view that the film as well as painting belongs to the same sphere of optical shaping. Nevertheless a principal and characteristic difference is being overlooked, which has been pointed out by Moholy-Nagy in his essay Noch einmal die Elemente (Once more the elements), wherein he confirms the simple and, as it would seem, evident truth, that while painting either absorbs or reflects light by means of colours, i.e., that an indirect form of optical shaping, in the film, contrary to this, such form is direct and beside the direct optical shaping the shaping of motion takes place also.
Besides the analogy with painting we also meet comparisons with music such as: "optical music," "counterpoint-composition," as maintained by Balazs, or "overtones of montage" mentioned by Eisenstein. Furthermore we meet discussions of problems of motion and rhythmisation on the ground of music* and in connection with same, are referred chiefly to Bergson and to his analysis of rhythm, motion, melody, etc. It seems that we have to do here with the method of "critical parallelism" (proof by analogy). If such a method gives momentary advantages, in further consequence it leads us to cross roads.

*The incorrectness of these analogies of the film with music is pointed out, among others, by Arthur Honegger, in his study Du cinéma sonore à la musique réelle (From the tone film to real music), where in consequence of his considerations, he distinctly states that "film montage is based on a principle entirely different from that of a musical composition."
with the opera and finishing with the revue and operetta, beating the record of the worst theatrical routine.

One must not forget, however, that the silent film, before having attained perfection, started with mobile kitsch-like photographs, and hence Balazs's conviction that in the future the sound film will refine our ear, giving to it as many sensations as the silent film has given to our eye. By an analogy with the culture of the eye, created by the silent film, Balazs sees the development of the sound film on a parallel road, i.e., on a road of creation of the culture of the ear.

While our optical sensations had attained their summit, we resented a hunger for additional sensations of the ear. Not so very long ago an orchestra had to perform the sound score in the musical illustrations "strictly corresponding to the picture," i.e., imitating the singing of nightingales or other birds in a scene of love, backing up war scenes by the imitation of shots and the rattle of machine guns.

The rôle of the sound film must not, however, be confined to completing the wants of the silent film. In our postulate with regard to the tone film we claim the creation of a new and individual art. The sonore film has "acoustic prospects," the significance and the importance of which we are not in a position to point out at present. Balazs analysing the "heard world" that surrounds us sets forth certain ideas, which in spite of their invention, are little persuasive.

There is no doubt about it that in the development of the tone film a great rôle will be played by the coloured film and as correctly maintained by Balazs, a film of this kind will have to overcome the co-called montage of colours, i.e., to consider beside the usual montage, the mutual relation of colours, their interference and their optical reaction. The same problem is complicated and becomes more difficult for solution in the three-dimensional film, as well as the stereoscopic and plastic ones.

The Film in the theatre.

The problem of adopting the film on a theatrical stage belongs, according to Balazs, to the problems of montage. The film in the theatre—we understand it as a part "inlaid" in the theatrical show, may be included and submitted to the general mise-en-scene, and this as a strictly independent whole, having only these or other contiguous points with the arrangement of a given scene or of a series of scenes.

These combinations of the theatre with the film irritate very much the "aesthetisizing" theatrelogues who see in this fact a lesion of the "purity" of theatrical art, forgetting as they do, that the theatre has always been a conglomerate of spiritual elements and of those pertaining to a spectacle; a place of spiritual and also of optical shaping. On the other hand it is wrong to think that by adapting a film to the theatre, will be removed the traditional and conventional contradiction on the stage between the mobile play and the static decor.
They do not pay attention to the disproportion of dimensions not allowing a complete symbiosis of the film with the theatre; for the rest it is a false way too. The solution of this contradiction belongs to the theatre and to its own technical perfections which will follow the need of getting the maximum of show possibilities out of its own apparatus, at the simultaneous consideration not of the film but of the important factor, which is and can be, the light on the stage. Samples of this have been given by Piscator and Meyerhold and by Schiller in Poland.

On the subject of modernizing the theatre, not in the way of film but of the theatre itself, much has been said by the authors of the project of the "simultanic theatre"* Andrew Pronaszko, Simon Syrkus, and also by Walter Gropius in his Totaltheater.

The ideas and endeavours of "filmisation" of the theatre have been opposed to by Irzykowski, who is rather an adherent of a contrary process, i.e., he wants the theatre not only to give up its courtship towards the film but to have it deprived of any filmistic element and to have it confined "to its own and very essential sphere, i.e., to the word."

Balazs sees the possibility of enriching the theatre by adapting the film, particularly for scenes in which conversations are going on "aside," i.e., by projecting them on the screen, thus revealing the inward changes of the protagonist, in one word, to realise in film projection all that it would be impossible to express otherwise. But in such conditions the spectator is being deprived of his own creative faculty, and his rôle in participating in what is happening on the stage is being diminished, his imagination is being reduced to an automaton, his intellect to a mechanical register of sensations.

