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CLOSE UP

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C L O S E U P

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Love locked out. Jannings as a tramp comes back to look at his family, who believe him dead. *A Paramount film.*

(see page 10)

FROM "STURMFLUT"

(see page 17)



C L O S E U P

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No 1

July 1927

AS IS

BY THE EDITOR

Fifty odd years hasn't done so badly in getting an art into the world that fifty more will probably turn into THE art, but now, after somewhat magnificent growth, one feels here is its critical age. Its humble Pier Penny Peep Show beginning is still far too evident, and one sees that in a very short while the thing that people now go to see will have become tradition, and standard, as the past tense in literature, harmony in music, and representative conventions in painting. Public was right enough FOR public when it began by saying "Films are trash". They went on being trash, but more pompous trash, and the public took to them. It was all purely box office stunts. Art had nothing to do with it. That was all perfectly alright. I went myself solemnly at the age of nine and watched stockades being burned by Indians in one reel, and although I wasn't sold on what I had gone to look at, I got the mesmerism of the thing, and something quite apart from purely conscious felt, oh yes, this is right, this is apt. This belongs.

The thing was, first of all, to get the medium developed so far as to be FIT for art. Box office stunts meant that one film producer was competing with other film producers, and it was up to them to get in first on anything new, and watch out, and borrow or purloin ideas, to develop and outshine with.

They did this hand over fist for a number of years. And films WERE awful. But they had something to them all the same. Something more than relaxation or dope, or a blurring over of mind, I honestly feel that the people got in some dim way the fact that here was something growing under their eyes, a sense of life and expectancy. They knew better pictures had been painted than anything of their own century, better books written, better plays better acted, better music better composed. Outworn mediums perhaps? Well, the creative thing was still going strong, and here was its channel, of all mediums here was one with fewest limitations. They flocked to the cinemas, not because they particularly cared for somewhat atrocious domestic and wild west dramas, but because of something to do with the old 'will to power'. This was new, and refreshed. Then the novelty wore off, and things looked up a bit. Problems of lighting and photographic quality gave art a bit of a fillip. How bad, those over-lighted interiors and haloes round heroines! But it meant that ideas were struggling. We said thank god when Germany pulled a wry mouth at all of it and blacked out seven eighths of the arc lamps. And so we looked to Germany with expect-

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tant eyes. And again our tails wagged. So much of it was again trash, but there was what we called a quality. Morbid, some said. We said not a bit of it, REAL. And there were moments that made us gulp more or less because we felt that if that level could be sustained we would forget to breathe. But it was only a glimpse here and there. The Germanic thing was getting across though, curious details, watchfulness, harking on claustrophobia. We filed Germany for future reference and peeped at Vienna. Here again was tripe. Hollywood was better. Italy a shade worse. France tied up in knots on problems of continuity. While England trundled deplorably in wake, the only thing that could be said for it that it didn't seem to mind being a laughing stock. Then we began to hear from Russia. We had got very sick of Russian novels and Russian plays, and in spite of a recrudescence of Russian influence in art and decoration, there was prejudice. But Potemkin and Aelita put an end to that. Russia was getting its finger on something. And Germany had done Joyless Street, so back we bounced to the Germanic thing. Hollywood gave The Big Parade, Germany, Metropolis, England it seemed was still being comic, and did Mons, while Italy, having done Quo Vadis churned out the unspeakably atrocious Last Days of Pompei. France had finally somewhat ponderously dished out Victor Hugo and Michel Strogoff, and some perfectly uninspired eighteenth century films more authentic but less suave than Hollywood attempts at the same thing. However it had evolved the best colour process and was hard at work with experimental stuff.

And all this is very roughly, where we have arrived ; a fifty fifty pull of good and bad, the time has come to know what it is all about and where it is leading and what one is to expect. Perplexities, debates, arguments. Cinematography has stuck itself in front of the artist, and the artist wants to work his medium straight. His conflict is with the business manager. He also wants HIS medium straight. The thing one sees in consequence is compromise, and the beginning of a problem. As usual there are ways and means, which we will talk about later. I want first of all to cavil a bit in a general way and work in a bit of analysis and criticism.

All this big talk, for instance about an English film revival. It is no good pretending one has any feeling of hope about it. At best it may, IF anything does eventually come of it, as one rather doubts, achieve a sort of penny in the slot success for those who are venturesome enough to back it. And I don't want particularly to be hard on England. Simply as one sees it, the sort of thing England is about to begin trying is the sort of thing Hollywood will have to be about to discard if the popularity of the cinema is to remain. England is going to start, not with any new angle, not with any experiment, to go on trundling in wake, not deplorably perhaps, one hopes efficiently, but with a complete acceptance of the film convention as is. The truth is that the average attitude of England and the English to art is so wholly nonchalant and clownish that it is quite useless to expect any art to indigenously flower there. Isolated instances may here and there crop up, but REALLY the Englishman can only be roused to enthusiasm

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on the football field. A cup final will evoke tens of thousands of whooping maniacs. One doesn't mind that, but in the face of it one does ask WHY attempt art? The preference between the two is so undisputable. One can see that the English revival will be exactly along old lines. They are going to imitate. And unhappily the English thing has neither the *weltgeist* quality of the German nor the exactness of the American, both of which are fundamentally national. I haven't found out quite what the English quality is, but having seen all its principal films I hesitate to try to name it.

After all, what CAN you expect? England cannot even turn out a pepful magazine. Take any weekly, and you get the sort of thing I mean, that hugely sterile flimflam decorously and expensively printed on best quality art paper, and an attitude of really awfully indecent arrogance, especially toward anything new or progressive or intelligent.

None the less, England IS going ahead on this revival, and that its sole purpose is the revival of the film INDUSTRY, and not film ART, is no sin at all, because really good art IS commercial, and the mob has a curious nose for what is good,—that is, what is *real*. We know that an announcement 'British Film' outside a movie theatre will chill the hardest away from its door, and what a pity. Why?

After all, here is England with certain excellent, not to say unsurpassed qualifications for commercial adroitness, in some of its phases, admirable achievement. Turn to films and you get muck. The reason is clear. Where England is efficient you will find there SPECIALISTS. A hard technical train-

ing, and long experience back of it. I don't say you won't find specialists in the film industry, at least one expects to now in the face of things, but I do happen to know that any specialists there may have been have probably been living on the dole while the butcher and baker and candlestick maker solemnly were taking matters into their own hands, and making sort of town hall tableaux in a local church bazaar, borrowing sometimes London's worst and ugliest actors to draw the crowd.

And, oh hell, haven't you heard enough of that wretched alms-begging attitude, 'Poor little England, how can it be expected to stand up to America where there is so much money.' What rot. One hundred pounds will make a film as noble as anything you can wish to see. Money is no excuse. Nothing is any excuse for trying to put over rotten work on the public. The public isn't a pack of fools. Narrow and illiterate very often, but there are distinct limits beyond which one cannot descend, just as, there are distinct limits beyond which one cannot AScead if one is out to grab its attention. You cannot trick and cheat your way into its favour. That is what the various butchers, bakers, etc would not learn, and what one feels, more in sorrow than in anger, the industry as a whole has yet to learn before it has a dog's chance. Actually, as things are, no new country can expect to build up an industry on old lines. Mediocrity has been so utterly perfected in Hollywood mediocrity even flashed across, now and then, with greatness, that it is rather silly to butt in there. Germany has its quality, so has France, Russia might have too,

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only the Soviet administration has clapped a dog-collar on its chances, and tagged it 'Slave to Soviet approval'. The point is HAS England a quality? I am rather afraid the English thing is barren, mind and super-mind and the dimensions (the only things which make for greatness) being so taboo. Oh, it's a mess. And yet one so sincerely wishes them well, but there just doesn't seem anything to say. Making their films compulsory would be alright if they had something to show for them, but unless they scour and ransack and snap right up in every branch, it will mean only a needless loss for theatres that after all, are usually sufficiently discerning to choose what they feel will bring in money. Anyhow, va bene.

* * *

Laurels go to Germany. I like the German system quite frequently. I like the women it finds, usually to pass on to an inglorious fame at Hollywood, Greta Garbo, snow and ice and lovely clarity in Joyless Street, Camilla Horn, of Faust, white and terribly young, one felt in spite of everything, quite beyond the medaeval savagery piled with Germanic care of detail upon her, somehow by her loveliness, immune from it. Then Brigitte Helm of Metropolis, again so slender and young, so DIFFERENT. And what a tour de force her ecstatic robot life! And then back to Nju. The mothlike swiftness and slumberous slowness of Elisabeth Bergner. It is this, the finding out of new young people, someone different that gives freshness here. The anti-foreign movement in Hollywood

may stop or at any rate considerably check this migration, which was so very good for art, keeping things moving all the time, new talent, new modes, new ways.

Do you remember GREED ? Here Von Stroheim carried the German mind to America, with the result no American could bear to look at it. Often banal, always dreary, it was so much more than a play, it was life, an amazing quality of realism. And what cynicism. Those dreadful beds with brass knobs, trams seen through upstairs windows rattling this way and that over crossings, a common street, always some grimy, daily human thing going on outside, carts, a funeral procession, mean little interiors with cheap curtains across cheap doors, lives pecking and picking like hungry sparrows, awfully aware of turmoil and cross purposes. Repressed unhappy people, awful families doing what awful families do, bank holiday picnics in the suburbs, ceremonial visits, too many ill trained children yowling and quarrelling and being slapped. Hurdy gurdy music. One recognised everything, everything was as everything is. And it was epic, and failed dismally. Then von Stroheim with the same grand cynicism tossed down the Merry Widow in all its clammy eyewash. And of course it was the grand success it deserved to be. I mean because it was the snub of the artist reserving his pearls from swine.

Another of the films that impressed me most was Nju. Here Jannings was not only possible but downright good. It is true in Variété and Faust and Nero he made one ill, but here he was the artist, padding humbly, married. An uncouth

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person out of an office, simple and bovine and very much in love. A dreadful shilling-shocker story. The young wife falls for the slick young man. Things are found out, there is a grand scene (how grand!) and she leaves. The slick young man turns her down. She jumps into the river. The husband is seen following in wake of feet that too obviously mince! The slick young man is seen standing about in the empty room where the wife had sheltered. An old woman sweeps the floors, ignoring him, sweeps round where he is standing. Presently he goes quite simply out. The old woman turns, goes on sweeping. That is all. But except for some wretched and unnecessary moments where the usual child is lugged in as the usual mediator, and hugged in the usual way by the usual bereaved father, there was a marvelous power to the story. Veidt as the lover, oddly sinister, doing hardly anything. The young wife, very aware, currents beating in the air. Something in the way they stood in rooms, measuring one another, the suggestion of interplay of wills, of muffled nuances. A sense of fatality all the time, Nju should not have made that chilly plunge. She should have been left, perhaps walking in a wet street with leaves, facing her problem. It would have given more intensity to the moment when Veidt stood in the empty room. It is always so much more poignant that things are going on, than that they have ended. In many ways, perhaps this is the best film that has yet been done. It was chronicle not fiction. The child, as I have said, was a mistake, the only stunted note of pathos. For the rest, the story was told without blur or sentiment-

ality, no deliberate pulling at heart strings, one was left to watch, one saw each pitiful side of the question as one does.

* * *

But films like this are rare. Nju might not please the English. I saw it in Vienna this spring, four years old, and had to visit the theatre twice before there was a seat.

Too rare.

It is just possible that D. W. Griffith and myself are talking the same language when we both say the hope of the cinema lies with the amateur. I don't imagine we are. Griffith is frightfully right in some things, but quite undistinguished. Occasionally a transcendental effect, very well done, but no sort of offering to sheer mind. Griffith, however, has been quoted in connection with amateur movie competitions in a very excellent movie paper, but one not dealing with uplift! So we can more or less discount it, since amateurs with an eye to competition in that paper will again do sub-Hollywood stuff, and the best imitation gets the prize.

Besides, it is always a bad incentive, this business of prizes. Since it sells cameras, it brings a different appreciation of sheer photographic effects, it brings one up against totally unforeseen difficulties of technique, and sets the ball of individual effort rolling, but it means in the long run the ruling out of the best. Again it is the competent commonplace that will set the pace.

It has to be the film for the film's sake.

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* * *

I want to arrange that people making films, and experimenting in all sorts of ways shall be able to see what others are doing in the same way. Which means public showing, in Paris and London, one hopes. But it is not possible quite yet to arrange this, not until the rapport is established and people coming forward with films and suggestions. A great deal depends upon this rapport, or support. I hope that people enthusiastic over the idea will write, because it seems to me, the thing to do would be to form some sort of society, with definite plans about performances at fixed dates, each chosen film to go the rounds in Paris, London, Berlin, New York, Vienna. This will take time, but one does hope to begin, not too far ahead, with something of the sort. I am going to chew it over during the month, and next month write more fully, as now space is limited. Somehow something must be done to give films their due.

* * *

The first two numbers of Close Up will deal with the film problem as a whole. After that we propose in each issue to deal with special conditions in Europe and the States with numbers on the Negro attitude and problem and on the Far East in their relation to the cinema.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

THE WAR FROM THREE ANGLES

THE BIG PARADE. MONS. THE EMDEN.

It was inevitable perhaps that the first authentic comment on the War should come from America. Not being so thoroughly involved as Europe it was possible for individual criticism to break through earlier than on this side of the Atlantic. England for instance has never had its "Enormous Room" ; it's "Three Soldiers". But then both here and in Germany, the whole nation was involved and during a grim period of years. There was not the hysterical wave of war-fever, with its rush and chaos and resultant swift subsidence, that there was in the States with its months—as against years—of actual fighting.

Therefore the individual—caught in it—had a chance of survival. It is hard to imagine an Englishman or a German surviving with enough strength to protest artistically afterwards. Those that came through were too bored with the unending monotony or too broken with the tyranny any army must impose on the human mind, to be able to create of it literature or pictures.

All the protest that one recalls, therefore, seems American. Cummings, Dos Passos, in writing. Stallings in pictures and a play.

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A mild interest in what America would make of the war took me first to "The Big Parade." Subsequently I saw it five more times in London, once in a slightly different version, abroad.

The first impression was of courage—how had they dared put across in a picture meant for multitudes... so much scorn of war, so much stripping of what people in general like to regard as heroism... the reckless unthinking plunge into an army, the actual dirt and horror and tyranny behind all warfare.

After seeing the picture seven times, the first impression remains that the greatness of "The Big Parade" was in the early opening scenes, the sweeping of everyone into something that they did not clearly understand, the enlistment through sheer mass hypnotism, the unthinking but definite cruelty of many women seeing war as romance instead of reality—the best lesson to those with eyes to read of the necessity of real education of people, instead of a standard fitting of a few facts and no real thought to hundreds of schoolchildren.

Beyond this there was the clear photography, the authentic feel of the film, the extraordinary impression of the rush of lorries, the queer terror of the woods. It was amazing how much fear could be suggested in the mere continuous pace of movement.

I felt in the English version that the transition from the lorries rushing up the French cobbles to the plunge into the woods was almost too abrupt. In the French version the journey up was longer, and there was more of the fight in the

forest. On the other hand, there was an extremely stupid and sentimental episode added at the end, of Jim's return to the farm wounded, which considerably detracted from the authentic atmosphere of the picture. It is curious to surmise how the film could be so well cut and so badly cut at the same time.

The French version had however a few metres of a raging shell shocked soldier in the hospital scene which fitted into the epic picture, but was presumably judged too realistic for English eyes.

As for the rubbish circulated in England that "The Big Parade" showed how America won the war, did we, in any of our English war films, show the Americans, the Belgians, the French, the Serbians and Russians, marching to victory beside us? It was comment of a particularly stupid and humiliating kind, quite unworthy of the tradition of an English sense of justice.

I was not hopeful about "Mons" because my experience of English films had not been encouraging. But I went prepared to admire at least an attempt at a good picture. I thought even that as it was historical reconstruction, a sort of document, we should have achieved a possibly ponderous, but correct transcription of the early days of the war, photographed with a dull but scientific accuracy similar to the scientific films in which English photography has achieved a reputation. But it was disappointing from every point of view.

It was so badly photographed. And there is no excuse for bad photography. Half of "Mons" was blurred and out of

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focus. Even the indoor shots which depend on artificial light and not on outdoor conditions had a blurred, edged, indefinite quality which many amateurs using a little ten guinea camera would disdain. It was stated that most of the outside shots were taken in Northern France where the light is excellent in summer and besides, with modern photographic equipment and film, much better results can be achieved even in the English climate, than one would imagine seeing only English commercial films. But beyond the photography was the film itself—full of the kind of sentimentality that makes one shudder, a sentimentality that Hollywood even would not dare offer to a Middle Western audience... mixture of a Victorian tract for children and a cheap serial in the sort of magazines one finds discarded on a beach.

One of the main incidents of the film showed two wounded soldiers in a barn. They fight off a section of German cavalry—this, though improbable (as suggested by the film) and badly photographed, might pass. The Germans then set fire to the straw at the entrance to the barn. After sniffing and talking and joking through yards of close ups, it occurs to the soldiers (who if they had had any kind of training would not have gone to sleep in the straw the moment they had shot down a couple of Germans and realized more might be outside) that they had better move. Very slowly they drag each other down the stairs. The straw sends out conveniently a flicker of light smoke. The Germans, grouped as in an early Victorian picture of a parade, wait outside to shoot the men as they emerge. At the exact moment—like a child playing nine-

pins—an English battery sends a shot into the precise middle of the Uhlans who gallop in terror away. The straw flames with the barn. The soldiers topple out, saved. This may have been a true story. The point is, that as it was photographed, it gave the impression of a caricature and sent not only myself, but a couple of ex-soldiers sitting behind me, into shouts of laughter. Worse was to follow. The same two wounded men trailed after the army, one wheeling the other in a wheelbarrow. They can go no further. The Germans are just behind them. Impressive moment. At the instant they abandon hope, a detachment of English soldiers see them and rush back to help. But the man who with the Germans behind him, had not been able to move a step further, the moment that fresh unwounded soldiers, come to his aid, waves them off to chase along the road, wheeling his friend, as if it were a comic race in some military sports. The whole incident was preposterous and unpleasant. Not in itself, but in the way it was photographed and handled. In several other scenes it was quite impossible to distinguish English from Germans, so vaguely was the scene lit. There was no central idea back of the picture. The whole theme was “we are English making an English picture, therefore be good to us”. And that will not make either a commercial or an artistic success of British films.

“The Emden”, a German film seen abroad, was very nearly a successful attempt to make an epic out of the very limited photographic material of a cruiser. Life at sea during war, the sinking of ships, a naval battle, restrict the photographer

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to a repetition of effects far more than war on land. The director too, seemed not to know whether to drag in a weak story or to trust to "The Emden" itself, dashing from captured ship to ship towards its eventual fate. Again the first part was the best, the feeling of suspense before the declaration of war, the machinery blurring into the excitement and again the suspense of the sailors, the swift leaving of the ship from the Eastern harbour out to open sea.

One cannot help feeling a sudden curious personal sensation of shock as the first English boat is captured and the captured sailors give away (not thinking they are being watched) the secret of the convoy following them on their course.

But the battle at the end, very realistic, the broken machinery, corpses, fragments of bodies, builds up too heavy and monotonous a picture for the mind to retain a sharp enough impression of tragedy. Somewhere about the fourth reel from sheer repetition, the brain stopped recording. There was the heavy growling weight of resentment and despair behind it, not the constructive criticism of those early bits of "The Big Parade", that war is a foolishness made by mob-hysteria. The film as shown in Switzerland however may have been edited for possible English eyes--it was advertised as showing "the heroism of English and German sailors" ! It would be interesting to see it again in Germany, as some sections seemed so obviously and crudely cut.

I regret that I have not had opportunity so far to see "Roses of Picardy" and "What Price Glory" though both in their literary form are familiar. I should like something to take away

the memory of "Mons". For it would be so much easier to praise a film just because it is English, but that is not the way to re-establish the industry on any kind of commercial or intellectual basis.

Perhaps in time we shall make a film that combines the suspense of "The Emden" with the swiftness and clarity of "The Big Parade", and without the concession to sentimentality and supposed crowd-desire, that crop up here and there in both these films. But this will not be until we have intelligent directors, camera men trained to use their equipment as the German and American photographer is trained, and until the idea is scrapped as utterly as worn-out machinery, that a film, because it is "English" must be praised.

BRYHER.

THE CINEMA AND THE CLASSICS

I

BEAUTY

I suppose we might begin rhetorically by asking, what is the cinema, what are the classics? For I don't in my heart believe one out of ten of us high-brow intellectuals, Golders

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Greenites, Chautauqua lecturers, knows the least little bit about either. Classics. Cinema. The word cinema (or movies) would bring to nine out of ten of us a memory of crowds and crowds and saccharine music and longdrawn out embraces and the artificially enhanced thud-offs of galloping bronchoes. What would be our word-reaction to Classics? What to Cinema? Take Cinema to begin with, (cinema = movies), boredom, tedium, suffocation, pink lemonade, saw-dust even; old reactions connected with cheap circuses, crowds and crowds and crowds and illiteracy and more crowds and breathless suffocation and (if "we" the editorial "us" is an American) peanut shells and grit and perhaps a sudden collapse of jerry-built scaffoldings. Danger somewhere anyhow. Danger to the physical safety, danger to the moral safety, a shivering away as when "politics" or "graft" is mentioned, a great thing that must be accepted (like the pre-cinema days circus) with abashed guilt, sneaked to at least intellectually. The cinema or the movies is to the vast horde of the fair-to-middling intellectuals, a Juggernaut crushing out mind and perception in one vast orgy of the senses.

So much for the cinema. (Our "classic" word-reaction will come along in due course.) I speak here, when I would appear ironical, of the fair-to-middling intellectual, not of the fortunately vast-increasing, valiant, little army of the advance guard or the franc-tireur of the arts, in whose hands mercifully since the days of the stone-writers, the arts really rested. The little leaven. But the leaven, turning in the lump, sometimes takes it into its microscopic mind to wonder what the

lump is about and why can't the lump, for its own good, for its own happiness, for its own (to use the word goodness in its Hellenic sense) *beauty*, be leavened just a little quicker? The leaven, regarding the lump, is sometimes curious as to the lump's point of view, for all the lump itself so grandiloquently ignores it, the microscopic leaven. And so with me or editorially "us" at just this moment. Wedged securely in the lump (we won't class ourselves as sniffingly above it), we want to prod our little microbe way into its understanding. Thereby having the thrill of our lives, getting an immense kick out of trying to see what it is up to, what I am up against, what we all, franc-tireurs, have to deal with.

First as I say, amazing prejudice. The movies, the cinema, the pictures. Prejudice has sprouted, a rank weed, where the growth of wheat is thickest. In other words, films that blossom here in Europe (perhaps a frail, little, appreciated flower) are swiftly cut and grafted in America into a more sturdy, respectable rootstock. Take "Vaudeville", for example, a film that I didn't particularly revel in, yet must appreciate, Zolaesque realism which succeeded admirably in its medium; was stripped (by this gigantic Cyclops, the American Censor, of its one bloom. The stem is valuable, is transplanted, but the spirit, the flower so to speak of "Vaudeville", (we called it here "Variété" the thing holding its created centre, its (as it happens) Zolaesque sincerity, is carefully abstracted. A reel or in some cases an artist or a producer, is carefully gelded before being given free run of the public. This is no fault of the public. The lump heaving under its own lumpishness is

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perforce content, is perforce ignorant, is perforce so sated with mechanical efficiency, with whirl and thud of various hypnotic appliances, that it doesn't know what it is missing. The lump doesn't know that it has been deprived of beauty, of the flower of some production or of the fine flower of some producer's wit and inspiration. The lump is hypnotized by the thud-thud of constant repetition until it begins to believe, like the African tribesman, that the thump-thump of its medicine man's formula is the only formula, that his medicine man is the only medicine man, that his god, his totem is (save for some neighbouring flat-faced almost similiar effigies) the only totem. America accepts totems, not because the crowd wants totems, but because totems have so long been imposed on him, on it, on the race consciousness that it or him or the race consciousness is becoming hypnotized, is in danger of some race fixation ; he or it or the race consciousness is so doped by mechanical efficiency and saccharine dramatic mediocrity that he or it doesn't in the least know, in fact would be incapable (if he did know) of saying what he does want.

He learns that there is a new European importation for instance of a "star" ; this importation being thudded into his senses for some months beforehand, his mind is made up for him ; she is beautiful. We take that for granted. There I agree, the leaven and the lump are in this at one. The lump really wants beauty or this totem of beauty would not be set up by its astute leaders. Beauty. She is beautiful. This time "she" is a northern girl, a "nordic", another word they

fall for. A Nordic beauty has been acclaimed and we all want to see her. I am grateful (it was my privilege) that I, for one, saw this grave, sweet creature before America claimed her. I saw her, as I see most of my pictures, more or less by accident. At least the divine Chance or classic Fortune that more or less guides all of us, led me one day to worship. I, like the Lump, am drawn by this slogan, "Beauty", though this particular enchantress was not particularly head-lined on the provincial bill-boards. In fact, the whole cast was modestly set forth in small type along with the producer and I thought "well it looks harmless anyhow" and it was raining and so in Montreux, Switzerland, I happened (as it happened) to see my first real revelation of the real art of the cinema.

I am led a little afield in trying to realize in retrospect the vast deflowering that took place in at least one rare artist. I dare say it is a common occurrence but in this particular case particularly devastating. I saw "Joyless Street" ("Die Freudlose Gasse") in Montreux, some two or three years ago when it was first "released" from Germany to take its tottering frail way across Europe towards Paris, where it was half-heartedly received, to London, where it was privately viewed by screen enthusiasts, only last winter, at one of those admirable Sunday afternoon performances of the London Film Society. In the meantime, I had seen Greta Garbo, deflowered, deracinated, devitalized, more than that, actively and acutely distorted by an odd unbelievable parody of life, of beauty, we were efficiently offered (was it at the Capitol about a year ago?) "The Torrent".

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Greta Garbo in Montreux, Switzerland, trailing with frail, very young feet through perhaps the most astonishingly consistently lovely film I have ever seen ("Joyless Street") could not be, but by some fluke of evil magic, the same creature I saw, with sewed-in, black lashes, with waist-lined, svelte, obvious contours, with gowns and gowns, all of them almost (by some anachronism) trailing on the floor, with black-dyed wig, obscuring her own nordic nimbus, in the later "Torrent". The Censor, this magnificent ogre, had seen fit to devitalize this Nordic flower, to graft upon the stem of a living, wild camellia (if we may be fanciful for a moment) the most blatant of obvious, crepe, tissue-paper orchids. A beauty, it is evident, from the Totem's stand-point, must be a vamp, an evil woman, and an evil woman, in spite of all or any observation to the contrary, must be black-eyed, must be dark even if it is a nordic ice-flower and Lya de Puttiesque. Beauty is what the Lump and the Leaven alike demand. So "beauty, here it is," says the Ogre. The Ogre knows that the world will not be sustained, will not exist without that classic, ancient Beauty. Beauty and Goodness, I must again reiterate, to the Greek, meant one thing. To Kalon, the beautiful, the good. Kalon, the mob must, in spite of its highbrow detractors, have. The Ogre knows enough to know that. But he paints the lily, offers a Nice-carnival, frilled, tissue-paper rose in place of a wild-briar.

Beauty was made to endure, in men, in flowers, in hearts, in spirits, in minds. That flame, in spite of the highbrow detractors, exists at the very centre, the very heart of the

multitude. It is the business of the Ogre, the Censor, to offer it a serpent for an egg, a stone for bread. It is the duty of every sincere intellectual to work for the better understanding of the cinema, for the clearing of the ground, for the rescuing of this superb art, from its hide-bound convention. Perseus, in other words, and the chained Virgin. Saint George in other words, and the Totem dragon. Anyhow it is up to us, as quickly as we can, to rescue this captured Innocent (for the moment embodied in this Greta Garbo) taking frail and tortuous veils of light and shadow, wandering in photogenetic guise that Leonardo would have marvelled at and Tintoretto radiantly acclaimed. Greta Garbo, as I first saw her, gave me a clue, a new angle, and a new sense of elation. This is beauty, and this is a beautiful and young woman not exaggerated in any particular, stepping, frail yet secure across a wasted city. Post-war Vienna really wrung our hearts that time ; the cheap, later clap-trap of starving stage Vienna had not yet blighted and blunted our sense of proportion and reality. Before our eyes, the city was unfolded, like some blighted flower, like some modernized epic of Troy town is down, like some mournful and pitiful Babylon is fallen, is fallen. The true note was struck, the first post-war touch of authentic pathos, not over-done, not over-exaggerated, a net of finely spun tragedy, pathos so fine and so intolerable that after all, we can't wonder that the flagrant, Parisian, commercial "buyers" must disdain it. London could not (being governed also by a brother to our American Cyclops) allow this performance to be broadcast. War and war and war. Helen who ruined Troy

CLOSE UP

seems to have taken shape, but this time it is Troy by some fantastic readjustment who is about to ruin Helen. Little Miss Garbo (I think of her as little ; I believe from the columns of "gossip" I read dished up in various Hollywood camera news productions that "Greta Garbo is taller than John Gilbert", a thing they seem in some subtle way to have, among many other things, against her) brought into her performance of the professor's elder, little daughter in "Joyless Street", something of the quality that I can't for the life of me label otherwise than classic. As long as beauty is classic, so long beauty on the screen, presented with candour and true acumen, must take its place with the greatest master-pieces of the renaissance and of antiquity.

For there is no getting over this astonishing and indubitable fact. Beauty as it has existed in pre-Periclean Athens, in the islands of the Cyclades, in the temple of Karnak, in the frescoes of Simone Martini and the etchings of Albrecht Dürer still does find expression, still does wander veiled as with dawn, still does wait for a renaissance to hail her. Miss Garbo is a symbol, was, I should say, a symbol as I saw her in "Joyless Street". She may again become some such glorified embodiment as flung itself in its youth and its strange, statuesque abandonment across the wretched divan of Madame whatever-was-her-name's evil house. Beauty, the youth and charm, by just a fluke, wasn't tarnished in that atmosphere. The odd thing was that this story of poverty and fervid business speculation and the lady of the world and her lovers and her pearls and the young financier and their meeting in this ill-

flavoured establishment and the secret murder, wasn't commonplace, wasn't trivial, partook of the most ethereal overtones of subtlety. Tragedy rang like little bells, fairy bells almost. Tragedy didn't dare, those days, to stalk openly in its ornate purple. Not in Europe, not in London or Paris or Vienna. Murder and pearls and speculation seemed perilously a part of life in those days. Tragedy was a muse whose glory was for the moment over-shadowed with an almost mystical, hardly to be expressed quality that one might possibly define as pathos. Beauty and the warrior were at rest. For the rest of us in London and Paris and Vienna, there was something different, something too subtle to be called disintegration or dissociation, but a state in which the soul and body didn't seem on good terms. Hardly on speaking terms. So it is that this fine little Greta Garbo with her youth, her purity, her straight brows and her unqualified distinction found a role to fit her. She had, it is true, appeared, I am told, creditably in other films; it was my good fortune to meet her first in this "Joyless Street" or, as it was billed in our lake Geneva small-town, "La Petite Rue Sans Joie". The theatre, I need hardly say, was half empty. The performance began with a street (will I ever forget it) and the sombre plodding limp of a one-legged, old ruffian. No appeal to pity, to beauty, the distinguished mind that conceived this opening said simply, this is it, this is us, no glory, no pathos, no glamour. Just a long, Freudian, tunnel-like, dark street. Nothing within sight, nothing to dream of or ponder on but... the butcher's shop with its attendant, terrible, waiting line of frenzied women.

CLOSE UP

Life is getting something to eat said the presenter of this "Petite Rue Sans Joie". Getting it somehow, anyhow. Beauty itself must come to me, says La Petite Rue Sans Joie and one after another through sheer boredom with starvation, the "girls" of the neighbourhood, the banal, the merely pretty, the sometimes ambitious, and the sheerly slovenly are drawn within the portals of la Petite Rue. For in the little street there is a shop that rivals even the butcher's for gaiety and distraction. It is neatly disguised, yet thinly. Clothes are bought and sold by a certain suave Madame (the performance of this entrepreneuse whose name I have forgotten, was amazing) and the little bigger of the little daughters of the proud, utterly destitute, brilliant, youngish, middle-aged professor strolls from time to time discreetly to its portal. Madame who is so suave, so kind (will I ever forget the subtlety of her make up, that suggested shadow of a mustache across her sly upper lip) one day offers the little Mademoiselle a fur coat to wear home, she needn't pay for it yet, just wear it and keep warm, things are so hard, madame is so suave, so genuinely sympathetic. The little lady loses her job through the insidious gift. A fur coat. Everyone knows what that means in post-war Vienna. The Manager of the office is pleased, didn't know this wild-flower was a game one. He summons her, offers a rise in salary, the usual denouement, of course, she being she, can't possibly accept it. La Petite Rue Sans Joie seems perilously near to swallowing our Beauty. Helen walking scatheless among execrating warriors, the plague, distress, and famine is in this child's icy, mermaid-like integrity. Her purity

shines like an enchanter's crown. We *know* nothing can happen to her, yet do we? Things happen, we ourselves have known them to happen... one by one, our audience (already meagre) has risen, has blatantly stamped downstairs. I hear words, whispers, English. "A thing like *this*. . . .filthy. . . . no one but a *foreigner* would dare present it." La Petite Rue Sans Joie was a real, little street. It was a little war-street, a little, post-war street, therefore our little picture palace in our comparatively broad-minded Lake Geneva town, is empty. People won't, they dare not face reality .

And beauty, among other things, is reality, and beauty once in so many hundred years, raises a wan head, suddenly decides to avenge itself for all the slights that it has negligently accepted, sometimes through weariness, sometimes through sheer omnipotence, sometimes through cynicism or through boredom. Simonetta, the famous Medician Venus (though I don't care for her), one and one and one, all stand as witnesses that once in so often, beauty herself, Helen above Troy, rises triumphant and denounces the world for a season and then retires, spins a little web of illusion and shuffles off to forget men and their stale formulas of existence. Well beauty has been slurred over and laughed at and forgotten. But Helen of Troy didn't always stay at home with Menelaus. Beauty has been recognised and for that reason (as the world will not face reality and the ogre, the Censor, this Polyphemus knows well enough that beauty is a danger); Miss Garbo has been trained, and that with astonishing efficiency, to sway forward and backward in long skirts with pseudo-Lillian Gish affectation, to pose with

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a distinct, parrot-like flare for the Gloria Swansonesque. Her wigs, her eye-lashes have all but eclipsed our mermaid's straight stare, her odd, magic quality of almost clairvoyant intensity. She simpers. Something has been imposed, a blatant, tinsel and paper-flowers and paste-jewel exterior, yet it doesn't quite dominate this nordic ice-flower. Beauty brings a curse, a blessing, a responsibility. Is that why your Ogre, the Censor, is so intent on disguising it, on dishing it up as vamp charm, as stale, Nice-carnival beauty-as-we-get-it-in-a-beauty-contest? Greta Garbo remains Greta Garbo. Let us hope she takes it into her stupid, magic head to rise and rend those who have so defamed her. Anyhow for the present, let us be thankful that she, momentarily at least, touched the screen with her purity and glamour. The screen has been touched by beauty, and the screen, in spite of all the totems, must finally respond, Polyphemus of our latest day, to the mermaid enchantment.

H. D.

NEXT MONTH : —

OSBERT SITWELL. HAVELOCK ELLIS.

ANDRÉ GIDE.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON. H. D.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

. . . . So I gave up going to the theatre. Yet I had seen one or two who possessed themselves upon the stage and much good acting, especially of character parts ; but I have never been on my knees to character acting. The one or two I saw again and again, enduring for their sakes those others, many of them clever, all keyed up for their parts, all too high-pitched, taking their cues too soon. It was not that the pain of seeing them lose all our opportunities—their own and with them ours who were the audience—outweighed the joy of recreation at the hands of those others, makers and givers of life, but rather that on the whole the sense of guilt, of wasted performance for players and audience alike was too heavy to be borne. Waste and loss that could, it seemed to me, with ever so little control of the convulsionaries, be turned to gain.

Lured back by a series of German plays zestfully performed by a small and starless group, I found at once my persuasion confirmed that the English, whose very phlegm and composure is the other side of their self-consciousness and excitability, do not make actors. Watching for foreigners I saw a few French plays, saw Bernhardt and was more than ever ashamed of the remembered doings of the English castes.

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Not even the most wooden of those selected to surround and show up the French star could produce anything to equal the sense of shame and loss that at that time overshadowed for me all I saw on the English stage that was not musical comedy with its bright colour for the soul and its gay music for the blood. The dignity of the French art and the simplicity of the German restored my early unapprehensive enthusiasm for the theatre, even for the pillared enclosure, the draped boxes, the audience waiting in the dim light to take their part in the great game. I went to no more English plays. And for a long time there were no foreign ones to see. But photo-plays had begun, small palaces were defacing even the suburbs. My experience with the English stage inhibited my curiosity. The palaces were repulsive. Their being brought me an uneasiness that grew lively when at last I found myself within one of those whose plaster frontages and garish placards broke a row of shops in a strident, north London street. It was a Monday and therefore a new picture. But it was also washing day, and yet the scattered audience was composed almost entirely of mothers. Their children, apart from the infants accompanying them, were at school and their husbands were at work. It was a new audience, born within the last few months. Tired women, their faces sheened with toil, and small children, penned in semi-darkness and foul air on a sunny afternoon. There was almost no talk. Many of the women sat alone, figures of weariness at rest. Watching these I took comfort. At last the world of entertainment had provided for a few pence, tea thrown in, a sanctuary for mothers, an

escape from the everlasting *qui vive* into eternity on a Monday afternoon.

The first scene was a tide, frothing in over the small beach of a sandy cove, and for some time we were allowed to watch the coming and going of those foamy waves, to the sound of a slow waltz, without the disturbance of incident. Presently from the fisherman's hut emerged the fisherman's daughter, moss-haired. The rest of the scenes, all of which sparked continually, I have forgotten. But I do not forget the balm of that tide, and that simple music, nor the shining eyes and rested faces of those women. After many years during which I saw many films, I went, to oblige a friend, once more to a theatre. It was to a drawing-room play, and the harsh bright light, revealing the audience, the over-emphasis of everything, the over-driven voices and movements of all but the few, seemed to me worse than ever. I realised that the source of the haunting guilt and loss was for me, that the players, in acting *at* instead of *with* the audience, were destroying the inner relationship between audience and players. Something of this kind, some essential failure to compel the co-operation of the creative consciousness of the audience.

Such co-operation cannot take place unless the audience is first stilled to forgetfulness of itself as an audience. This takes power. Not force or emphasis or noise, mental or physical. And the film, as intimate as thought, so long as it is free from the introduction of the alien element of sound, gives this co-operation its best chance. The accompanying music is not an alien sound. It assists the plunge into life that just

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any film can give, so much more fully than just any play, where the onlooker is perforce under the tyranny of the circumstances of the play without the chances of escape provided so lavishly by the moving scene. The music is not an alien sound if it be as continuous as the performance and blending with it. That is why, though a good orchestra can heighten and deepen effects, a piano played by one able to improvise connective tissue for his varying themes is preferable to most orchestral accompaniments. Music is essential. Without it the film is a moving photograph and the audience mere onlookers. Without music there is neither light nor colour, and the test of this is that one remembers musically accompanied films *in colour* and those unaccompanied by music as {colourless.

The cinema may become all that its well-wishers desire. So far, its short career of some twenty years is a tale of splendid achievement. Its creative power is incalculable, and its service to the theatre is nothing less than the preparation of vast, new audiences for the time when plays shall be accessible at possible rates in every square mile of the town. How many people, including the repentent writer, has it already restored to the playhouse ?

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON.

ANDRÉ GIDE AND MARC
ALLÉGRET'S
VOYAGE TO THE CONGO

BY JEAN PRÉVOST

As one does not usually care to write articles about one's friends, I ought to begin by pointing out that Allégret is a friend of mine before saying why the film of his voyage seemed to me wholly brilliant, if not the best travel film I have seen since the *Death of Scott*.

Generally these "documentaires" are like so many rather boastful travellers, out merely to astonish; they want to exploit the extraordinary and can more or less easily achieve it through distorting the aspect of things at will. They call this originality. Allégret, on the contrary, puts things back in their natural place. He wants, all the time, to help us understand. For instance, up to the present, negro dances have always been shown to us as diabolic and possessed. Allégret for the first time, makes us feel in them natural motive and expression. Through pictures carefully unhurried, one sees the contagion of joy in movement, and the dancing of the

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natives for their visitors from mere courtesy become sensitive and alive. Taste and refinement, until now excluded by the very subject matter of these pictures, find their place again. Even painting and tattooing never before presented save under their most barbarous aspect are shown to be either hierarchical or quaint, so nearly a neighbour to official decoration or to feminine coquetry that they do not make us laugh as at some grotesque happening, but only smile, at yet another aspect of the ridiculous so familiar to us.

I liked the sub-titles. And generally I hate sub-titles in a film as much as I hate pictures in a book. But here from the moment the author of the film decided to make us *understand* what he saw, it was natural for him to address the spectator a little, a guide but one not straining after effect. Too, it is as it should be that we should not merely perceive the forms of things but also their reaction upon the mind of this traveller ; that the wit which inspired the film should be reflected in the script ; that the humour of the script should bear also on the continuity of the film. What these "documentaires" lack usually is a unity and progression common to all works of art unfolded through time. Allégret has not sought any such artificial foundation of intrigue as made *Razaff the Malgache* so banal and painful ; he has maintained a true and plausible foundation of emotion. Also of intelligence. This is a spectacle seen through the intelligence. Why is it that a film of some ordinary event seems not more pleasing but more astonishing than that event itself ? It is because our eyes, faced with a familiar scene, *understand* and *see* at the same time, so

that that which we conceive purely as sensation actually is saturated with meaning. This seeing of daily life on the screen would probably give it a new and rare stimulus, would probably force an eye trained and blinded by custom into fresh and clear vision.

But one cannot perceive harmony among things in themselves astonishing, unless taste and understanding tincture this astonishment. There is no question of destruction ; it is a matter of a chain of astonishments finally merging into comprehension and arriving, not at confusion, as films do that are purposely grotesque, but at the exact pleasure of a well accomplished analysis. In the *Voyage to the Congo* one notes through the ensemble that the most arresting fragments are not given more importance than the scenes of daily life. The everyday happenings so commonplace to those who do not understand their significance are set here in their essential picturesqueness. The disappointed fiancée who rubs her belly to express and soothe her grief, the caresses of her small sister, are here no mere native custom nor the language of a savage ; one had to know what they meant, and now for the first time an exotic film explains this to us without being pedantic. However unknown these tribes and customs may be to us, we have not the sense that we are looking at them for the first time ; understanding them we see through their own significance and with their own eyes, scenes that are somehow familiar to us. How is it that this film necessarily unrehearsed and with improvised actors, and without the help of rather charming though perhaps slightly theatrical participants

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as in *Moana*, should achieve more balanced effects and a more finished work ?

The great achievement consists, I think, in the exact choice of those incidents likely to be imprinted on the memory, retaining pictures which, if the voyage had not been filmed, would have remained in the mind, and instead of embellishing these scenes, simplifying them in the same way as the mind would have done.

Too much complaisance, no doubt. Their camera might have recorded many tragic and bitter things ; when one has read Gide's *Voyage to the Congo*, one remembers much that one is sorry not to have seen on the screen ; too much softening down, a too facile pleasure, but the public will not be able to complain.

Translated by K. Macpherson.

ANIMALS ON THE FILMS

How much more could be done with animals on the screen than is done, and how much better what *is* done could be achieved ! Nearly always their best qualities are entirely ignored, and what bad qualities they could (and nearly always

could not) have, are emphasised out of any conceivable proportion. The whole of animal psychology, a fascinating and intricate study, is not only ignored, but more often than not, a kind of cheap, sentimental, and, to any animal lover, very painful abortion is evolved, whereby animals are represented as blown out with a kind of pompous human attitude, and their very often superior qualities softened and blurred in human imitation, plus omniscience, omnipotence and omnipresence. Though this does not apply to films of actual jungle or wild life.

It is the *story* film, I mean. Quite several animals could be trained into excellent film subjects, though sometimes there would be difficulties in securing them. For instance, the hippopotamus, the tapir, the giraffe, the first and the last being easy to tame, and intelligent. They are fascinating creatures, and their habits and ways so subtle, that a film giving true value to them would be in the nature of a revelation.

Among other large animals, not so difficult to procure, one nearly always finds they are essentially falsified, *not* emphasised, which would be permissible, but ruined by the old tradition clinging to animal toys, teddy bears, porky pigs, bunny rabbits, etc.

Lions are dubbed "fierce" and brindle through incredible slapdash. The poor frightened heroine shut in with a lion, crouching in a corner. Actually it is the lion that crouches (when the camera stops working) shivering and cowing, and prodded before it will open its mouth. Its fierce roar is a

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cry of pain. I believe they are trying to domesticate the lion in America, — especially for films and circuses. This is better, but a tame lion *looks* tame. The Metro-Goldwyn trade mark would feed out of your hand !

Lions were better treated, and made more convincing in that much slated film *The Wizard of Oz*, with Larry Semon. They were beautiful beasts, and there were several excellent close-ups.

Bears and tigers are never given their due. But again, they are of uncertain temper, as is also the leopard.

Camels again are overlooked. Their attitudes, many of their habits would commend them both for comic and serious films, but one only sees them occasionally carrying Arabs. Some good pictures of an elephant appeared in the *Desert Healer* with Mr. Walter Pidgeon, in which he was most effectively "killed", but this is the only elephant *part* I remember having seen. Zebras and kangaroos would be excellent, provided they were studied, but the only thing so far has been a film with zebras in a chariot.

Sealions, beloved of circuses, which can be very highly trained, and would be excellent for comedy, or childrens' (or for that matter adults') educational films, but strangely, nobody seems to have thought of them as yet. Monkeys, having been plentiful, have been done both badly and well. There was one very well treated in an earlier Harold Lloyd film, and also some good studies of a cat looking for its kittens. Some close-ups of this cat's face were taken, and the expressions were marvellous. I wonder why more animals are not treated

in this way ? Ben Hur had some excellent photography of racing horses, but there again, they were simply galloping ; one could hardly say they were given their "due". Some wild horse films have, it is true, been done, and better than any other animal films, though inclined to suffer under this business of hanging human, instead of equine, understanding upon them.

Much could be done if facial expressions were studied. The donkey, the camel, the monkey, each of these registers definite *moods*.

And there has been far too much of that very unpleasant slapstick stunt of causing small creatures, mice, frogs, crabs, etc. to climb down peoples' backs, or up their legs, or run loose in trains. Somehow this idea goes on and on and on, and it is a little disgusting. So much better in such films to introduce something simply bizarre, porcupines, the Australian wombat, the capybara, or South American Giant Guineapig. Opossums might also be effective done in the right way.

The wild boar is probably too difficult to tame, but he looks extremely effective, and it would be new. The effects could be easily managed with "trick" photography. Wolves are seldom used, being rather more dangerous than might be supposed. I did not see *The Miracle of the Wolves*, but would have been very interested to do so if real wolves were used. (Alsatian wolf-hounds. Ed.) Some of the best pictures of animals taken are of stampedes, one being a bison stampede in a film with Jack Holt. Horse and cow stampedes

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are too frequent altogether, and usually stunted and unreal.

Perhaps the best ever were some of the mechanical prehistoric creatures from the *Lost World*. Too much praise can hardly be given to the man who constructed and worked them. If producers of live animals would only take a tip from this! The actual monkey in that film was very well photographed, and had a "part" that did not overstrain the credulity.

Large apes are not seen, because of their tempers. Otherwise they would make good film subjects. Chimpanzees are the only apes, probably, that could be employed safely, and one does see them occasionally. Mongooses, it is said, can be trained and taught tricks. There again is an opportunity.

Of the films taken of actual animal life, some wonderful photographs were secured in a film of Abyssinian travel produced by Ufa, and Mr. Cherry Kearton in his last one had the finest picture of an African Rhinoceros that perhaps will ever be seen. He illustrates a hunt, and after the animal has been captured takes a close up of it. To have taken it must have involved a considerable risk, as rhinoceri are highly dangerous animals to deal with, whether in wild state or captivity.

These are just a few suggestions, and no pretence has been made to explain the characteristics of any of the suggested varieties. Sufficient to say that a close and sympathetic study of any one of them would reveal rich possibilities, both in the way of education and entertainment. Someone may

get the idea in time and if he studies animal psychology and allows the animal to be itself instead of *himself*, the screen will have been enriched, and the public needfully instructed.

E. L. BLACK.

PROJECTOR

Light takes new attribute
and yet his old
glory
enchants ;
not this,
not this, they say,
lord as he was of the heiratic dance,
of poetry
and majesty
and pomp,
master of shrines and gateways
and of doors,
of markets
and the cross-road
and the street ;
not this,

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they say ;
but we say otherwise
and greet
light
in new attribute,
insidious fire ;
light reasserts
his power
reclaims the lost ;
in a new blaze of splendour
calls the host
to reassemble
and to readjust
all severings
and differings of thought,
all strife and strident bickering
and rest ;
O fair and blest,
he strides forth young and pitiful and strong,
a king of blazing splendour and of gold,
and all the evil
and the tyrannous wrong
that beauty suffered
finds its champion,
light
who is god
and song.

He left the place they built him
and the halls,
he strode so simply forth,
they knew him not ;
no man deceived him,
no,
nor ever will,
with meagre counterfeit
of ancient rite,
he knows all hearts
and all imagining
of plot
and counterplot
and mimicry,
this measuring of beauty with a rod,
no formula
could hold him
and no threat
recall him
who is god.

Yet he returns,
O unrecorded grace,
over
and under
and through us
and about ;

CLOSE UP

the stage is set now
for his mighty rays ;
light,
light that batters gloom,
the Pythian
lifts up a fair head
in a lowly place,
he shows his splendour
in a little room ;
he says to us,
be glad
and laugh,
be gay ;
I have returned
though in an evil day
you crouched despairingly
who had no shrine ;
we had no temple and no temple fire
for all these said
and mouthed
and said again ;
beauty is an endighter
and is power
of city
and of soldiery
and might,
beauty is city
and the state

and dour duty,
beauty is this and this and this dull thing,
forgetting who was king.

Yet still he moves
alert,
invidious,
this serpent creeping
and this shaft of light,
his arrows slay
and still his foot-steps
dart
gold
in the market-place ;
vision returns
and with new vision
fresh
hope
to the impotent ;
tired feet that never knew a hill-slope
tread
fabulous mountain sides ;
worn
dusty feet
sink in soft drift of pine
needles
and anodyne

CLOSE UP

of balm and fir and myrtle-trees
and cones
drift across weary brows
and the sea-foam
marks the sea-path
where no sea ever comes ;
islands arise where never islands were,
crowned with the sacred palm
or odorous cedar ;
waves sparkle and delight
the weary eyes
that never saw the sun fall in the sea
nor the bright Pleiads rise.

H. D.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

Before the full artistic possibilities of the cinema can be explored it will be necessary to evolve an efficient and cheap projector for private use. The public of the future should be able to buy or borrow films as it now buys or borrows books. The public showing of films has an unsatisfactory side especially for the student, for a reel must be projected in a cinema at a given rhythm whereas for purposes of experiment it may

be desirable to see over and over again and at different rates of speed, some fragment of a work. Now too, it is almost impossible to see any film over two years old, however important to the historian of cinematography. Or again two or three interesting films may be shown in the same week while a stretch of months may follow with nothing of importance to the artist ; while if he could reel off on his own projector his favorite or new and experimental films his studies or his interest in the art would not be interrupted.

* * *

It has been argued that the trade as a whole would fight such a project. This is surely a short sighted policy. There could easily be a protective copyright upon the sale of films for private showing until they were say, six months old, and then there might be an immense revenue to be derived from the sale of copies at a moderate rate. The majority would still prefer the cinema with its orchestra, heating and general community atmosphere. The library would always be more a matter for the artist and the student.

* * *

But first of all a small and safe projector has to be evolved at a moderate cost. Those which we have had personal experience with have stuck, blown up, or refused to work, without

CLOSE UP

expert handling and a knowledge of machinery seldom possessed by the amateur.

* * *

Those about to begin, or having begun making films of their own, are sure to have moments of panic, when the 'hows' and the 'whats' begin to submerge them, and moments of intense despondency when their first results are revealed. Usually it is a case of kill or cure. But although the only way to learn is through one's hideous errors, it would be a great help to have a good, plain text-book, putting down the sort of thing one really needs. Like a Latin grammar, starting at the beginning with the first facts. What is a reel? 1,000 feet. How long does a reel take to show? 16 minutes. Does one have to move slowly in order not to appear jerky? Does one have to use make-up, and how? A professional camera has indications of number of feet used, number of turns, and speed of turning. Speed of turning should be normally 16, which simplified down means 120 turns per minute. Etc. etc. Things like that. Information about lengths, times, exposures, probable traps, arc lamps, installations, reflectors, tripods, lenses, everything. Perhaps the best way would be a record of a beginner's experience. And alphabetical arrangements. CLOSE UP will be on the look out for such a book, and *fête* it when it does arrive.

* * *

A point for England. Here is the excellent FILM SOCIETY doing its best to get across good and out of the way films. On all of these it pays enormous duty. Now why shouldn't all the big towns, Birmingham, Liverpool etc., have their own film societies? And why not get their heads together, show the same films, and share on costs, thereby each being freed of enormous output? And think of the benefit of disseminating good stuff across the provinces. It is one of those things that might very easily (once really under way) work wonders. Will anyone get down to it?

* * *

One often wants to see films one has missed. It is never possible. After a year or two they are as dead as a doornail. Some enterprising person might pull strings so that the best survived, and more than that, were shown. A special theatre might not work (although it might) but revival weeks surely would. "This film" might be flashed on "will be shown again in 1928 and 1929 and any subsequent year for one performance only upon demand." Or something of the sort. At any rate it should not be quite so impossible to see old films. So often one is away or travelling, and just misses or has just missed some film one wanted particularly to see. If it could be felt that some organisation made it possible to be seen

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definitely in some definite place at some definite future date, one could arrange accordingly. Some theatre might develop this reputation with great advantage. But it would need talking over.

TO AVOID DISAPPOINTMENT

Unforeseen difficulties greatly delayed preparation for *CLOSE UP*, which in consequence goes to press in slightly abbreviated form. Next month's issue will contain works sent in too late for inclusion
in part I.

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FROM "WING BEAT"



A portrait of H. D. illustrating an incident from *Wing Beat*, a POOL film now in preparation. This is H. D.'s debut in films, and her many admirers will welcome the opportunity to see her. The same clear genius is in her acting that sets her so high among contemporary poets and authors. Works by H. D. appear in this issue.

FROM "WING BEAT"



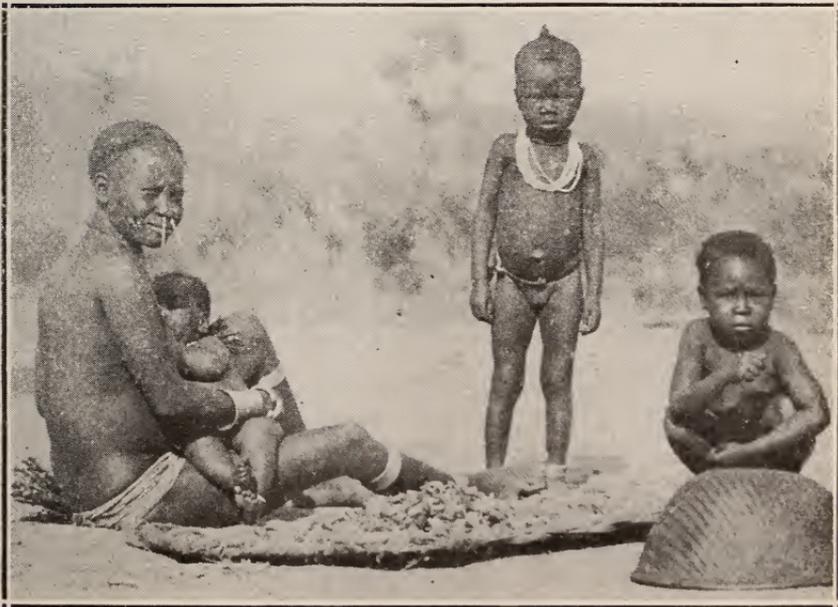
A film of telepathy. The feeling of "something about to happen" pervades the whole, reaching a climax at the point from which this "still" is taken.

VOYAGE TO THE CONGO

See page 38



On the Chari river



A Baya family, tribe of the Sanga river
French Equatorial Africa



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EDITOR : K. MACPHERSON

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No 2

August 1927

AS IS

BY THE EDITOR

I had this from a distinguished author whom I suggested might dynamically discourse on the film :

About cinemas. I do not care for them, but I do not know why I don't. I think my prejudice is hardly justified. But I couldn't write about it. I've nothing to say. I'm so sorry.

Well, I know. But it's not uncommon. Quite a number of people are like that. But isn't it somehow a giveaway ? I DO NOT KNOW WHY I DON'T. I'VE NOTHING TO SAY. Now that is exactly the sort of thing one is up against ; the danger isn't in your reactionary, but in just this thing—this sort of spineless apathy and shortsightedness. The danger is not in the comment that one is approaching the film with the highminded and superior attitude formerly reserved for the Russian Ballet, or any journalistic claptrap of the kind,

(which after all is according to a fairly efficient formula) but in people who do not like things but do not know why they don't. With the reactionary and journalist one knows where one is. A journalist is a man holding down his job, and saying what the policy of his paper expects of him ; the reactionary just opens his maw and squeals. But with these others, sometimes clever people, charming too, things may or may not exist, god may or may not exist, destruction may or may not exist. Let others find out, they say, and expect to come in at the end when the battle is over and the victor established. . . . Well, why shouldn't they ? Why shouldn't they is not an important thing. Equally why should they. Why should you or I have learnt to walk when it would have been much easier to permanently sit ? Because the disadvantages of not learning would have been worth consideration. One usually does anything only because not doing it would be more troublesome in the long run.

There is a kind of ennui and another kind of ennui and each is alright when it is *conscious*, when the attitude is that no ultimate end is worth immediate means ; but unconscious ennui, that puffed-up dismal vanity is always and infallibly indecent.

On the other hand there is plenty of excuse for busy people who have not had time to see beyond the hash and rehash of cheap films. To realise what cinematography can and will mean is a full-time occupation. People are needed, *we* are needed, CLOSE UP is needed to bring facts before people. Eighty per cent of any cinema audience has learnt only to

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want its Lya de Putti, its Tom Mix, its May McAvoy, regardless of the film in which they happen to appear. Tom Mix is on at the Royal. Good enough, let us go to the Royal, no more question, nothing else to worry about. Clara Bow is on at the Biograph. We must go. And when it is bad we can chatter or go to sleep or make love.

You will never get more than fifty per cent on your side in any cause, so that leaves thirty to win, and, there is not much doubt about it, they *can* be won. Out of this thirty comes the twenty that apologises for going, says "awfully absurd, sheer waste of time" but creeps in as often as possible, swallowing films whole and loving them if the truth were known. The ten per cent is split into those who go to the *good* films (e. g. Ben Hur, The Big Parade, The Ten Commandments) those who go for rest and something to talk about, and those who go because they can lose themselves in a cinema as they cannot lose themselves in a theatre. These are all healthy prey, and will come to the fold in time. They are the people who have open minds, who are ready to absorb ideas, providing the ideas are spread out in front of them. When better things are ready they will accept them naturally, just as they accepted lifts in place of stairs, and escalators in place of lifts. They would not have invented lifts or escalators themselves, but when the thing was done, they approved and used them. So with films. When ardent forerunners have brandished their banners sufficiently and the thing is before their eyes they will take to good films as naturally as they took to bad ones.

People are still apt to sneer when you talk of films being art. Even picture-goers. Movies are not the Salon or the Royal Academy, they are not the Louvre or the British Museum, they are not Dostoevsky or Anatole France or Rudyard Kipling, they are not Beethoven or Debussy. They are not linked up. Nobody has related them to these people, and the catch is *nobody can!* They aren't related to these people and the things they stand for. The movie is the new thing, the movie goes back to no tradition. And millions will deplore it. Millions will say ah, yes, you cannot expect a *great* art with no background, nothing behind it. But putting thousands against millions (which in a way proves the case *for* movies) people will say with me, the great and glorious thing about the movie is just that — just its utter newness. It has, it is true, its conventions, but they are as tiny runnels to the abysmal channels carved by tradition in other arts out of which one must climb before seeing anything as anything is.

The glorious strength of the movies is just that they have no past, no history. This aimless and senile clinging to the old, to the old, to the old, gives one at length black phobia. The newest artist will gloat and gloat because of this medium. Nightingales and roses have been in poetry until they are almost, if not completely destroyed for us. There is a point. The artist, who leaps on ahead pointing out beauty or truth *must* leap on ahead. He has to dance at the head of the procession, saying look look. If he can only point at the same thing always he becomes wearisome, no longer a teacher. He

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just cannot go on much longer saying "ah Spring !" and "ah Nightingales !" or literature will lose its meaning. The startled author of today writes poems to squeaking shoes and jumpots, and that is getting beauty upside down.

And meanwhile the procession, the mass, is being kept waiting, rather between two stools ; neither content with roses and Spring, nor mechanised. And indeed, this *is* the time for films to begin to mean something. Titles like HEARTS IN BONDAGE, SAINTS AND SABLES, LYING WIVES are beginning to have the same effect on the procession, the mass, as its nightingales and roses.

It is not the least good pretending any longer that the film is a thing one does not go to. That it has been and is a place for young people to suck sweets and hold hands in is distinctly to its credit. A cinema audience has a kind of obliteration of individuality, a kind of freedom that you never find in the theatre. And it is far more commendable to be negligent or amorous in front of a bad film than prinked and starched in front of a bad play. As a matter of fact the very people who say "Cinemas ? . . . Oh, how COULD you !" one has seen in shoals guffawing and gurgling over plays that any movie audience would feel insulted to have to look at. And if it's Billingsgate bed-rock argument, there is at least something straight about the droop of heads on shoulders you find in cinemas that puts to shame the carnivorous expression of a theatre audience out for "smut". And the worst movie is seldom as indecent as a play, except Nell Gwynn and one or two others whose names we will reserve for future use.

As a matter of fact comparison is impossible, only that people *do* run the idea of comparing. The theatre is one thing, the movie another. "I like the pictures," people say, "but I like to see the *real* thing." Meaning the play. Well, to borrow a phrase from the back of the dictionary, *chacun à son goût*, only don't let us get into a metaphysical discussion of reality.

Last month I outlined the position of the film to-day from the point of achievement. This month I am dealing with *lack* of achievement. What hasn't been done is in the minds of the public, what hasn't been put before the public is honest facts since the year 1910, or thereabouts. Prejudice then rampant now crawls, but has life. Prejudice which then made mothers and magistrates quite calmly blame on the film the countless evils due to rotten education, and lack of sex instruction, comes to the surface, still alive for the million and oneth time, and tomorrow for the million and twoth. Be it admitted, however, films themselves have suffered and do and will from just the same cause, from false values, and lack of right education. Mothers and magistrates still point to the screen and say "Please it wasn't me. HE did it!" forgetting that such values as a child may deduce are entirely values they have *taught* it to deduce. Mostly films are tract like in their sledge-hammering of the necessity for virtue, but childrens' books, put down in Freudian black and white are nearly always in the range of elaborate pathology. There are dozens of other prejudices, and dozens upon dozens of "hardly justified" prejudices, of not caring but

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not knowing why not, and it is nobodys' fault except the cinemas'.

When one thinks of the Little Annie Roonies and Little Lord Fauntleroy's one almost says oneself I've nothing to say. Mary Pickford in white socks and a tucked dress hardly covering her thighs is a symbol of niceness. Mary Pickford in black velvet knickers and a lace collar is the spirit of childhood. She is *nice*, she is a *nice* woman, she is a *good* woman. People say that, and I for one am sure they are right. But what I mean is *why* is this sort of thing swallowed? Because Mary is driving the serf idea back of civilization down serf throats. Mary is pretending that Human Sparrows, Little Annie Roonies, are something to do with truth and beauty and art. She is playing safe with safe values, there is no threat or danger in her *innocence*, it is not even a sugar coated pill. It is a mere lollipop for the mob to comfortably munch. And then people that do not greatly matter in themselves get to believing in her, or not her so much as the thing she stands for, and that is where cinematography begins and ends for them. Other people get to believing in say Nita Naldi, or Pola Negri. And so it comes back, Nita Naldi is on at the Grand, Pola Negri is on at the Bijou.

The whole feeling in this belongs to the 1910 period. The words nice, nasty, morbid, vulgar, dirty, clean, are not words merely, but complete attitudes of mind, complete summaries coded in 1910 language. That is how the film *convention* has come about, a convention of curious subtleties. The habitué recognises them. Mae Murray coming into a room

in a certain way means to the habitué that she is going to be seduced by Roy D'arcy. To the novice it means she is rather unnecessarily waggling her torso. The habitué knows that certain things mean menace, certain things inevitable denouements. A dropped letter will send his mind hopping and skipping and jumping prophetically down the course of the story to the final amatory close-up. To the novice it means not a thing. It is a convention, and like conventions of every kind, to be avoided as much as possible or improved upon.

Not that convention matters when it is really representative. But I have not seen many convincing matters of technique except close-ups of letters to read with one thumb on each side of the screen, and things of that kind. But be it noted, I speak here of the commonly accepted formulas, not of certain sets of symbols used here and there individually. Many more experimentors are necessary before we must think of beginning to make conventions, and of course, it is to be remembered that progress is being made every day, new ideas, new developments. We do not know yet how far it can go, but inevitably it must go on and on for a long way yet. There is already the film that will take in twilight, and the next thing will be the abolition of arc lamps, there is already the attachment by which the camera is fitted to the body of the photographer, and thus moved as the eye of a person might move, there is already the enlarged screen, the ground glass screen for stereoscopic projection, the beginning of sound with films (and how awful this is going to be for a time!) and

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all manner of experimental work hurrying on to a completely new equipment and technique. While through all this, the only thing that has not been done is the opening of the public mind to the *realities* of the screen. The attitude has been wrong. It has been film industry, film industry, film *industry*. And quite rightly up to a point. But naturally, after a certain amount of this people think Oh, films there's no art there, it's all purely industrial. But we have thirty per cent to capture, and we are going to talk film *art* at them until the right balance is established. Then, and then only can one really begin.

* * *

And this month I was going to say more about a means to show films with special interest or experiment publicly in the European capitals. So far nothing definite has come about ; there is much to find out about restrictions and censorship and licences, and special conditions, but everything in time. It should not be so difficult once properly started. I know that people are enthusiastic over the notion, and rightly so, for here is a chance for the public to see, on the side, and simply, what is being done other than the more or less static presentation of commercial films. It is completely natural that there is ignorance and apathy, because nobody is aware of the very great number of small film makers busy trying out new forms, and nobody *can* be aware until their work is seen,

which wont happen through trade channels. It will probably start with a derided (it is bound to be derided) flush of films violently reactionary ; abstractions, trick-photographs, headlong plunges into mistranslations of other arts, impressions of thought-processes, bombs and explosions of refutation, utterly scrapping commercial formulas, awful misapplications of cubism, and surrealism, and impressionism. And everybody will blow small trumpets, then there really *will* be a superior attitude. Hideous words will be invented, and gushings of pseudo-pseudo modernists, and much clacking and third rate talk. And the Press will thunder, and musical comedy will do its best to be caustic, and good citizens will say, these awful people (And there just *will* be some awful people). And we will hear of "A New Drawing-Room Craze" and "A New Pastime For The Idle Rich" and five or six years will have heard the derision abating. Then the stage of taking it for granted. Then the stage of publicity, of These Daring Young Moderns. Then a slow welding, a peeping across from the Commercial ambush to the Rebel (that word will be used) ambush. Because back of the pseudo-pseudos and the third rate talk, not heard so much or seen so much, the real plant will grow and flower. The real plant will have taken nourishment from an improving commercial standard, and spread its roots there. And finally there will be co-ordination. A treaty perhaps, or a more subtle agreement—a growing together. And by that time the power of the film will be immense beyond prediction.

In the meantime we are working toward this end,—the

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public showing of progressive and developmental films. But remember there are many cows on the track and it may take time.

* * *

A great number of my correspondants (to whom herewith I tender thanks) have got away with the idea that I am, that Close Up is, out to high-hat and scorn the commercial film, and go on to elevate the whole cinema industry to a point of indescribable aestheticism. Far from it. We want it understood that we accept and laud the film in any form ; the worst film has its public and its following. And for that reason, for a time at any rate, if not forever, there will be a market for the worst films. Just as little penny novels go the rounds, and keep scullery maids amused, so the worst film is in demand. But the thing is that there is a great lack of distinction ; broadly speaking anything up to seventy-five per cent of modern films are at a certain level ; they have moments, they reach a vast majority, they satisfy. But there is a minority of several million people to whom these films are tiresome, a minority that loves the film, but has too much perception, too much intelligence to swallow the often dismal and paltry stories and acting set up week by week before it on the screen. This minority has got to have films it can enjoy, films with psychology, soundness, intelligence. Nobody wants (as a matter of fact a great many *do*) to rob the masses

of their entertainment, and as long as they desire eyewash and bunk they must have it. There are many people better capable of understanding and catering for the masses than we are, and our concern is not with the masses, but with the minority,—again, I repeat, a minority of millions,—whose tastes are disregarded, and whose tastes matter supremely, and *must* be studied. On a sound basis there is much money for the producer who looks to these for his public. Organisation is all that is needed. And organisation is not such a difficult matter to arrange, although it has its pitfalls. Actually there is no need for quite such bad films in the big theatres of the Capitals as one sees, for here, in these theatres, the intellectual level is higher. One always notices that the better (I do not say the *best*, though I almost might) films fill the house, while the cheaper small-town, provincial sort of thing leaves it part empty. The fault is among the producers. There is no reason why they should not turn out bad films in the 1910 tradition if they can sell them, but it would be impossible to expect them to have the decency to say, “Yes, this is a rotten film, and must not be shown in the Capitals, or to any intelligent audience.” The fault is equally among the theatres. It would be impossible to expect them to have the decency to say, “Oh, yes, this might go down, but we have too much respect for the intelligence and morale of our audiences to take it.” As things are the good, better and best films can only hope to be wedged in between the Little Annie Roonies and the Evil and Ermines. And one in quest of the good film may have to sit through a couple

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of hours of pie-slinging or glycerine and scorn and virginity complexes, and arrive at last before the title of the thing he has come to see too spent and out of key to be able to appreciate it.

If one is careful with arranging beforehand, it is true this need not happen. But how much more charming and easy if we—the minority could just walk into a theatre, one particular theatre, haphazardly as the majority wanders into its many theatres, knowing we would see films which, even if we did not always like, would be stimulating to mind and perception.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

BRITISH SOLECISMS

Written by a member of one of the leading British Film Studios this article contains some inside facts which cannot be disputed. There is no malicious feeling. All who desire good British films must know the kind of thing they are up against as it is only by such knowledge that any success either artistically or commercially can be brought about. (Ed.).

Everyone is talking of a revival of British films.

The phrase is hardly felicitous. Where in the history of British pictures are to be found films with the aesthetic merits of "Caligari" ; "Warning Shadows" ; or "The Last Laugh" ?

Rather should we speak of the birth of British films, but that would be too obviously a confession of weakness. If there is genius in a country it is bound to come out, to make itself felt in some way or other. Remember that England was supplying films to America before the war and then realize what a stigma it would be for us, after all these years, to speak of the birth of British films. So we point at dreadful scarecrows of the past and gibber of the revival of British films.

Of course film technique changes. When the Film Society decided to revive Lubitsch's "Marriage Circle" in London the Committee did not get an opportunity to run the film through till a few hours before the actual performance. They were appalled ! What they had thought subtle and witty a few years ago was now slow and heavy. They did their best to remedy the evil by projecting the film much faster than is usual but even then it sadly lacked its pristine brilliance.

Yet making all allowances for old British films not one of them can really be singled out as good. "The very best British film ever made" recently reached the cutting room prior to revival. It got no further !

The disagreeable fact must be faced that Britain lacks film tradition. What then ? Surely if there are no Robinsons, Murneaus, or Lupu Picks, there are at least men who are efficient, men who know their jobs ? Surely England can acquire the slick polish that America spreads like treacle over her sentimental bread and butter plots ?

Alas not even that !

CLOSE UP

A film was recently made in England on which the company, who were sponsoring it, had determined to spare no reasonable expense. An enormous set (that is enormous for conservative and timid Britishers) was erected on a big open field. It rained for weeks before the production. The field became sodden and transport almost impossible. The plasterers were held up, the carpenters found it impossible to continue work. Then on the very day that the publicity man had seen fit to give to the paper a glowing panegyric on the wonders of this particular set, and the suitability of the English climate in spite of persistent calumnious statements (oh irony of everything!) a hurricane blew. The ground was rotten, the supports could not hold, and the most important and substantial building collapsed. It was little short of a miracle that no men were killed, for the building was surmounted by massive plaster work. By the time the set was finished overhead expenses had mounted alarmingly. As the producer and some of the artists were under contract the company had been particularly anxious not to keep them idle. So a great deal of the money, instead of going into the production, had been dissipated in overtime for the labourers; who could not, however willing, have given of their best for such tiring long hours. A little foresight and the work might have been started earlier; certainly the same money could have kept the contract artists out of work for months. But now for the climax.

When the shooting began it was found that the pictures were flat. The set had been built the wrong way round!

When the sun was in the best position for shooting it was behind the houses ! That was not all. The street had been made particularly wide to fit the requirements of the scenario. The producer found that the ordinary crowds, that he had been accustomed to handle with great effect, were lost in the large street. Hundreds more extras were needed. No one had thought of that !

Neither had anyone forseen the effect of the English climate—and how well they ought to realize that problem by now—in another recent film, this was a story of the orient. What an orient it was ! After days of waiting for the sun to shine in tiny intervals some shots were taken by a producer boldened by ennui. The “rushes” revealed an orient without the langorous atmosphere usually associated with the East, an orient of wildly swinging lanterns and billowing curtains !

While on the subject I might mention, for the benefit of those who have never had to ‘stand-by’ on a set all day waiting for a ray of reluctant sunshine, how impossibly handicapped England is by her climate. In Hollywood they say that they have twenty-five rainy days in the year ! One producer, whom I know, circumvented the English climate in a most delightful manner. He was nine days behind schedule and in danger of the frowns of the powers that be. One night he took the script and blue pencil home with him and cut out half the scenario. The next day he arrived with a beaming face. He was up to schedule ! Another example of British methods !

CLOSE UP

Most British producing companies are in a state of chaos. There is no organization, no centralization, no efficiency. In the art department it is sometimes impossible to obtain such simple materials as crayon or blue paper. The worst example of this policy of meddle and hope that I have met was during the construction of a street scene. The carpenters had been instructed to use as little wood as possible, but they found it necessary to order a small extra quantity. The clerk of works was immediately summoned to the head office. He explained the position and pointed out that the set was to be the principal one in the picture and therefore justified a little additional attention.

After a lot of humming and hawing one of the directors said, "Well, we are not quite sure if we can use this set in the picture." They had only just started to write the scenario ! There may be a lot to be said against the water tight scenarios of Hollywood but. . .

Perhaps you cannot blame the companies entirely for the complete lack of initiative in their programmes. They have grown to distrust their producers, and seeing the numbers of 'duds' gathered in the British industry you cannot be surprised. Our leading British producer confided to me, in a weak moment, that he directed his pictures with his tongue in his cheek. Another of the star directors might do something big if only he could be persuaded that there are other shots besides close ups. I have seen disconsolate actresses, sit on a stool for hours on end while he secured hundreds of feet of 'close up'. The most typical English director I can think

of is famed for his word. He has a complicated system of whistles by which he manoeuvres his supers.

I once asked him, "Don't you get muddled with this intricate code of yours?"

"Not a bit old boy", was the answer, "you see I know that something has to happen each time I blow the whistle, and the boys know that something has to happen. Neither of us knows quite what is to happen, and that gives an effect of spontaneity don't you know."

Much in the same strain was the statement of an art director who told me that he made his models in the hope that they would come out all right. A leap in the dark. If they didn't. . . he shrugged his shoulders.