There is a further point in which Balazs endeavours to defend the rôle of film in the theatre, namely, collective scenes, which cannot be performed in the theatre on such a scale as by the film. Balazs does not appreciate enough the rôle of Piscator and of Soviet producers who have the method of mise-en-scene operating with the masses. For those who have seen the arrangements of collective scenes of the Polish regisseur, Schiller, the question is beyond any discussion. For example, in the show The due Potemkin of Micinski, based on the revolutionary plot of 1905, besides the interesting construction of collective scenes, Schiller has given a good mise-en-scene of the rebellion on board the Potemkin in the shape of brief fragmentary, kaleidoscopic scenes with condensed dynamics, fully expressing the revolutionary tension of the rebellion raging on the steamer.

Although the means necessary for operating with masses are more abundant and stronger in the film than in the theatre, nevertheless masses directed by modern regisseurs have their own expressive and ideological aspect, not ceding to the masses in film from the point of view of plastics and dynamics.

Zygmunt Tonecki.


(Poland, 1931).
NEWS FROM PORTUGAL

The Fifth International Congress of the Critics took place in Lisbon, and on September 19th, the opening day, a cinematographic evening was arranged for the many distinguished visitors, and several Portuguese films were shown.

The programme was composed of the following films: *Douro*, a short documentary picture of the aspects and the traffic of the Douro river, (Oporto); *Nasaré*, an interesting record of the life of the fishermen at the
Nazaré beach; Alfama, another documentary picture of great beauty, showing one of the most picturesque and ancient quarters of Lisbon*; and A Severa, the big Portuguese sound film directed by Leitão de Barros.

Antonio Leitão is finishing his second picture, O Milagre da Rainha, with Antonio Fagim, Lina Fontoura, Heloisa Clara and Gina Froes in the cast. Several important scenes were filmed in Coimbra.

Campinos is the title of a new Portuguese talkie which should be completed by the time this issue appears. Antonio Luiz Lopes directing it with the assistance of his first cameraman Salazar Diniz. The cast includes Maria Helena, Maria Lalande, Gil Ferreira and T. de Sousa. The metteur en scene is acting also in the picture.

Among the silent documentary records produced by the Ulyssea-Film, I must mention Uma Feira na Maia, a nice film composed in a good modern cinematographic manner by two amateur cineastes. This picture shows a big fair in Maia (near Oporto) with all its picturesqueness and strange quality.

A. C.

MOTION PICTURE NEWS FROM CZECHOSLOVAKIA

Karel Lamac, a Czech director who is very well known in foreign countries, has just founded in Prague together with Vlasta Burian a new producing society under the social firm, Burian-Lamac-Film. This company will produce three pictures in a year with Vlasta Burian in the title part and Karel Lamac as the director. As Burian is now under contract to the Elektafilm, the first picture of this new society will not be produced probably till in the next year. Lamac will soon go to Paris where he will direct the new talking picture of Anny Ondra, The Bat, adapted from the musical comedy of Johann Strauss. This picture will be produced in Czech, German, French and English. Then Lamac will return to Berlin to make there the screen version of The Fellowship of a Frog by Edgar Wallace.

The Third Troop is the title of a new Czech war picture to be produced soon. The story is based upon a successful novel of the same name by Josef Kopta who has also written together with V. Wasserman the continuity. This picture will have no principal parts, its chief dramatic element being the solidarity and admirable comradeship of a collective of unknown heroes. It will be a talking picture but the dialogues will be reduced to 10 per cent. of the whole picture. Mr. J. Kabelik, representative

* See Close Up, Vol. 8, No. 1.
of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer in Prague, is the producer of this picture which will be directed by Svatopluk Inneman as soon as he completes *Karel Havlicek Borovsky*.

According to the last statistics, there are in Prague 51 sound theatres. The society Merkurfilm has sent an invitation to Mr. Granowsky to come to Prague to produce here the Czech version of his excellent picture, *The Song of Life*. He will very probably accept this invitation.

The new Czech sound camera, devised by Josef Slechta, has achieved a great success not only in Prague but also in foreign countries. The most important advantage of this camera is that the sound and the picture can be registered at the same time on one single negative. Such companies as Tobis, Klangfilm, Sirius-Farbenfilm, Fox-Movietone of Europe, are using it and Mr. Otto Kanturek, one of the most prominent cameramen of Berlin, has declared that Slechta's device beats all other sound cameras. He has himself worked with it during the last two years and achieved the best results.

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**FLY AT ONCE—ALL IS NOW KNOWN!**

Miss Mary Field directed *The Mystery of Marriage*, making generous use, from external evidence, of *The Secrets of Nature* stock shots.

The throw-away announces the opus as, “A fascinating Study of All Forms of Life—In Love, Courtship and Parenthood—A Frank Explanation of the Attraction Between the Sexes!”

Picture opens shot of maiden in country lane hiding behind hedge. Enter boy-friend whistling. Maiden discovered. Boy-friend, “Oh! you must marry me, darling. Why! I had a rise this year and I expect to have another rise next year.”