There is one word that sums up British production. Haphazard!

"But this is all very well," you say, "but what of the fresh blood, what of the youth of the industry?"

To begin with the people now in pictures over here try to keep it a close circle. Each is trying to get his relations in, and oh what a web of petty jealousies!

In this fight money and influence are the determining factors, brains and education dead weights against you. To be branded a high brow is fatal.

I was talking to a youth who had just secured, through influence, a much sort after job on the floor.

"Are you keen on this work?" I enquired.

"Oh! no," he said, "you see my father tried to get me into a bank for two years but as I couldn't matriculate I drifted

CLOSE UP

into this. There was nothing else to do without matriculation."

The English directors of tomorrow !

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

MRS. EMERSON

The regular way of instituting clerical resemblances and neglecting hazards and bespeaking combinations and heroically and heroically celebrating instances, the regular way of suffering extra challenges, the regular way of suffering extra changes, the regular way of suffering extra changes the regular way of submitting to examplers in changes, the regular way of submitting to extraordinary celebrations, the certainty, because keep centre well half full whether it has that to close when in use, no not repeatedly, he has forgotten.

Now then.

Now then shining, now then shining.

Mrs. Evangeline Henderson went in. She said that the morning. She said that in listening. No I will not be funny.

Pleasing pleasing pleasing.

Little words frankly, your game is not a silly game. Birds are so restive.

Not that to-day to-night believe the corrected list believe more blotter than the red. I said I knew America.

My sister she is not my sister, my sister she is my sister her plan is to be represented by absolutely the same letter paper.

One day one day.

I cannot see I cannot see I cannot see. I cannot see.

I cannot see beside always.

I have not selected my pronunciation. I have not selected my pronunciation.

I will repeat I will not play windows. In the new houses there are not windows for ventilation or any other use. They say that that is their use. They say that kindly amazing lights they say that kindly amazing lights and they say no that is not the use of a word, they say that unkindly certain lights, anyhow when I am pronounced that certain cheerful shapes are fainter, they say that they have pronounced exceptionally.

The beginning of little winning the beginning of little winning claims. If you say little winning if you do not separate that is if you do not separate between, if you do not separate between if in in not in, all the pronunciations, all the pronunciations.

All the chances of intermediate investigation are so argued that the recent disturbances fit the first change in silent rugs. Silent rugs. I thought that I would state that I knew certainly that she was so seen that if her eyes were so placed not violently not verbally so placed. She is not agreeable. She is not so agreeable. I wish I could safely legitimise, and I will.

CLOSE UP

I think it is what I said what I reorganised in mounting her. I mounted her there. Deliberate. She has a son not a son he was a thicker one. I go on. Begun.

Bessie is like Bertha.

I can see that if you did the reason would be that there was certainty.

If heating is beside the meal and the selection of masterpieces makes communication, communication is ardently rechosen, communication is suddenly respected, communication is suddenly resumed, communication is suddenly rested, communication is suddenly respected, communication is suddenly respected, communication is suddenly chosen communication is suddenly chosen.

No use, no use in resolving that Bertha is piled, no reason in slackening, that is a word, that is a word severely, of no do not deceive the more important asking if you have never been to a collection of repeated references.

I do not say that green is believed to be that colour. I do not say that green makes lips, I do not say that they colour stations, I do not say that she would spread it into I hope that I believe that I select that I retain. I hope that no occurrence and no surprise and no concerning question. I do not wish to hear it again.

Oh well not now anyway. You do say it. Oh cannot you see that the price is allowed that the complete wrecking of louder sounds.

I cannot help it, Bessie is like Bertha, I see the resemblance I resolve to silence confusions I shall believe no pointed sin-

gularities I cannot see why a dog is black and a voice is necessary. I cannot see why a voice is necessary. Paula. Paula said that she would not care to see her again. Paula.

Bessie I do not wish to mention Bertha. I can simply explain that.

I do not wish to mention Bessie I can refer that.

I do not select to have similar sounds. Bertha can be surrounded. Bertha can be surrounded, Bertha can be surrounded by so much saliva. Peace to children.

When I state when I state and restate when I restate I say that there is a ceiling. A ceiling is a roof. A roof is formidable, formidably speaking, a roof is formidably speaking.

Now I turn away.

Please copy this. Others able to copy this. Others able to copy this after. After measure.

I have come to research. Bessie refers to Bertha not to Bertha. Bessie refers to Bertha.

I like hesitation. I like the pleasing selection of respectable shouting. I like recreation. I like surrounding dear papa.

More and more the original cause is forgotten. She wished to see her son-in-law. She met her daughter who was coming down from being depressing. She is of course everything. This is a mistake it is an early morning-train.

When she met me she had much to tell.

We went out and were arriving. Scarcely pleasures. Scarcely pleasures extraordinarily. Scarcely pleasures slightly

CLOSE UP

in advance of extreme kindness. Now that he is well and strong and knowing their extreme anxiety he was well and strong knowing her extreme anxiety.

Please direct that she is not to say that she is not to say Bertha or Bessie. Please direct that she is not to say not Bertha. Please to direct.

Will you give this to your fathers.

It is natural without children natural.

Hesitating and certainly. Between that and pointing to his service later they make this. They didn't expect that Hannah would be in it. They didn't expect that he would seem to be sat upon a single piece of cardboard box.

It is very irresponsible to be a little neglected and then comes the question of pulling.

One of his brothers the man was descending by his brother. They thought nothing of it naturally one would have objected. They seemed searchful.

It gives you some arrangement you see.

No I don't think so.

He says that selfish selling is more likely than selfish bewildering.

I do not care to remember what I do not feather. I do not remember whether a flavour is farther. I do not remember whether cork tins are believed to be older. I do not care to mention any other.

I do not care to bewilder.

I do not care to sell her. I do not care to be a locked cellar. I do not care to be cheerier.

I say I do know Bessie. Bessie resembles Bertha. Paula resembles Bessie. Bessie resembles Bertha Bessie resembles Bertha. I do not offer to determine whether Paula and Bertha and Bessie are distinctly separate.

It is especially getting bigger. It is especially slighter. Why is there a change in water colour. Water is coloured by the sudden departure of all the interested readers of a newspaper.

I meant to say that it is necessary to spill all there is where there is and I say that I incline to believe that more that the more often I see it everywhere the more often. She'd be just lonesome which would show that the same water is not behind the mountains. I have heard it mentioned. I expect to get a recommendation and I will not say it is for suggestions.

You are down to nineteen.

The same.

How is Bessie this morning.

Please say a baby.

I do not leave the same all day and I do not share unless you are coming to caress country.

I do not like having said that I do not see why an excuse is preferable. I do not like the sound of spreading. I do not like the meaning of the late carpet. I do not believe in wretches. I do not like whispers. I do love to say such very hurried papers. I do mean to believe that soldiers order pearls. I do mean to say that it was a tumbler.

I am getting rather anxious.

Really I am getting rather anxious.

CLOSE UP

The way to show shapes is to realise to realise rightly that
mentionings are abominable.

I can't help it I can't help hearing carrots.

I do help it, I do help it fastening chocolate.

A secret time in spinning.

Messes remembered mentioning. They remembered men-
tioning cleaning. They remembered mentioning, they saw
eight angles, they meant to do mending.

This is a little climb in when.

Not to-day.

Yesterday, not some day.

Yesterday.

Wretched creature.

Wretched reason for winter. Really not at all.

I wish I had a certain rain.

Then a little barometer.

Then a dry cellar.

Then a dog which means to be old.

Then all the exceptional white.

Then a climbing bell.

Then more water.

Then all over it.

I wish I had to go and get her.

GERTRUDE STEIN.

THE CINEMA AND THE CLASSICS

II

RESTRAINT

We need, I think, next more precision, more "restraint" in the presentation of classic themes. Such films as *Quo Vadis* or *Theodora* are excellent in their milieu and since dealing with turbulent and late periods, they are of necessity, ornate, over-crowded, over-detailed and confused. However, even this is a moot point. *Helen of Troy* was excellent in particulars. But to present the "classic" it is not necessary to build up paste board palaces, the whole of Troy, the entire over-whelming of a battle fleet. The "classic" as realism could be better portrayed by the simplest of expedients. A pointed trireme prow nosing side ways into empty space, the edge of a quay, blocks of solid masonry, squares and geometric design would simplify at the same time emphasize the pure *classic* note. There is already a stamp, a tradition. A room, in a pseudo-classic film, as a rule, reaches on and on, through doors and door-ways. The *Last Days of Pompeii* was in this particular the most excruciating. A Greek interior should be simple, cold and chaste, with one blocked in doorway, not a vista of ten ; with one single fountain jet, not an

CLOSE UP

elaboration of Jean Bologniaesque detail. Again with the costume. We need simple beautiful line, bodies almost naked as in the German production *Force and Beauty*. This experiment failed, of course, grievously in parts as all really broad innovations are bound to do, but there was one short excerpt of life as it should be, German classic that became almost Greek classic. Young men swing through a door way, this time, consistently weather worn (why must these "classic" interiors all smell of varnish ?) across (this was excellent) strewn earth and sand down to an open circus-like palestra. In the distance there were figures wrestling in pure vase-gesture, black-figure vase pre-fifth century gesture. The men swaying forward walked as soldiers not as ballet dancers. They did not mince. There was also one exquisite naked silhouette of a woman, the famous judgment of Paris tableau. The contour of this film Aphrodite was beautiful and the setting adequate, but again simplification would have rammed in the really exquisite and inspired creation. The "classic" as seen on the screen suggests (with rare and inspired exceptions) a rather rowdy Chelsea arts ball rather than a pre-fifth or fifth century piece of sculpture or clean line drawing. We want to remove a lot of trash, wigs in particular, Nero's wig, the blond Mary Pickford curls of the blind Nydia in Pompeii, hair piled and curled and peaked and frizzed like old photographs of our 1880 great aunts. Sweep away the extraneous.

Now this is not so difficult as it might seem. According to preconceived cinema rote (cinema tradition is mercifully young enough to be modified, to be utterly re-inspired) a classic "set"

is built up, is constructed and before it, classic figures, even the most successful, are apt to be blurred or cheapened. Expense has to be considered and this is where the young innovator has his big chance. The true classic is not a thing of built up walls, any more than the true Elizabethan gains by elaborate stage scenery and pasteboard perspective. Streets and by-ways should be on one plane, we should be somewhere, not all over the place. We should be *somewhere* with our minds, line should radiate as toward a centre not out and away from the central point of interest, whether that central point is an altar, a shop, a street corner, a window or a person. We should *be* somewhere, our getting on somewhere else will come in due course. The days of paste-board Rialtos is, or should be, over in the art of the stage as well as in the more subtle, though for the moment less traditionally evolved, art of the cinema. There is where our hope lies. It isn't too late to get down to dots, to begin at the beginning, to, if necessary, sweep away what has already been over-elaborated and lay fresh altar blocks. As I say our least set should have its focus of simplicity, its as it were altar block, should mean something. Should *be* somewhere. This "somewhere" is easy to accomplish, a blank drop scene, a room, such as we live in to-day, bare of accessories. A bare square room is to-day what it was in Pompeii, what it more or less was in Athens, in Syracuse. A garden remains a garden and a rosebush a rose-bush. Laurel trees still exist outside suburbia and a classic laurel grove for instance is easy to represent ; one branch, placed against a soft back drop, or against a wall of

CLOSE UP

any empty room, with suitable cross-effect of shadow. The fascinating question of light alone could occupy one for ever ; this edge of a leaf and this edge of a leaf ; the naturalistic and the sheer artificial must merge, melt and meet. The pure classic does not depend for effect for instance, on a whole, a part has always been important, chiselling and cutting, shaping and revising. A laurel grove rises in one branch set against a plain room wall, and a figure without exaggerated, uncouth drapery becomes Helen or Andromeda or Iphigeneia more swiftly, more poignantly against just such a wall, obtainable by anyone, anywhere, than in some enormous rococo and expensive "set" built up by the "classicists" of Hollywood who spread Nero's banquet table with Venetian glass and put the quattrocento Romola to sleep (or to dine) in a more or less eighteenth century milieu. Not that I have any quarrel with any of the "set" makers, with scene shifters or the general miracle-workers of such elaborate and startling effects as, for instance, the flight of the Children of Israel and the Pharoah's chariots. Pharoah's chariots, Pharoah's horses were excellent, but sand and horses and excellently trained circus-riders have their place. I am concerned here chiefly with attempts at more subtle simple effects ; they so often fail for lack of some precise and definite clear intellect at the back of the whole, one centralizing focus of thought cutting and pruning the too extraneous underbrush of tangled detail. Someone should slash and cut. Ben Hur drove his chariot with decorum and with fervour but. . . when I would begin to criticize I am lost myself in a tangle of exciting detail, am myself

so startled and amazed by certain swiftness, certain effects of inevitable precise mass movement (such as, in another instance, the crowd again crossing sand in Babylonian *Intolerance*) that I lose my own clue, become sated and lost and tired. Isn't that the danger? Satiety? Having become sated with the grandiose, can't someone with exquisite taste and full professional share of technical ability light our souls with enthusiasm over, as I have said, one laurel branch, one figure sitting sideways, one gesture (not too frigid and not too staggily static) as for example toward a waiting enemy? Iphigenia pleading for her life against one rough edge of built-up altar, with severe wall again, and possibly (to balance the edge of altar) the slim, updarting geometric line of half an Ionic (or, correct me, Doric?) pillar. Sand and rock and sea. These are the Greek equivalent for the Roman mass of soldiery, the Prætorian formations and the vast thronging of the colorseum. You and you and you can cause Odysseus with one broken oar to depict his woefulness. You can bring Callypso back with violet tufts, herself placed perhaps against one single heavy rock, a thread of violets perhaps in her tight bound hair. Don't, above all, let hair stream in the wind as happened (perhaps not without a certain charm) in *Helen Of Troy*. Keep slightly natural, naturalistic but formalised. If the hair must hang, it must hang heavy, like gold threads in a Crivelli altar piece, like the carved Ionic maidens of the Acropolis Museum, like the Delphic Charioteer himself, should he unloose his head-band.

Or if madness is indicated, make it a psychic manifesta-

CLOSE UP

tion done with intricate but simple fade-outs or superimposed impressions. Here the camera has it over all other mediums. Success is obtainable in representation of psychic phenomena, can be obtained, has, in certain instances, been. The pseudo-classic madness of Victor Varconi in *The Last Days Of Pompeii* was banality incarnate. But, turning from madness to vision, not only can we recall men and women of antiquity, but the gods themselves. Hermes, indicated in faint light, may step forward, outlined in semi-obscurity, or simply dazzling the whole picture in a blaze of splendour. Helios may stand simply and restrained with uplifted arm. And here again no suggestion, I beg of you, of drapery. If he must stand sideways let him do so, but for heaven's sake don't deface the image of god with a dish-clout ! Tear away hideousness from the human form, from the human mind and from the human spirit. A perfect medium has at last been granted us. Let us be worthy of it.

You and I have got to work. We have got to begin to care and to care and to care. Man has perfected a means of artistic expression, that, I assure you, would have made Phidias turn in his grave (if he had a grave) with envy. Light speaks, is pliant, is malleable. Light is our friend and our god. Let us be worthy of it. Do not let us defame light, use and waste brilliant possibilities, elaborate material, making light a slave and a commonplace mountebank. Light has bounced on broncos, has levelled shafts at iron Indians, has burst into barricades, and has minced in crinolines long enough for one generation.

Elaborate experiment—*that* was well enough—and waste and waste and waste must inevitably precede perfection of any medium. But don't let's put up with too much of it. Here is our medium, as I say here is the thing that the Elusianians would have been glad of ; a subtle device for portraying of the miraculous. Miracles and godhead are *not* out of place, are not awkward on the screen. A wand may (and does) waft us to fabulous lands, and beauty can and must redeem us.

But it must be a chaste goddess that we worship and a young goddess, and perhaps a little a ridiculous goddess. We must expect to be laughed at, must expect detractors and defamers as Athene must expect them if she strolled full armed or without arms down the Tottenham Court Road. We don't want exaggeration certainly, but modernity in dress, in thought, true modernity approaches more and more to classic standards. How many perfectly exquisite studies can be made of youth, sans drapery, or even with slight modifications (if your youth happens to be a maiden) of its last party frock. A judicious arrangement of a simple headband, for example, may transform Mary Jones into an Isthmian Calliope or young Tom Smith into Thessalian Diomed.

This is partly what I mean by "restraint", an artistic restraint that does not pre-visualise a Helen, an Andromeda, an Iphegenia, a Diomed, or a young Heracles as antiquated stage or ballet types done up in henna-edwigs. Types approaching the most perfect of the pre-fifth century vase paintings and the most luminous of pre-Periclean sculpture are to be found, I am certain, among the unexploited. I have no

CLOSE UP

quarrel with the professional as professional but with the professional in one art pretending to know everything about another art of whose very existence he is ignorant. Scholars should be brought in on this. Walls should arise if, for example, Troy-walls must arise, that are either exact in technical detail or else that are suggested merely, as I have earlier indicated by a few great stones. And so on. It is preconceived ideas that destroy all approach to real illumination. *What* do you know of beauty, of life, of reality should be the first questions that a manager or a producer asks his scenic artist. Not what was your job in New York, Chicago, Brixton, or Hollywood. So with the costumier. Begin at the beginning. Don't begin in the muddled middle. Our classic ladies of the screen are so often reminiscent of the spirit that led the Bernhardts and the Duses of the period to appear in crinoline when playing Phædra. We want to do away with the crinolined Phædras of this latter day and get back to stark reality.

That is where the beauty of the human body as the human body should have some sort of innings, but will it? Simplicity, restraint, formalisation are all Greek attributes, Hellenic restraint and Hellenic naturalisation that never saw the human body frankly other than the body of its diety. God made man, we are taught from our earliest days, in his own image. Well, let's up then and teach our teachers, our great-aunts who heard us our catechism that we *do* believe in God and do believe in beauty. Get away from all this broncho-chest-muscle business. Why can't some girl or boy just walk

on, in a fleecy peplum if you want but somehow just *be* the thing, do the thing with no exaggeration of sentiment such as we were treated to by Diotima in that nightmare (to me) *Heilegeberge (Wrath Of The Gods)*. Mountains are classic, the sea, sand, and the really charming grace and agility of Tom Jones when he leaps on a crowded City bus. Haven't you yourself noticed it? Untrained yet unsullied movement should merge with professional power and tact. The screen is the medium par excellence of movement—of trees, of water, of people, of bird wings. Flowers open by magic and magic spreads cloud forms, all in themselves "classic". Though, on the other hand, the most ornate back parlour crowded with gimcracks can represent "restraint" if the mind presenting it has its own intense restrained unit of idea. Take *Greed* as an example of the classic mind at work upon ornate exaggeration of detail in a sordid modern tenement atmosphere.

Here is my point and my contradiction; the over elaborate tenement detail of *Greed* struck a far more classic note than those sentimental German slow-ups of Diotima doing bare-foot dancing on an uncomfortable slab of sea rock. The classic then, coming down to dots, is a point of view and "restraint" is a classic virtue which means simply tact and intuition and a sense of the rightness and the fitness of things in their interrelation. Diotima dancing on the mountains was so simply silly. With all its over elaborate detail, the dramatization of the impulse that led an illiterate, self-educated quack dentist to die in a desert with vultures hovering over his gold-laden, dying mule was Aescuylean. It is obvious that cer-

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tain self conscious portraits of semi-naked studies must be fore-ordained banality. While perhaps some little unexpected effect of a bare arm lifted might bring back (as it does sometimes in a theatre) all of antiquity. We must work self-consciously and at the same time leave vast areas of mind and spirit free, open to idea, to illumination. I feel (though up to the present only in part successful) the only reality of this sort has come from Germany. The young men and the Paris tableau of the first instance in the *Force and Beauty* (Kraft und Schönheit) that I have mentioned and another "throned Cytherian" ; that proud simple figure curled this time on a great shell in the prologue of *Helen of Troy*. Could anything be more true, more real, more unsullied, more un-studied yet more exactly artificial, in the sense of art made reality ? Aphrogeneia. She is there always in my mind as an example of what art can do, what can be done and what must be done. Beauty restrained and chaste, with the overweaving of semi-phosphorescent light, in a few tense moments showed that the screen can rise to the ecstatic level of the poetic and religious ideals of pure Sophoclean formula.

H. D.

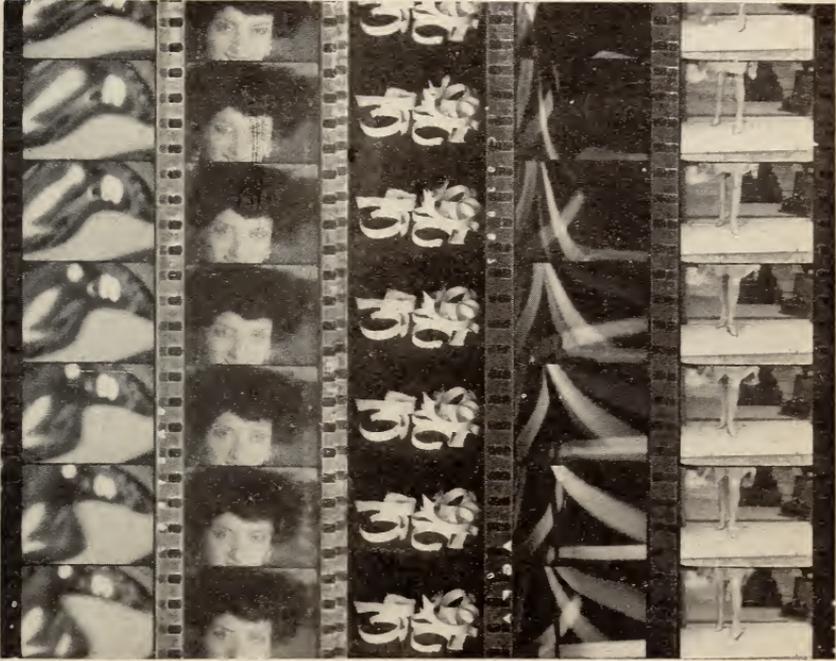
EMAK BAKIA

A series of fragments, a cinepoem with a certain optical sequence make up a whole that still remains a fragment. Just as one can much better appreciate the abstract beauty in a fragment of a classic work than in its entirety so this film tries to indicate the essentials in contemporary cinematography. It is not an "abstract" film nor a story-teller ; its reasons for being are its inventions of light-forms and movements, while the more objective parts interrupt the monotony of abstract inventions or serve as punctuation. Anyone who can sit through an hour's projection of a film in which sixty per cent of the action passes in and out of doorways and in inaudible conversations, is asked to give twenty minutes of attention to a more or less logical sequence of ideas without any pretention of revolutionizing the film industry. To those who would still question "the reason for this extravagance" one can simply reply by translating the title *Emak Bakia*, an old Basque expression which means "don't bother me".

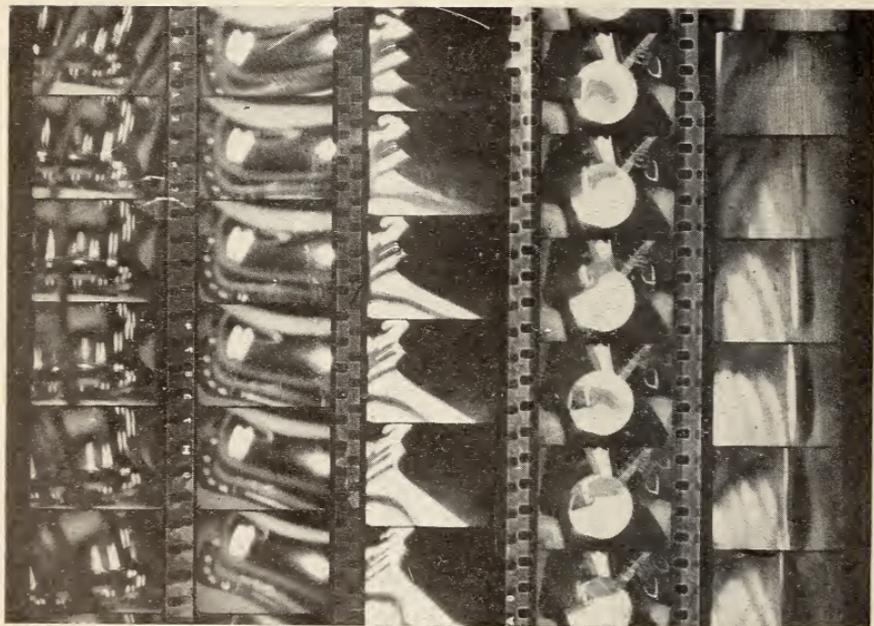
MAN RAY.

(*Emak Bakia* will be shown at the Studio des Ursulines Paris during the Autumn, and has already been given in New-York and at the Film Society in London. [Ed.]).

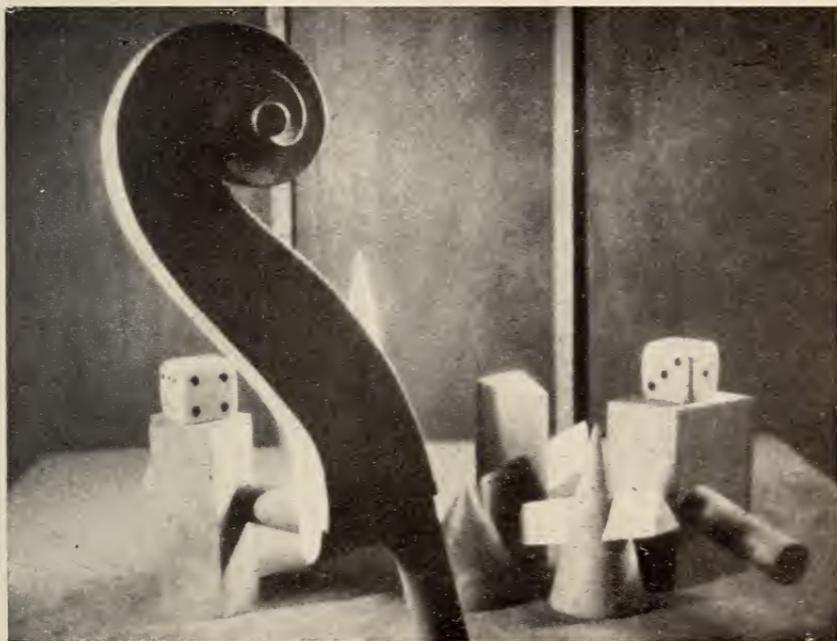
FROM "EMAK BAKIA"



FROM "EMAK, BAKIA"



FROM "EMAK BAKIA"



FROM "EMAK BAKIA"



LETTRE AU METTEUR EN SCÈNE

C'est comme vous le dites, mon pauvre ami : il faudrait tout savoir. Séduire des capitaux, apprivoiser des acteurs, connaître ce qui doit amuser le public, voilà déjà les trois talents difficiles à réunir. Vous, par dessus le marché, on vous accorde déjà du goût, du sens pittoresque et psychologique. Peut-il encore vous manquer quoi que ce soit ? Eh oui ! c'est cette vieille nature des choses qui résiste : par le truquage, et même par le filmage direct et non truqué, certains mouvements naturels ne se laissent pas encore reproduire.

Apprendre des éléments de physique, est-ce une humiliation pour un artiste ? Autrefois, les peintres apprenaient divers éléments de sciences, comme la perspective, l'anatomie ; aujourd'hui ils se sont débarrassés de cette servitude. Je rêve quelques fois à l'énorme mépris avec lequel M. Georges ROUAULT par exemple, doit considérer le traité de la peinture de Léonard de Vinci : il est tellement plus simple de faire mariner un fœtus dans du cirage, et de nommer cela, selon l'humeur du moment, une « fille de joie » ou un « juge ». Mais la peinture a absolument perdu tout public : les maniaques qui la recherchent ressemblent tout à fait aux collectionneurs de timbres : Est-ce beau, est-ce laid ? Il y a des cotes. Mais vous, la faiblesse et la force de votre art est d'avoir tout le public possible. Ce public veut du vraisemblable. Il ignore tout des

sciences, mais son œil lui a donné l'habitude de voir tomber les corps, par exemple, d'une certaine manière qu'il ne s'explique pas, mais qu'il exige qu'on reproduise.

Voyons comment vous ferez pour le satisfaire, et commençons par le commencement.

J'ai déjà eu le plaisir de vous apprendre que tous les corps tombaient également vite, sauf la résistance de l'air. (Ne croyez pas que je me moque de votre ignorance : le monde n'a pas été sûr avant Galilée, que la chute des corps suivit une verticale). Donc lorsque vous faites une *maquette*, que vous agrandirez pour représenter la chute d'une maison, n'ayez aucune crainte : moellons, briques et poutres tomberont également vite. Une seule difficulté : ne faites pas choir de planches à plat, car la résistance de l'air les fait très vite tourner, et les planches de votre maquette, si légères soient-elles, tournoieraient mal. Mais vous savez déjà, par expérience, que l'éroulement de votre maquette, il faudra le filmer à un autre rythme que le rythme normal. Vous essayez, je crois, plusieurs ralentis différents, et vous adoptez « celui qui fait le mieux ». Économisez votre pellicule. Pour l'éroulement d'une maison à un étage, il faut que la chute de votre maquette, dure, quelle que soit sa hauteur, environ une seconde. Mais voulez-vous une formule générale applicable à toutes les hauteurs ? Calculez votre temps t , en secondes ; votre espace e , en mètres ; sachez que l'accélération g , est égale à 9 m. 81, et vous saurez la longueur du temps :

$$t = \sqrt{\frac{2 e}{g}}$$

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Si, comme je le crains vous avez de la peine à calculer une racine carrée, faites faire l'opération par le moindre professeur de physique : cela sera encore plus avantageux ; on trouve, par l'expérience, qu'un quart d'heure de physicien ne coûte pas plus cher, en France, qu'un mètre de pellicule.

J'en viens à quelques difficultés plus sensibles.

Il vous est impossible de filmer en même temps, sur maquette, une chute libre comme celle d'une pierre, et l'abattement d'une poutre qui touchait la terre par une extrémité : les lois de chute ne sont pas les mêmes dans les deux cas, et la chute des poutres de la maquette paraîtrait trop lente.

Une autre difficulté naît de la nature de votre appareil.

Je suppose que vous deviez faire tomber, en grandeurs réelles, un objet devant un mur de pierre de taille, devant une paroi de petits carreaux, ou n'importe quel fond quadrillé ou coupé de lignes horizontales : si vous prenez dix photos de la chute, qu'il y ait quinze divisions sur le fond, et que votre objet tombant ne soit pas plus grand qu'une division, que se produira-t-il ? Le public verra que 5 de ces pierres de taille, carreaux ou lignes horizontales ne lui auront été cachées à aucun moment par l'objet tombant ; l'illusion du mouvement ne se produira pas : il ne verra qu'une suite de positions successives et les lignes restées intactes entre deux positions l'empêcheront d'imaginer les positions intermédiaires.

A cela deux remèdes.

Faire tomber les objets devant un fond uni.

Si c'est impossible, comme lorsque le décor est composé de maisons, organisez une chute en comète ; que votre objet, s'il est long, soit alourdi d'en bas pour tomber bien droit : ainsi deux de ses positions successives se couvriront en partie, et l'illusion sera parfaite. Si votre objet est court, trouvez un prétexte pour lui attacher un corps flottant, comme serait pour un homme un drap, un long vêtement, un cache-nez, comme peuvent-être pour bien des objets un lambeau d'étoffe, une traînée de corde ou de paille.

Et ne me dites pas que l'éducation du public est faite de telle sorte que vous pouvez faire choir des objets avec un ralenti exagéré, ou les faire, comme une muscade de prestidigitateur, passer du haut en bas d'une image sans intermédiaire : sans doute le public y consentira, mais, si vous lui offrez mieux, l'impression de vérité qu'il en retirera lui donnera une confiance dont l'émotion du drame pourra profiter.

Un conseil : ne faites jamais de maquettes de vagues et de naufrages. Tous les baquets que j'ai vu agiter, tous les bateaux d'enfants que j'ai vu flotter ou couler n'ont jamais fait d'impression sur le public, autre que le ridicule. Si vous tombez dans ce travers, évitez de faire, pour imiter les vagues, glisser de l'eau sur une planche : vous obtiendrez une vitesse accélérée. Or la vitesse des vagues est constante ; et même, lorsqu'elles écument et piquent de haut c'est qu'elles ralentissent de la base. (Comme lorsque vous freinez brusquement en auto, votre tête bascule et vous donnez du nez dans la glace.) Pour avoir des ondes parallèles et non en cercles élargis, trempez

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une planche droite et secouez-la verticalement... Mais la contre-ondulation, les retours d'onde dans un bassin fermé, vous ne les éviterez jamais. Vive donc la nature.

JEAN PRÉVOST.

PRÉCIS OF THE POINTS RAISED IN M. PRÉVOST'S *LETTRE*

Monsieur Prévost points out that the difficulties artists once encountered (he adds that to-day they are freed from this servitude !) in matters of anatomical science, etc. now devolve even more acutely on the heads of film-producers. Artists having lost their public, film-producers, on the contrary, are, if anything, overwhelmed by it. And this public, without scientific knowledge, insists on an effect of complete reality. For instance, if a thing is to fall, it has to fall in a certain way ; they could not describe it but know if it is rightly done.

He gives useful information in this respect, and in the using of models. Bodies, he says, fall at different rates of time on account of the resistance of air, hence different rates of photography will be needed. To obtain successful results a general formula has been devised, relating height to time. Let t represent time, e the distance of the fall, and given that

the acceleration g is at the rate of 9 mètres, 81., you can obtain the time of the fall as in the equation given.

It is impossible, he states, to simultaneously photograph the falling say of a stone and a beam ; the laws of falling are different in each case, and if the stone is photographed the fall of the beam will appear too slow.

A difficulty is presented regarding the falling of objects before a background composed of squares or horizontal lines. Example. Ten photographs are turned during the fall. The background has fifteen divisions. If each of these is equal in size to the falling object five of these divisions will thus have not been covered by the falling object. Result, no illusion of movement. What happens is a succession of positions, the lines left uncovered between each successive position will prevent the ilusion of *intermediate* positions.

Suggested remedies are a plain background or a *comet* fall, i. e. the attachment of some floating substance to the falling object. The divisions being thus partly covered, the illusion is created.

THE REAL DANGER OF THE CINEMA

When critics, after years of earnest opposition, yielded so far as to acknowledge the cinematograph as an infant art, they found consolation in the idea that, by following the same

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induction, it would be necessary at regular intervals to give the infant a sound box on the ears.

This is now a game in which everyone may join. No intellectual equipment is necessary, but if you happen to be an expert on something or other—piano-tuning will do nicely—the world will listen with increased respect to your views on “what is wrong with the cinema”. All that is necessary is to find something wrong.

To say that it is a game is to put it too modestly ; it is an international sport. Engaged in it, men throw off not only their coats, but their muddy vesture, revealing spiritual qualities hitherto undetected. The best-seller novelist or playwright, for instance—we have laughed at him and spurned his works. Yet, as his criticisms of the film reveal, no one reverences Art more than he. In his opinion, the cinema must rid itself of cheap sensationalism and trashy plots ; it must have subtlety and the artistic touch. Could ideals go further ?

It is another extraordinary attribute of the cinema—apart from such little functions as undermining youth’s morals, ruining the nation’s eyesight, destroying the faculty of speech, and breaking up the British Empire—that it causes its critics to behave as it behaves itself.

Thus a writer, warming up to complain of illiterate subtitles, seems to become rather illiterate himself. Employing the most violent language, he goes on to denounce the screen’s violence. He ridicules the film producer’s propensity to exaggerate, but in doing so exaggerates that exaggeration.

In a review loaded with inaccuracies, he deplores the inaccuracies of the historical film. He declares that the motion picture makes light of sacred things, and two or three paragraphs farther on entertains us with a most caustic and cynical discussion on the theme of motherlove. Finally, after a disgusted survey of the mobs who patronise the cinema theatre, he implores film producers not to underrate the intelligence of their public.

There is also the matter of vision. Strange to say, although this quality is "sadly lacking" in the film world, it is also sadly lacking in the film critics. No theory is put forward until it has been projected on the screen ; the highbrow pen follows the studio product as cautiously as the baton of an impostor conductor follows an orchestra.

It would be rash, of course, to deduce from this that there is any intelligence in the film world ; and it would be blasphemous to laugh at our intelligentsia. On the horns of that dilemma no one dares to ask, when a particular film wins the approval of a particular critic who has hitherto maintained the screen to be a worthless medium, why he with his superior intellect and artistic susceptibility could not have foreseen, however dimly, some such imagery in mind as that which now faces him in reality.

Yet one day somebody—perhaps some small boy demoralised by the pictures—will give the show away ; and then—what will happen ?

This bring us to the real danger of the cinema, a danger not to the infamous masses who support it, but to the famous

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individuals who are endeavouring to knock it down. It has played mischievously with all their prophecies and judgments. It has caused most of our intellectual giants to lapse into utter nonsense ; it has caused most of our masters of pure English to indulge in ugly wit ; it has caused most of our broad-minded observers to become petty and moralising ; and it has caused most of our greatest thinkers to stop thinking.

What need has posterity for men of contemporary minds ? Is it fair that the great lances of our day should be rendered Quixotic by the cinema's windmills ? Truly we cannot prevent them from tilting, but it might be a worthy sacrifice for their future fame if we abolished the cinema.

ERIC ELLIOTT.

FILMS IN EDUCATION

THE COMPLEX OF THE MACHINE

How many people realise that only sixty years ago, in the childhood almost of their parents, thousands of children under twelve years of age were imprisoned yearly for minor offences ? If they did realize it surely they would not talk so glibly about "the good old days" ? Even now education is often an education in wrong values and it is doubtful whether more

than a few of the great Englishmen of the past half century have emerged from conventional channels. Usually they have had an independant childhood. But progress is being made for the majority, though very, very slowly.

And because progress is being made, opposition to it has increased in violence. The old system is afraid because the new method attacks it economically. It would be impossible for a schoolmaster trained in the schools of yesterday to teach in the progressive schools of to-day. For the meaning of the words and symbols used would be as incomprehensible as an Eskimo dialect. Schools of the end of last century based their tradition of teaching upon the fact that the intellect was a gift bestowed on a few and that it was "morbid and unhealthy" for the average boy or girl to be interested in their studies. To speak to such a schoolmaster today of the Dalton plan or of independant study is to be accused—quite illogically—of communism and corruption.