So—a good time was had by all!

O. B.

The Cinema and Film Industry supplement to the *Manchester Guardian Commercial* (September, 1931) is a creditable job of work and its usefulness is out of all proportion to its price (a humble threepence).

Practically all the phases of the industry likely to interest both the technical student and the fan are covered. Studio lighting, by J. C. Warbis, the technical genius of the “Cinema,” records the most modern developments in this mystic art; G. F. Sanger of Movietone reveals a few of the problems of newsreel construction, and the veteran Will Day contributes some stimulating thoughts on “Films by Wireless.”

Other articles cover projection problems, make-up, the cinema organ, photography, colour and sound recording.

Ralph Bond.
Lotte Reiniger's new silhouette film, *Harlequin*, is a pantomime based on the figures and ideas of the old Italian *commedia dell'arte*. The action is so condensed that, in spite of all the intrigues between Harlequin, the gardener's wife, the wealthy spinster, Colombine and the other 23 characters, the film lasts no more than half an hour. The accompanying music has been chosen from the works of contemporary composers: the gardener and his wife dance to a *Rigaudon* of Rameau, an *Arietta* from Pergolese's *Serva Padrona* accompanies the lovers in the park, and Lully's *Minuet* from *Le Bourgeois Gentilhomme* is played as funeral march when Harlequin is led to execution. Although the film with its 47 figures of various sizes and its 25 different scene decorations is only two reels long, it has taken Lotte Reiniger more than six months to make it. Photographs of some of its scenes and characters appeared in our last number.
THE IDEA

Berthold Bartosch, formerly Lotte Reiniger's collaborator in The Adventures of Prince Achmet, Running after Luck, etc., is at present in Paris working on a trick film freely adapted from Frans Masereel's woodcut novel, The Idea. Out of Masereel's typically bold woodcut style with its harsh and jagged blacks and whites, he has succeeded in evolving a new trick film technique of extraordinary beauty and subtlety, halfway between the silhouette film and the cartoon film. Gray tones predominate and lend the scenes showing factories, tenements, streets, cafés, canals, workers' meetings, etc., an atmosphere such as is to be found in some Japanese prints. The scenes and figures are so constructed that they can be lit from above and below as they lie on the trick table. The contours and plastic values of the white cardboard figures are brought out by flakes of black cardboard stuck wildly together in a way that is reminiscent of Van Gogh's brushwork. If the movements of the figures are as successful as the pictorial composition of certain scenes, The Idea bids fair to become one of the most astonishing trickfilms ever made. It should be ready at the beginning of 1932.

E. W. W.

ON SHOW

It would be very good to take Gertrude Stein with one to the annual exhibition of the London Salon of Photography; then, she could remark on leaving in a loud voice, "CONTINUOUS PRESENT!"

This year's impression was made by Paul Fripp with some corrugated cardboard as with a wood shaving from a plane. N. Barany was feature player, making some pretty patterns of disorder (bits of metal work) and order (a crystal ball and cut loops of paper ribbon). A Kono dared to be abstract. Nicely sentimental: Goodwin's plump Cypress cut in half horizontally, Gordon Coster's Fireworks grouped round a pillar of light, K. Schwerdtfeger's Giraffe (because of the giraffe), Sinkinson's Head of Youth (because of the youth).

As for the rest of the output, one can stand in front of the portrait of the photographer's wife (looking as if she was never intimidated by a male servant bringing round the fish) and remark, as a famous critic did during the most emotional moment of a Polish talkie, "That is not funny!" Or, as another famous critic once said, one can go out and do some comic relief!

Like last year, the excitement at the Exhibition of the Royal Photographic Society is the Technical Section. The walls of the pictorial rooms can be safely neglected: they seem to be on the same artistic plane as the curtain at a much-used trade-show theatre which must most adequately represent Betty Balfour's idea of a nice evening wrap!
On the other hand, some of the technical stuff is stunning. Russell T. Neville's flash-light interior of a cave is truly enchanted; the radiograph of Star Fish is a lovely thing from the X-ray Section of Messrs. Ilford, Ltd.; the Erratic Crystals of Bromide of Potassium produced on a repellent support (tower of ivory-glass), the Design Motives from Chemical Crystallisations, the Normal Radiographic Appearances of the Teeth—they are all pictures full of strange beauty. It is good to note that the first-rate technical photographers have individual style: Dr. Alfred Grabner achieves marvellous flat patterns with transverse sections of organic matter (Len Lye would like these); Ranald Rigby carries out microscopic work in the round; Fred Koch photographs Mineral Salts as if they were sculptural constructions. Perhaps the most magic of the technical-print exhibits are the six photos of the Night-blooming Cereus taken by Martin Vos. This wondrous flower blooms only at night and for one night only: "it commences to close at midnight, never to open again!"

Oswell Blakeston.

One of the minor joys in life is the perusal of the news sheets sent out by the film publicity men. One of these days someone will make a collection of the choicest morsels, but in the meantime I present two specimens for the delight of my fellow men.