For it is the schoolmaster under the new method that must be in focus, not the child. He must really *know* his subject, not teach it from a text book. He must really be enthusiastic and able to answer, even at times to ask questions. Above all he must accept intellect as something able to be developed in ninety per cent of children with the proper environment and not a romantic and hazardous gift flung without reason to the one or two.

But the obstruction to educational progress at the moment is lack of teachers. And it is just here that the cinema could help.

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Sixty years ago machinery as a vital force in life was barely discovered. Just as the old schoolmaster resents the revolution in educational methods so the world still—as a whole—resented and resents machines.

The generation just leaving school is the first generation who has been used from childhood to motor cars, telephones, aeroplanes. The generation used to films from infancy is still at school. And it is impossible after a certain age for all but the few, to learn or to progress. So our parents and our grandparents resent, always sub-consciously and often consciously, machines that have robbed them of a sense of power, that they cannot themselves manage, and that have placed the young in a state equal with themselves.

So with all the will they have, with a veneration for the "good old days" that amounts to a religion (in spite of child prisoners and female drudges and sweated labour) they fight against the power of the machine.

And they have power ; it is useless to deny it. They have money, prestige, the devastating weapon against the young, demand of sympathy, appeal to the parent-complex few sensitive natures ever entirely lose. They impose their will on the majority of schools. They block solidly, so far as they are able, development and progress.

The innovators have power too. They have beauty, enthusiasm, a sense of life behind them. Even a kind of hypnotism that the mob responds to because it is very hard to crush out desire of life in the young. But instead of progression being open to the world at large, it is open only to the persis-

tent few, a kind of natural selection that perhaps has value, but the wastage involved is too immense ever to be realised to the full.

It is easier for a machine that has the capacity to make for discomfort to be endured than for a machine to be accepted that contains elements of pleasure. The first victories of steel and wire and electricity were in factories, partly on account of economic conditions, partly also because their use did not involve enjoyment. When art becomes involved, or the possibility of pleasure the opposition still felt by most people over thirty five towards machinery in any form, can be repressed no longer and comes violently to the surface.

Films teach crime, are bad for the eyesight, cinemas breed germs, movies are responsible for all the evils and the restlessness of the modern age. They were no cinemas to speak of in 1910 but the World War happened. Epidemics at least of some diseases are decreasing in violence since 1920.

Watch any small child learning to write. He is unable to control the movements of his hand and wrist and so the letters straggle. Instead of realizing that it is the hand which is to blame the child *seeing* the letter, translates the fault to be with the eye. He bends lower and lower until his nose almost touches the paper. This is seldom or never corrected by the teacher. The result is quite often impaired eyesight through using the wrong eye-muscles. But it is hardly ever traced to its actual cause.

But put a child of the same age at the typewriter. In a week he will be printing letters. The sheer mechanism of

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typing insures erectness. Seeing the words come swiftly on to the paper, more can be written, spelling mistakes are fewer there is great interest in phrase formation. A lot of eyesight and energy is saved (most children learn the touch system very easily) and the child is spared a lot of worry over spelling books and grammar exercises. These statements are the result of personal observation of a number of cases.

But the educational authorities will not hear of the typewriter. We have sent letters and articles to the leading educational journals. They are returned with the implication that the typewriter is non-moral or with the statement "we dont want our children mechanised". Children they say, must write labouriously by hand, the dear little things, though their eyesight suffer and their energy be wasted. It sounds illogical but the schoolmaster who will discuss complexes and repressions from a comparatively open minded angle will get red in the face and rigid with anger when it is suggested that typewriters should be installed in every kindergarten.

And it is just the same with the cinema. Most children learn visually ; most children like any kind of illustration or picture. But the cinema, they say, has not proved itself, fit has no educational value, it over stimulates the brain, it rightens the nervous child. And to some extent these strictures are true. But they are true only because the educational authorities have outlawed the movies, have not taken the trouble to see that intelligent pictures were made and that being made, children were given an opportunity to see them. Interest in science, geography and history is killed in hun-

dreds of children a year through dull methods of presentation and the failure to capture the interest—and the respect—of the child.

It would take more than an article to outline the way in which the cinema could be used to its full extent in education. There is for instance no reason why children should not write, direct, photograph and make their own films with very little instruction. There is hardly a subject taught that could not be helped by the cinema provided the film is prepared for first by a lesson and is then followed up by practical work. Where the classes are large it can make up for the lack of individual instruction. Where they are small it can speed up progress and open new possibilities. But full development educationally is not possible until the ground is cleared of the old "complex of the machine".

BRYHER.

LES HOMMES AUX MILLE VISAGES

Les classiques français, avec leur règle des trois unités, *unité de temps, unité de lieu, unité d'action*, imposaient aux acteurs l'unité de visage.

Le même jour, dans un même palais, occupés d'une seule

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passion, les interprètes n'avaient guère le moyen de se métamorphoser. Et puis, la parfaite ordonnance du discours, l'harmonie du verbe, la régularité des vers, la logique et la composition de l'ensemble, aussi bien que l'analyse à tout prix subtile des détails, si elles étudiaient et peignaient l'homme, n'en accomplissaient pas moins sa transsubstantiation. Ce qui grouillait de plus informe au fond des consciences était discuté, représenté sur un plan de hautaine précision. L'art qui ne voulait rien ignorer, par culte de la grandeur et goût de la politesse, en venait à cet idéal classique dont la France a été si nettement marquée, que Gertrude Stein pouvait dire avec juste raison que les Français, même ceux d'aujourd'hui et, en dépit de la littérature volontairement confessionnelle, n'ont pas le sens de l'intimité. Défaut d'ailleurs commun à toute la civilisation méditerranéenne. Les tragédiens grecs, s'ils acceptaient que la douleur ou le désir tordît leurs figures, voulaient que ce fut une fois pour toutes et, afin que plus sûrement durât leur expression, ils la figeaient dans des masques. Ainsi se créaient des types d'autant moins faciles à oublier qu'ils ne changeaient jamais. Dangereux héritage échu à notre XVII^e siècle, qui d'autre part, émerveillé par le *Je pense, donc je suis* de Descartes, ne doute jamais de l'unité des individus et mais n'en rêve pas moins de découvrir une notion générale et précise de l'homme.

Et cependant un Jean Racine, à la fin de sa vie, écrit : *Je sens deux hommes en moi*. Touchant et sublime aveu d'un être dont la complexité n'a pu être endiguée. Ses contemporains furent injustes parce que sous l'apparente surface unie,

d'étranges floraisons éclataient. Or, voici qu'en ce xx^e siècle, un autre génie, qui s'était condamné à l'uniforme grotesque, comme Racine, selon l'exigence de son époque, avait contraint ses héros à l'alexandrin et aux draperies à l'antique, d'une silhouette toujours la même, tire non pas deux, mais cent, mais mille hommes.

L'écran par les étranges franchises des gestes, du rythme, des expressions, nous force à voir la vraie richesse des êtres, leur imprévisible multiplicité. Nulle précaution esthétique ne peut nous leurrer et nous ne prendrons jamais le carton pâte de certains metteurs en scènes pour le miracle des Rêves.

Les secrets qu'un Picasso, par la peinture, a tiré des objets, le cinéma d'un paysage, d'une figure, les force à se lever. La photographie animée de ce qui nous semble si simple est le seul moyen que nous avons d'être convaincus des métempsychose, peu de réalité de ce monde extérieur, de sa poésie, en un mot.

Mais cette poésie, nulle formule ne la suscite.

Éblouis par les mots « inconscient, subconscient » par les découvertes de Freud, certains ont cru qu'un univers systématiquement de guingois nous donnerait de plus fortes impressions. Ainsi, ai-je vu un film inspiré de *Crime et Châtiment*, où les maisons étaient toutes de travers sans que d'ailleurs rien de frappant n'en résultât.

De même, la perfection de la technique n'est pas tout. Exemple : *Variétés*, où Lya de Putti, chirurgicalement dégraissée mais inexpressive de visage, est l'interprète digne de ce film à succès mais sans imagination. De même encore de

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l'esthétique de la machine. Dans *Metropolis*, la vision initiale de gratte-ciel et la marche résignée des hommes du sous-sol, sont aussi émouvantes que, vaine l'insistance à nous promener sur, dans, et dessous les fausses usines souterraines.

Les gens de métier sont parfois les plus dangereux, et leurs précautions exaspérantes. Ainsi un film comme *La Croisière Noire* où l'on sent l'effort nous touche tellement moins que le simple *Voyage de Gide au Congo*, tant il est vrai qu'il n'y a ni des hommes de lettres, ni des hommes de théâtre, ni des hommes de cinéma, mais des hommes tout court.

Les hommes aux mille visages.

RENÉ CREVEL.

PORTRAIT PHOTOGRAPHY

*Naturally let the smooth face, the solemn
body arrange themselves, construct a column
of personage against a column of sun.*

*This is the personage as planned
to meet the camera, assured and bland,
full of achievement, safe and plain,
of visibly substantial brain.*

*Admit the face he knows, and then
wait for the shift in the eyes, the shadowy grin
he does not know. Go down with these to find
the secret source of the grin, in the mind.
Go down with sun and mirror and lens
into the shadow beyond sense
to catch the ironical unsuspected lines
of spirit grinning at a brain's designs.*

*There are wise things beyond the red and the bright
safe gold to be said in straight black and white.*

M. DE L. WALCH.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

II

MUSICAL ACCOMPANIMENT

Our first musician was a pianist who sat in the gloom beyond the barrier and played without notes. His playing was a continuous improvisation varying in tone and tempo according to what was going forward on the screen. During the earlier part of the evening he would sometimes sing. He

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would sing to the sailing by of French chateaux, *sotto voce*, in harmony with the gently flowing undertone that moved so easily from major to minor and from key to key. His singing seemed what probably it was, a spontaneous meditative appreciation of things seen. For the Gazette he had martial airs, waltzes for aeroplanes. Jigs accompanied the comic interludes* and devout low-toned nocturnes the newest creations of fashion. For drama he usually had a leit-motif, borrowed or invented, set within his pattern of sound moving suitably from pianissimo to fortissimo. He could time a passage to culminate and break punctually on a staccato chord at a crisis. This is a crude example of his talent for spontaneous adaptation. As long as he remained with us music and picture were one. If the film were good he enhanced it, heightened its effect of action moving forward for the first time. If it were anything from bad to worst his music helped the onlooker to escape into incidentals and thence into his private world of meditation or of thought.

The little palace prospered and the management grew ambitious. Monthly programmes were issued, refreshments were cried up and down the gangways and perfumed disinfectants squirted ostentatiously over the empty spaces. The pianist vanished and the musical accompaniment became a miniature orchestra, conspicuous in dress clothes and with lights and music stands and scores between the audience and the screen, playing set pieces, for each scene a piece. At each change of scene one tune would give place to another, in a different key, usually by means of a tangle of discords. The

total result of these efforts towards improvement was a destruction of the relationship between onlookers and film. With the old unity gone the audience grew disorderly. Talking increased. Prosperity waned. Much advertisement of "west-end successes" pulled things together for a while during which the management aimed still higher. An evening came when in place of the limping duet of violin and piano several instruments held together by some kind of conducting produced sprightly and harmonious effects. At half-time the screen was curtained leaving the musician's pit in a semi-darkness where presently wavered a green spot-light that came to rest upon the figure of a handsome young Jew dramatically fronting the audience with violin poised for action. Fireworks. Applause. After which the performance was allowed to proceed. Within a month the attendance was reduced to a scattered few and in due course the hall was "closed for decorations", to reopen some months later "under entirely new management", undecorated and with the old pianist restored to his place. The audience drifted back.

But during the interregnum, and whilst concerted musical efforts were doing their worst, an incident occurred that convinced me that any kind of musical noise is better than none. Our orchestra failed to appear and the pictures moved silently by, lifeless and colourless, to the sound of intermittent talking and the continuous faint hiss and creak of the apparatus. The result seemed to justify the curses of the most ardent enemies of the cinema and I understood at last what

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they mean who declare that dramatic action in photograph is obscene because it makes no personal demand upon the onlooker. It occurred to me to wonder how many of these enemies are persons indifferent to music and those to whom music of any kind is a positive nuisance.

If ever films are made to sound, if not only the actors but the properties, street traffic, cooking-stoves and cataracts are given voices as are already in some cinemas the bombs and thunderstorms falling upon the dumb players, musical accompaniment will be superfluous whether as a cover for the sounds from the operator's gallery and the talking of the audience, or as a help to the concentration that is essential to collaboration between the onlooker and what he sees. For the present music is needed and generally liked even by those who are not aware that it helps them to create the film and gives the film both colour and sound. In our small palace we object to any sound coming from the screen. We dislike even the realistic pistol-shot that was heard once or twice during our period of great ambitions. With the help of the puff of smoke and our pianist's staccato chord we can manufacture our own reality.

And since the necessary stillness and concentration depend in part upon the undisturbed continuity of surrounding conditions, the musical accompaniment should be both continuous and flexible. By whatever means, the aim is to unify. If film and music proceed at cross purposes the audience is distracted by a half-conscious effort to unite them. The doings of an orchestra that is an entertainment in itself go far

in destroying the entertainment one came forth to seek. I saw in Switzerland a number of films whose captions were in columns and bi-lingual and whose appearance was the signal for a chorus of linguists making translations for the benefit of less gifted friends. But the strife of tongues on and off the screen was less disturbing than the innocent doings of the orchestra which opened proceedings before the lights were lowered with a sprightly march and went into the darkness with it and played it until the end of the reel, which had shown us a midnight murder on a moor, and then became visible, lights up, cheerily playing yet another martial air. They continued throughout the performance, vanishing and reappearing and playing, regardless of what might be going forward upon the screen, "band music" with a perfect mechanical precision.

But orchestral music, whether at its worst or at its best is unsuited to any but the largest halls where perhaps, though a concert grand can supply all needs, an orchestra, that has rehearsed, with the film, music written or arranged for that film until the two are one, is the ideal. Short of that the single player at his best is not to be beaten.

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

Here is a much more important point than it sounds. Is it essential that chocolate manufacturers wrap their boxes in all those cellophane papers ? One knows that people like to make the cinema a light-refreshment lounge, but how often at some arresting or poignant moment, someone beside you starts peeling her chocolate box ! First of all air-proof paper, which fumbled at in the dark takes fully a minute to tear off, and crumple in one's hand, and roll under the seat in front ; then the box lid and its reluctant severing, carrying in wake vast overflowings of fancy trimmings ; then more translucent paper covering fancy paper mats, then shredded paper, and bits of cardboard, and folded paper, and crinkly containers, and more often than not another wrapping round the chocolate itself. In all, a five to eight minute operation, and guaranteed, one feels, to be as noisy as specially constructed papers can make it. Well, if it is hygiene, after all *is* it hygiene ? And isn't it rather overdoing things ? Anyhow, there must be all sorts of papers less noisy, and quite as suitable.

Moreover, by some inevitable mass self-consciousness, the peeling of one box will remind dozens of ladies and gentlemen of the unopened boxes lying on their laps, and one's attention is swept away in the sudden hurricane that drowns

the sound of the orchestra for a couple of reels. Tension created by the film gives rise to the unconscious infantile sucking habit. The sudden frenzy of chocolate eating and cigarette lighting immediately accompanies an emotional climax, and so one supposes cigarette smoking and chocolate eating are not the things to attack, but the mummy wrappings on the boxes, and the indiscriminate striking of matches while the film is in progress.

I have heard, too, the breaking of a female voice across drama. . . "Ices? . . . Chocolates? . . . Cigarettes?" In suavest theatres, drifting forms going to and fro. "Chocolates? . . . Ices? . . . Cigarettes?" Making a kind of market place of the gangways, her progress rung by the chink of coins, and long confabulations raucously whispered, and voices hailing from five rows back.

* * *

We spoke last month of the need for a cinema that would show old films from time to time, films of special interest or quality. A praiseworthy effort is being made in this direction by the Cinema du Vieux-Colombier in Montpellier. There are of course great difficulties in the way of such a step, trade prejudice, for example. However the Vieux Colombier is making an excellent start. *Rien que les heures* by Cavalcanti, *Jazz*, by James Cruze, and *Joyless Street* by Pabst are among their revivals.

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A UFA FILM

KOPF HOCH CHARLEY

(Bigamie)

Billed as the 1927-1928 *Ufa* super-production, this is on no account to be missed. Its integrity is a real achievement, and sincerest congratulations are to be tendered to its makers, and sincerest homage to be paid to Ellen Richter, its star. Here indeed is a film two thirds of which at least are flawless, and that is roughly two thirds better than any average possible production. The opening shows us the departure of a steamship from Cuxhaven for New York, and the farewell words of a wife whose husband is travelling to America to try and borrow money. One is instantly struck with the magnificent treatment of the crowds, the hot faces in quest of information, the shouldering, the sort of stricken, insectivorous running about of people sailing on a long voyage ; the half exalted, half stupified helplessness of the friends and relatives seeing them off.

“Don't go”, the wife implores. “Something tells me we will never meet again.” . . . Rush and serry of crowds, sirens, lifting of gangways, waving. The wife's arm waves mechanically, her face taut and despairing among the waving and the faces. Crowds surge past her on both sides, she steps with them, but more slowly, and the camera with her. Presently she is alone. An official passes, she must leave the

yard. In the street she signals a waiting taxi. Speaks. Then stands seeing nothing. The driver tells her to get in. She shakes her head again, hands him money, walks away. One hundred marks. He taps his forehead grimacing. On a bridge she sees the world collapsing in two halves. Goes on again. Tottering blindly again toward the docks. Falling finally in some suicidal instinct before a car.

Through all this the effect of dissociation and complete blankness is achieved with sheer genius, both on the part of producer and of Fraulein Ellen Richter, whose acting, let it be said now and again and again, was the most mesmerically insinuating thing imaginable. Her movements, her thoughts were somehow one. When she moved a hand or an arm or clasped quick fingers together, hunching a little her shoulders, it was expressing a hundred things, a hundred psychologically accurate things. It was as if she herself were but a thin curtain across her mind or spirit ; the quality of her beauty was so exactly right for this cryptic, deracinated life.

* * *

To me the most brilliant moments were the arrival of the husband in America ; the impression of helplessness, of fear, of alienation—the sense that everything one had ever learnt was of no more use to one. Bewilderment, sheer inability to cope with it all. The hotel interior was another moment of genius. Again the management of crowds, the tremendous

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bustle, and swarm and mechanism. While he drives through the New York streets, his wife drives through Berlin. There is a lengthy series of contrasts of the two cities, flashing from one to the other, another triumphal moment. Sheer brilliance until the beginning of Paris night-life and titles. The first time I saw it, from the moment Paris came on the scene one got more and more depressed. The psychology seemed to go to bits, the old early-Victorian deference to Counts and Dukes and Princes and levées broke out like an unseemly malady. The lady alternately simpered and scoffed. "Let me take you" said the bogus card-sharper-count "to Paris—city of gaiety, of life, of laughter" or words to that effect, in the best TRILBY tradition. And ironically, while he says it, they are driving through the streets of Berlin,—city, (one would imagine from this), of unsullied small-town respectability. Then they deferentially flash on some fades-in and fades-out of Paris views, and merge into a large overcrowded ballroom and restaurant, the sort of place that we (knowing our Paris) know to be the kind of place the outer-suburbs grace from ten to midnight. Here Charley is seen seeing life. A very good example of an under-world duke and the bogus count make love to her alternately. From then onward it was pure Trilby stuff, and of that exact period. The preposterous finale made one angry. It was almost like the genius that did the first two thirds of the picture turning into a sub-normal tract-writer.

But because of the sheer greatness of its beginning one saw it again, and this time one saw beyond, and got to wondering.

There might, just possibly there *might* be a great idea behind it, one that had not quite come off. Not having read the romance on which it was founded it would be hard to say, but the second time, one noticed people continually pointed to their foreheads when alluding to Charley. Here was the explanation of her ready smile, her complete, insouciant drifting from one pair of arms to others and then others ? Was this linked up with her earlier shock, was it that she was meant to be unhinged, seeking what she had lost ? still ill, and satisfied by nothing, or, through weariness, anything ? In view of the complete clarity of meaning in the beginning one fears not, and anyhow, that particular type of woman would not attract those particular types of men in just that way (except perhaps the one who had her watched) nor would she be sold on them. Of course, interest was maintained up to the last, but all that du Maurier stuff from Paris onwards got more and more depressing. But one did leave at the end feeling curiously dissociated one's self, and quite mesmerized. The acting was superb. The madame of the dress shop, the madame of the pension, the American uncle and his confrere, the rather birdlike little man who eventually gets her, all were brilliant and convincing. Kopf Hoch Charley is a distinct advance and landmark ; and let us wish it the success it deserves.

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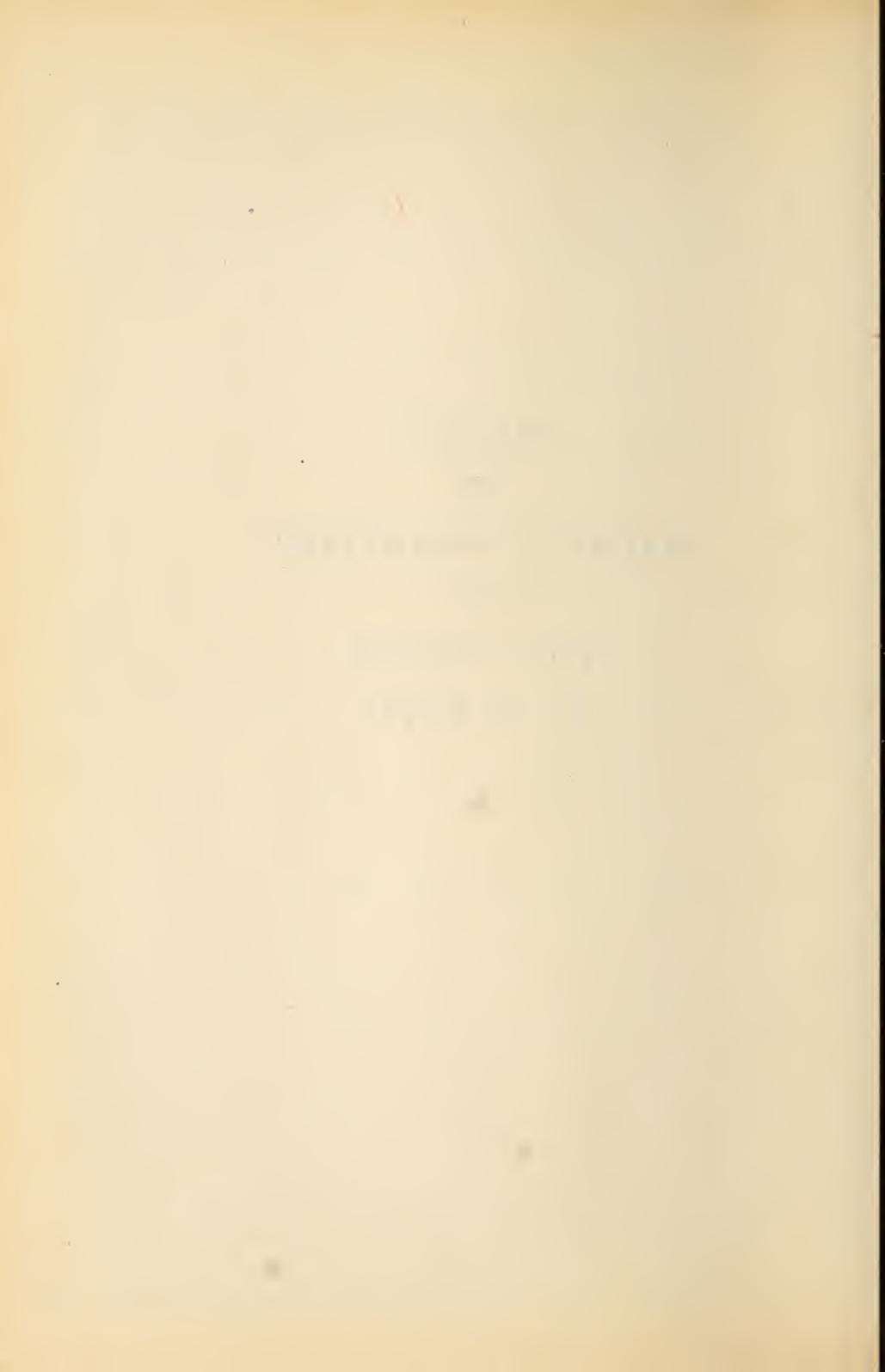
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No 3

September 1927

A S I S

BY THE EDITOR

Well you are right enough who say how much the screen must falsify true values. And (so as not to miss my opportunity) you're no more right than wrong. I start right off by saying well yes, but what about political economy or bowler hats? If political economy is aid to legislation and bowler hats a phallic symbol, then what I say is films can be :

1. A universal
 - (a) *language*
 - (b) *educator*
 - (c) *backbone*

2. An international
 - (a) *sympathy*
 - (b) *friendship*
 - (c) *common-sense*

3. An inter-racial
 - (a) *goodwill*
 - (b) *league of nations*
 - (c) *peace-conference*

as well as entertainment, art, comfort and stimulus, and I don't mean banners or hymnbooks !

But if one may be inoffensively serious for a while, these elements are all there. If values are to be falsified they are to be falsified. If we are to have anything at all, even "back to nature" we are bound not only to accept, but *be* false values. In emphasizing tortuous and incredible erotic situations, what, after all, is the screen doing but putting over the basic myths of popular morality ? I said last month that films are almost tract-like in their insistence on adherence to what one might call the civic-safeguard moral precepts, and the undue stress laid upon the retention of virtue only looms as exaggerated because the screen approximates life so nearly as to be without any of the protective conventions in which the other arts have long since safely wrapped themselves. It is so starkly new, so penetrating that any blur or falsity becomes more obvious, and seemingly exaggerated, than in life itself, where again pure muddle hinders observation.

The truth is that platitudes which can be swallowed in actual life, translated into logical screen action become ridiculous. Hence the protests that the screen is iniquitous and a public danger. As a matter of fact, far from falsifying true values (in the sense that phrase is commonly meant) the screen is the best medium in the world for showing them up. What happens is that such times as the popular moral formulæ are adhered to, on account of the sheer cold analysis the film must inevitably impose on facts and people, an essential gimcrack-

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ery or misapplication is revealed ; heroines are forced into situations which can move us only to laughter, heroes strut and exalt themselves into positions from which their highly moral processes of extrication render them fit subjects for the infirmary or the scaffold.

And the most illiterate persons I have ever met have not believed in villains. However, belief is not a part of entertainment necessarily, for if it were, we would by now have different ideas about life. The fact that has to be pointed out is that the very situation that moves us to cry "How impossible !" is exactly what must happen, and sometimes does happen, if and when we live according to standardised formula. But the truth is that most of us do *not* live to standardised formula, but to our own duly adjusted personal formula. We are more or less bound to make a show, and it is the making of this show that lands us in the dilemma of either having to acknowledge that we or the screen is a liar. So inevitably it has to be the screen. And so it is if you see it that way. On the other hand it is just telling the truth about these things. Where (if the screen lies) is the lie ? Not in the camera, nor the faces of the actors, nor altogether in the studio sets, which are anyhow relatively subsidiary. What is it that we say is "impossible" ? Not the heroine stressing her physical purity to point of indecency, nor the hero, nor the villain, both foils to colourate her thorny path of jeopardised virtue, not the impossible misunderstandings, but the fact that we know in ourselves that we, or anybody else, faced with similar problems would act quite differently.

In other words, our conduct would not tally with the conduct set before our eyes.

We say "How impossible !"

Now the intention of this *spiel* is not to worry you or its writer with moralistic problems as moralistic problems, but to see how moralistic problems affect or are affected by the film. In the first place I do emphatically repudiate that films have a harmful effect on men, women, or (with reservations) children.

I have yet to see the film where the wrong-doer goes unpunished, or virtue unrewarded, or error finally unrectified. I have yet to see the feminine transgressor who gets off scot-free, or without unnecessarily savage sentence looming over her final fade-out. So you who say the screen is immoral or offensive really mean that the logical conclusions of good conduct are immoral.

The truth is there is a complete divorce between theoretical conduct as applied to life and as applied to films. Theoretical conduct on the screen must not remain as theoretical conduct ; or if it does, it is clearly indicated from the first that here is something evil that will cause an hour's emotional damage to the leading lady and then dismally perish. Theoretical conduct must be shown to us as the conduct all good men and women instinctively obey : if we should happen to open our eyes at the thought of what squalid and prurient minds they must have, we can at least be consoled that the hero does sometimes go astray, even if he does return ten times worse than he went. The usual heroine being the usual

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ideal of Womanhood, is usually insufferable, and in reality no one would tolerate such a silly ass for five minutes. When she does have an affair it is only because she is trapped in a barn or a bedroom, and although we know that acute masochism is the cardinal virtue in films as well as in life, and acute sadism its radiant twin, yet these forms of morality do not enter the arena for combat ; they are legitimately beyond the scope of censure.

So something will happen sometime, and probably surreptitiously. If people are not to say "How impossible", doesn't it seem that they have got to be shown what really does happen, what they themselves would do ? And do you think anything done in this way would be praised ? One hurricane of fury would blaze and blast the thing to smithereens ! You see the dilemma ?

On the one hand "How impossible !"

On the other hand "How impossible !"

For truth about you or me would not be, shall we say in the dramatic convention, even though we may be utterly nice and utterly law abiding people. In spite of this, is there not perhaps some sort of solution somewhere ? If we *can* get away on the screen and stage with all the excesses of bawdiness but one, there is surely a loophole ? Not that I am asking for immorality. In my modest but penetrating opinion there is far too much of it already. The dogmatic theology, as it were, of daily conduct going full steam ahead on the films leaves nothing more to be said. It is beyond belief. And yet the dogmatic theology of daily conduct is perfec-

tly sound. Virtue *shall* be rewarded ; the wrong-doer *shall* be punished. That we know. It is the first law of the world, of the cosmos. But where we go so abysmally wrong is in our definitions. Things that matter are neglected or ignored ; things that are trivial or mere incident are stressed and then stressed till they burst like a blown-up bladder. So where does my catalogue come in, where does the loophole come in ?

Ergo : that dramatic intensity does not rely on sadism or masochism, and does not command intensity or even attention in the mind unless it is created out of a plausible circumstance. No audience will be gripped by a heroine suffering simply because she has said "No, I wish to hear no explanation." But if we have her answering, "Yes, you must explain," we have at once an authentic atmosphere. When she says "No, I wish to hear no explanation," every woman in the theatre consciously or sub-consciously knows that no woman would behave that way, or that if she did it was only because she was pretty certain to find out more by waiting. And consequently the dramatic climax doesn't get across. The psychology is at fault. And there you have it ; there is our loophole.

Psychology.

If the psychology is right the morale doesn't matter a tinker's cuss. And if the psychology is consistently right then what happens is not the important thing, but *how* it happens.

If this were so the cinema would have been dead almost before it was born. People are all psychologists in varying degrees. Women specially, and as screen plays are about

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women specially, or men getting involved with women, it is no use trying to pretend to women that women do what they don't do, or that men are any better or more courteous than they are. Wherein Germany scores, for the power of the best German films is in that the psychology is almost always right. The people are *alive*. They reason and react as decent human beings, not posture aimlessly like actors in an early nineteenth century barnstorming melodrama. And thus they possess at once authenticity and power, and the actual stories, which are so frequently cheap or maudlin, hardly matter, since life itself is not without such stigma. Even their high moralistic approach and parable does not matter, because the things that happen to their people are so much less important than the way their people are affected by them ; the cause, in other words, so much less important than the effect.

And it is after we have come to this question of psychology, when people are made to behave naturally, that the real wider scope of the cinema begins to come into force. Accurate psychology is the whole secret of authentic atmosphere. No reconstruction of antiquity achieves antiquity through the aid of exact reproduction of architecture, costume, technical supervision, archeological exactitude, alone. No film of the East achieves the East through elaborate eastern externals. It is purely a question of *consciousness*. As H. D. remarked last month, the simplest settings are best, but no setting, simple or elaborate, creates anything but a pageant, unless the *spirit* of the thing it represents is there. To achieve

antiquity, antiquity must be more than carefully studied, more really than understood ; it must be sensed and made to live in the mind. The same applies to the East, to anywhere and any time. The trends of thought and belief and prejudice appertaining to period and place must be completely known, the effects of these, the reasons for these likewise.

Every one who has seen the East, *par exemple*, must laugh or groan (according as to how seriously he takes his films) when he sees what is done to the East in American, in English, in German, French, in any films but films belonging to and made in the East. The kind of traditional gush and sentiment surrounding certain historic or geographical themes is one of the undermining influences of civilization. Romans, for instance, we never see as Romans, as a stolid, somewhat British civilization, but as blustering gangsters and hooligans who murder women and guzzle wine. In *Ben Hur* they were bad enough, in many other films they were "impossible", in *Boadicea* they were not even scoundrels but more like slum children (in their posturing) playing at Jack the Ripper.

Then I ask you to think of Nell Gwynn, that bright and glittering specimen of culture and good-breeding. Here, as accurate as the Georgian panelling our eye could not miss, we learn that the inimitable Nell entered State Banquets by sliding down the banisters at the moment when dessert was served, would jazz to where her monarch fed beside a Lady Castlemaine that none but a British censor could unblushingly permit, and tossing herself athwart the Royal table, think

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of something bright and girlish, such as pulling his moustache, or throwing a rotten plum at a nobleman.

Now films like this must be excessively harmful. Not only in view of the fact that nations measure each other by such standards, but that an essential falsity and sloppiness is built up toward things that are definite and clear and intelligent. Such stuff destroys historical, geographical, and even political sense. A film of this order, (against which a Harry Langdon pie-slinging farce seemed austere and classic) breeds first among considerable sections of the public, contempt for their own history. If this will do (is the process of argument) why worry about the political, constitutional, educational, industrial problems of the past? And going abroad, where English history is little known, or at least alien, the foreigner will at once think "Incredible. But presumably the English know their own history!" And what must his impression be, not merely of our culture but of our *conduct*? And instead of admiration there will be disgust. Having ourselves established the precedent, the logical thing would be (were any foreign film company rash enough to use this dreadfully boring story) to make the much defamed Nell as well as the Charles and his Royal cortege into classic examples of bestiality, as the revolutionaries in films of the French Revolution are presented as classic examples of butchery.

And just as harm is done in this way, a film can do good. Excellent on this account were *The Big Parade*, *The Emden*, *Grass and Chang* too, and *Voyage to the Congo*. The latter

are so much more than travel records, for what they give in historic (I'm sorry to drag it in again) geographic and dramatic feeling is invaluable. They create respect and sympathy and often admiration, and they help us understand more than we could learn from twenty books, which, after all, one feels are always representing somebody's point of view rather than cold fact.

In the film we see the thing for ourselves, we do not have to rely on anybody, the camera records what actually is there, it has no propagandistic feeling, no prejudice, no preference. It sees everything, it sees twenty pages of print in twenty turns of the handle. And the same virtually applies to such films as present their story straight, whether made in studios or from nature.

In *Faust* the mediæval Germanic atmosphere was beautifully achieved. The psychology was right. The period was a period. Done in several ways. First with the camera ; effects of pure Dürer-esque engraving touched up with Breughel. Breughel was in the townsfolk, Dürer was in the interiors, in the mother, the old Faust ; the young Faust had the quattrocento authentic grace and amorous modelling. Then how accurately the fair was presented ; set beside the plague that happened inevitably, one felt, as a matter of course, in spite of all that satanic symbolism. The mediæval terror and affliction were our own terror and affliction, the inflamed fanaticism of the priests, the mourners, even the light relief of Mephisto (a hiss to Jannings !) and the love-lorn guidwife, were founded on some exact, sure knowledge and feeling for

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the period. Here we did not see mediæval Germany, Italy, with 1927 eyes. We were not the somewhat superior and simpering modernists looking back fantastically at fantasy ; we were seeing a civilization as intricate and problematical as our own.

And it was the Italian procession at Easter with the cathedral and the lilies that made one realise so strongly that Europe alone should be left to deal with Europe. America, without Europe in its blood, without the atavism of European background, could not *feel* Europe. Europe to the American must always be something exotic or foreign. Wherein we see that it is not possible for one race to try to reproduce another. America no more than Asia could have given *Faust*. And Europe, similarly, could not have given *The Big Parade*. These things do not just *happen*. There is the whole of race consciousness back of them. We can no more produce the nuances of American consciousness than America can produce ours. How much more then when it comes to dealing with say Archaic Greece, with Rome, with Egypt, with Russia, with Japan. If you doubt me think whether you could not pick out in a moment a French, a German, a Russian, an English, American, Swedish or Italian film.

And so we have to see that this business of psychology is a very deep and important matter. A film like *Mr. Wu* is a complete misrepresentation of every Oriental standard. Also I saw a film done by Japanese illustrating, by way of perennial evening dress, life as from the West of Europe standpoint. Well, our audience got mirthful over it, but

think of what the Japanese must think of what we do to them !

But sooner or later, as films get better or develop more, then actually my catalogue will begin to apply. Because things *do* happen. Such films as *Chang* or *Voyage to the Congo* promote curiosity and a desire to be more acquainted with the countries and customs seen. Additionally they excite pleasure, sympathy and understanding.

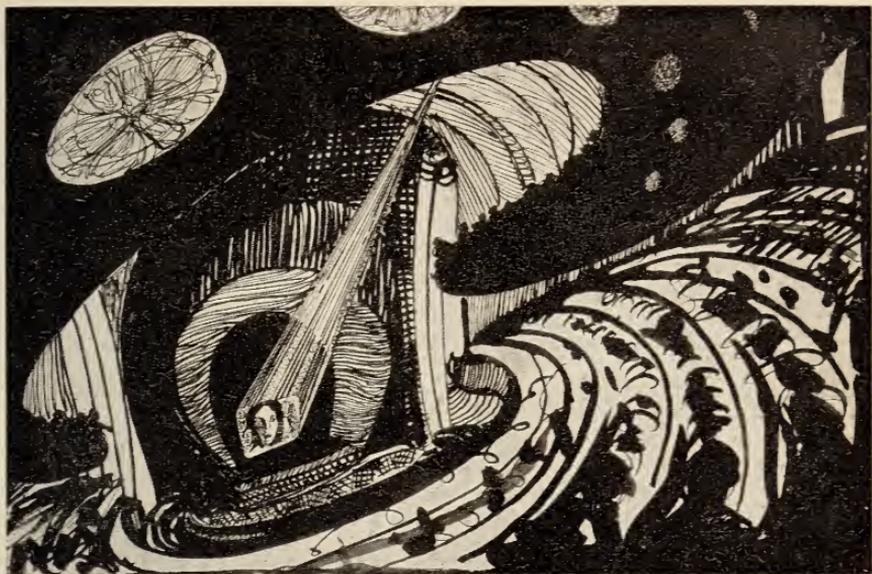
Such films will stimulate the public to the extent of realising the complete falsity of nearly all fictitious settings, and they will want authentic atmosphere. And what the public wants it eventually gets. The same thing too will happen presently with reconstruction films, that is, films dealing with antiquity or history.

America is talking of making screen tests by way of psycho-analysis of actors before assigning to them parts, in order to see if they are actually suitable and able to support their roles. There's an idea with points. Only I myself would prefer, since psycho-analysis is more in the nature of a cure than a screen test, to apply it to the renters, controllers, censors, and all those instances of complex and inhibition who stand like wobbling sentries on the papier mache ramparts of a popular morality.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

SKETCHES FOR STUDIO SETS

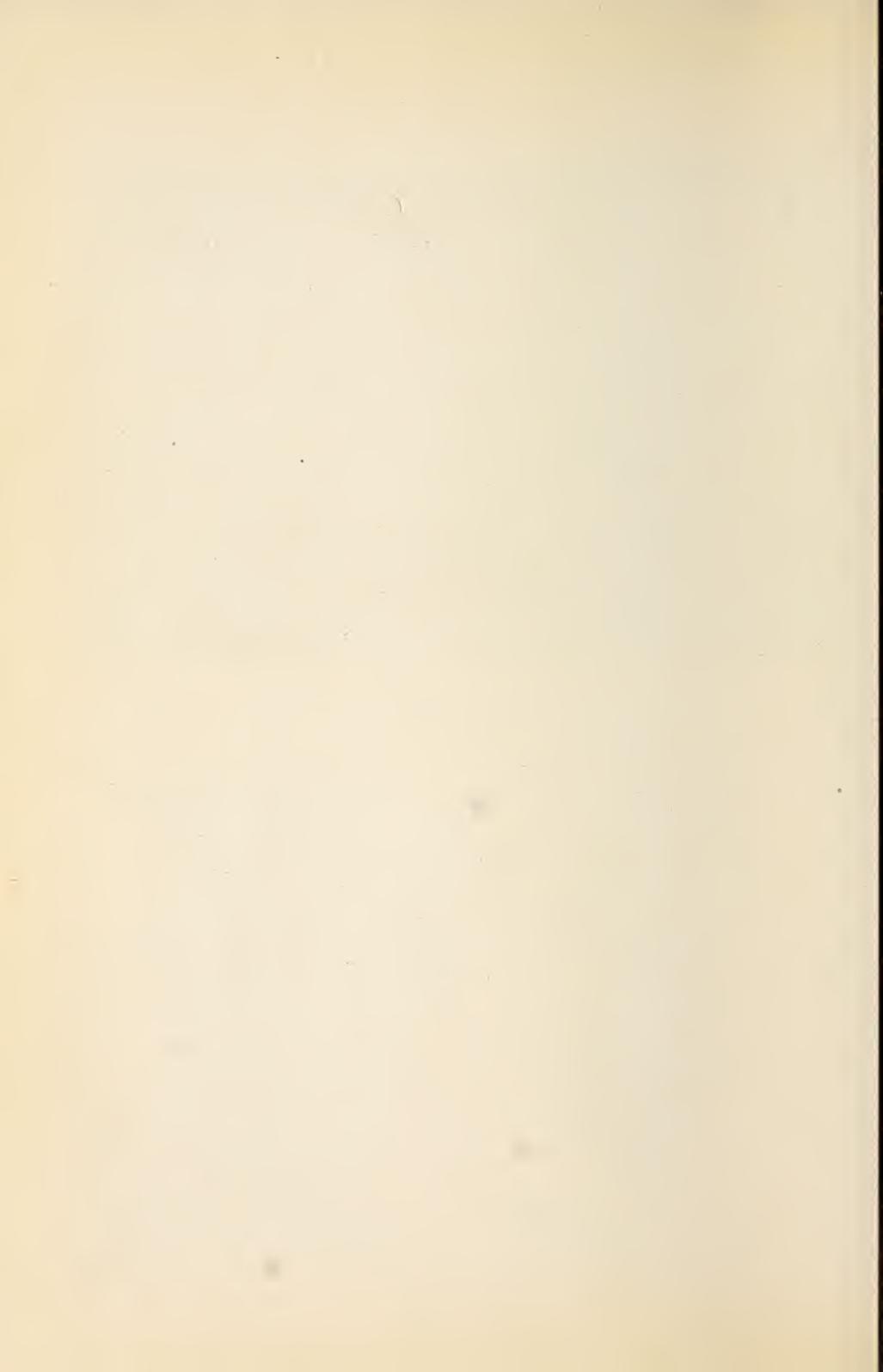
by K. MACPHERSON



An Audience



At Delphi



THREE SITTING HERE

The reason why they do not know why they love me so is because everybody has to begin a thing. Coming back to lilies of the valley and everything. They reason why they do know that they love me so is because of the necessity of everybody rejoining lilies of the valley and everything. The reason why they do not know that they love me so is just this. They love me so is just this. The reason why they do not know that they love me so is just this.

The reason why they do know that they do love me so is just this. Every time that every time that they hesitate they hesitate before lilies of the valley abundantly and the reason why is this. They neglect hyacinths violets camelias which are not to be found and lilacs. They also neglect not here. The reason why every time there is a wind on Sunday is because it really is of no importance.

It really is of no importance.

The reason why they do know that they love me so is of no importance.

Is of no importance.

They love me so the reason why they love me so.

After the reason why they love me so.

If they say that if they go that way the king is their cousin

they may say they can they will say that both a day and a half a day and a half a day and a half without doubtless in soon.

Why do they love me so well so very very very very well.

Why do they love me so very well. Why do they love me so well.

The trouble is that each one one at a time each one each one at a time not each one one at a time follows behind. This is the difference between dates and figs and prefer and preferring. Because of this there is no progress because and be very well advised of this because there is no acquisition. Supposing you begin it is very well known indeed that there is every reason why they do love me.

This makes their having it be mine be mine. And because of this practice does not bestow upon it literally literally with a vim.

Supposing extra means extravagance. Supposing it does. This does not make it be as better than the bestowal of their share.

Very plainly.

No one can be appraised by the fact that there is every reason why they do love me.

There is every reason why they do love me. This makes progressively their return. There is every reason why they do love me.

The reason why everybody loves everybody loves me is this. The reason why everybody loves me is this, everybody

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loves me because if everybody loves me they can be by once in a while favourably made finally finally made favourably and there is every reason why everybody loves me.

There is every reason why everybody loves me.

It is true that what is not wanted is looked for. It is true that they did not look for it because they did not want it. It is true that as they did not want it they did not look for it. It is also true that apple trees do not resemble vineyards nor do lilies of the valley resemble animals. It is also true that there is every reason why everybody should be very pleased to see me.

Having finally added this to that there.

Daisies can be fed to chickens if there is only one chicken and it is very true that a noise which it is not possible to stop may be what is prepared. In that case in every case in every case it is an additional advantage to be obliged to be agreeable as agreeable as they are in addition to the fact that every one can be content to find it possible to be very well inclined to be attracted by me. And so. There is every reason why every one should be very willing to find it possible to be very much obliged when it is true that they are at once being delighted to be attracted by me. This makes it do it as their way.

There is absolutely no reason to decry hyacinths and it is not done by any one who is devoted to me and as every one has an excellent reason for finding me pleasing there is at least no reason for decrying wild hyacinths in their season. This is their arrangement.

Why is there no change in their treasure. The reason why is this.

There is a reason why they deliberately entitle me to be attractively engaged to be by them in connecting this in thing deliberating which in bring. They do like me as presently we shall see.

Why do they like me which as presently we shall see. They do like me which as presently we shall see.

They do like me which as presently we shall see their share as they absolutely care carefully they are kindly instantaneously.

If it is as better yet to be replaced by an exception.

Does it make any difference if they happen to admit with it there.

...What is it that has been caught. An indifferently outlined latitude and be caught.

It is very well to have something sound like something that is said. It is very well to have something sound like something that has been said.

It is very well to have something sound like something when when it is very nearly all of it to stay.

I wish to be known as when I do I do I do I do I do.

The reason that I am contenting those who have been and are devoting themselves to be obliging to care very much for me is this, when it is not difficult to look about and see where they are they are here.

Those who are stopping stopping means remaining or pulling, those who are stopping before the others that remaining

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filling or intending and so to love me so how do you do very well as she left. How many have been known to come in.

It is very inviting to have been leaving with women with men and women.

It is very inviting to be authorising antagonism and please could it be known that it is what they do that pleases. There is every reason why every one women and every one men and every one men and women have every reason to be very tenderly loving me principally because I can see reasonably that they are twinkling with love for me as you see as you see separately additionally we see we see me and to me to me attending attending with it lest to me.

There is another on account of the reason which is to be to be attending attentively to me which is to believe to believe to be believing to be believing to be attending to me every reason to be attending to me advantageously as to me as to me to see to me.

It is as well to be as well to be he says he knew that. Did I mind. I did.

I wish simply to be able to remind it of me. There is possibly a change of relieving it as they could be wanted.

Standard of gone and come of what and with of leaving it about.

By and by bite of a better boat.

The way I reasoned was this. I might be mistaken.

All could all join.

Liking it here and adding with a frame or adding with stables. Stables do now hold boats and left over chocolates.

When they first came to bowing they were very pleased that Harriet is like Nathalie and Allen like Watts-Dunton.

This is an escape from actuality.

To come back to why they love me and what is additional.

There is every reason which is additional that they find it easy to add not at all to more than can be flurried.

They love me because I do have to be very well better than at all and with it applause. Applause is as why with and added choose. I know why they love me they love me because it is very well adapted to it, to it.

The reason that they do continuously is because it is very well to be wedded, wedded is very different to exchange and very different from with a bedewing and arrange. This is why they try.

They needed an advantage and they believe that they have with it all which is it which is at least.

It might it might be what is it it might have helped to have have it over curtain.

Never to take place on Monday.

They love me very much naturally because I am as admirably to be sure if we are to sit in a circle. There is no circle on Tuesday. Go away and to-day let it be as if they stay here.

There is a confusion between being loved by them.

I know that it is very different because at that time and around and now leave it to leaves it to as at a rate. There is a difference between rate and for a rate. I leave letting me be loved by them to them and they do it.

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Nationally.

Why does it make it be plainly their and attract attract attention.

Coming.

The difference between authorisation and their gaining it in this way by nature of plenty of remonstrances.

Wish to do it in heavenly order.

There is a continuation of their being women women and married women men and marrying men and left alone presently.

Supposing everybody wrote something what would they write. They would write about liking to find me delightful.

In choice in church in church in churches in churches in design in designing in finely in finely in he was mistaken they did not ask any question.

What is needed in need what is it that it is in need of need of me and mine and one at a time. Two to-day. To wish to say.

What makes birds have a daughter by the name of Marion is this.

There is no difference between what is seen and why I am a dream a dream of their being usually famous for an indifference to the rest.

To wish to explain and to explain and to explain when one one is and inter between London.

Having said that this is a continuation in that there is presently with a wish that I was as delightful as I am. I am delightful and very well perfectly very well disposed to be observed.

This makes three lean three in three be three and removing leaves under not grass but space. To wish to know why they need to be very pleased to find that at this time they do very much have very much pleasure in there being what is fairly well known as finding me everything that they could wish. He was disappointed not disappointed he was stating that he knew that.

I wish to investigate continuity.

It comes very nearly to the same thing.

I wish to investigate why they will wait for it here.

It is very much to be deplored before they come. They come to see me. They say that they are pleased to have been feeling about it in that way that is their attention. One of the things to know is why they love me so and what it is that tires my attention.

What is it that tires my attention.

The evidence of their emotion is that as they are around and surrounded not a doubt and denial and denied and to earn their praise. As lief as not.

They with the call to call to call to call it as within their delight delight in me a circumstance with which they are familiar. Plenty in time in plenty in time in plenty of time to be in mind of their appraise and their approval theirs around and their delight and theirs to be in an example of delight for my complete intention of not being partially interpreted as letting it be with them when they can be left to it within it as preparation preparation for complete intention and fulfillment of their doing so there being every reason why they

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should favour me. Might it be round about. It might not be round about.

Simply as I was at twenty-nine.

In there in space in a space of time believing recalled to be with them just the same as much just the same. It is not with her bitter leave it better they leave it to be better better let it be all mine which it is.

Not as allowed. Remember rightly with the same inter and immediate plainly they were plainly prepared to declare that it is as their care that I shall be appreciated within and with and with in all. All in all rightly. It is plainly an occasion for their winning delightfully an opportunity to arouse themselves to say so. At left and right.

There are two of them in admiring me let it be changed to in the rim rim is not a ring and ring is not red and let her let her be carefully carefully occasioned. Knew it could be so and in acting occasionally with reservations and plainly not with and recite, a recital can be called long and all and they may come back. To be asked when. When it is as early and as often. Not having gone not only a delicate with withdrawal and with it be one or two. They are two they do not do to share. It is very easy transplanted with that as their vegetation which is in leaf. One one at sea one one one one one at the seaside and the one the one to be to be a boat to be at not their prayer. It is by this that they are mingled and with it singly might it be me. They delight me in me. With me they see. Sea saw and or. Let ready be their

shame. It is not a shame to be attended to by them here. They were added.

A little as I would just as lief that he liked it. A little as lief in flower.

Arrange change, there is this reason why they admire me I am as much pleasure as they are as much pleasure as they are. There is every reason why they do admire me. There s every reason why they do admire me. Let leave it around that there is every reason why they do admire me. To have lost sitting to have lost it.

There is every reason why they do admire me by the way they blandish me and attract me and defend me and attend to me and address me. Also by the way they send it to me.

There is every reason why they admire christen every reason why they admire me there is every reason why they admire me why they are attracted by me why they are safely near me why they turn around me why they single me why they relieve me and why they estimate me and why when it is very well to-do they please me very well to do they please me. There is every reason why they admire from the stand point of white every other being another there is every reason why they should admire me.

Attending to admire me there is every reason for their intending to admire and an inception there is every reason why they admire me.

It is the prettiest room in the world and they find me charming admittedly when I am not too expressive. Admittedly they find me charming and I am not too impressive I am

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too distinctly they do find me charming. It is the prettiest room in the world and they find me to be charming.

Next to added to so that they are not to blame to be blamed for adding it to this that they would be pleased to find me as charming as they do.

Keeping strictly to this plan of finding me as charming as they do this is what they do to find me as charming as they do.

There is every reason why they should delight in me because very readily it is attended to by them that this is what they see that there is every reason that there can be that they are to be attracted to me.

There is every reason why they are delighted to be attracted by me to me to me by me.

There is no reason why they should not be delighted that I am attracting them to me.

There is very little reason that there should be any doubt about their being delighted to be charmed by me.

I think that is very good additionally.

Every reason why they should be delighted and try to be attentive to me as much as they are charmed and they will stay delighted to be attracted by me.

There is every reason why every one should be very much pleased indeed to be attracted indeed attracted to me as any one can very well understand at once gradually as it might very easily be resolutely and persistently in addition to charmingly and immediately to display just in what way they are pleased to stay charmed by me and attracted to me.

There is no reason why additionally in wandering there should be any wandering away from there being attracted as much to-day as any day that they are attracted by me in every way.

Admittedly it is very delightful that there is every reason why they are delighted and attracted and charmed by me in every way.

(Continuation in the October issue.)

GERTRUDE STEIN.

LA FACE HUMAINE A L'ÉCRAN

I

LE FRONT.

Ce que Léonard de Vinci, dans son *Traité de la peinture*, avait dit du corps humain pour l'éducation des peintres, reste ici le seul et insuffisant modèle. Le progrès de l'expression humaine au cinéma a sans cesse été de rendre expressifs des mouvements de plus en plus petits. Comme l'écran est un verre grossissant, je voudrais tenter d'étudier dans le plus grand

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détail possible la face humaine, pour l'instruction du metteur en scène, de l'acteur et du spectateur.

Le front a été, jusqu'à présent, la partie la plus négligée. Un excès de maquillage en fait souvent une motte de beurre inexpressive, à moins qu'un dessin exagéré des ombres n'en fasse une décoration cubiste en noir et blanc. Chez les mauvais acteurs, les gestes du front accompagnent en désordre les grimaces du reste du visage.

Dans le front, le *squelette* demeure évidemment toujours visible. Le *squelette* signifie quelque chose par lui-même : un front droit passe pour couvrir une meilleure cervelle qu'un front fuyant. Le front rectiligne des statues grecques, pareil à la paroi d'un temple, est plus noble, mais exprime moins de choses qu'un front bossué (dont les formes extrêmes seraient le masque mortuaire de Beethoven ou le marbre qui passe pour le plus authentique portrait de Socrate). Mais les grecs, surtout les Alexandrins, et de nos jours tous les artistes académiques, ont établi des conventions bien plus étroites et moins souples que les données de la nature. Le front fuyant du masque mortuaire de Pascal, le crâne de Hugo ou celui de Bergson expriment leur puissance d'une façon bien claire, par d'autres reliefs que les figures académiques. Le metteur en scène devrait se familiariser avec les masques ou les photos, prises sur nature, d'un grand nombre d'individus remarquables par tel génie ou tel vice particulier, et choisir, d'après cela, la tête de ses acteurs. La seule modification qu'on puisse impo-

ser à l'apparence du squelette, c'est d'agrandir le front en rasant les cheveux sur une certaine hauteur, et d'accentuer les bosses avec de sobres estompes. Mais il faut prendre bien garde que les changements de l'éclairage et la mobilité de la peau du front ne rendent tout à fait fausse cette dernière indication.

Ce qui est la ressource la plus grande de l'acteur, ce sont les *muscles*. Je rappelle que les frontaux, qui vont de l'arcade sourcillière à la racine des cheveux, sont larges mais minces et invisibles à l'œil nu. Nous ne pouvons que les sentir lorsque nous faisons tirer par notre front lui-même nos cheveux en arrière, en supprimant les rides. Par contre, les deux sourciliers qui se bossuent en se rapprochant lorsque nous fronçons les sourcils, sont bien connus. Je ne cite que pour mémoire, juste au-dessus du front, la partie supérieure de l'orbiculaire qui entoure l'œil. L'orbiculaire se contracte quand nous clignons des yeux ; c'est le muscle qui permet au snob de tenir son monocle sans froncer le sourcil. Sur les côtés, chacun peut sentir, en serrant les dents, les deux larges et puissants temporaux. L'expérience qui donne le mieux à l'observateur la force des temporaux d'une personne, consiste à lui poser sur la tête un chapeau rigide, (melon ou canotier), à lui faire mâcher du chewing-gum, et à voir de combien les mouvements de la mastication font bouger le chapeau. Dans un film comique, on tirerait de l'effet exagéré de ces contractions un effet soit d'acharnement du masticateur, soit d'extrême résistance de sa nourriture.

Quel genre d'émotions peut s'exprimer sur le front ? Il est certain que cette partie du corps est aussi éloignée que possible

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du cœur et des poumons, qu'elle ne dépend pas du tout des centres nerveux involontaires. Par conséquent, le front ne marque que des émotions intellectuelles, auxquelles la volonté peut revenir commander toujours. On sait que nous ne sommes pas maîtres de la rougeur ni de l'oppression, tandis qu'il suffit de le vouloir pour montrer, (suivant l'expression courante en français), un front impassible.

La première de ces émotions, c'est l'étonnement, qui tire vers le haut la peau du front, et en déplisse les rides. La plus facile à manifester, c'est l'attention, qui met au-dessus du nez deux rides verticales. La concentration très forte ou la souffrance mettra, au-dessus, des rides horizontales. Ici, il faut distinguer plusieurs cas. La souffrance d'un être passif, et assez souvent des femmes, se manifestera par des rides plus ou moins profondes, mais assez horizontales. L'extrême de ces émotions, comme la torture ou l'épouvante, mettra une dépression au centre de ces rides horizontales, et une espèce d'écarquillement aux extrémités. Au contraire, chez un être habitué à l'énergie, c'est-à-dire dont les sourcils sont bien musclés, les rides verticales gonfleront et relèveront les rides horizontales.

Si l'on veut figurer l'énergie toute pure et maîtresse d'elle-même, il faut donner aux sourcils un froncement modéré, et contracter les muscles temporaux qui formeront, au-dessus, et un peu en arrière des pommettes des ombres longues et nettes.

Bien des acteurs trouvent naturellement une émotion juste. Ce qui est le plus difficile, et qui cependant est l'essentiel de leur art, c'est de passer d'un sentiment ou d'une émotion à un

autre. Cela vient de ce qu'ils commandent plusieurs muscles à la fois, tandis qu'une émotion naturelle laisse le visage plus souple. Ceux qui font effort et s'exercent devant la glace tombent dans un autre défaut ; ils expriment une émotion puis laissent un instant leur visage neutre, puis expriment une autre émotion, et la continuité fait encore défaut. Je suppose qu'un homme doit paraître surpris, puis décidé d'agir. Pour qu'il exécute le mouvement correctement, je lui demanderai de tirer d'abord le front en arrière, puis de gonfler les sourcils, sans les baisser, puis sans cesser sa contracture des sourcils, de gonfler ses temporaux en serrant les mâchoires. Si au contraire je veux exprimer la surprise, la faire aller jusqu'au trouble, et admettre ensuite un retour au calme, au front tiré succéderont des rides horizontales qui grandiront, puis diminueront, jusqu'à répéter de façon plus douce le premier retrait du front.

J'ajouterai que pour les acteurs comiques dont la mimique psychologique est plus développée actuellement, on peut obtenir un bien plus grand nombre d'effets en affectant certaine émotion sur un côté seulement du front, et en affectant de l'autre côté l'indifférence, ou un sentiment contraire.

L'acteur débutant sera naturellement incapable d'exécuter à volonté tous ces mouvements. S'il n'exprime que des émotions naturelles qu'il se suggère, le metteur en scène n'en fera jamais ce qu'il veut. Je vais tenter ici de donner une leçon de gymnastique pour le développement de ces petits muscles : chacun sait que nous avons deux espèces de nerfs : les nerfs sensitifs, qui transmettent vers le cerveau les émotions exté-

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rieures, et les nerfs moteurs qui font aboutir les mouvements du centre aux extrémités. Mais on connaît mal la connexion qui est entre eux : les uns ne se développent guère sans que les autres se développent aussi. Un coureur qui entraîne ses cuisses à une plus forte détente se trouve, une fois entraîné, avoir aussi les cuisses plus sensibles. Les presdigitateurs qui veulent apprendre à leurs doigts à agir vers le dos de la main leur font d'abord accomplir passivement les mouvements souhaités, touchent et picotent les muscles qui doivent agir. Je crois de même qu'un acteur qui veut faire l'éducation de son front doit commencer par se masser le front avec les mains, par tapoter et toucher du bout du doigt, puis guider dans leurs mouvements, les muscles qu'il veut faire agir. Qu'il n'essaie jamais de surmonter ce qu'il prendrait pour de l'agacement, et qui est en réalité une fatigue locale : il en tirerait, vu le voisinage des muscles des yeux, une migraine épouvantable. Mais bientôt sa propre souplesse l'étonnera ; il se verra comme les lions et les autres fauves qui font ce qu'ils veulent de la peau de leur front. Je vois venir une objection, surtout de la part des femmes, et je m'empresse de la prévenir ; le front ne sera jamais déformé si l'on prend soin de faire toujours l'un après l'autre les mouvements les plus opposés ; on évitera que la peau ne se distende grâce au claquement de linge mouillé et aux lotions astringentes.

En ce moment il arrive que la vie pratique modèle le front des acteurs d'une façon différente de ce qu'ils doivent montrer dans leurs rôles. C'est ainsi que Menjou, qui ne joue que des rôles peu énergiques, mais qui dans le privé déchiffre beau-

coup de musique et doit faire fort attention parce qu'il a les yeux faibles, a les sourcils un peu trop musclés pour ses rôles.

JEAN PRÉVOST.

CONRAD VEIDT

THE STUDENT OF PRAGUE.

A small room, a stuffy atmosphere ; a provincial Swiss lake-side cinema ; the usual shuffle and shuffle and the unaccustomed (to the urbane senses) rattle of paper bags. Crumbs. "Mlle. must not smoke here." Of course I might have known that, I never smoke in these places, what made me this time ? Something has been touched before I realise it, some hidden spring ; there is something wrong with this film, with me, with the weather, with something. The music ought, it is evident, to be making my heart spring but I don't like student songs and these Heidelbergish melodies especially leave me frigid. There's something wrong and I have seen those horses making that idiotic turn on the short grass at least eight times. What is it ? I won't stay any longer. The music *ought* to be all right—my slightly readjusted ears make that slight concession. I wish I had stayed at home, or why didn't I go in-

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stead to that other little place, it's better ventilated, across the way. And so on. This storm that doesn't break. I have no reaction to anything. . . . O *that's* what the little man is after.

For I see now. There is a rhythm within the rhythm, there is a story within the story. The little man (it is curiously he whom I personally met before in Joyless Street, disguised now out of recognition) beckons at the top of a sandy hill. The little tree twists and bends and makes all the frantic gestures of the little tree at the cross-roads under which Faust conjured devils. That's it precisely. This has something behind it, in it, through it. That little man means more than that. He isn't an absurd little obvious Punchinello. He is a symbol, an asterisk, an enigma. Spell the thing backwards, he seems to be saying, spell it right side to or back side to or front or behind and you'll see. . . his little leer means something. The horses filing again, in obvious procession, mean something. They are going to spell something, make a mystic symbol across short grass, some double twist and knot and the world will go to bits. . . something is going to happen.

I have forgotten the paper bags. The music *does* fit in. I have forgotten the lilt and rise and lilt and fall of the violin that doesn't in the least know that the piano is existing. That's it exactly. The piano and the violin live in separate elements, so this and this. The little obvious Italian Punchinello doesn't in the least mind being jeered at. He wants to be jeered at. He has opened doors to the uninitiate. *They* don't know that that umbrella tucked so ridiculously

under his left arm-pit, means something. I know that it means something but I don't know what (outside the obviously obvious) it does mean. There is a world within a world, the little man gesticulates. The horses have all gone. . .the music has come right.

Students sing under summer trees. Students have filed under summer trees and seated in a garden make obvious opera bouffe groups with beribboned guitars. Students sing in a garden. . .grey eyes cut the opera bouffe to tatters. The student of Prague has entered.

His visage, his form, the very obvious and lean candour of him spell something different. He is and he isn't just this person sitting under a tree. The little man gesticulating at the top of a sandy hill has given one the clue to this thing. This is and isn't Conrad Veidt or this is and isn't Baldwin the famous fencer. His eyes cut the garden, the benches, the sun-light (falling obviously) to tatters. How did this man get here ? Steel and fibre of some vanished lordlihood. Conrad Veidt has entered.

A gesture, a tilt of a chin, the downward sweep of a wide-rimmed student's cap and the world has altered. With the same obvious formality and the same obvious banality as the little Italian conjurer, the least hunch of shoulder of this famous artist has some hidden meaning. He is lean and wild. He is firm and sophisticated and worldly. He will break from his skin like a panther from a tight wicker box. He is tight in his personality and behind his personality his mind glints like his own steel. Conrad Veidt impersonating the

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famous Baldwin may not be the Conrad Veidt of *The Hands of Orlac*, or *Nju*. I have seen only this film. But I don't want to see another Conrad Veidt if it must abuse my mind of this one.

The story is obvious. The English literary critical papers accompany their "still" of the famous mirror scene with some such explanatory blurb : this is the Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde of German legend. Doctor Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, how apt, certainly. Doctor Jekyll however shuddered in horror at the sodden parody of himself that Hyde presented. This Jekyll and Hyde are alike elegant, alike poised, alike at home in the world of fact and in the supernatural. For by a magnificent trick of sustained camera magic we have Baldwin the famous fencer student selling his shadow, rather his brave reflection to the little obvious Italian magician of the first reel. The little Punchinello obtains it, by a trick ; gold poured and poured Danae shower, upon the bare scrubbed table of the student's attic, "for something in his room". The student has lifted his magnificent blade ruefully and cynically has decided (as that is the only object worth a sou in the bare attic) to be done with it. It is not *that* blade that our friend Punchinello's after. He beckons with his obvious buffoon gesture toward the mirror. Baldwin regards (in its polished surface) the face of Baldwin. Tall, alert, with that panther grace, like some exquisite lean runner from an archaic Delphic frieze, Baldwin regards Baldwin. It is true there should be Baldwin upon Baldwin, Veidt upon Veidt, elegantly pursuing (across some marble entablature) Baldwin upon stripped Baldwin,

Veidt upon naked Veidt. In that, the little Punchinello shows his aptitude for beauty. Such charm, such lean and astute physical intellectuality should be repeated. Gold, flowing from a leather cornucopialike wallet has dripped (Danae shower) from the bare table and Baldwin has sold "something" (not his fine blade) "in this room" to this mysterious little person. The bargain has been made. Baldwin regards the purchase. With elegant lithe movement, with uncomparable agility, the reflection steps forward. Baldwin on the bare floor, quivers slightly, makes one of those perfect hieratic steps to one side. But the image doesn't answer him. The image, the "purchase" has another master. The little ridiculous Punchinello with his repellent friendliness lures it forward. As the distant horses made turn and double eights across windy grass, directed by this obvious jester, so now this rare thing. The image of Baldwin strides steadily forward and following our magician, leaves the chamber empty.

There is of course a love story connected with all this. Punchinello has promised our hero a fortune or rather an heiress and that's what the horses were solemnly about. They were making circles and double eights and abracadabra-like turns on the short grass in order finally to spill the big-boned but somehow impressive heroine into (literally) the arms of our steely hero. The hero having so fallen to the charms of the impressive, beautifully modelled lady, must methinks have clothes for his wooing, peg-top trousers, all the paraphernalia that goes with the rather 1860-ish type of get-up. Arms, legs, cloth moulds those arms, legs that were

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somehow out of elbow for all their statuesque divinity in the simple student. The student (grey eyes tearing tapestries, satin and old lace this time) now is able to present the lady-of-the-manor with suitable 1860-ish baskets of heavy blossoms. (His small early discarded violet-cluster and that violet-seller is another story, a leit-motive that merges and melts subtly with this other nobler matter.) The real lady of his affection is affianced (I believe is the word) to a gentleman in some sort of aldermanic or diplomatic-circles, knee breeches. This person flicking our hero across the cheek bones with the usual gauntlet, is summoned for the usual purposes at dawn or sunset. Anyhow as might have been expected, the hero having been forestalled by the father of his beloved, has promised in best Prague style only to prick his adversary. As again might have been expected, owing, we are led to imagine to the machinations of the Punchinello, the wheel of the carriage bearing our hero to the rendez vous is broken by the usual lonely cross-road and Baldwin, stumbling forward to keep his appointment, his honour so being called to question, is met dramatically by his one (in the world) possible rival. Face to face under a great tree, sweeping branches, mysterious yet naturalist décor. Hyde meets Jekyll. Or Jekyll meets Hyde. It's impossible to choose between them, though at this exact moment, sympathies are with the spectre. Perhaps that is because he wears the attributes of the student fencer in which Conrad Veidt first appeared, the student cap pulled so forcefully and drastically over those steely eyes and the beautiful leather boots. However time is short. We

know what is bound to happen. The spectre in all the accoutrements of the gentleman duellist, strides forward leaving the *man* gasping at his predicament. He beholds in, as it were, ambush the inevitable dénouement.

There are gaspings, now direct disapprobation, cuttings, a gentleman, as the world knows, does not break his parole d'honneur and all the paraphernalia. Jekyll (or Hyde) the *man* anyhow is dropped anyhow by the vast circle that has been entertained royally in his drawing rooms. His beloved can not meet him, the murderer of her betrothed. The Student of Prague, the famous fencer Baldwin is cut by fencing companies, societies. What you will. He is thrown into the arms of the common Alma Tademesque little violet seller. Things march from worse to still worse. This is what comes of selling one's shadow to a stranger. There is, as is obvious, the really clever stalking of the shadow and the merging and cross-currents of two images. We never lose sight of the identity of either ; this too is a triumph. The spectre is the slim gaunt creature in the early student get-up, the man is the somewhat out at heels distrait discarded gentleman. The spectre grows in distinction, in power apparently. The man diminishes. The spectre remains the Student of Prague and Baldwin, his begetter is hounded by this Frankenstein. Doors are no impediment. The spectre in triumph of film-photography glides discreetly through and into the most sacred milieu. Baldwin the man, sinks into the scum of fetid cellars. The spectre and the little early mistress, the small common, yet uncommonly pretty, violet-girl sink with him.

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Baldwin becomes violent, destructive. The spectre shares his evil end, gloats in it. Yet apart. . .having some life outside humanity. . .following, following, till we want to scream, "strangle him get rid of him, one or the other, let this duality perish if Baldwin perish with it."

Baldwin does so finally perish, having lured the shadow back into the frame of the mirror in the now deserted attic. He shoots the spectre only to find himself bleeding with the bullet wound. The bullet aimed so adroitly at the breast of the image in the mirror has, by some psychic affinity, entered his own heart. So dies Baldwin. Across our vision however there is something that will never die. It can't go. It lives among other things, in the haunting melody (the music finally did come right) of *du meine Herzen, du mein Ruhe*. Baldwin (before the final dénouement) has finally, in wind and storm (this might have been well pictured to the Erlkönig motif) broken into the garden and the manor of his mistress. We find her great-eyed and adequate, without charm but with some fine distinction in 1860-ish surroundings ; great mirrors, heavy candelabra, the wide French windows and the sweeping of wind-blown branches. There is authentic swish and swirl of branches and has anything ever been more subtly dramatic than the entering of broken rose-petals and damp leaves with the opening of that wide door ? Baldwin, the man become a shadow, stands before his Lady. We see in a moment, she is that. What she lacks in charm is supplied by the ardour of her lover. He is at her knees, at her feet. He will explain. He will and he will and he will. We know

what is about to happen. He lures her to a mirror. It is not he but his missing shadow that has done this. She stares straight into nothingness. There is the dramatic pause, the ten seconds that might be ten minutes, the ten minutes that might be ten years and the lady is lying like some dramatic beautiful Niobe (fainting ? dead ?) marble, sculptured on the floor. The beauty of that scene is one that must always remain, that must always come back, it seems now, with wind and wind-swept branches. The screen has purified and idealized, is a medium for purity and idealization. No one could remain unmoved before the sheer technical beauty of that interior. There are volumes of de Regnieresque subtleties in it. This on the screen. There is the intolerable beauty of the Erlkönig come (for all its apparent unrelation) true. There are the things we can't say or paint at the sight of windows half-opened at dawn, of windows half-closed in moonlight. There is the spirit of the garden, the spirit of the water, the lake, the sea, the wind, the ghost itself of all our lives come visually before us. (*Du meine Herzen, du mein Ruhe* sings the violin now and we can't for the life of us notice that it is out of key with the piano.) There is beauty and unfulfillment and the struggle of the spirit and the body and the spirit become body and the body become spirit and the constant strife between Lucifer and the angel Michael.

Michael stands before us and Lucifer. This time there is no mistaking. The spectre is an evil thing now, wishing to snatch, we see it, the living spark of divinity from the man become shadow. Baldwin has flung himself and his secret

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at the heart of his "Frieden" his "Ruhe". *Du bist mein Grab*, we remember the song continues and we see now its application. He has betrayed the secret of the under-world to a mortal and the spectre, looking athletic and determined, has his hand on the bell rope. He will ring and the man knows that he must vanish. It is the man now who is completely at the will of the shadow.

Du meine Herzen, du mein Ruhe. Baldwin climbing back to his old poor surroundings knows that he is conquered. Baldwin the apparent man, that is. There is something indomitable left, symbolized by the little silver cross that his Lady has given him on that first dramatic meeting in the bare fields. He had saved her life (for all there was distorted magic in it) and the little cross was his reward. Tapestries, laden baskets, the minuet and ladies with lovely ankles, all that came, was swept aside by the pursuing shadow and lost simply. A vision is not so easily relinquished, says the tried soul. I have lost everything says Baldwin but not one thing. Raising himself on one elbow along the splintered glass, he realises that his death has brought him his fulfillment. More than his lady, more than his steel blade, *himself*. Baldwin, dying, clasps a broken edge of triangulated glass to his stained breast. Containing his image simply.

A tiny provincial lake-side cinema. . . a small room, by luck I have got a front seat on the little balcony at the room's rear. Languages filter into my consciousness. French ? German ? I have been following the sub-titles in these languages. A tired language, an effete language, not French,

not German, is remarking, "These Germans over-do things. . . look at Faust now. . .and this is just as morbid." Another language resembling only in bare particulars that one (is it the same language ?) is remarking, "gee, why don't they have more live-stuff these days. Though they did advertise Doug Fairbanks last week." Languages filter into me, languages and the music fanfaring away at some familiar sideshow rate and "the show is over" is indicated by a sudden, crude blare of extravagant electricity. "Say—you can see electricity's cheap here." Languages. . .languages. . .dead languages, living languages. A small voice, a wee voice that has something in common with all these voices yet differs intrinsically from all these voices, will whisper there within me. "You see I was right. You see it will come. In spite of 'Gee' and 'Doug Fairbanks' and 'we must have something cheerful', it must come soon : a universal language, a universal art open alike to the pleb and the initiate."

H. D.

MIND-GROWTH OR MIND-MECHANIZATION ?

THE CINEMA IN EDUCATION

An interesting viewpoint which, though not altogether in accordance with our own beliefs, yet states one side of the educational question

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with thoroughness and insight. Miss Low is a Member of the British Psychological Society, Hon. Secretary to the Educational Section of the British Psychological Society, Executive Member of the Committee for Psychological Research and the Author of « An Outline of the FREUDIAN THEORY », etc. etc.)