After a lucid dissertation on the merits of a British film we are informed that Mr. X is responsible for the photography "which, it is said, is likely to impress filmgoers."

From the announcement of yet another British film, for which an eminent composer has prepared a special musical score, it appears that the gentleman in question, although at first disturbed by the technicalities of the studio was not for long dismayed for "on one occasion he continued to play throughout an earthquake in Italy, thereby preventing a panic."

After prolonged meditation and fasting, we believe that here is an occasion when comment really would be superfluous.

R. B.

**STREET SCENE**

We feared that *Street Scene*, the film, would be crushed by the spacial limitations of *Street Scene*, the play, but we were wrong and hasten to congratulate King Vidor on a fine achievement.

*Street Scene* proves the tremendous possibilities of sound and music wedded intelligently to the pictorial image. The sequence when the husband returns and shoots his wife's lover is a triumph of dramatic construction. From a measured, peaceful tempo the story suddenly becomes charged with dynamite. The frantic fear of the boy as he shouts his warning again and again, the cry of terror bursting from the room, the revolver shots, the broken window—the entire sequence photographed from
the street with a crashing crescendo of music welling up, forcing itself into the consciousness, clutching the spectator right into the drama and suspense of the moment.

The crowd scenes, the "incidentals" subtly weaving their atmosphere of reality, are fully representative of what Hollywood can do when it tries. The milling crowds on the elevated railway, from which Rose gets her first glimpse of the tragedy in the boarding house, the mass of humanity miraculously springing from nowhere as the shots are fired, the boy on the bicycle ambling down the middle of the road as the girl walks out of it all—these and a hundred other little details add their quota to a film that reveals thought and intelligently planned construction in every foot.

As for the people in the boarding house, it would be unjust to single out any player for special honours, but I cannot help feeling that Sylvia Sidney was the one actress possible for the part of Rose.

We repeat—Street Scene is a fine piece of craftsmanship which overcomes the limitations that many people thought would prevent it being filmed filmically.

RALPH BOND.

BOOK REVIEWS


An interesting and worth-while essay this, done by a man who not only knows what he’s talking about—which, it is true, can sometimes, though not here, be as much of a nuisance as a virtue, depending on what one wants to say—but is sufficiently discerning to choose aspects of his subject which make it eminently worth reading about. In other words, he has accomplished an essay (less critical than informative) free of any taint of the tedious proselytising streak your essayist (either through some fault of his constitution, or maybe the constitution of essay writing itself) sooner or later nearly always acquires; particularly, of course, if his essays are about his fellow men. That suggestion of omniscience mixed with condescension, that episcopal and missionary-like inability to refrain from meddling in the affairs of others, so characteristic of our time, and those who write on cinema.

Thank goodness, here is someone with the gumption to go straight to his subject, whose interest is in disclosing it, in examining it, rather than in muddled pyrotechnics. Madame Reiniger has hosts of admirers, many of them still wondering how she achieves her incredible fluidity in spacial illusion. Let them read this little book, that is what it’s about.

Not always does she work alone—I think I am right in saying this, though maybe it should go into the past tense, since I am reading about
Achmed, in which she had the assistance of Walther Ruttmann, Berthold Bartosch and Alexander Kardan. These assistants were engaged in creating the "cloud, mist and other effects such as are to be found in the magic fight," by painting them "on a glass shelf situated under the trick table, between the silhouette play and the lighting."

Very good they were, too! So are the photographs of various figures employed in certain films, among them an eagle made for Kriemhild's Dream in Fritz Lang's Nibelungs, but unfortunately never used. Ruttmann's Dream of Hawks was substituted. I should like to have seen this eagle "in flight." A formidable brute, it is, and, judging by the number of joints one can count, capable of almost infinite movement with every feather of its brindling tail and wings, to say nothing of its thoroughly rapacious claws. A hell of a dream that would have been!

"As a prelude to cutting, the figure is usually sketched out roughly in chalk or charcoal on the verso of the cardboard; but such sketches are merely intended to save errors in the proportions of the figure. The rhythm of the lines, expression of the features and details of dress all possess that unmistakable quality that comes from the subtle and incisive cutting of a pair of scissors, and not from the random wanderings of a pencil or a pen."

There is something very stimulating and intrepid about it all. The author has allowed this impression to emerge, he has kept himself in the background, avoided the kind of rant that genuine appreciation can tempt one into; has, in short, made a clean job of it, wherefore congratulations. - K. M.

Cinema. A Review of Thirty Years' Achievement. C. A. Lejeune. Published by Alexander Maclehose. 5s.

On the whole it becomes more and more difficult to read books about the cinema. That mumbo-jumbo people just will utter! Here is a glowering exception. Here is something thoroughly worth studying, not only for its specific and essential relevancy, but for many virtues besides; for understanding, control, vision, enthusiasm without distraction, information without uplift, hope without quarrelsomeness.