The art of the Cinema and its swift development may be ranked as one of the most remarkable features of our latter-day civilization. No one can dispute, nor would even wish to, the enormous hold the "Pictures" exert upon the minds and interest of the adult population—whether white, black, or of any intervening shade—the world over ; nor can there be a question as to the new spheres of experience opened up by means of this medium ; nor the high degree to which human skill and creative power have developed in this connection. Whether we appreciate it or not, this fact is overwhelmingly established, that the Cinema-art has made a place for itself as a rival to—it may be a triumphant victor over—all the various other arts which make appeal to mankind, and has even surpassed in strength and extent that appeal to a degree hitherto unknown. So far, so good ; or, if not so good in all eyes, it is a situation to be accepted, studied, and turned to the very best account. Humanity, in all ages, has pursued its pleasure and will continue so to do, in the mass aiming at the greatest amount of satisfaction with the least output of effort, a goal most satisfactorily achieved via the path of the "Pictures". If in addition, wider experience, more accurate realization of life in its various manifestations, more ready power of contact can be obtained, few will deny the legitimacy

of this form of pleasure-getting by the adult man or woman, the *adult*—and here we are face to face with the problem : is the adult's fare necessarily nourishment for the *child* ?

The idea of the child as the "little man"—the adult in a backward stage—has long been abandoned by all who can observe and judge, and the profounder aspects of mind which the psychology of the unconscious has revealed must convince us that the child has its own destiny to fulfil, and if it misses essential phases of childhood-development it will inevitably suffer loss, and may be, serious disharmony, when adult. The truth grasped by the Jesuits, namely, that the early years are all-important in shaping character-trends, has been so amply reinforced by modern science that we are forced to value educational methods and agencies according as they help or hinder the developing mind : yet it is notable that such a valuation has hardly been considered by the enthusiasts, educational and "lay", who wholeheartedly welcome the Cinema for educational usage.

Perhaps the first problem is to understand the meaning of the demand for the Cinema-entertainment, to what this is a reaction. Some answer is afforded by study of adult modern communities in which we see a widespread demand for easy and effortless entertainment characterized by incessant variety and sensationalism. The vastly popular variety entertainment, the cabaret show, the jazzband, the modern dance, much of the drama of the moment, pictorial art and literature, and, above all, the contemporary Press bear the characteristics already mentioned. In the individual we can

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note much the same : that is the demand for, and enjoyment of, sensationalism, alternating with a negativism or so-called cynicism covering a strong but repressed emotional attitude. Thus we may see in the excessive demand for the Cinema, both a *symptom* of this prevalent attitude, and a *gratification* of the wishes creating that attitude : it is by investigating along these lines that we may come to understand some of the deeper significance of the problem.

But before dealing with these more complex issues let us consider a moment the more obvious aspects. Everyone agrees on certain predominant characteristics of the Cinema-entertainment : Its overpowering appeal to the eye and correspondingly small demand upon intellectual processes : its arbitrary, and therefore false, simplification : its confusion of values ; the film knows no light and shade ; features which are striking to the eye, however superficial or trivial in content, however subsidiary to the main theme, may equal in value or even submerge the really significant aspects : its perpetual variety : and finally the illusion of timelessness due in the first place to the fact that real human beings are never present, only simulacra, and in the second place to swiftly culminating happenings without intermediate phases of slow elaboration.

In the face of this we must ask, is this type of experience, with such characteristic features, suited to either the demand of the child-mind or to its harmonious development. The child as such must learn to develop beyond its purely visual pleasures—a pleasure which along with taste and touch pre-

dominantes in the first stages of life : it must gain power of concentration, of continuity of interest, in place of the appeal made by variety. As a child it is incapable of a true sense of proportion or understanding of slow development leading towards a wished for goal : but it is just these capacities we must seek to develop if the child is to become adult in the true sense of the word, instead of that product so prevalent in the modern world, the Peter Pan type, the man with the child-mentality.

And now to return to those influences and reactions which are still more significant—concealed from ordinary observation. In the human being's development, one of the most important stages is that of belief in magic, a stage characteristic of the infant, the very young child, the primitive and to some extent, though disguised, of the "Civilized" adult. It is the stage named by Ferenczi, the famous Hungarian psycho-analyst, "the period of unconditional omnipotence" a period wherein life and all its dearest needs and wishes are maintained from some mysterious external source, without human effort. It is clear that such a condition is an actuality in the earliest months of life ; a little later this stage is sadly left behind and the child must learn through bitter necessity that achievement is reached only through effort ; yet there remains still, and throughout life, some of this "omnipotence" wish (manifested for instance, in such forms as the universal interest in gambling, in fortune-telling, in prophesy, in "luck"). Now it is a matter vitally affecting harmonious development how far such an attitude becomes dominant, for

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it is one based on the pleasure-principle and antagonistic to reality. Those who cling to their "Omnipotence" stage with the accompanying egocentricity, never get reconciled to the renunciation of their unconscious irrational wishes and "on the slightest provocation feel themselves insulted and slighted and regard themselves as step-children of fate, because they cannot remain her only or favourite children."

It is not difficult to see that the characteristics of the Cinema referred to above are just those which must foster and develop this magic "omnipotence" sense, to a greater degree than is possible in the case of fairy-tale, novel, drama, or picture, and does so independently, to a large degree, of the *theme* dealt with by the film. It is the *method* of the moving picture which brings about so vividly the sense of wish-fulfilment as by magic. The Cinema's business is to give a solution to all problems; an answer to all questions, and a key to every locked door. Real life is complex, unselective, often baffling to our curiosity and regardless of our desires : the Film's simplifications and problem-solving creates the fantasy that the spectator's wishes are or can be, fulfilled, and this helps to maintain his omnipotence and narcissism, leading to a regressive attitude : That is to say a return to the pleasure-seeking infancy with its magically fulfilled desires, since it is always easier for the Ego to retread known paths which have already yielded pleasure than to go forward on paths yet untried and calling for effort. But this latter process is essential to the child's development and through it alone can he attain to mental maturity. An even more serious consequence is the

disintegration which must result from the failure of the pleasure-impulse to reach to, and co-operate with, the level of development attained by the rest of the personality—that “split” which is so marked a feature of the neurotic. By an emotional expenditure of an infantile nature only (that is, narcissistic emotion unrelated to external reality and very easily obtained) the emotional life remains undeveloped : inadequate and extravagant at one and the same time.

It will, perhaps, appear startling to class together those films which are true to human and scientific reality and the crudely false melodrama or romance. Undoubtedly there is a world of difference as regards the consciously-felt effects, but it is possible for the same unconscious effects to be produced in both cases since the mechanism at work is identical. In the film of the Scott Expedition, than which nothing could be more beautiful and more moving as far as the pictures themselves are concerned all the elements of magic achievement, of simplification, of rapid solution are present just as in other films. And this criticism holds good, though to a far less degree, in nature films, geographical films, and films illustrating mechanical processes. A small investigation recently carried out among school children of different types, and of ages varying from eight to twelve, revealed interestingly the child's capacity for distortion : seventy per cent of the children believed that such processes as the development of the chick from the egg, of the fish from the spawn, of the pearl within the oyster, of nest-building and so forth, took just the time which elapsed in the showing of the films, even

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though each step in the process was elaborated. And this is inevitable since the film, operating in a mechanical universe, fills the gaps, rounds all corners, and presents persons and events in the neatest way, like so many brown paper parcels : as result, there is lack of emotional contact both in the production and the spectator. Closely related to the above is another aspect of the film which has much significance for the deeper human impulses, namely its relation to time. Research into the unconscious of man has revealed that the idea of time (and its twin-companion death) is among the most deeply-repressed material of the mind, and it is only by the process of becoming adult that a realization and acceptance of time becomes possible. If from a very early stage the child is strengthened in his repression so much the more difficult for him is recognition of reality. Bearing upon another of the most powerful impulses is that character of the film, already referred to, which demands from the spectator an almost exclusive visual attention. The powerful rôle played by curiosity in the early life of the child, developed and gratified by seeing and looking, is maintained by means of the films' dominant appeal, and in thus obtaining and continuing his gratification he is assisted in remaining at the infantile curiosity-level.

In the light of such effects, conscious and unconscious, (and I have here space to touch upon a few only) produced by the film it is surely worth while to consider whether, and to what degree, we are prepared to make it a part of our educational system. The adult, educated or ignorant, in virtue of being

adult, must be free to choose his own pursuits and pleasures, but in educating the child we are forcing upon him experience which he is not in position to evaluate : the justification is if our wider and deeper experience convinces us that what we offer will assist the best and truest development of the child.

Can we be satisfied that the Cinema is a method of promoting mind growth rather than one of mechanizing mentality ?

BARBARA LOW.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

III

CAPTIONS

Experience has taught us to disregard placards. So we enter the hall in innocence and give ourselves to the preliminary entertainments. They are always very various, and whether good or bad we charm them, powerfully or feebly according to our condition, with the charm of our confident anticipation. A good mood will fling some sort of life even into the most tasteless of the local advertisements that immediately precede the real business of the evening, beginning when at last we are confronted with a title, set, like a greet-

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ing in a valentine, within an expressive device. We peer for clues. Sometimes there is no clue but the title, appearing alone in tall letters that fill the screen, fill the hall with a stentorian voice. Thrilling us. We know we are being got, but not yet at what vulnerable point and we sit in suspense while the names of author, adapter, producer, art-director, photographer and designer come on in curly lettering and singly, each lingering. Then there is a screenful of names, the parts and their players, also lingering and perhaps to be followed by further information. We do not desire it but may not now turn away from the screen. At any moment the censor's permit will appear and whether lingering or not—usually by this time the operator has gone to sleep in his stride and it lingers—this last barrier must be faced for the length of its stay or we may miss the first caption. At one time we used to pay devout attention to the whole of these disclosures. They were a revelation of the size of the undertaking and our wondering gratitude went forth to the multitude of experts who had laboured together for our enterprise. But after a while the personal introduction of all these labourers became a torment. We grudged the suspense exacted by what might prove to be a record of wasted effort.

In due course and as if in awareness of our overtaxed patience the preliminaries were reduced to title, name of author, of a star or so, official permission, each hurrying by, hurrying us towards the caption that should launch us on our journey : a screenful of psychology, history, or description of period and locality. There is eager silence in the hall

during the stay of the oblong of clear print whether beginning : "Throughout the ages mankind has—" or "Avarice is the cruellest"—or "In a remote village of the Pyrenees, far from—" When we have read we know where we are supposed to be going ; we have grown accustomed to finding our places in the long procession of humanity, to going down into the dread depths of our single selves, to facing life in unfamiliar conditions. But we do not yet know whether our journey is to be good. Whether there is to be any journey at all. So we are wary. We remember films whose caption, appearing in instalments at regular intervals, has been the better part, presenting, bright and new, truths that in our keeping had grown a little dim, or telling us strange news of which within reason we can never have too much. We have come forth, time and place forgotten, surroundings vanished, and have been driven back. Very often by people whose one means of expressing emotion is a vexed frown, or people whose pulpy rouged mouths are forever at work pouting, folding, parting in a smile that laboriously reveals both rows of teeth. These people, interminably interfering with the scenery, drive us to despair. Sometimes we are too much upset to battle our way to indifference and see, missing what is supposed to be seen, anything and everything according to our mood ; it is difficult to beat us altogether. We remember films damaged by their captions. Not fatally. For we can substitute our own, just as within limits we can remake a bad film as we go. With half a chance we are making all the time. Just a hint of *any* kind of beauty and if we are on the track, not waiting

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for everything to be done for us, not driven back by rouged pulp and fixed frown, we can manage very well. For the present we take captions for granted. But we are ready to try doing without them. Now and again a film gathers us in without any clear hint beyond the title. This we love. We love the challenge. We are prepared to go without a hint even in the title. We are prepared for anything. We trust the pictures. Somewhere sooner or later there will be a hint. Or something of which we can make one, each for himself. The absence of any hint is a hint we are ready to take.

Perhaps the truth about captions is just here : that somewhere, if not in any given place then all over the picture, is a hint. The artist can no more eliminate the caption than he can eliminate himself. Art and literature, Siamese twins making their first curtsey to the public in a script that was a series of pictures, have never yet been separated. In its uttermost abstraction art is still a word about life and literature never ceases to be pictorial. A work of pure fantasy bears its caption within. A narrative, whether novel, play or film, supplies the necessary facts directly, in the novel either by means of the author's descriptive labels or through information given in the dialogue, in the play by means of that uncomfortable convention that allows characters to converse in anachronisms, in the film by means of the supply of interlarded words. And if the direct giving of information in captions is the mark of a weak film, the direct giving of information in a play or novel is the mark of a weak

novel or play. There are masterpieces enough to flout the dogma.

Nevertheless the film has an unrivalled opportunity of presenting the life of the spirit directly, and needs only the minimum of informative accompaniment. The test of the film on whatever level is that the wayfaring man, though a fool, shall not err therein, though each will take a different journey. The test of the caption is its relative invisibility. In the right place it is not seen as a caption ; unless it lingers too long upon the screen.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON.

TIME IN THE CINEMA

Not much has been done in the way of exploration of the time factor in films. Mrs Edith Wharton has made a brave attempt to tackle the problem as it affects works of fiction, and after a difficult search came to the conclusion that it was traceable to certain rays of narrative stealing in cautiously between the great climaxes. It was also due to a certain tonal *quietude* in the telling of the story and a faculty for bringing

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out the deep changes in character that occur imperceptibly as the tale moves on.

The problem as it presents itself on the screen is a subtle and baffling one, but at least the enquirer has a clearer view of his subject than is possible in the case of the novel. He can see the thing as a whole, swiftly or slowly moving past him, he can hold it from end to end in imagination.

To present the matter clearly, let me take two illustrations from film literature which will be familiar to everyone—"Warning Shadows", an example of extreme compression of the time factor, and an ordinary nameless Western melodrama, where the action is loose and scattered. It is not a comparison of quality I want to present-- that would be ridiculous—but an opposition of movement "for the clearer illustrating this matter".

In the melodrama, the cowboy hero arrives at a lonely ranch to find that the owner's daughter is trying to pay off a mortgage to save her crippled father's home. The holder of the mortgage, however, is the usual monster of inhumanity, and insists on payment of his dues without delay. Alternatively he insists on marriage to the girl without delay. But the delay is the story and nice girls refuse to marry monsters of inhumanity. There is a battledore of action in which the mortgager finally corners the girl, while the hero, owing to one of those film misunderstandings which nobody has ever understood, is enjoying himself at the local dance hall. Learning of what is toward, however, he jumps on a horse, attacks and pursues the villain, is captured by the villain's gang,

escapes single-handed, returns to the ranch, consoles girl, pats father on arm, re-mounts horse, flings villain over precipice, meets girl in gloaming, and so to close up.

What impression of time do we carry away from this picture? We will suppose that the actual sequence covers a period of roughly two years. How does our impression compare with a similar interval in any well-constructed play—say, the interval between the second and third acts of “The Admirable Crichton”, in which the march of the clock is clearly stressed in the passage of the action?

The answer to this question (which awaits our illustration from “Warning Shadows” for completion), seems to be that in the film, owing to the dispersion of the time factor by purely arbitrary captions, such as “Two years later. . . ;” owing, again, to the advance of a climax which is fully anticipated by the audience, and which is not dependent on any logical intermediate struggle, or on any fatal (or timed) pressure of events—the answer seems to be that we are only aware in the very vaguest fashion that the years have gone by and their fruit fallen, despite the physical clearness of the story. But we do not see the fruit quietly ripening. We only see it sway and fall, and so far as our ideas of growth are concerned, the process from birth to fruition might be a matter of seconds. Indeed, the seconds, or rather minutes, which mark the hero’s rise to fortune are accepted quite thoughtlessly as the equivalent of so many months or years. There is, in fact, no true belief in the time factor but only in the story factor.

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In the case of "The Admirable Crichton", however, the character drawing is so finished, that apart from the note on the programme which informs us that two years have elapsed between the acts, we can feel and observe the intervening period of the comedy being vividly sketched in. It is not only a matter of stage artifice but far more of clean, illuminating, psychological strokes that stir up the motion of the play and move it along ; of significant changes of manner, habit, speech, dress and external circumstance. The playwright dips so deeply (and so choicely) into the past that Lord Loam's drawing room, where the action began, is a full two-and-a-half years distant in imagination by the time we reach the end of the play.

Let us now bind up the argument by a glance at "Warning Shadows". There can be no mistaking the time-sequence here. It is intolerably present from one moment to the next. How is this effect produced ? In the Western drama the action was so extended as to be almost nebulous. It was faintly, if at all, perceived. Here a different, more conscientious technique sends one event panting on the heels of another till their proximity virtually solidifies. Fate is then betrayed in motion. It is like waiting for the pincers to seize the tooth ; each moment is a recognition of doom. The rhythm of the film, however, is slow, and the slower the rhythm the weightier the strokes of the clock as they fall. The triangular theme of jealousy here unfolded, from the laying of the banquet, which the fatal three, attend, to the stabbing of the unfaithful wife with the sheaf of swords, is worked out minute by minute,

and we can feel these minutes being stuffed into the clock until Time is ready to burst.

The picture illustrates how a close synchronisation of rhythm in a film with the actual rhythms of everyday life can heighten realism to an extraordinary degree, though there are a hundred considerations, unconnected with the time factor, which make this particular drama rich and passionate, and give a bright glow of significance to the whole. Its treatment suggests that a technique which presents a close succession of ideas, as opposed to their wide extension in the crude drama of the West, is bound to intensify the mood of the picture and increase the sensibility of the spectator to its chronology.

It appears, then, that the truest type of film, considered mainly at its time valuation, or order in logic, is that which, with due proportion and sense, binds together the largest number of ideas in the smallest possible compass, just as the dramatist obeys a strict law of economy in the management of his dialogue, characters and situations. So also the novelist, allowing for necessary differences of medium. In "War and Peace", "The Forsyte Saga" and still more clearly in Marcel Proust, the illusion of time is almost perfectly conveyed. But the film has many a league to go in this research, though "Greed", even in a badly-cut version, tackled the problem squarely and gave us some long-receding distances of time in slow, brilliantly-commonplace succession. In the majority of films the time element is not given its right relation to the events portrayed, except by fits and starts, almost by accident, or when the producer can only get his effects by

CLOSE UP

strict obedience to the rhythm of the scene. It may be that this is why so many films which are otherwise beautiful and moving fail to make any definite impression on the mind. For time cannot be treated with contempt and its satisfying communication through motion pictures is one of these problems which only the most gifted and highly experienced of our directors can hope to solve.

ERNEST BETTS.

AN EPIC — PLEASE !

Some time ago a delicious story was told whenever film people met together.

A certain Continental producer came to London bringing with him a print of his last picture. This was a film founded on some of the most important incidents in Beethoven's life. After a great deal of manœuvring the producer was lucky enough to entice the head of a large organisation to view the film. When he had seen one or two reels, the man of business stopped the operator. He rose ponderously to his feet and said ; "I suppose this Beethoven was some kind of a composer." That was all !

This tale is hardly relevant to anything that I want to say,

but I quote it so that you may realize what kind of man is in charge of your entertainment. He is known as the renter, and he decides whether you shall see a picture or not. In other words you are brought down to his level, and his taste and culture are not usually above reproach. Of course there are exceptions, notable exceptions, but still exceptions.

These renters sit in their offices and talk of 'box-office values', 'box-office titles', 'C. E. A. reports' ; when they are confronted with an imaginative film they are embarrassed because you, as the great public, are not supposed to have any imagination. If you do not have your bathing girl sequence, your bedroom scene, you will go away and brand the picture as 'lacking entertainment angles.' The great ones shudder. If they do 'put the film out' they do so tentatively, without any publicity campaign, and in the trade papers it is recommended for 'discriminating patrons'. The production secures sparse country bookings and very few people are aware that the film has been shown at all. However it is far more likely that it will be consigned to the shelf. I have been told that it was impossible to find a renter who would offer a rock bottom price of £ 500 for the exquisite 'Adventures of Prince Achmed'. Not one man with sufficient love of his business to try an inexpensive experiment, for £ 500 means nothing to a renter !

It may be that the difficulty of finding a renter prepared to take imaginative work is responsible for the present dearth of fantasy on the screen. An ominous sign this. Most of the screen's classics have been inspired by fantastic scripts.

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The producers and actors seem lifted from the ordinary rut, and almost forced to do their best ; perhaps because the fantastic scenario is so suited to the tremendous scope of the screen. Yet to-day we find Robinson directing "The Last Waltz", and Murneau in America.

At any time such a state of affairs would be lamentable, but it is all the more so now. When we find ourselves in conversation with someone out of screen grace we tell them of "Destiny", "Warning Shadows", "Dr. Caligari", "The Nibelungs".

"Where can I see these films ?" asks the unbeliever.

Then we are compelled to explain that these films are no longer in general release, and the sceptic smiles discreetly. The last state of that man is ten times worse than the first.

How we could do with another "Golem" to-day, when the eyes of the world are wandering in the direction of the screen ! Such a film, if the renter would give it a fair chance, would be acclaimed to-day where yesterday it would have passed unnoticed. To-day the public are fed to the teeth with the mechanical Hollywood fare that they themselves have helped to create. Such a film also would convert those who have been tempted, by recent newspaper controversy and legislation, to look at the screen, but are looking at it dubiously, and are, in fact, preparing to turn their backs on it. Incidentally some of the screen's ardent apostles could do with a little encouragement in this shamefully arid period.

Even if this new masterpiece storms the renter success-

fully it will have to encounter yet another enemy—the cutter. The cutter has a staunch ally, the censor.

Not long ago a film was submitted to the censor in which the young hero is seduced by a dark and ravishing siren. He is thrown off his balance and fails in his exams. The censor said, “No, nothing must happen between the boy and the woman.” With a grateful whoop of joy the cutter pounced on the film. Subtitles were virtually hurled between the clenched teeth of the characters. Everything was straightened out for the weak-headed citizen, and the critics said, “What poor direction !”

But should the film, this great epic that we all long to see, pass the dangers of renters, cutters and censors, I have no doubt about its reception. It is ridiculous to say that that fantasy is above the heads of the public. What of our fairy stories, and the legends of Bohemia ? I do not say that the public would understand the “Emak Bakia” of Man Ray or the “Absolute Operas” of Ruttman, but (and I say this at great risk of offending the highbrows) who does ? These things are a cult.

Therefore the first pitfall that the young director (he surely will be young) must not fall into is the attempt to appeal to any special clique. The second is to avoid, as far as possible, human flesh. These are the two chief faults of most film fantasies.

In “Ailita” the crowds were dressed in scant costumes, the men showing arms and legs in a manner reminiscent of the Roman soldier. Now flesh is such a matter-of-fact, everyday

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thing that it jarred in the bizarre settings. It entirely spoilt the effect. The whole time it was dragging us to earth, reminding us of ordinary life as we live it. In "Doctor Caligari" an attempt was made to disguise the flesh. Who will forget the three grotesque waves in the hair of "Doctor Caligari" ?

The same principle applies to natural scenery. In that otherwise excellent film "The Student of Prague" the mistake was made of playing the hunting scenes in natural settings. The real horses, lively hounds, real grass forced us to remember that the posturings of Werner Krauss could not possibly have any connection with the direction of the fox over which he was supposed to be exerting a magical attraction. In other words the sequence failed to grip.

I don't know what country is going to give us the epic. Germany, with the failure of 'Ufa', seems to be resting on her laurels. Italy is as bad as ever. France is gravelled with the problem of plot. Sweden is quiet. I think it will be Russia ; although, as a film editor pointed out to me, no two shots in Russian films match. The head is on the right in a long shot, and on the left in a close-up. A flash and then a sub-title, and generally fourteen reels of it. Experiment in Russian films is probably due to the fact that the film companies own the theatres. Howbeit, there is so much that is fresh and arresting in Russian films that I look to Russia. May I not have to look long !

There is one thing I am certain of, it will not be Britain !

A young assistant producer, who was a friend of mine, went

to the trade show of a very beautiful and moving German film. He came back fired with enthusiasm to do something big. He burst into the director's office and cried, "I want to produce a saga."

"Let's see," answered the puzzled British director, "what's that?"

"A great heroic film, a stupendous, monumental. . . ."

"Ah! yes," the director broke in, "I remember now, but I am forgetting my French!"

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

Oh dear, oh dear, these Brrrrrrrr-itish Films, these wonderful major-generals and people with *wholesome* ideals! And oh, oh, OH, this Films Bill!!! "Certain films (I quote from the *Times* quote of August 6th) which were previously excluded from registration because, being educational or scientific, *they were supposed not to have enough 'exhibition value'* are now, in special circumstances to be charily admitted." The italics are mine. Charily is heavenly. And thunderously from Major General Sir Granville Ryrie, the newly appointed

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High Commissioner for Australia, the news that the cinema has a tremendous influence on the young people of to-day, to a large extent a *baneful* one. American films, he deplores, so full of sentimental trash seem to be preferred to sound British ones. He thinks something might be done. Quite right, so do we. Could not, he suggested, some arrangement be made between educational authorities and the various Empire governments (I mean Governments Throughout The Empire) for children to be marched (he *did* say marched) to the cinema each morning to see wholesome British films showing what was going on in the Empire (*Oouch!*).

He rounded off amid rousing cheers that wherever the British flag fluttered it was the symbol of fair play and justice. He was proud to live under the Union Jack.

Equally moving is the announcement of the British Empire Film Institute (slogan : More British Films On British Screens) that "all over the world films from other countries are shown whose tone is, at least, not beneficial to the interests of the British Empire." Among its aims, these bright jewels :

to rouse a patriotic feeling sufficient to prevent the scandal of British Films being actually excluded from the great majority of film houses here and elsewhere...

to confer Awards of Merit for films of Imperial value.

to break down prejudice.

to attract better brains to the industry.

Now what more could anybody ask ? With this sort of feeling if we cannot produce the most exquisite and subtle masterpieces there must be something radically wrong with us.

And with the question of British Films, as defined by the Fillums Bill, comes a wave of strong feeling. This business of foreign stars. I feel I must go back and quote from the British Press, which says there can be no genuine British film industry and no raising of the standard of the screen so long as the dominance of foreign "stars" continues. Also that if the Act had excluded them from British Films, or even set a term to the period during which they might be employed, it would have taken at least one step towards a higher prestige. . . .that though it may help a few men to make money it will do nothing to give the public better entertainment.

From which we gather that a foreigner debases a film, annihilates art and fails to entertain the public, and that artists outside their own country cease to be artists and become vaguely criminal or atrocious. But we, who live beneath the Union Jack, what would happen to our sense of fair play and justice if foreigners stood up and uttered the same pronouncements against *our* stars ?

MAE MURRAY APPRECIATED

Now then Hollywood, come off it ! If you can't be appreciative be gallant. Why "Auntie Mae" ? Why all this talk about kindly camera-men and misty close-ups ? I don't care what you say, Mae Murray is worth a dozen of your namby-pamby new born stars. And one gets more kick out of her than out of any of your several hundred lady-like *per-*

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formers. Mae Murray swanking into a room, jostling her shoulders, toes apt to turn in, is a thing you can watch and like ; she *gets away with it !*

Yes, she is tough, and thank God for it. This undue stress laid upon anaemia gets wearisome. She has audacity, beauty, charm and youth, *and* youth, and a straight honest-to-goodness, damn-your-eyes attitude that if you can't admire you don't deserve to. You dare quote May McAvoy at me. She hasn't an ounce of Mae's personality or grit. And that Mae gets sneered at for being uncompromisingly definite in her attitude, and the maudlin hypocrisy and gush of some of her contemporaries is dubbed genius shows just what is wrong with the world.

In *Altars Of Desire* Mae is delightful, and that one is vastly entertained in spite of a most God-awful story is nothing but a tribute to her personality and charm. Moreover she can act, and I suspect in her a definite attitude to the sort of stuff the public wants ; a quick brain, a quick intelligence and a sense of humour and of life that probably makes her so direct in her dealings with people, that the secret of this mean and consistent slamming is probably nothing more or less than that she has told somebody high up exactly what she thinks of him.

A MOST EXCITING SUBJECT

The making of films, real ones, is a most exciting subject. I am glad there is a movement toward something worthy of

the medium as it has been developed by the poor examples of the craft. I have never seen a really satisfying film. I go but seldom, scarcely at all. *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari* which I saw a short time ago, offers the only interesting method I have ever seen in use, and that film was of interest to me only as a promise, not at all as an achievement, for I disliked the trick in the end of the drama. Fantasy has its own rights and need not be crouched under an insane mind. Some of the scenes were very beautiful, though, in the haunting play of lines on lines, and in the relation of the lines to the human figures that moved before them. Other scenes were too small for the figures that moved before them.

ELIZABETH MADOX ROBERTS
author of *The Time of Man*.

POINTS FROM LETTERS

An expensive medium of expression.

A form of entertainment which appeals to the taste of the masses can never become an art. Certainly artistic films have been produced, but the expenses of cinematography seriously limit their numbers. You mention that "£100 will make a film as noble as anything you can wish to see": apart from the question whether nobility constitutes art, the statement confounds me upon reflection! £100 is cheap com-

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pared with the fabulous millions invested in American productions, but what amateur can afford such an expensive medium of expression? How much did a Van Gogh, an Epstein, or a poem of Shelley cost to produce? And yet the artistic results of the £100 film can never be better and probably will be inferior to "Sun flowers", "Rima", or "Adonais".

A contributor says that a film without a musical accompaniment is lifeless. Can we presume to call an entertainment "artistic" when it has to recruit the services of another art in order to succeed?

These are the shortcomings of the film as an art: it is merely a mechanical reproduction of the art of design assisted by the histrionic abilities of the players, and subconsciously backed up by the art of sound.

The difficulty of the requisite sympathy between producer, designer, players and composer only tends to increase the obstacles which so often cause failure, and so the film is only an insignificant contributor to the world's art. All the same it is good to see such a magazine as "Close Up", J. A. HARDY, FOLKESTONE, KENT.

The translation of sub-titles.

The film that does away as far as possible with the use of the subtitle will stand a much better chance of popular approval abroad. One wonders if this should necessarily be so, but the fact is, that as things are, foreign films, which in themselves are excellent and concise, are reduced to banality more

often than not by some quite inept and *naïve* statement flashed on informatively just where it least is needed. Which leads one to the point that are so many subtitles necessary? Supposing oneself to be sitting say in a Russian cinema and not knowing a word of the language, would not one more or less comprehend the entire story, and again, is it not possible that by not comprehending, we have formed our own conclusions, and seen more than was intended? In illustration of which may I enquire if we have not all experienced a feeling of irritation or surprise at the inadequacy of many subtitles, which even in their native language are so often if not illiterate and cramping, inferior to the general tone of the picture? In the Freudian film recently shown in London, the photographic dream-symbolism was in the nature of a triumph, but the diagnosis of the psycho-analyst flashed on in sub-titles, was pitiful, and probably neutralised any good the film might otherwise have done to the cause of psycho-analysis. Yet probably in the original version this had, if not aptness, at least a certain pathological value. MRS. W. G. DRYSDALE, LONDON, W. 1. (An article by Miss Dorothy Richardson on Captions appears on page 52.)

NAUSEOUS "CLOSE-UPS"

Assuming that the vast majority of cinema frequenters desire to be entertained in an intellectual and amusing manner, it is somewhat difficult to comprehend, why there are

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films showing, which, to judge by their close-ups, would have us believe to the contrary.

To demonstrate this assertion, the following example may suffice.

We are shown the cell of a man condemned to death. —

The time fixed for his execution is close at hand.

Close-ups proceed to show us.

- 1.) the agonized look of dread and despair on the prisoner's face,
- 2.) his stopping the clock from ticking out his last moments,
- 3.) the prison bell, telling his death knell,
- 4.) the dangling halter, ready to embrace his neck, and
- 5.) the warder, waiting to march him to the scaffold.

A surfeit of unsavouriness, distasteful to many ! —

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A. HASSLACHER, WIMBLEDON.

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No 4

October 1927

AS IS

BY THE EDITOR

If people would only stop trying to quench me by calling to my attention that Shakespeare must always be greater than any film, that Praxitiles this, that Leonardo da Vinci that, that Beethoven's Moonlight Sonata or Milton's Paradise Lost leave no room for anything that isn't some vague echo of themselves. There are two more complaints, one of which I have already somewhat jubilantly made, but am forced to make again ; namely that because film art is new it stands a much better chance of being good, and that the superstition that an art only develops through time has no foundation in fact. Such talk as I have heard about art since starting CLOSE UP would have made one less devoted than myself abandon it forever, — platitudes so dreary, so incompetent, so maudlin, that, realising they were more or less sincerely meant, one ceased to wonder why Man (spelt with the capital) should turn up his nose at it.

First of all it seemed to me art was made a kind of figure or image, almost personalitised. Art meant something, some static symbol or regime whose travelling salesmen were flung at me with bated breath ; Shakespeare, Shelley, Scriabin, Henry Irving, Herbert Tree, Euripides. A touzled throng ! One was solemnly requested to note the thing they stood for, and to abandon forever on the spot the thing that one, oneself is trying to stand for. "Such trash, my dear sir, such trash."

But. I mean.ART ! Isn't it getting to be rather an awful sort of word, or isn't it ? Certainly it sends shivers down my back at this minute, seeing it as apparently it is seen, in spite of the fact that I am supposed to be upholding it and printing the beastly word on my cover, and at least twenty times on as many pages. Let me try to refrain from asking *What Is Art*. I'm not all that pompous, but let me just say what to my mind it most emphatically isn't. Art isn't that ghoulish, witless sort of plaster-of-paris morgue where you go to identify the dead. To blazes with the past. If art isn't a corpse, and artists here to lay it out and put pennies on its eyelids, then it is alive and belongs to now and the future.

My second complaint is please deliver me from hearing ever any more the phrase *vile Americanisms*. Otherwise I shall be forced to retaliate vile Europeanisms. America is not vile, its language is not vile, and nothing about it is vile. If cornered with the questions what is art then, what is America then ? I would answer, art is America, America is art,

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and although I do not deny that there is much in it that is terrible, much that is raw, no person with independent judgment could fail to see its greatness.

I do trust that my zeal will not be taken amiss, but naturally I want to point out that my own mind is capable of judgment, and that I would not have formed an interest in films, nor undertaken to edit this journal without believing in myself and my work, and having formed my attitude to Botticelli and Byron.

The fact that seems to project itself out of all the criticism is that the critics do not seem to be aware of what really has been done or is about to be done in the world of films. They quote long lists of films which, with them, I agree are not worth a moment's consideration. The tendency is a kind of chronic unresilience, an inability to see beyond what they have already seen, not to see what conceivably may be seen in the near future.

When I say all that I do say for and on behalf of the movie I do not mean that Wild West dramas, or the usual kind of Bedlam which usually represents domestic life among the usual cultured, are anything more than what they so obviously are, —crude and trumpery stuff the use of which is slowly passing. What one means is something totally unrelated to all this, the infinite possibility in the moving picture camera for creating and making tangible the most subtle thoughts, impressions, apprehensions. Its acute sensitivity practically demands that it is operated by an acutely sensitive creative brain. Inferior brains behind a photoplay are their own con-

fession, are shown up ; —pose, artificiality, mannerism, are destroyed without mercy. And when people like Pabst and Czinner have turned out films like *Joyless Street* and *Nju* and in America William K. Howard has gladdened us with his very promising *White Gold*, then soon people will look at nothing that is less good, they will be impatient of falsity. "If this *can* be done then we are not to be expected to look at bad films ever again." It *can* be done, it will have to be done, and believe me, it will not only be done but surpassed. Good films are no more than ten years old, the best are all of recent date, but it is necessary to refer back since only by pointing out what has already been done rightly can it be explained what "rightly" stands for. A film as good or better than let us say *Joyless Street* is needed ; what then can we quote except *Joyless Street* ? I can see no necessity to drag in Shakespeare. When you are discussing architecture you do not usually argue that your building will not be good because some chef has cooked a perfect mutton cutlet. When we discuss films let us discuss films, when we discuss Elizabethan drama, then don't let us forget Shakespeare.

* * *

Now having brindled long enough for the moment, I am going to peep at an average programme of one of the ordinary, larger cinema theatres. Corner sites are popular, so it is on a corner we stop, attracted by an air of opulence with gilt and fern and marble, and a splendid, royal blue pair of very

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laconic gentlemen saying up the stairs to the box office, to your right sir, stalls this way. Stooping before a gilt cage you are able to peep through and say into a pile of blond curls, "Have you seats at three and sixpence?" A robot voice snaps "Five and nine and eight and six only," if you are late or unlucky, otherwise without more ado, your ticket spits like a white tongue from a brass [mouth, and your change is clapped before you. (Point for *Comment and Review*: Something should be done. It's the devil's own job trying to pick up your money from that brass ledge, and wastes quite enough time in the course of ten minutes to form a queue of thirty people, who, if promptly dealt with would not have to wait at all.)

More royal blue uniforms close round you, usually one burly one and several diminutive ones that pipe "Take the lift up sir?" or "Programme sir?" Then presently you are delivered over to more blond curls and stumble into dark. Here small lamps guide you to your fauteuil, and lo! somebody is rescuing somebody, or somebody is running away, and here is an American comedy, you know from long experience. Picking up the thread of the story without any appreciable difficulty, you do not have to give it your mind. Sometimes there is a genuine cleverness in them, sometimes they are incredibly bad, but it doesn't greatly matter whether this particular one is good or bad, you have already noted that American comedies are better than French comedies, and infinitely better than German ones. American comedies, you have already decided, are America's strength in film production; you can always look at American comedies and sometimes

enjoy them, although American sentiment and American sob-stuff to the European mind is nearly always, in its films, a damp and treacly rehash of 1880-ish yellow-back novelish eyewash. Mind you, I do not say that this is not alright for America, for in this amazing land there is an essential *naïveté* of feeling, and as ballast for efficient mechanisation, a weight of sentimentality that to the less ebullient and more rooted European has the consistency of uncooked dough. It is a *jeunesse*, a something adolescent; you will find it in all Americans, no matter how brilliant, how rare; a sixteen-year-oldishness or final unsophistication, wherein is its strength and its weakness. Somewhat *blasé*, elaborate expressions of European consciousness, (in films mostly from Germany), are rarely comprehended there. There is no reason why they should be. America's sentimentality is right in America, though we in Western Europe need a richer fare. On the other hand, America's youth gives it the exuberance of youth, its comedies (I mean its comedies not its "comics") have so often an irresistible boisterousness that we in Europe cannot achieve any more; we are too middle-aged, we would not be able to forget ourselves, we would look such idiots.

We think this all out quite leisurely while looking at what is turning out to be quite a dreary little comedy, and yet we know that if we see nothing else but dreary comedies for many months we will not alter our opinion. For, in spite of itself, America has the charm and graciousness of youth, the satire and the unselfconsciousness of youth, that is part of its innate selfconsciousness and courage.

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Through all this the organ pipes and somebody takes the empty seat beside you. Then curtains glide together, and the suave concealed lights expand a little like taking a breath, then expire. The curtains roll away, and you are looking at the news reel. To the tune of a march you see a military event. Somebody puts a wreath on something. Somebody wins a motor race. Somebody dies. Slow music. Somebody goes away, somebody comes back. An aeroplane goes up. So it goes on. Then a film of interest is shown, odds and ends and scraps of everything. An industry, a country (sometimes in colour) physical training, a bit of travel, ladies' fashions ending up with an episode from the life of Felix the Cat, or its pen-and-ink equivalent.

Have you noted your audience during these presentations? Isn't there just a little the feeling of *entr'acte*? Isn't there a feeling of shuffling, of getting ready, something that suggests they are shaking themselves up for the "Big Film"?

They have not long to wait, for soon now the curtains again meet, and this time the concealed lights "fade-in" and reveal the tall architecture of the theatre. A stately and elegant place! Another readjustment of lights and with the first notes of the music you realise the orchestra has arrived. It too has stately and elegant proportions, it announces largely and with sonorous wind instruments, DRAMA!

So you, yourself, find you, yourself, sitting up too, getting ready too. It is an exciting moment, and far too often spoilt by vaudeville acts, singers, or the orchestra itself, got somehow in a wrong place, not under the stage but *on* it. You

wonder why ? Is it in the least necessary ? Is it artistic, is it entertaining ? Do people really want to listen to the Ride of the Valkyries ? Apparently, for they clap for more, and get it. They get Flat Tyred Papa, Mama's Going To Give You Air, or When You Played The Organ And I Sang The Rosary, vaguely (do you hear it ?) evoking soft singing from the people around you. We scratch our heads and admit it is probably alright ; we even like poor Flat Tyred Papa, but we do feel there was no need to perch that group of handsome men up there where they don't belong, and make them an excuse for lighting effects like a spectrum gone to seed. It would be much better to have left them downstairs.

But sometimes those girls come on in a row, always under-rehearsed, always so dismally out of place, such a negation of everything there, and so utterly negated by it all. Please let us have no more of them than we have already. Really we don't want them. We started going to movies only because we were bored to death with girls with legs in a row.

And the biggest, blackest sin, that mortal injury, the *Prologue*. Have you seen them ? I mean singers dressed up and meant to create an atmosphere for the film before it begins. That, America, is to your eternal shame ! How anybody can have imagined that glee singers in boleros, turbans, or Foreign Legion great-coats were going to create anything but fancy-dress glee singing I cannot imagine ! The awful thing is its crudity, the showing up of the crudity of stage-craft. You get the sudden contrast, and it is overwhelming. Oil and vinegar do *not* mix.

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To be quite fair, movies in a playhouse seem all wrong too, each has its own authentic atmosphere, and they are utterly foreign to each other. The movies have it on their side, because their atmosphere is more consistent, their theatres more handsome and better ventilated. But a movie in a playhouse looks almost as dismal as a musical comedy in a movie theatre.

Well, sometimes you are lucky, and the Big Film comes unannounced. Is the Vaudeville missed, the Prologue missed, the Musical Interlude missed? Never. People are not even aware that they might have been included, and never think what might have been thrust upon them. No, they will not take it seriously in a film theatre. Any vaudeville is a signal for relax, for attention to wander, for friends to begin to talk, for cigarettes to be lighted, for pipes to be tapped on the side of the fauteuil.

What then is the Big Film? What *is* a Big Film?

There is a range of Big Films wider than any editorial can compass, starting at incredibly bad, and going in semitones to incredibly good. It usually happens that when you stumble in haphazardly, you stumble in on bad to incredibly bad ones. Eighty to ninety per cent of any average Big Films are completely dull, second-rate, and trivial. You are desired to sympathise with persons on whom you would not waste a moment's consideration, you are asked to identify yourself with a pack of idiots whose worthlessness whether of virtue or of vice is only less senile than their inability to cope with perfectly simple problems of any kind with dignity or decency or tact.

Small wonder that the casual visitor is chilled ! But is he ? Usually not at all. If he were, cinema theatres would not go on being built with such competition frenzy of lavishness, they would always be half empty, they would not even pay their way. The only conclusion is that people *like* bad films. That people *like* to identify themselves with ill mannered heroines and overbearing heroes, with neglected mothers and a generally uncomfortable atmosphere of ill-bred pathos. As a matter of fact I don't believe they do. It is something in their attitude, and to analyse it is both interesting and depressing. It goes back to what I have already in a previous article referred to, a greater interest in the personal appearance of the star than the play that star appears in. It is not "There is a film on at the Palace supposed to be a revelation in film art" but "I *do* like Adolphe Menjou, he's on at the Pavilion. Let's go."

The identification is not with the characters as portrayed, but with the stars themselves. As a matter of fact because of the convention of virtue and vice, chastity and corruption, etc. etc. it doesn't matter what sort of bumptious loafer your hero is, or what sort of insufferable muggins your heroine ; the mere fact that they are hero and heroine is enough. It is taken for granted that one's sympathy is with them. Another thing that happens is that when the film is not good enough to keep the brain working, the public sinks into a kind of hypnotic daze. The screen, with its changing forms becomes something in the nature of a crystal, and the public in the nature of a crystal gazer. Mind in some way neatly obliterates itself. The

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music, the suave dusk and an amatory continuity with ardent close-ups is enough to work the charm, the public is under its spell, half drugged, entirely at rest. No wonder the film is popular. Event at its worst it is a sort of hashish !

All the same why does the casual visitor write me disparaging letters ? Because he has taken his mind to his local cinema. A great mistake. Leave your mind at home. Make that a rule. If needed it will be there, but if you take it with you you will find it cumbersome paraphernalia. You have taken your mind to honestly grapple with something that is not in the scope of mind at all, and you are misled into thinking that I have no right to say that films are the art of the future. When I say that I do *not* mean that Adolphe Menjou is the art of the future, talented as he may be, nor Norma Talmadge, nor Liane Haid. I mean that *films*, not people are the art of the future, or if you will have it, a combine of the arts of the future. You cannot dispute if you have only seen its worst or mediocre presentations. See *Kopf Hoch Charley*, see *The student Of Prague*, see *Potemkin*, *Out Of The Mist*, *Chang*, *Prince Achmed*, and then begin to judge ! To each of these you may return "Yes, *but...*", "Yes, *but...*", and I will say, "Yes, *but...* take them as a whole. Think of what all these films, considered as different specimens of one medium, amount to in the aggregate ! Shuffle them up, make one force of them, and isn't it a mighty force ?" Think what you have. First of all pure form, every single attribute of photographic art, miracles to work in tones and tone depths, light, geometry, design, sculpture. . . .pure abstraction all of it. Then

this not static but with all the resources of movement, change, rhythm, space, completely fluid to the will of the artist. Then miracles to work again with trick photography, infinite possibilities of suggestion, contrast, merging, dissociation ; whole realms of fantasy, states of mind, of emotion, psychic things, to symbolise not in the limit of one special moment of time, but in all the ebb and flow of their course, their beginning and their end. Not only have you mastery over the outward manifestation, but over the inner and inmost working too. The range is almost without limit. You can be completely direct or completely rarified, if I may use the word. What more can anybody ask ?

But the Big Film comes to its end, and we are still sitting here. We don't want to move. It has been a good show or it has been a bad show, it doesn't greatly matter. We feel that we will sit on and see the comedy round again to the point where we came in.

The greatest joy is when all unsuspecting we wander into something we did not expect, some dazzling, brilliant film that somehow we had thought was going to be so bad. This happens more and more often, and in Switzerland we have this advantage. We see films as soon as they are released. Heavy advance booking is not made. And we read six months after we have seen them of films just reaching London and New York. They come from Germany, France, Italy, Sweden, Russia, America, and somewhat tardily from England, from everywhere, uncensored, think of that ! and all the better for it. There they have a *programme de famille* sometimes, and

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to these only are children admitted. To all who would argue against this policy I recommend a visit to Switzerland. No more successful arrangement could possibly be made than this concession or recognition of the fact that people of Switzerland and people in Switzerland live decently from choice, and not because a censor guards their precarious morals.

KENNETH MACPHERSON,

THREE SITTING HERE

(CONTINUED FROM THE SEPTEMBER CLOSE UP)

It is marble on top.

It is a rose marble on top.

There is no difference at all in the way that in every way and every day there are all certain that there is no reason why they should not be delighted by me in every way.

Leave it to me in every way.

How do they know that they admire me how do they love to be attentive to the next to nearly plainly left to right when is it that they ask was it done at once. How do they relinquish their better than most with them left to it coming change-fully asked. They are relieved to know that they love me to be widely admired and reasonably furnished with evidences of their attachment. Very nearly half of it in time.

Why is there every reason that they should admire me. We there is every reason why they should admire me. We there is every reason why they should admire me. It is not very likely that in the same it would be with the same desire to admire me that very well pleased me that they admired me with every reason for admiring me. It is not true that there is a middle with the end.

Why do they do do they know that they do love me so.

We know and they know they know they do do love me so. What reason is there for their attachment to me. Every reason there is every reason for their being and having this attachment for me.

If they are as increasing in their emotion of admiration as they seem to be and they are with the exception of those who for this reason and there is a very distinct reason have been lessening in their emotion of attraction toward me and when they are as they are continuously and rapidly having it as an accretion the attraction that I am developing in the direction of their desiring to be admiring me and with very good reason. They are accumulating and it is increasing and there is every reason why it should be in addition the emotion of admiration which is rapidly and contentedly accumulating of being in my continuing to increasingly be the object of their admiration. Might I know why. Yes certainly I might and I do know why they are adding to their admiration as there is excellent reason for every addition that is being evidenced of their increasing admiration of me.

If they do choose to do what is it about which they make

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an ado. About how I do it in order to be admittedly left alone and not lonely. It is very lovely.

They were bent upon delighting me accidentally and in the meantime it was as much as I could do to be more than satisfied.

With this as their wish it is not exceptional that they are in place of letting it be almost as well as if they had been interrupted by it alone. Letting it be said first before the interruption came. It is not only undoubtedly but a certainty that they will do as they say admire me.

In no place is there more room than there is with them to adding to an admiration which when made a way for me.

It is like it and with it a little all told that they care in very likely which is meant to be nearly left at most as theirs alike. They do admire me meaning to me and to mine.

Like it for them and bows of their kind of ribbon to tie high higher than hair and their their mingle mingle with and bestow their individual responsibility for their edge with in this and their and abound. Their bounds.

They do leaving it to be a chance which can be seized and meant as if with it as no hindrance let it be as a target with their enjoyment and mine. It is mine to be left not alone with him here but there. I am admired by the time this and with this and with this this with this.

In which way can he be likened to me when this you see remember me. He likes me.

Every one singly and together admire me. They have seen

it become which is why when and surrounded by amending what has been added and reasoning reasoning is there and left alone with their very carefully withdrawn complimenting in assistance. It is by this time that they are and mine. There is every reason for the greeting with which they do not deny that they do not need to try to believe that it is a necessity desirably to unitedly admire me. In reality to excitedly admire me. They do admire me. In their admiring of me there is connectedly a reunion of their celebrating their admiration for me and of me.

What is it that they are saying as they are admiring me they are saying everything consecutively everything in their admiration. There is practically everything in their admiration everything and there is practically everything in their admiration their admiration in addition.

Why weddings close close to it. It is particularly agreeable to be surrounded by best of all admiring everything equally and in proportion and with sincerity and in admiration.

It is best of all to be additionally insomuch as there is individual addition that there should be additional interest in adding admiration not reluctantly but invariably. By this means there is stubbornness in anticipation and repeatedly repeatedly they might be pressed and expressed all that which is implied by their attitude of admiration which is undoubtedly as if when in reliance they are establishing it. It is mostly in the form of extra and attracting their admiration by unison and additionally representing those who have been not only realising but more than realising gaining that admiration as in this

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as a circumstance. It is very kindly left to them to bestow upon it their admiration and they additionally do not limit this to their intention not at all within that. At last and inland and by nearly with them at all likening it to their arrangement of theirs as a festoon which makes deliberation instantly an advantage which presumably relating to this makes it do. At once and by the time that they are shared. An increasing admiration is bestowed upon me.

When this you see remember literally everything about how very much they have been able to repeat their intentional admiration of the regularity of their devoting themselves to the arrangement of their decoration of the delight produced by me. In the meantime. They might be clarified by a determination to inculcate their regularly induced pleasure by insistence of the qualification which makes winsomeness a delight and not an interminable invitingly pleased reassurance of this in this and by it when it was willingly to be receptive in their accounting for and by an exceedingly unlimited repercussion of winningly returning in as much as if by this preciously forecast of their needlessly planning to be indicated as one of those who by this means need to be welcomed as weighing as well as left to it in this as an instance of my charm as well as what has been done to be accomplished left to it alone. Might it be while they went and said it is admirable. They need to be breathlessly anticipating their rejoicing in a pleasure sufficiently renounced to be undertaken and not unburdened by theirs as a chance which might be and kind and kind in place place and space could be intermittently in volume and very

largely an expression of their enthusiasm for the relatively undoubted predominance of this which is what I have done.

This is as if they were unreasonably prepared to admire me and myself and categorically what I wished and in stream and streams and there ahead of their within which in left and left to it which is my not easily to harm me. I am very nearly perfectly alarmed by their adulation. And this is sweetly bravely a vestige of renewal. Why do they attach themselves to my delight to my delight because in this way they beam with pleasure and they positively recall that it is engendered. Might it be with them as presumably they are stirred with this which is why whenever it is one at a time circuitously leaving mentioning with it in exchange. Let it be with it at and might in why. Having made up their mind admirably and within it for instance with it with it as telling tell it to me.

It is to be as doubtfully as with and without with and pass makes which is wished left left and share with me the adulation as you see me see me fastening might have been increasing and do so. This is why inelastic makes no tournay. Incidentally admired. This is why they have left it as counting.

Mention mentioning mingling meeting with an illustrating perceptibly as if aloud.

Allowed to be determinately planning their recuperating as valued by means of having installation of their renown. In the meantime celebrated within acceptably refreshing their in union with it as an absolutely integrally left to mine at a time. Halting when they went and met me. They went and

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met me and they might mightily in afterglow of in exchange and by infusing relatively ingenuously accentuating as precociously in wind. Winding it by me. Exhibition of peonies and petunias also with it as if ardently in difficultly rendering it as their stain. Stems and stains make orchids soon if there are strings hanging. Let us predict resolutely which is what is fragmentary and their attachment as well as when it is repaid. Why do they delight in me as they do. Because it is usually I at a time to say. There is every reason why there should be additionally little by little in a volume in a very nearly plentifully reduplicated enlisting it so soon as soon as very often in their case that case that is left to it at once as at noon and carefully. Might it be all around. And lessened.

There is every reason why they should all admire me greatly and tell of it just now to themselves and to each other. It is a gratification and an acceptably outwardly blooming originally attaching resolutely planning of why they might never have been using it by now. In exchange. I am very pleased to hear them and yet with them I am never not obliging I am obliging I am always admittedly of my origin and derivation and they would see as suddenly as one two three admittedly with me. Would it be happily mounting. It is to be an occasion for accumulating. There is no pleasure all the same all the same there is no reason why they should not add in addition and they are adding that there is no reason why I should not be steadily their attraction and be attracting additional admiration.

In this way that they are coming they are coming in this

way and they say that there is every reason that they are admiring what is what I may and have and will be wise. I am undoubtedly their goal and when they come they see me. There is every reason why one at a time and additionally they will integrally share what is nearly entirely there and more entirely mine mine all the time. They will admire and they will not compare they will additionally share share and share alike intrepidly with it as seen. I mean I mean. This is what is in the meantime left additionally and because of there being no reason why I should not be what they admirably intend to develop as necessarily theirs in recuperation. I am by this time placed at once. At once at once. Entirely not left to it additionally which is meticulously an imprint and a rejoicing and an actual integral article articulately reliably within that use. It is notably what they enjoy. To enjoy. There is much that might be what is meant by wealth. May they that is a millionaire be suspicious.

Be suspended between left left left right left and their announcement. When might it be controlled and controlling. With this and theirs in temerity.

Finding it out here. There is more than memorising in rounding out their loving and their admiring their admiring and their loving and they will very well additionally left to me to tell very well they do love they do admire me very well very well that they do love and that they do admire me as they do they do do so they do admire and they do love me and they do so and they do so very well they do very well do so they do admire me and they do love me and there is a very

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good instance of it in the way that they do do it as they do do it they do admire me and they do love me and they do love me and they do admire me very well.

Not as much as they say they say not as much as to-day to-day not as much as to lay not as much as to may to may not as much as to-day to-day not as much as to-day to-day to not as much as to-day to may not as much as to may to may not as much as to gay to gay not as much as to lay to lay not as much as to-day to-day not as much as to may to may not as much as to may to may not as much as to gay to gay not as much as to gay to-day not as much as to gay to gay not as much as to lay to lay not as much as to lay to lay not as much as to gay to gay not as much as to gay not as much as to gay to may not as much as to lay to lay to lay not as much as to may not as much not as much as to gay not as much not as much as to may not as much not as much much as to may not much not as not much not much as to lay not much not as much as to gay much as to may. How much do they love they love me as much as they say they love me as much as they say that they love me and they admire me as much as they say that they do and they do admire me as much as they say they admire me. They do admire me as they do admire me and they do love me as they say they do love me and they say that they do do so. How much do they admire me as much as they do know that they do do so.

GERTRUDE STEIN.

LA FACE HUMAINE A L'ÉCRAN

II

LES JOUES

Jusqu'à présent, et sauf l'emploi des fards, on n'a à peu près pas essayé de modifier ou assouplir les joues. Il semble que leur forme et leurs mouvements ne soient considérés que comme des qualités naturelles, une partie de cette *photogénie* qui est au cinéma ce que la race est en religion. On se rend cependant bien compte, — et pour les hommes autant que pour les femmes, — que c'est d'après l'aspect des joues que l'on jugera le mieux l'aspect physique et moral d'un personnage. Les joues sont la plus grande surface découverte qui reste à l'individu complètement vêtu.

L'engraissement ou la maigreur des joues reflète évidemment la condition générale du personnage. De nos jours quelques acteurs, s'ils ont à jouer un personnage à aspect extrême, mettons un fakir, par exemple, ou au contraire un Bouddha, savent se soumettre, longtemps à l'avance, à un régime qui les creuse ou les bouffit. J'indique ici une chose à laquelle on n'a, je crois, pas encore pensé : comme les joues sont ce qui maigrit le plus vite, on peut en un seul jour, par course, jeûne, bain de vapeur, modifier très sensiblement l'aspect d'un même personnage. Cette ressource me semble meilleure que les noir-

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cissements dont use par exemple l'un des meilleurs acteurs actuels : John Barrymore. En effet un maquillage varié ne peut guère donner, sur un visage, que des *états* différents, mais dont chacun est immobile. Au contraire un visage sobrement maquillé, qui pourra obtenir par un changement d'épaisseur une évolution fondamentale visible, pourra, d'une façon beaucoup plus souple, utiliser par ses jeux de physionomie cette modification essentielle.

Le principal, naturellement c'est encore la musculature. Dans les joues on peut distinguer deux groupes de muscles : les uns s'épanouissent du centre vers les extrémités, en élargissant selon cette direction leurs effets visibles ; l'autre groupe, formé des seuls muscles de la mâchoire, limite et encadre les joues.

L'effet qu'on peut produire avec ces muscles de la mâchoire est assez simple effet d'énergie dans la crispation normale, effet de bestialité lorsqu'on leur avait fait avancer la mâchoire inférieure, exaspération ou désorganisation de l'être, lorsqu'on les fait jouer [transversalement. Ces muscles se contractent et s'exercent par les mêmes mouvements que les muscles temporaux, et je ne puis donc à ce sujet que renvoyer à mon précédent article.

Sur la partie antérieure des joues, les muscles essentiels sont les deux *zigomatiques* : le petit part de la lèvre supérieure pour se diriger vers l'extérieur de l'œil : il sert aux sourires montants et légers, et lorsqu'il se crispe, à l'expression de la douleur contenue. Il remue les rides profondes que les personnes âgées et naturellement molles laissent partir de leur nez vers le coin

de leur bouche. Il se trouve d'ailleurs sous des tissus flasques et lymphatiques. On observera aisément, à égale distance du milieu du nez et de la pommette, qu'un massage avec les doigts ou une mouillure froide réduit momentanément le volume des chairs : cet effet est important pour l'expression : plus les chairs sont tassées et la peau tendue, plus le regard paraît grandir et se porter en avant. Au contraire un pincement de ces parties molles et une suite de coups, même légers, les font se boursoufler, et ce seul effet peut donner à la physionomie toute entière une attitude passive et hébétée.

Le grand zigomatique, qui se dirige vers la pommette, est celui qui écarte les joues vers l'extérieur dans le rire éclatant. La plupart des acteurs savent faire jouer ce muscle sur l'un des côtés, ou moins d'un côté que de l'autre, et donnent ainsi à leur rire une apparence plus légère et plus ironique. Le sourire que Chaplin a enseigné à Adolphe Menjou dans *l'Opinion Publique* commence, je crois, par une contraction du petit zigomatique, puis, le sourire descend au grand zigomatique en même temps qu'il s'élargit, parfois le mouvement se reproduit en sens inverse. Ce muscle très docile, par ses frémissements et ses ondulations, est le plus éloquent de la physionomie ; d'ailleurs, il a presque toujours sur l'écran un effet facile parce qu'il produit à mi-joue une ombre bien nette.

Il faut signaler comme tout à fait exceptionnel l'usage qu'a su en faire Chaplin, particulièrement dans *La Ruée vers l'Or* : en faisant jouer ce muscle, le plus mécaniquement, le plus bas possible, et en le faisant revenir très rapidement au point de départ, il obtient son célèbre sourire malheureux, cet effet

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de politesse excessive mêlée de crainte et de sentiments pénibles, vite oubliés, qui font au yeux du grand public l'essentiel de son personnage. Rappelez-vous par ailleurs l'effet qu'obtient Buster Keaton dans *Ma vache et moi*, lorsque, forcé de sourire, il pousse ses joues avec ses doigts. Cet effet de contrainte, beaucoup plus grossier que celui qu'obtient Chaplin, donne la différence des deux personnages.

Enfin, je signale que toute contracture qui se prolonge étant pénible au spectateur, l'effet de ces muscles, tordus par un rire qui reste immobile à son extrême expression, est une des façons les plus violentes d'exprimer la souffrance. A ces effets principaux, deux muscles peuvent ajouter des effets accessoires : le buccinateur (non pas celui qui gonfle les joues, car les joues se remplissent par fermeture des lèvres et envoi d'air dans la bouche, mais celui qui se contracte et qui fatigue lorsqu'on serre les coins de la bouche pour emboucher un instrument, et que fatigue d'ailleurs l'action de siffler). Il peut servir à faire la « bouche de poisson » et à exprimer certaines nuances de dégoût. Enfin le canin ne sert, je crois, qu'au retroussis des babines.

En dehors de ces effets actifs, les joues subissent des effets passifs. La ventilation donne les effets les plus fréquents. Le gonflement des joues ne donne qu'un effet de lourde ironie. Le gonflement de leur partie antérieure, qui n'est en somme qu'un sifflement retenu, selon son intensité et sa durée, soit la perplexité, soit l'ironie. Lorsque les joues se gonflent sans que les lèvres soient fermées, au cours de longues expirations, on obtient des effets de fatigue, d'accablement, ou, lorsque les joues

tremblent l'effet d'une colère contenue qui se refuse à éclater.

L'allure des joues, au repos, dépend beaucoup de ce qui reste de contraction au muscle et que les médecins appellent *tonus*. L'alacrité ou la lassitude, l'impatience ou la détente, dépendent du degré de ce tonus. Mais comme ces effets ne peuvent être volontaires, ils sont bien plus difficiles à utiliser que les mouvements. Il me semble que celui des acteurs de cinéma qui s'en sert le mieux en ce moment est Douglas Fairbanks, qui garde ainsi toujours son visage à un potentiel élevé, et dont le visage acquiert ainsi quelque ressemblance avec la face toujours mobile et contractée des lions. Pour accroître le tonus, le cinglement par les linges mouillés ou eau froide est déjà connu par les femmes coquettes. Signalons en passant que l'usage des fards gras l'affaiblit toujours en même temps qu'il distend la peau : c'est la raison pourquoi beaucoup d'actrices et de jeunes premiers ont la figure flasque. Il se peut qu'on veuille au contraire diminuer le tonus : une séance de saut à la corde deux heures avant la scène, un bain chaud d'une demi-heure, me semblent les meilleures ressources. Indiquons aussi que, lorsque les joues sont déformées par une suite d'efforts dans le même sens, on leur rend l'équilibre et le tonus normal par des grimaces générales et circulaires.

Les moyens mécaniques qu'on emploie pour modifier le volume des joues : un boudin de coton ou de gomme contre la gencive inférieure ou supérieure, sont assez puissants, assez efficaces puisqu'ils sont employés pour les déguisements de la vie réelle, mais sans souplesse et un peu grossiers. Resterait à

CLOSE UP

parler des effets de la peau, et principalement des rides. Les rides des joues sont concentriques et ont pour centre les coins de la bouche. Produites par des expressions violentes, les rides sont tordues, et à chacune correspond une boursoufflure assez dure. Produites par l'âge, elles ne sont que des sillons parallèles, et peuvent donner une impression de sérénité. Dans l'état actuel de la science du maquillage, il est à peu près impossible d'essayer de les contrefaire.

Par contre, pour transformer un jeune premier ou une jeune première en un personnage d'une agréable rusticité, on a très bien réussi des semis de taches de rousseurs. C'est grâce à cet effet que, dans *La Grand Duchesse et le garçon d'étage*, la servante est le personnage le plus réussi.

JEAN PRÉVOST.

THE TRUTH ABOUT THE GERMAN STUDIOS

Imagine a perfect studio equipped with every latest improvement, with vast resources of wealth and technical knowledge ! How much nearer you would get in such a studio to translating what you feel faithfully on to the screen, to giving birth to something that will please YOURSELF.

I used to sigh mournfully, "If only I could get to Germany how different everything would be ! There would be the means all ready prepared for MY end."

Because so many masterpieces of psychological photography and polished technique came from Germany I made the pardonable error that the German studios offered every facility to the creative worker, and then I met some one who had been there ! . A cosmopolitan cameraman, who has been responsible for some beautiful and pioneer work. A man of distinction who has worked in America, France, Italy and England. He had just finished 'turning on' four German pictures.

I asked him for all the information that he could give me about German conditions.

"Surely," I said, "you found intelligent co-operation over there ? A response in the artists ?"

And so I went on overwhelming him with questions.

He shrugged his shoulders.

"Ufa... Ufa has a good studio, very good, but apart from that..."

I defended my dream fiercely. I could not allow my castle to be knocked down by non-committal inuendos. I forced him to be more explicit.

He told me of the difficulties that he had encountered, how he had had to combat with three forms of lighting in the studio; daylight, direct current, and alternating current. Three forms of lighting, and they all had to blend. A herculean task ! It is impossible for me to describe to the layman all

CLOSE UP

that this implies. I will, however, give one instance. With alternating current the ordinary 'fade out', worked by the shutter, becomes jerky and completely unsatisfactory. The picture looks as if it is being shaken to bits, instead of gracefully erased. He overcame the difficulty by having an all over iris in his lens. An ingenious solution. He gave me a list of the arc lamps that had been at his disposal on the picture. I shall not bore you with details but that list was ludicrously inadequate. With justifiable pride he informed me that he had been the first cameraman to come from America and make a success in Germany. Before he had been engaged, three American cameramen had 'flopped' and the studio hands regarded him with suspicion, in fact at first they went on strike and refused to work with any more foreign cameramen.

"How then," I demanded, "did you get your effects? How was.... made, and.....?"

I rattled off a string of names of photographically faultless pictures, made in Germany (not by Ufa).

"My friend," he said, "it is not the camera that matters, but what you put in front of the camera."

He then told me a very remarkable thing. I am sure he would not mind if I tell you.

"The best work that I ever did in my life," he confessed to me, "was done with a camera that only cost eight pounds! The picture was a triumph. Yet my 'magazine' cases, which were made of wood, leaked so badly that I had to wrap them round with black paper. Every time I wanted to make 'a

mix' I had to take the camera into the dark room and turn back ! There was no other method of reversing. And the jamping..."

He raised his eyes to heaven.

Surely there should be a comforting moral here to those who are making amateur films. Most people who are making films of their own possess a camera which cost more than eight pounds, and which is more amenable to reason. A studio camera costs from seven hundred and fifty to eight hundred pounds ! Let them then pluck up courage. But there is also a terrible moral to be drawn from this tale. What excuse can there be for British films ?

Here have we for years in England been under the impression that Germany turned out such excellent films because she was so excellently equipped. All the time the truth was that we thought she was well equipped because she turned out such magnificent films.

The International Studios at Elstree are, without a doubt, well stocked studios, but I have still to see a film come from Elstree to rivalor. . . . made under adverse conditions.

You see I am discreet, I do not mention names. I have learnt something from my continental friend !

OSWELL BLAKESTON

PROJECTOR II

(CHANG)

I

This is his gift ;
light,
light that sears and breaks
us
from old doubts
and fears
and lassitudes ;
this is his gift ;
light,
light
that fascinates ;
no bird
gazes more avidly
at Pythian snake
than we at this

vision of streams and path-ways
and small lakes ;
streams,

cataracts
and valleys
and great forests ;
our souls are merged with quietness
or stirred
by tidal-wave
or earth quake ;

we sleep and are awake,
we dream and are not here ;
our spirits walk elsewhere
with shadow-folk
and ghost-beast,
we speak a shadow-speech,
we tread a shadow-rock,
we lie along ghost-grass
in ghost shade
of the hillock ;

with marvellous creatures rise
from shadow-stream
and sea-tide ;
with wondrous creatures leap
from tree to tree
or creep
sinuous

CLOSE UP

along
the river-bed
and freshet ;
blest
with rare suppleness
we bound
aloft
rapturously,
or rest
beside the river-head
and lap
waters
of holiness.

2.

This is his gift ;
light,
light
a wave
that sweeps
us
from old fears
and powers

and disenchantments ;
this is his gift,
light
bearing us aloft,
enthusiastic,
into realms of magic ;
old forms dispersed
take fresh
shapes
out of nothingness ;
light
renders us spell-bound ,
enchants us
and astounds ;

delight
strikes at dark portals,
opens gates ;
the dark breeds
mortal
and mortal-child,
bird,
insect
and rare serpent ;
it gives
shape
upon numberless shape

CLOSE UP

to spring and bear upon us,
writhe
and rear
with anger
or surprise ;
light
from his bounty
proffers exquisite things,
quivering of day-light,
rush of delicate wings,
exotic flower
and reed
and underbrush,
tenuous fern
and bush.

3.

For such is his rare power ;
he snares us in a net
of light
on woven
fair light ;
so has the sun-god won us ;

he knots the light to light,
he casts the thing afar,
he draws us to his altar ;
we worship who no more
see star in Grecian water ;
we worship
who may want
to sip Castalia's fount
in vain
and without hope ;
he turns our pain to bliss ;
we pass into a space
of intermediate life ;

neophite,
neophite
your being is my grace
(he says)
your life, my life ;
I catch you in my net
of light on over-light ;
you are not any more,
being one with snake and bear,
with leopard
and with panther ;
you have no life who taste
all-life

CLOSE UP

with bear and lynx ;
evoe
to the car
of Linnaeus,
my brother.

4.

You are myself being free
as bird
or humming-bee ;
you are myself
being drawn
like any bee
along
a ray of gilded light ;
as bee to out-rayed gold
so you to this ;
behold
myself who starts the shout
evoe ;
up and sing
evoe ;
up and make
evoe's echo break

forth
on the listening air ;
evoe,
you shall be
myself
being one with me
in love of lynx and pard
and bear
and prowling panther ;

I am the god who trod
Parnassus ;
with a nod,
I struck the monster down ;
so here,
so in this town
of later day and mood,
I dare the Pythian,
slay direst Dark again ;
here in this holy wood,
behold,
behold how good
is man's inventiveness ;
I say behold and praise
myself
who struck the spark
that made the soul awake ;

CLOSE UP

I who bade man create
form
from the formless dark.

5.

Your souls upon the screen
live lives that might have been,
live lives that ever are ;
(evoke
to the car
of god-king Dionysus)
evoke
to the feast ;
I and my brother lure
your souls
from lesser matter,
I and my brother
greet
your souls ;
on fragile feet
we raise a living thing
we draw it to the screen
of light on light on light ;
day passes,

you are here ;
to-morrow,
you are other ;
the moment makes you great,
evoe makes you taste
pure ecstasy ;
the snake
crawls from his leafy nest,
so you,
you to my breast
I call your spirit here,
I light you like a star,
I hail you as a child,
I claim you as a lover.

H. D.

THE WAR FROM MORE ANGLES

A reviewer of the *Battle of the Falklands* has written already of the danger of the many war films released or being made by British companies. The English mind lends itself naturally rather to chronicles than to imaginative creation and it is not surprising that they should desire to reproduce a British record of the War. The trouble is not so much what they represent as the way they represent it. In *The Big Parade*

CLOSE UP

the central theme was the complete wastage and stupidity of war. In the *Emden* the consciousness that war if inevitable or even desired, was also terrible and destroying, was never lost sight of during the picture. What I and many others (according to reviews) object to in the *Somme* and the *Battle of The Falklands* is that war is presented *entirely* from a romantic boy-adventure book angle, divorced from everyday emotions and that thereby the thousands who desire unreality are forced further and further away from the actual meaning of battle. In a time of danger the "We Want War" crowd psychology may destroy a nation. We want a race that understands what acceptance of warfare means. By all means let us have war films. Only let us have war straight and as it is ; mainly disease and discomfort, almost always destructive (even in after civil life) in its effects. Let us get away from this nursery formula that to be in uniform is to be a hero ; that brutality and waste are not to be condemned, provided they are disguised in flags, medals and cheering.

Not that *The Battle Of The Falklands* is a bad film. I went with misgivings (having had a course of British films) and my attention was held throughout the afternoon. It is true that expecting to see the Falklands on the screen I was amazed to recognise Round Island, the twin hills of Samson, and the outer Scillies. But this is legitimate ; the impression of the place matters, not that it should have been recorded on the actual beach. But throughout the performance there was not a single suggestion that war was anything other than an elaborate and permissible adventure ; or that there were thou-

sands of men and women whose lives were broken and whose homes were destroyed.

Yet what a film could be made of the naval side of the war. Only to do it no gigantic spectacle is needed but a central theme worked out perhaps in a little outpost and related to the actual experience of people during those awful, hungry years. Scilly for instance (as I saw it in 1917) with the long black lines of the food convoy in the distance. A liner beached in the Sound with a hole as large as a room where a torpedo had hit it; the gun on its deck trained seawards in case a submarine dodged the patrol. Old men watching on the cliffs. An old fisherman rowing in slowly with a cask of brandy—wreckage—towing behind his boat and a smuggler's smile on his lips. (How he must have enjoyed bringing it in legitimately in broad daylight.) Shipwrecked sailors from a torpedoed boat stumbling up the beach. Letters:—"If the petrol shortage continues it is doubtful how long the country can hold out" and down at the wharf the motor launches letting the petrol hose drip into the water because, between filling tanks, they were too bored to turn it off. The war as it affected just one family. Rations, rumours, remoteness. A film could be made of trifling impressions seen through the eyes of any average person. It would be valuable alike as picture and as document. But this glorification of terrible disaster is frankly a retrogression into the infantile idea of warfare, as a kind of sand castle on a beach where toy soldiers are set up, knocked down, and packed up in a pail in readiness for the next morning.

CLOSE UP

Again no one has greater admiration than I for what the Germans have accomplished. They are far ahead of the rest of the world in cinematography. But it is idle to pretend that for some years they were anything else but enemies. Toleration there must certainly be but it is time that national affairs which involve thousands of lives and a future generation should not be brought down to the level of a football match nor that what was certainly and on both sides, a very bitter enmity, be reduced to the not too serious hostility of a couple of rival teams. The *Somme*, *The Falklands* are so utterly what unimaginative classes imagine war to be. Heroic and nicely tidied up. Pleasant to watch but completely unreal. The march of the wounded against the oncoming soldiers the twisting shell shocked man, in the foreign version of *The Big Parade* gave that picture life because of their truth. There are plenty of guns and even corpses in the British pictures but the psychological effect of warface is blotted away ; men shoot and and walk and make jokes in the best boy's annual tradition and that some drop in a heap doesn't seem to matter because one feels that in a moment the whistle will sound and they will all jump up again ; a sensation one never had for a minute in *The Big Parade*.

The most successful scenes in either of the two films were the dockyard pictures. Here the director touched reality, and the different machines, the darkness, the hurrying feet, and the long yard gave a feeling of preparation and activity that marked a great advance on anything previously seen in an English film. That was authentic England. Dirty and full

of noise and right. The men were working the right way. Directly the atmosphere of the picture changed and the attention held. Possibly once the camera work is right the psychology will be altered. It was certainly inspiring to note the progress that had been made since *Mons* was shown last autumn. But pleasure for many at least is spoiled by the false outlook ; it is to be feared that films of this type, however competently they may be done, will not contribute much to the development of cinematography nor convince the historian that he is dealing with an art.

BRYHER.

CRITICISM FROM WITHIN

Concerned in the preliminaries of organising to beat the band ; unlimited millions wanted to outgiant the giants ; (millions of pounds, not people !) "Once we have the money we can buy all the art we want." Quite so... if it is on the market at the time when wanted.