And, talking of quarrelsomeness, let no one think that because I am about to start off with a complaint I wish to belittle an excellent piece of work. Far from it. Among many, I am grateful to the author for producing one of the few cinema books which, to tell the truth, I have been able to read of late. And with zest too.

My complaint is disappointment in the first chapter that Chaplin is again approached as a minor diety, as the great panjandrum of the whimsical. Chaplin is played out now, spoilt really by what has been written about him. Little has survived the wreckage. And no wonder. Anyone
NOTE

By Charles E. Stenhouse.

These "stills" from the talky La Mort d'un Ruisseau were sent to me by a young cinéaste who lives in Paris.

I regret that my written request for full particulars of this film has up to the time of writing remained unanswered, and consequently the only knowledge I possess of this—what my correspondent terms "violent" film, is that it is La Mort d'un Ruisseau, sound and talking film by Henry Levesque, Roger Livet and Jean Calvel, and features Rita Stolinauskay and Marthe Winterstein.

E. & O. E. and "sans aucune responsabilité."

"Death of a Stream," a sound-and-speech-film by Henry Levesque, Roger Livet and Jean Calvel.

"La Morte d'un Ruisseau," film sonore et parlant de Henry Levesque, Roger Livet et Jean Calvel.

"Der Tod eines Baches," ein Tonfilm von Henry Levesque, Roger Livet und Jean Calvel.
who could support the assertive, cantankerous, ebullient, lachrymose, diabetic, proselytising, hysterical drivel that has tried to make another saviour, rimmed with tears and tenderness, of a perfectly healthy-minded, ever so slightly bawdy little man, would have to be a bigger fraud than he. It's that vile word—waif! What a sickeningly maudlin, flatulent strain is revealed in this worship of the pathetic! What a falsifying of the sound business principle on which Chaplin built his success, namely, that frank sadistic mirth is not too much for a conscience-stricken civilization, be it sugar coated first, dolled up in the appurtenances of pathos, whereby one may wipe away a "furtive" tear with one hand, and cover a grin with the other, and feel the better for it.

Once a Chaplin comedy meant laughter. Then laughter through tears. Then it became a sort of gulping competition. Disgusting! He went too far, not, I am sure, because that was the way he would have chosen, but because he was driven to it by the religious mania of the mob. That is why one must deplore another adulatory chapter, making much of the pathetic element. Who cares a hang about pathos who is himself sunny in disposition? Chaplin would never have dubbed himself a gutter Galahad in a sunny climate. He would have just knocked about with the rest—the sort of fellow you wouldn't mind standing a drink or a meal—a friendly little muggins with (let it be hoped) a repertoire of dirty stories. Its that greyness that does it, that sciatical Celtic twilight!

And no mention is made of Chaplin as director, as maker of one of the most significant films in history; where, indeed, he does shine with a brilliance that may approach the genius attributed to him in his far more insignificant capacity as clown and waif in one.

However, these things happen, and if we begin in a mist—a positively Celtic one—it is a mist from which emerges the rightly appreciated figure of Mack Sennett, to whom so much thanks is due that probably in the future some perfectly ghastly monument will be erected to him, surrounded with Keystone cops and bathing belles in reinforced cement.

There is a very neat chapter on Fairbanks, rightly linking up his infectious heartiness with poetry. "The truth is that under all the acrobatics and mummery, the schoolboy exuberance and the swagger, there lies in him a streak of pure artistry. I do not think he is himself aware of the fact. I hope he never will be . . . ."

Mary Pickford, Lubitsch, "the people's director, the spokesman of and for the mass," Von Stroheim, with "a flair for polished sensuality . . . a courteous old-school viciousness that excites the admiration of a new world cruder in crime," Nazimova, "poised and balanced, on the tip of movement like some Hermes in bas-relief," and Walt Disney, complete the American scene. Omissions are accounted for in an admirably clear-thinking apologia which gives the book its preface.
The European Film section takes in its sweep, Sweden, Germany, "the land of fairy tales," France, and the U.S.S.R. To my mind it is in these chapters the book really comes into its own, perhaps because the author is herself European simply. There are excellent chapters on Pommer and Pabst, on Feyder and Clair; although it is impossible to agree, concerning Feyder, that his _Therese Raquin_ was greater than _Les Nouveaux Messieurs_, "limited by its own superb qualities of satire." Limited to what? The intellect, surely? That's no limitation. Here, if anywhere, is a tonic film, healthy, mellow and robust; a kind of Silaenus among films, pagan and irreverent. A few more like it is exactly what we need. What's more, as subject matter it will never date, because of its laughter, its wholesomeness, the inevitable absurdity of statesmen. Beside it, when this epoch is over, much of the Russian output will seem cantankerous and tart—does now—a little livery. Instead of fretful, paranoiac gloating, Feyder tossed authority, to the winds with pungent and hearty gibes. What else is it fit for? It's the same thing as with Chaplin. People can't laugh any more. They want pathos, they demand to be aggrieved. An age of masochists, willing only to be abused, to concede the superiority of almost anything, particularly if it makes them uncomfortable. No wonder they get bilious and complain.

What is undoubtedly the major attraction of a (let this be clear) very attractive book, is an approach both unmuddled and appreciative, to a subject about which more nonsense is spouted than almost any other. Ever so slightly pantherine is the dexterity of judgment. No hazards, no faint, hesitant theorisings. Not a bit of it. A model in compactness, in commonsense, which certainly does not exclude appreciations as sensitive as they are mature, catholic as they are orderly. K. M.

_Celluloid. The Film of Today._ By Paul Rotha. Longman. 7s. 6d.

There is in England today a group of young cineasts whose doctrine is based on the teachings of John Grierson. This doctrine is the offspring of a misunderstanding of Russian film technique on one side, and muddled thinking on the other, and now that one of Mr. Grierson's Young Gentlemen has taken to writing books, it is time to examine the mis-conception of cutting which is the foundation of his faith.

The trouble seems to be that word "montage." To Mr. Rotha it means the joining together of film strips of varying lengths, and little else. To the Russians, who do not believe in metrical cutting, it means the complete synthesis of a film. The Russians looked to Hollywood, the home of film technique, for their foundations. They saw in Chaplin's method of creating a non-visual idea by the conflict of two distinct images, e.g., the shot of a collar cut into the conversation in _A Woman of Paris_, the only practical way of expressing an idea on the screen. This led them to the increased use of the stationary camera and the straight cut. The time-
value (length) of a film strip and the accent (angle, distance, etc.) of a shot is therefore determined solely by the effect required from its position between the strips before and after it. Rhythm is born naturally as the result of such mounting, whereas with Grierson, rhythm (by which he means time-values, ignoring accent) is a rigid framework around which shots are draped. This is the difference between the living emotional force of Türksib and the dead jig-saw-puzzle dreariness of Drifters.

Mr. Rotha appears to have read a good deal about the cinema, most of which he has not been able to digest properly owing to this fundamental misconception and to his lack of practical experience. Probably this latter reason also accounts for his having nothing constructive to say on the subject of sound, about which so little has been written. We have, however, a certain amount of original thought on the subject of cutting, of which the following (from page 155) is a typical example:

"Many of these early films of pace (Westerns) were extremely well cut, not because their editors were aware of any principles of long or short cutting, but because they were cut purely in terms of movement."

And he remains a disciple of metrical cutting.

The book consists of three sections, a general introduction, a collection of film reviews and a pair of essays, all written in the faith. There is also an appendix, the production units and principal actors of some 27 recent films.

The appendix is interesting.

D. B.


"There are three ways," says Mr. Hacker, "of separating scenes—by using the dissolve, the iris or the fade. Of the three the dissolve is probably the most effective as scenes can melt one into the other without impairing the rhythm. . . . Scenes should not jerk from one to the other, as in most of the present day motion pictures, unless some novel effect is wanted." I am sorry not to be able to agree with Mr. Hacker, as he is trying to "reveal the significance of the future art and to help in showing the way," but perhaps I am not sufficiently "modernistic." Of course every cut must mean something, but so must every dissolve, and in Mr. Hacker's 9 scenarios he has ruined the effect of almost every shot-junction by using a dissolve instead of a straight cut. About 6 of his 370 odd dissolves are justifiable.

One of his scenarios consists of a single scene, hundreds of feet long, but how his camera does cover ground!

However the book is written, in spite of everything the blurb on the wrapper has to say, not for the serious cineaste but for the user of sub-standard stock, upon which no serious work can be done, and it would therefore be unfair to expect a work on the Cinema.

D. B.

Filmbücher für alle. Edited by A. Kraszna-Krausz. I. Max Tiesler: "Schmalfilm als Schulfilm." (Wih, Knapp, Halle an der Saale, Germany.) 1.80 Rm.

In the preface to the first volume of the new series Filmbücher für alle, Krasna-Krausz, the editor says, that the aim of them is, the showing of new possibilities for amateurs.
CLOSE UP

The use of narrow-width-films in schools is the object of the first small book, in which the problem is treated not only from the technical aspect, but, experienced teachers cooperating, from the pedagogical one. The question of the regular use of films in teaching has already been discussed in Close Up, and we are glad of any progress made in that direction. According to Max Tiesler’s opinion, the narrow-width film seems to solve the problem due to its qualities: relative cheapness and easy handling in projecting as well as in shooting. Besides every standard film can be printed on a 16mm. stock and so be projected on the small apparatus. A further advantage of the narrow-width-stock is its being manufactured from non-inflammable material.

The author shows us some nice stills as examples for shots which could be taken by a school class on a walk or excursion for instance, and there is a chapter advising the teacher in the production of design trickfilms; there is a description of a fascinating map, and I imagine a talented teacher would be able to make the most marvellous use of self-designed films in his mathematical, science or history lessons. The technical execution is well explained and seems very simple.

There are descriptions of various projectors, screens, advice on how the classrooms may be darkened by curtains, etc.

But those also who do not want simply to project, but make films themselves, will find all the details they want to know.

There is even a plan for the organisation of the film renting service for schools. It is interesting to hear that more than 400 educational films printed on narrow-width stock are already existing and can be bought from the big firms. There is a useful chapter on the prices of the apparatus, stock, developing, renting, etc., and a list of the chief books on the subject.

T. W.

Dawn’s Left Hand, by Dorothy M. Richardson, published by Duckworth, 7s. 6d.

It is not possible to forget the first meeting with Miriam, the heroine of Miss Dorothy Richardson’s many volume novel, Pilgrimage. Our own memory goes back to Backwater in 1916. It was a moment when normal adolescence ceased, and although the suppression was accepted, it was a violently imposed external barrier and actual impulses made themselves felt in a hidden way, through delight in small event that made the days endurable or despair that was as old and barren as the press communiques at night. There were food queues, there was no heat in winter-damp rooms. Against this cold, and never ending anxiety, a searchlight swung in black sky. Into this suspended moment came Pilgrimage, and it its pages growth was possible.

It was a peculiar sensation, to be conscious that development was barred not because of any inward conflict, but for sheerly external reasons imposed by war. Reading Pointed Roofs and Backwater, not one but many, were able to resume for a few hours, the growth proper to their age. It was not escape, but an actual sense of movement.

Perhaps it is for this reason that Dorothy Richardson seems to express, more than any other writer, the English spirit. Her books are the best history yet written of the slow progression from the Victorian period to the modern age. She is the English Proust and like him, has written for the few, but her understanding of character is much deeper, and she
sees so universally that her books belong most to the circles of workers where for some inexplicable reason, her work is little known.

Miriam becomes a teacher, in Germany and England, then a governess, then a secretary. She has a brief holiday in Switzerland, occasional country weekends, the ordinary average life of hundreds fifteen years ago, of thousands now. But this Turksib of a worker's years is set against the background of the emerging of the modern world and of her own view of life. Unless, she says, the human being is often alone, it is impossible to appreciate the richness of human individuality; London or the country-side are only fully to be enjoyed in contrast one with the other.

What a film her books could make. The real English film for which so many are waiting. Apart from Miriam herself, the pages are filled with people, men and women who resume their whole thought and vocabulary in a few phrases or a few actions, immediately to be recognised, for they are to be met every day. Dawn's Left Hand begins (as perhaps films should) in a railway carriage. Miriam returns from a holiday in Switzerland; the London year goes by, apparently nothing happens, underneath the surface an epoch of life, of civilisation, changes. She leaves a flat and the narrow boundaries of a social worker's mind for the communal richness of the boarding house, familiar to readers of previous volumes. She meets a friend, she refuses to marry a doctor, her own development progresses. And in each page an aspect of London is created that like an image from a film, substitutes itself for memory, to revolve before the eyes as we read.

This volume, the tenth in the series, is probably the finest written by Miss Richardson to date.

Dorothy Richardson, by John Cowper Powys (Joiner and Steele, 3/6) is an excellent study of Miss Richardson's methods, though not all readers will agree with his conclusions. It is, however, particularly to be commended to those who hesitate to begin Pilgrimage, because they have not read all the previous volumes.

W. B.

A RETROSPECTIVE EXHIBITION OF AMERICAN PHOTOGRAPHY, arranged with the cooperation of Alfred Stieglitz, and showing a selection of work from the daguerreotype to the present day, was held at the JULIEN LEVEY GALLERY, 602, Madison Avenue, New York, from November 2 to November 21.

The most important section of the exhibition was devoted to the work of the group later known as the Photosecessionists, who, under the leadership of Alfred Stieglitz, organised the magazine Camera Work in 1903 and were pioneers in the fight for the recognition of photography as a fine art.

The exhibition demonstrated the manner in which this group—Alfred Stieglitz, Edward Steichen, Gertrude Kasebier and Clarence White, between the years of 1903 and 1910, influenced the development of American photography, and laid the basis for what might be called a reorganisation and renaissance. The death of Clarence White in 1924, and the retirement of Gertrude Kasebier withdrew their influence from the field, but Stieglitz and Steichen, with Paul Strand and Charles Sheeler as later recruits, continued to develop steadily, and became the prototypes for the younger men such as Ralph Steiner, Anton
Bruehl and others. It is the hope of the gallery that this later development, illustrated in the current show may constitute a valuable re-statement of aims and incentive for future departures.

Zwemmer Gallery.

International Exhibition of Film Stills.

Between October 22 and November 5, stills from America, England, France, Germany and the U.S.S.R. were exhibited. The collection, which was assembled by Mr. Paul Rotha, contained a well chosen selection of the best films of each country represented.

An excellent idea, and a welcome opportunity for the many desirous of reviving memories or gaining new impressions. It might have been a good idea to include a section devoted to the worst stills in existence (the world teems with them), and—better still—a few from the earliest films; this by way of contrast to give a sort of spacial, geographical outline of the film's scope and achievement.

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## Contents of Vol. VIII

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As Is. Kenneth Macpherson</td>
<td>71 &amp; 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Be British. Dan Birt</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before Daybreak. Y. Ogino</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Before the Microphone of German Broadcasting. A. Kraszna-Krausz</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Berlin, April 1931. Bryher</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brief History of Czech Motion Pictures. Karel Santar</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Can Cinema be Taught. Oswell Blakeston</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Certain General Conclusions. L. Duckworth</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Check-up On Technique, No. 2. Oswell Blakeston</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comment and Review</td>
<td>73, 140, 230 &amp; 325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coming Revolution, The. Clifford Howard</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuous Performance. Dorothy Richardson</td>
<td>182 &amp; 304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dinamic Square. The. Serge Eisenstein</td>
<td>2 &amp; 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education as a By-Product. Clifford Howard</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Educational and Cultural Film Commission. Mary Chadwick</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English Television. Robert Herring</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eye and Ear in the Theatre. Mark Segal</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>First Russian Soundfilms. A. Kraszna-Krausz</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Future of the Amateur Film Movement, The. L. B. Duckworth</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hollywood Review. Clifford Howard</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese Cinema. Carl Koch</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My First Sound Film. Eugen Deslaw</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Kino, The. H. A. Potamkin</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes from America. Herman Weinberg</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes on the Portuguese Cinema. Alves Costa</td>
<td>17 &amp; 325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Novel Into Film. H. A. Potamkin</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On Film Patrol. Gordon Young</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On the Mountains and in the Valleys. Karel Plicka</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Petite Lise, L.A. Jean Lenauer</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preliminary of Film Art. Zygmunt Tonecki</td>
<td>193 &amp; 321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prelude to a Criticism of the Movies. Herman G. Weinberg</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Film Form. Serge Eisenstein</td>
<td>107</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Principles of Film Recording. Dan Birt</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queen Kelly and Queen Victoria. H.A.M.</td>
<td>136</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflections. Clifford Howard</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Revu du Poete, l.a. Stenhouse</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seasons Retrospect, A. A. Kraszna-Krausz</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stills and their Relation to Modern Cinema. Oswell Blakeston</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strange Adventure of David Gray</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Theatre of the Future and the Talking Film, The. Zygmunt Tonecki</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Days</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Films. C. E. Stenhouse</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two Little Stories. O.B.</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Contributors to Vol. VIII.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Birt, Dan</td>
<td>Be British</td>
<td>284</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principles of Film Recording</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blakeston, Oswell</td>
<td>Can Cinema be Taught?</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Check-up On Technique, No. 2</td>
<td>311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stills and Their Relation to Modern Cinema</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two Little Stories</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bryher</td>
<td>Berlin, April 1931</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hollywood Code, The</td>
<td>234 &amp; 280</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chadwick, Mary</td>
<td>Educational and Cultural Film Commission</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Costa, Alves</td>
<td>Notes on the Portuguese Cinema</td>
<td>17 &amp; 325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deslaw, Eugen</td>
<td>My First Sound Film</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duckworth, L. B.</td>
<td>Certain General Conclusions</td>
<td>207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Future of the Amateur Film Movement, The</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eisenstein, Serge</td>
<td>Dinamic Square, The</td>
<td>2 &amp; 91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principles of Film Form</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Herring, Robert</td>
<td>English Television</td>
<td>286</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Howard, Clifford</td>
<td>Coming Revolution, The</td>
<td>214</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Education as a By-Product</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Hollywood Review</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reflections</td>
<td>318</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Koch, Carl</td>
<td>Japanese Cinema</td>
<td>296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kraszna-Krausz, A.</td>
<td>Before the Microphone of German Broadcasting</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>First Russian Soundfilms</td>
<td>300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Season's Retrospect, A</td>
<td>225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenauer, Jean</td>
<td>Petite Lise, la</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macpherson, Kenneth</td>
<td>As Is</td>
<td>71 &amp; 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ogino, Y.</td>
<td>Before Daybreak</td>
<td>290</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plicka, Karel</td>
<td>On the Mountains and in the Valleys</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Potamkin, H. A.</td>
<td>New Kino, The</td>
<td>64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Novel into Film</td>
<td>267</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richardson, Dorothy</td>
<td>Continuous Performance</td>
<td>182 &amp; 304</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Santar, Karel</td>
<td>Brief History of Czech Motion Pictures</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Segal, Mark</td>
<td>Eye and Ear in the Theatre</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenhouse, C. E.</td>
<td>Reve du Poete, la</td>
<td>134</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Two Films</td>
<td>232</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonecki, Zygmunt</td>
<td>Preliminary of Film Art</td>
<td>193 &amp; 321</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Theatre of the Future and the Talking Film</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weinberg, Herman G.</td>
<td>Notes from America</td>
<td>188</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Prelude to a Criticism of the Movies</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young, Gordon</td>
<td>On Film Patrol</td>
<td>108</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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