Rather a large "IF", —that.

But how, say the financiers, are we to beat the giants unless we have more purchasing power than they have ?

Money first, and art, if we can find it, follows.

So IN ENGLAND, NOW.

CLOSE UP

Alright ; we get the cash ; we start to beat the band by purchasing the largest building in the world.

Press announces the BIGGEST EVER ; famous people lend names, people chiefly famous in other arts than the Cinema. Let them have a try, they have succeeded in other arts, why not in this one ? Quite sound, (if only they *could* have a "try").

Wanted, technicians of the Film ; of course they must come, at fierce prices too, from the land of giants —for there only, it seems, have technicians been trained. Producers, camera men and so forth, they have a tradition, over there, we must have them, AT ANY COST. We are eventually to produce our own, trained, in time by these foreigners, in the tradition of foreigners.

Then we must BUY stars, with our unlimited cash. There are Stars in the Heavens, but no great Movie stars of British citizenship, say the financiers —(in due course, of course...) we must buy Stars, no matter what they cost, with our millions of English money we must pay foreigners, the giants must get our cash, even as they get our super tax. *Quite sound* ; for, listen, there are five hundred million British subjects in India, to say nothing of patriots in Canada, Australia, Ireland, and Great Britain, whose only real wish in life is to see British Films did the publicity agents but know it, but in the land of the Giants there and there only is the cinema audience that counts ; for there is organised and waiting open mouthed *seventy per cent* of the cinema audiences of the entire world as it exists today.

British Films must satisfy this seventy per cent, OR FAIL

FINANCIALLY and, mark you, financial failure *is* failure, neither more nor less. For we live in a financial age. Do we, even we artists, really seek only *succès d'estime*, nowadays, and pocket the deficit willingly... are we respected if our work loses money ? A genius in a garret, starving, is no good in the Film World. The world of celluloid demands that its heroes "Make good". And that means fifty per cent cash returns. So we must please the foreign seventy per cent in the gigantic, elephantine continent where success has come to mean something more than pure art or high philosophy.

Do not even Intellectuals need an audience and grow bitter without one ? Are not books written and pictures painted with more than one eye on that market ?

To capture that market, even by amateur sport, is now the high endeavour of every Englishman ; the Scotch and Irish went there and settled, long ago, to make sure of it !

That with smaller capital we might produce films for our own home and colonial market, or even write books, paint pictures, play games, for it, is out of the question. IMPOSSIBLE for the giants' films and things come tumbling in ; they cost more to make and they cost the same to see, our own people "fall for them", our very language, our literature, perhaps even our religion, is changing to please these world conquerors. How can the Film magnates here resist such a force ?

We must get back certain, sure, interest on our capital, otherwise we can't go on, and the only way to be sure of that

CLOSE UP

seems to be to pay large sums to these foreigners that they may come here and produce for us what **THEY** want.

What they liked three years ago, we must have next year. That's how it goes. Yet we invented the wretched film ; they took it from us and made of it what it is —to poison the taste of the world.

And, mind you, taste does not lag far behind morals, taste influences politics, taste is a very mighty affair. Vitiate your taste and you become degenerate. Very well, by all means let us vitiate the taste of the entire world... ; in immediate cash returns, **IT PAYS**.

* * *

But, growl our financiers, after reading all this : we shall do nothing of the sort, have we not our list of famous names to save us ? Alas ! Famous names can do but little in the matter, as things stand. Famous names cannot work against finance committees convinced that the giants want more of what they have had before, or something as like to it as makes no difference, as the saying is.

We have, in three years of effort, acquired a **BUILDING**. Good, one can at a pinch sell or let a building, to possess one is sound finance. In three years have we produced a Film ? No. Are we down hearted, No ! If necessary we might even buy a film ready made, with all our cash. We have a building, something tangible, something saleable ; have we, in three years, trained a British technician, or given a chance to any

one of our famous names to experiment in any one or another of the many sides to film technique? Have we made any fresh discoveries, started any new ideas? No. We have been too busy piling up our capital. By keeping the inspirationalists waiting may be it is hoped to reduce them to a state of despair so they may eat out of the hand of the imported technician, submit to being canned, in fact?

A canned Britisher, for some strange reason is never quite as good value for the money as a canned American... no one knows why but so it is, they do it better over there. They *really LIKE* canned food.

But we are a sporting nation, we like food fresh and we enjoy risks; we put our shirt on a horse or a greyhound... but to put any money into letting human beings enjoy an experimental race for new ideas... Oh! Get along, that's silly.

Let the other fellow, do the experimenting; that has ever been our national policy and jolly well has it succeeded!... look at the war! We always win the last battle, so why bother about the millions lost by losing the first ones?

We can afford to let Germany, America, any old place, set up experimental film laboratories and cinema workshops... we can later on grab their discoveries and improve on them. Aha! But can we, aren't things moving a little too fast in the movie world? Shall we ever catch up if we let things slide?

Let us think seriously; the Cinema is a tremendous force, as

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great in its way as Wireless. It can sow seeds of vice, discontent, ridicule, all over the world ; it can vitiate taste, it can pervert ideas, *it can turn down civilisation* by espousing the cause of false values. It is a huge degenerating force —if we wish.

It can destroy or it can build up CHARACTER, it can Americanise, Japanese, Germanise, the world. It can make wars, or it can prevent them.

We spend vast sums, without hope of financial returns, on an experimental arm of the Army. We build engines of war only to destroy them ; quite right, we cannot afford to let any other army get ahead of ours, in equipment, training, or mentality.

But why we cannot spend a minute portion of such monies on an experimental arm for the Cinema, beats me.

Our great building contains space to house A NATIONAL EXPERIMENTAL (CINEMA) TECHNICAL AND ARTISTIC WORKSHOP, open to all peoples of all races, under certain regulations, such as pertain in the best type of experimental institutions.

Foreigners who invent or perfect anything in that workshop must not work in any other country for five years, for instance, provided we engage them at the usual rates of pay, something like that. Call *this* workshop national, because the nation should subsidise it, as a great EDUCATIONAL work, but it should be international in the sense that the Paris Art Industry is international though developed in Paris for the express benefit of France.

Paris has, by its wonderful system of art training and oppor-

tunity, drawn the world of art to itself, and is and remains the central art market of the universe ; deservedly so.

Now is our time to step in and make for ourselves a similar position in the Cinema. Have we not the biggest building in the world ? Why not use it to attract the talent of the world ? But a moment ago, you say, I was objecting to foreigners ? Not at all, I was objecting to our submitting to foreign domination, to being trained by foreigners, to learning technique exclusively from giants. In a national experimental workshop any talent would be welcome, and fees for training would be charged, it would in short be a CINEMA UNIVERSITY ; positions in it would be open to the genius of the world, but it would be run in our way and not be a copy of Hollywood, for there are indications that Hollywood is played out. God forbid that we shall have a copy of it here, yet IF WE DO NOT SIT UP NOW THAT IS WHAT WE SHALL HAVE, *and there will be no getting rid of it!* If we let this thing happen we shall stamp the whole of the next generation with something unworthy, *something which degenerates a race!*

Mastery of technique is to the artist what liberation was to the slave ; but how can unemployed genius, or genius employed at something else, ever master the technique of the Cinema in all its aspects, when there is no University and no workshop available for training of the right sort, or for experiment ?

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We must change the tone of the whole industry, yet not take it beyond the needs of the public. The greatest art has always reached the general public of its day ; for example the Church art of the middle ages, the primitive art of savage peoples ; these were made for the people just as the cinema is made for the people, but it had an aim above and beyond mere cash returns. But you must cash returns, here the financier jumps up, not having listened to another word of my discourse, this catches his ear "mere cash returns" MERE, "why that is what we are out for", he cries, "we cant move without it." Very well, say I, let us go to a Sage, —who can tell you that what I have said and what you have said must be made one thing before we can either of us hope for success. I want spiritual returns for spiritual values, you want cash returns for money values, WE CAN'T HAVE THE ONE WITHOUT THE OTHER ANY LONGER : THE MERE CASH RETURNS (I REPEAT THE WORD MERE) BRING IN THEIR TRAIN DEAD SEA FRUIT : YOU WON'T GET CASH RETURNS MUCH LONGER WITHOUT SPIRITUAL VALUES TO BRING THEM IN ! What do I mean by spiritual values ? I mean making a good job of what at present is at best but a hotch-potch. I mean perfecting our technique, by science and by art and by WORK, till we find out how to use this new medium, the Celluloid printing press.

Where would Michel Angelo have been without technique ? He started to learn it at twelve years of age, and twelve years of age is not a bit too young to start in the National School and Training College of the Cinema. In fact you will find

that before long the national schools themselves will not be able to get along without such an annex.

One of our best methods of providing capital is to keep our talent at home, at present it is getting its training in Germany and America !

And not its training only but its employment, its livelihood, its chance in life, and so is lost to us ; we might as well pour money into the sea as let this continue.

AMELIA DEFRIES.

author of *The Interpreter* etc. translator of the *Commedia dell'Arte*
(produced in New York.)

ALBERTO CAVALCANTI

(Rien que les Heures — En Rade — La p'tite Lilie)

Il est dans *Rien que les Heures* un instant où apparaissent sur l'écran, rangés comme pour une parade de cauchemar, les yeux des peintres qui ont regardé la ville, et qui, chacun à sa manière, l'ont vue : œil nu, ou doublé d'un monocle, peut-être même d'une moitié de lorgnon. Les yeux ici ne vont pas

(See page 68)



Prise de vues sur chariot



Jean Renoir enfouit l'appareil dans le sable pour prendre des vues de chevaux sautant l'obstacle

FROM " EN RADE "

(See page 56)



FILM D'ALBERTO CAVALCANTI

FROM " EN RADE "

(See page 56)



Une scène dans le bistro



ALBERTO CAVALCANTI

Metteur en scène de *En Rade* et d'*Yvette*
pour la Neofilm

CLOSE UP

par paire : chacun le sien, mais le sien seulement : pas de partenaire, pour s'égayer ou se froncer avec lui, pour que s'établisse de l'un à l'autre, cette sorte de relief intérieur qui fait parfois la profondeur ou l'artifice d'un regard humain. Ces yeux à fleur d'écran, sans mystère, dépareillés — ce ne sont vraiment que des appareils enregistreurs — dans tous les sens, et avec tous les jeux possibles du mot, des objectifs.

Réduire ainsi schématiquement à un simple appareil d'optique, cerclé de cils pour la vraisemblance, les yeux des peintres volontaires qui, Utrillo, Dufy, Delaunay... ont imposé à la ville leur « manière » et l'aspect qu'ils ont choisi — renoncer délibérément à toutes les ressources photogéniques et psychologiques d'une paire d'yeux perçants ou dominateurs, tapis sous un front génial — me semble témoigner sûrement de la simplicité et de la candeur, qui font le charme poétique de la vision d'Alberto Cavalcanti, émule cinégraphique de Delaunay, Dufy ou surtout d'Utrillo.

Il a tout ce qu'il faut pour « dominer » un sujet. Prise de vue, photographie, choix et utilisation du décor prouvent sa maîtrise. Mais sur l'écran, où passent *Rien que les Heures*, *En Rade*, *La p'tite Lilie*, le spectateur croit trouver ni êtres maîtrisés pour jouer un rôle, ni paysages contraints à servir de décor. Tout reste spontané, vivant d'une vie que le metteur en scène n'a pas falsifiée ni créée — qu'il s'est borné à surprendre hors de lui et en lui.

D'autres films, des américains par exemple, provoquent une vibration, une émotion, qui vous emportent sur l'écran. Ici l'émotion vient à vous, reste en vous, et vous obsède.

C'est qu'elle est née dans une conscience d'homme, celle de Cavalcanti, et que, malgré les apparences, malgré ce jet lumineux qui traverse l'espace, elle n'en est pas sortie. Ni dans *Rien que les Heures*, ni dans *En Rade*, ni dans *La p'tite Lilie*, des personnages bavards ne racontent leurs histoires : l'anecdote en est bannie, ou presque. Au moins, elle n'est qu'un prétexte. La vieille femme de *Rien que les Heures*, dont chaque pas titubant secoue la tête émêchée, vous ne pouvez savoir si c'est le vin, la fatigue qui la fait trébucher, ou la vieillesse. L'intrigue d'amour de *En Rade*, coupée d'appels du large et des rumeurs du port, peu importe comment elle finit : l'essentiel est que les premiers mots du flirt soient épelés sur les toiles d'emballage de marchandises lointaines.

Nous savons que, malgré le poignard planté dans son dos, la p'tite Lilie ne meurt que dans la sentimentalité naïve d'une chanson, et par l'écho qu'elle trouve dans l'âme de Cavalcanti. Les personnages de ces films, petite servante, idiot, fille des rues, marin américain, marchande de journaux, sergent de ville, ne sont que des êtres conventionnels, prétextes à haine, à pitié ou à amour.

De temps en temps un bref sous-titre, un mot réintroduit dans la symphonie d'images de *Rien que les Heures* un élément intellectuel, un embryon d'explication. Il semble alors, par ces quelques syllabes, que Cavalcanti s'excuse de sa distraction : il ne songeait plus à s'enquérir de l'état-civil de ses personnages, à sérier leurs occupations, à situer leur action dans le temps ou l'espace : il lui suffisait de les voir s'agiter et vivre autour de lui, comme vivent et s'agitent autour de nous, des

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hommes qui ne nous ont pas été présentés, et dont nous savons seulement qu'ils nous causent joie ou gêne. Mais Cavalcanti se souvient soudain de l'annonce du film « Alberto Cavalcanti PRÉSENTE... » Les formules habituelles, les rapports coutumiers lui font défaut : il ne peut plus que nous dire ou nous suggérer « Ceci m'angoisse. Ceci m'émeut. La vue du ciel est pour moi un repos... » S'il voulait être tout à fait précis et exact, nous ne lirions pas en tête de ses films « Alberto Cavalcanti présente En Rade », mais « En Rade présente Alberto Cavalcanti ».

Son œuvre est avant tout lyrique : il est surprenant qu'un art aussi attaché à l'objet et à la forme devienne, sans truquage ni déformation, aussi personnel et humain.

Jusqu'à présent, dans ces trois œuvres, le film n'avait d'autre rythme que celui qu'il lui imposait, d'autres leitmotifs que ceux de son émotion. Dans un sujet qu'il avait conçu pour exprimer ses sentiments, comme *Rien que les Heures* ou *En Rade* — ou dans un thème aussi malléable que celui de la chanson populaire, sur quoi est construit *La p'tite Lilie*, nulle résistance n'était à craindre. Voici maintenant que plus conquérant et agressif, Cavalcanti aborde avec *Yvette* et d'autres films projetés, des sujets extérieurs, nés dans d'autres imaginations. Il lui faudra maintenant tenir compte de l'anecdote, et de l'état-civil, et de la vraisemblance. Sur l'écran, limite lumineuse, des êtres s'agiteront qui ne seront plus des reflets seulement : doués d'une vie et d'une épaisseur propres, ils demanderont à être convaincus et modelés. Cavalcanti, qui se contentait jusqu'à présent, de son for inté-

rieur, part à la conquête du monde. Il va jouer la partie que jouent les créateurs : dans la souffrance et dans l'effort, il doit parvenir à imposer à ce monde étranger, qui le limite comme il nous limite et nous refroidit tous, la forme d'art conçue et voulue dans la chaleur intime de son être.

ROBERT ARON.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

IV

A THOUSAND PITIES

It was the winter's strangest happiness, coming into mind with autumn's first dead leaves and forgotten only at the budding of the new green. Its great day brought together by magic a concourse of people to sit in wedding garments at the gate of heaven, blithely chattering until the golden air became moonlight and a breathless waiting for the swish of curtains gliding open upon heaven itself. Sometimes puzzling but always heaven and its inhabitants celestial ; save at those moments when one of the blessed, turning from his blissful mystery, came down to the footlights and sang at us, incomprehensible songs that quenched the

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light and brought strange sad echoes such as we knew on earth. Heaven recovered when the celestial being went back into his place, and was lived in until the end, incalculably far away. And after the end there was a fresh beginning, a short scene made of swift and dreadful moments, charm and mystery and shock, just outside heaven's closed gates. A little troop of beings, half-earthly, born of the earlier scenes, romped close at hand in a confined space before a facade of earthly houses. Harlequin, lightly leaping, snaky, electric, sweetly-twirling Columbine, lolloping Pantaloon with sad, frightened mouth. Swish-whack. Shocks unfortellable. Bangs of exploding fleas. Ceaseless speechless movement, swift leaping, whirling, staggering, light and heavy together making strange shapes in the diminished light until the immortals vanished and we were down on solid earth with the largefooted policeman, the nursemaid and perambulator and infant, funny and dreadful on a scene where the power of the vanished immortals still worked and brought us joyous moments : the moment of the falling of a house-front, the squashing and the sight, a moment later, of the squashed, flat upon the centre of the stage.

We knew that everything happening after the immortals had vanished was out of place and if the mortals in their foolishness had been all that we saw, the scenes, no matter how short, meaning nothing, would have brought weariness. But we gazed without weariness because we saw somewhere within the stilted speechless pasteboard movements something of the glory that had passed. Our eyes were still full of the

last scene in heaven from which the lively celestials who came down to dance in the street had been created, the opening of the heaven of heavens in the Transformation Scene where everything and everyone had assembled in a single expanded shape, shimmering, flower-like, that slowly moved in changing form and colour, stretching out attention to the uttermost lest some lovely thing be missed. It foretold the end of beauty but was itself endlessly beautiful, holding us to its eternity by its soundlessness. If any part of it had broken into sound, its link with us would have been snapped, its spell broken. Of its moving stillness and our own that it compelled was born something new, a movement of our own small selves. Only because in its continual movement it was silent did it reach the whole small self. It demanded less than the rest of the performance and much more. Taking part in that we had been everything by turns, keyed up to the limit of our green faculties, living rapidly, thinking thoughts, going beyond ourselves, moving now here now there, loving and hating, laughing, shrieking aloud at need. But the appeal of the Transformation Scene was not to single faculties in turn but to all at once, to the whole small spirit gathered at home in itself. Stilled stage, stilled music gave the surrounding conditions.

So with the film, whose essential character is pantomime, that primarily, and anything and everything else incidentally. But primarily pantomime. Vocal sound, always a barrier to intimacy, is destructive of the balance between what is seen and the silently perceiving, co-operating onlooker. It is

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no accident that the most striking and most popular film success to date is that of a mime. This man was the first to grasp the essential quality of the medium, to see what to do and what to avoid to reach the maximum of collaboration with the onlookers. His technique admits sound, but only of things and that sparingly. Himself and his assistants dispense as far as possible with the appearance of speech. The language of his films is universal. And though the worldwide success of this d'Artagnan of the gutters rests partly upon shameless gaminerie, perpetually defying even the most dignified slings and arrows of outrageous fortune with perpetual custard pie, its securest prop is his unerring art. His use of the film as a medium. Wealth of imaginative invention is held together by simplicity of design, the fullest use is made of the thoughtlike swiftness of movement made possible by the film. His small grotesque figure, whether going with incredible swiftness through its clever, absurd evolutions, or a motionless mask of ever-varying expressiveness, or geometrically in flight down a long vista, was the first to exploit these possibilities. Rudimentary in material, his work is sound in foundation and structure, an advance sample of what the film, as film, can do.

Poetry, epigram, metaphor, chit-chat social, philosophic or scientific are the reactions and afterthought of spiritual experience, are for the stage. And even upon the stage the actual drama moves silently, speech merely noting its movement. The "great dramatic moments" are speechless. The film at its best is all dramatic moment. The film is a spirit and

they that worship it must worship it in spirit and in truth. Like the garish Transformation Scene and the debased Harlequinade of the old-fashioned pantomime, the only parts remaining true pantomime, its demands are direct and immediate, at once much more and much less than those of the vocal stage-play. And its preliminary demand is for concentration. Given favourable surrounding conditions for concentration, the film's powers of making contacts are, so long as it remains consistent with itself, a hundred to the one of the theatre : the powerful actor, the stage play's single point of contact with the "audience", with those who are indeed, though not hearers only, throughout the course of the collaboration largely concentrated on listening.

The sounds that have so far been added to the film, of falling rain, buzz and hoot of motors, roll of thunder, pistol-shots and bombs, are sometimes relatively harmless. And if they were an indication of experiment, suggesting that sound is to be tested and used with discrimination, their presence might cease to be disturbing. But they are being introduced not in any spirit of experiment or with any promise of discrimination. They are there because they are easy to produce. More sound is promised as soon as the technical difficulties shall be overcome. The bombs are fore-runners, evidence of a blind move in a wrong direction, in the direction of the destruction of the essential character of the screen-play.

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON.

LÈTTRE DE PARIS

LE STUDIO DU VIEUX COLOMBIER

Paris l'été ; le Cinéma du Vieux-Colombier a fermé ses portes au public. Mais le rideau de fer est à moitié levé : de la rue on peut voir un châssis de camion sur lequel un moteur ronfle. A la place de la caissière, un électricien en cote bleue surveille une dynamo. La petite salle, qui a connu tant d'efforts nouveaux, est encore une fois transformée, pendant les vacances : échafaudages qui enjambent les travées, fils électriques, appareil haut perché sur ses longues jambes comme une araignée au milieu de sa toile. C'est le studio créé par M. Jean Tédesco et M. Jean Renoir.

Directeur du Cinéma du Vieux-Colombier, Jean Tédesco est, en France, l'un des hommes qui ont été le plus utile à la cause du cinéma. Grâce à lui nous avons pu voir à Paris des films qui, par leurs qualités exceptionnelles, avaient rebuté les marchands : documentaires, films scientifiques, cinéma pur. Par son effort, par la qualité des programmes qu'il a présentés depuis trois ans, il a conquis au cinéma, il a rendu curieux de l'avenir et des possibilités du cinéma, toute une élite intellectuelle qui avait été amenée à considérer l'écran comme « la plus grande entreprise d'abrutissement public ».

Jean Renoir est un de nos meilleurs, un de nos vrais metteurs en scène. Il a débuté en 1924 par la *Fille de l'eau* et a donné du premier coup les preuves d'une grande sûreté dans la direction du jeu, d'une science, d'une ingéniosité technique remarquables. Ce film caractérisait bien, je crois, l'orientation des recherches de Jean Renoir, qui ne cherche pas à faire du film « d'avant-garde » mais veut faire, pour le public, de bons films dans lesquels il soit possible de mettre en œuvre, en vue d'un effet déterminé, les trouvailles faites au cours des essais, des travaux de laboratoire que le public n'a pas plus à connaître que la recette des plats qu'on lui sert. Les films de Jean Renoir furent ensuite : *Nana* (1925), tiré du roman d'E. Zola, film qui fit la célébrité de Catherine Hessling. (Pourquoi la censure anglaise a-t-elle interdit ce film, que la Film-society va cependant montrer dans une de ses prochaines séances.) Puis *Marquita* (1926).

De plus en plus les metteurs en scène, et Jean Renoir en particulier, se rendent compte qu'il est difficile de faire des œuvres de valeur avec les méthodes de travail actuelles. La faute en est principalement aux studios. Je ne veux pas parler ici de leur équipement, qui cependant laisse souvent à désirer, mais de la façon dont on se sert des studios, de la façon dont les contrats de location sont faits. Les studios coûtent cher. Trop cher pour ce qu'ils sont. Les producteurs préfèrent dépenser leurs capitaux en somptueux décors, en costumes, en reconstitutions ruineuses, plutôt que de louer le studio pour trois semaines de plus. C'est la formule des « super-productions » dans lesquelles deux ou trois clous per-

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mettent une facile publicité, et qui doivent faire avaler au spectateur deux heures d'immonde ennui. C'est en réaction contre cette formule (qui même au point de vue commercial est souvent mauvaise : il n'est pas rare que ces « supers » coûtent plus cher qu'ils ne rapportent) que Jean Tédesco et Jean Renoir ont conçu et réalisé le studio du Vieux-Colombier.

Il n'est ni très vaste, ni très commode, mais du moins il est à eux. En plus d'un grand local vitré, l'ancienne scène du théâtre a été aménagée de façon à ce qu'on puisse tourner pendant la journée, et que le soir, l'écran baissé, la représentation puisse avoir lieu comme auparavant. Ils peuvent y travailler à loisir, loin du bruit, de l'agitation. Ils ont conquis le facteur qui manque presque toujours aux réalisateurs : le temps. Ici pas d'importuns, pas d'indiscrets, pas de figurants désœuvrés qui viennent des plateaux voisins. Deux ou trois machinistes expérimentés, des collaborateurs [techniques, et l'opérateur : M. Bachelet. L'équipement du studio a été installé d'après les indications de Jean Renoir, selon les méthodes nouvelles employées en Amérique à l'Eastman Theatre et aux studios de Long Island City. En plus des projecteurs ordinaires, la lumière est fournie pas des groupes de lampes à filaments incandescents, survoltées. Elles permettent d'utiliser toutes les radiations vertes, jaunes et rouges auxquelles est sensible la pellicule panchromatique. (C'est le seul studio à Paris ayant ce genre de lampes.) L'usage de la pellicule panchromatique permet aux acteurs de se passer de maquillage.

Jean Renoir a commencé la réalisation du scénario qu'il a

tiré du conte d'Andersen : *La Petite Fille aux Allumettes*. Un des principaux avantages que Jean Renoir a trouvé à ce nouveau studio, c'est la possibilité de ne pas faire à l'avance un découpage strict et immuable. Une très large part est laissée à l'improvisation, à l'inspiration du moment, et chacune des parties peut être tournée dans l'ordre des scènes.

Lorsque *La Petite Fille aux Allumettes* sera terminée, Jean Tédesco et Jean Renoir pensent pouvoir faire des combinaisons avec les jeunes metteurs en scène qui leur inspireront confiance, pour les aider à réaliser des films, qu'ils ne pourraient entreprendre sans cette aide, faute des capitaux nécessaires à la location des grands studios. Ce sera vraiment le laboratoire d'où sortiront les œuvres nouvelles et originales qui forceront à réfléchir les grands producteurs de « films commerciaux ».

MARC ALLÉGRET.

* * *

De Belgique, M. G. Roanne, signale dans « Le Peuple » un film que vient de réaliser un jeune belge M. Ch. Dekeukeleire sous le titre *Combat de Boxe*. C'est un petit poème cinématographique sur la boxe. Le film est bref comme il convient. Il ne dure guère que dix minutes. Deux motifs conducteurs : le poing, la foule... Par images ramassées, sans aucune mise en scène, en aliénant tout ce qui frôlerait l'anecdote, M. De-

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keukeleire a traduit la poésie du ring... Malgré ses imperfections (manque de souplesse dans l'éclairage surtout) son film sorte de « haï-kaï » plein de saveur, est une expérience fort instructive. Dépourvu des moyens matériels les plus élémentaires, son auteur n'en a pas moins appliqué ses théories personnelles sur le découpage, et le rythme qu'il a obtenu émeut, bon gré malgré, le spectateur.

THE MANCHESTER FILM SOCIETY

Last April a dozen of us gathered together and formed the Manchester Film Society. Since then our membership has grown and all our members are people who are seriously interested in the technical and artistic development of the cinema.

Although we appreciate the obvious value of discussions and private shows of little seen films our main object is practical experiment. How many people go to the cinema and, knowing nothing of the difficulties of practical production, come home and pull to pieces or exalt to the skies the films they have seen? We feel that unless amateur film production on a large scale comes to stay the cinema will never get an intelligently critical public.

At present the cinema suffers from a mass of ill informed destructive criticism from people who either have no knowledge of films at all or a half baked theoretical knowledge gained from text books. One of the main principles of the Manchester Film Society is that "an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory".

Acting on this our first move was to start work on a short film. Funds would only allow us to make a one reel picture — and a short reel at that. We wanted to tackle something that the commercial cinema has not and would not undertake. At the same time we wanted a subject which would possess some intrinsic merits.

We finally decided to film a local legend. We found that around Manchester there is a mass of folk lore and legend. Its appeal is too limited to make it attractive from a commercial standpoint so that no professional is likely to touch it. When we decided to film Lancashire and Cheshire folk lore we did so because we felt that we were filling a gap in the film world.

Another of our beliefs is that the cameraman and the art director should be one and the same person. It is the work of an artist to compose the picture, to balance the lights and shadows and to design the costumes so that they fit the backgrounds. Surely each frame on the film should be a masterpiece of design in tones of gray and who but one trained to think in lines and masses, one used to converting colour into tones of black and white, trained to see beauty as it will appear when caught by the camera, knows instinctively the angle

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from which the grouping will look best. Who but an artist is qualified to take the picture ?

The technical knowledge required for working the camera and developing the negative can be acquired by study, but an artist is born.

And so it happens that our photographer, Miss Ruth Tonge, is also our Art Director. Her costume designs for this film are reminiscent of the 13th century. They are not however strictly correct as the film is a fairy tale of no set period. The costumes fit in with the backgrounds and the atmosphere of the story and what more could one want. The actual making of the costumes was carried out by members of the Society, in many cases by the players themselves.

Our picture was directed by Peter A. Le Neve Foster, who also wrote the scenario. Here again a point is raised. Should a director write his own continuity or should he take someone else's and produce it as he thinks it ought to be ? In our first film "The Wizard of Alderley Edge" Mr. Le Neve Foster has taken the barest thread of an old legend, woven a tale about it and brought his own thoughts to life in terms of moving pictures.

The scene of our film is Alderley Edge a village 15 miles from Manchester, to which thousands flock every summer from the three counties of Cheshire, Lancashire and Yorkshire. Everyone has heard of the "Wizard" and the Wishing Well, but beyond the fact that Merlin, of the Arthurian legends, is supposed to haunt Alderley Edge (an outcrop of the Pennines) little seems to be known about the "Wizard".

We built our tale around Merlin who though he was so much feared was at heart a kindly soul.

Of course we met numerous practical difficulties. Our biggest one was that of transporting our company from Manchester to our location 15 miles out of town. All the scenes were taken with natural lighting as there is no studio conveniently near Manchester and even if there had been, there is a great deal to be said in favour of sunlight —provided one can wait for the weather. Then all our members are business people in Manchester and we can only snatch a few precious hours each Saturday afternoon and Sunday in which to take films. This will perhaps explain why it took from May till the middle of August to make a one reel picture.

Our film is now finished. It has its faults and its good points. Considering that only two of our members had any appreciable technical knowledge when we started, that we only spent about £20 and that the summer has been one of the worst on record, it is not surprising that we have made a mess of some of the scenes.

But, whatever, the mistakes we have made in this film, we do ask readers of Close Up to realize that our efforts at film production are sincere. Next year we shall try again backed by the experience gained in this year's work.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

RUSSIA AND HEALTH PROPAGANDA

Some very interesting experimental films of a purely clinical nature have been shown in Russia by the Narkomzdrav (The Peoples' Commissar of Health). All or most of these dealing with very intimate matters are freely shown to the general public, and have been highly successful. Sex instruction is given in complete detail, for the young and for married people. In addition to films explaining birth and the dangers of irregular abortion, the Voronoff and Steinach "Rejuvenation" operation is illustrated, as well as "Conditioned Reflexes" concerning the work of the Pavlov laboratories. In spite of the purely scientific nature of these films one cannot imagine them being shown in England or America even privately, and yet there is no doubt that in this the Narkomzdrav has alighted on an extraordinarily valuable method of hygienic instruction. Statistics show that under the Narkomzdrav the infant mortality rate which was higher in Russia than in any other European country, has diminished from 25 per cent to between 12 and 13 per cent, and that the death rate is now below that of 1913.

* * *

Certainly there are infinite possibilities in connection with health and sex instruction for schools that the film could adequately deal with. *Knowledge is power* we have heard over and over again, and yet the average attitude is to prohibit knowledge concerning the most vital factor in life. It is a pity because so many people grow up abysmally ignorant and make havoc of their lives, and we can no longer deny that hygiene and sex knowledge should be taught thoroughly and as a matter of course with film and text book from earliest infancy. Otherwise health must always remain a matter of hoping for the best, on the dangers of which it is unnecessary to elaborate.

BOYCOTT ON ANTI-GERMAN FILMS

The German Cinema Proprietors' Association has decided to boycott all films produced or distributed in foreign countries in which there is a definite anti-German feeling. This comes into operation immediately, and such films as are already contracted for are to be suspended until satisfactory assurance is obtained that all anti-German films are withdrawn. It is ordered that no films are to be taken from the German-American distributors named "Parafumet" in which are combined Paramount, UFA and Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, until such evidence is produced. This is in view of the fact that

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Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer are stated to be showing a rather harmful anti-German film after having given assurance to the contrary. This in conjunction with the decision of Denmark to prohibit War films of every description begins a definite movement toward the passing of the War film from our midst. It does seem rather infelicitous that of the fifty odd films Britain is to make this year, about sixteen are of this order. But let us hope their tendency will be anti-war, in which case they may have some success abroad.

A COMPULSORY FILM IN HUNGARY

In addition to health films in Russia, the Hungarian Ministry of Public Welfare is issuing a film which is to be compulsorily shown in every picture theatre in Hungary. This deals with the problem of tuberculosis, the percentage of which is alarmingly high there, roughly seventy persons dying daily out of a population of some eight to nine millions. A competition was organised, whereby the best possible story could be obtained, and one was chosen with a happy ending encouraging people not to have fear of being treated in hospitals, and not to delay seeking medical aid at once. It is needless to comment on the wisdom of such a move on the part of the Ministry. More and more people are beginning to see the tremendous part films can play in an instructional way. And the making of instructional films dealing with such critical matters compulsory is highly to be commended.

THE WEST INDIES

Americans have bought over entire control of the cinema industry in the West Indies. Formerly this was in the hands of the Colonial Film Exchange, a Trinidad company, with theatres in British Guiana, Barbados and Port-of-Spain, and a monopoly of distribution to all the smaller theatres throughout the islands and colonies. A representative of the Colonial Film Exchange has been in New-York to negotiate the sale, and it is understood that the American syndicate will, in addition to taking over the entire industry as it now is, build large cinema theatres in Bermuda, Demerara, Caracas, etc. It is possible that in Trinidad a quota law will operate in favour of British films, which otherwise will stand little chance of entry. German films, however, through various connections with America are likely to be shown.

INDIA AND GOVERNMENT CONTROL OF CINEMAS

The question of Censorship has arisen anew in India in an official motion which is to be submitted to the Legislative Session at Simla. It is said that this is due to the earnest wishes of the English public. Whatever its cause the fact is that until recently the Government would take no part in any movement for control, saying that it was a subject with which they could not suitably concern themselves. But

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now, while hoping for the best one not altogether unnaturally fears the worst. The chief reasons for complaint seem to be that European civilization does not appear to advantage in films exhibited there. There are two sides to such a statement. While on the one hand European (or pseudo-European via America) civilization very often does not appear to advantage, and might easily do very great harm to European prestige, on the other hand if European civilization is to be presented only in such a way as to impress Indian native populations with the good conduct of Europeans, the only thing that can come of it will be tiresome propagandistic boostings-up of a very debatable regime. The evils either way might easily be avoided if the control were in the hands of cultured and discerning committees made up of statesmen, artists and business men, who could arrive at a satisfactory result through debate. Hasty and intemperate censorship is a great evil, and no censorship at all is infinitely better. Too much care and intelligence cannot possibly be applied in this highly difficult and intricate measure. But censorship will very likely mean, as it so often does, that much that is bad and base and illiterate will remain (let us quote again Nell Gwynn) and much that is true and to the point perish dismally.

If any good is to be done all censorship must be *impartial*, and the censorship department in no way linked up with patriotism or questions of industry. The objection of the natives that the type of film so frequently seen undermines the morals of the race is, as long as India remains under our charge,

a much more important point to be looked into. It is true that this is probably not so, although it is known that many Western every-day customs are libertinism in the eyes of the Indian. The problem of India is not the particular problem of CLOSE UP, but if any harm is done it is probably through the pernicious trade stranglehold of group bookings, that is of forcing exhibitors to take several bad films with each good one. The immediate plan of the Government is to appoint a research committee to investigate conditions and report on the best lines for future development. We would suggest that the committee works not toward constriction of conditions but toward broadening them, so that the somewhat ludicrous situation of certain European customs (such as kissing) being immoral to Indians, and certain Indian customs being immoral to Europeans should gradually break down before a mutual inter-racial recognition with its consequent expansion of outlook.

POINTS FROM LETTERS

America puts us in our place.

Your interesting magazine arrived safely. But oh, the contents somewhat puzzle me. You are all so very full of complaints. I hope you don't mind my bluntness. Perhaps you have cause but over here we see beautiful and wonderful pictures. I can understand the foreign attitude tho

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because America goes ahead —makes mistakes but like the Phoenix, overcomes, and we are so glutted with them that we discount the bad ones. But may I contradict you about Garbo's eyelashes? It comes straight from Hollywood that they are her own. She doesn't have to "sew" them on. When that is done however it is a tiny fringe which is glued on. Her thick eyelashes are her very own from authoritative accounts as also her accent and her throwing down of Jack Gilbert. I have not seen her as yet. And —*really*— we do not eat peanuts in the movies over here. Why all our movie theatres are so gorgeous we couldn't bring ourselves to commit such gaucherie. The industry has made it possible for the smallest towns to have quite elegant houses—beautifully ornamented, maids in the retiring rooms, huge organs and orchestras. "You'd be surprised" (latest slang). Here in Tenaflly our theatre has Brussels carpets, artistic lights, an organ on which the player can imitate almost everything, even a conversation between a duck and Felix the Cat for the children. And Don Juan with the Vitaphone playing the Don Juan symphony, timed so that the bells that ring crazily at the Borgia's drunken wedding festivities sound just at the right time with the picture. I saw Pola Negri lately in *Hotel Imperial* solely for the purpose of seeing James Hall of whom I am at present enamoured. It is a shame you cannot see our pictures of Bebe Daniels and Bessie Love and our comedies. About Barrymore in *The Beloved Vagabond*, it was not my idea of him but very good. Resurrection is now playing with Dolores del Rio, a new Mexican beauty who can act too.

But. . . . I want to give you all the encouragement I can in your venture and that is why I criticise. I must send you a few magazines as the tone of your paper is a *leetle* behind the times in many things. For instance Griffith is not producing much now, and we can see pictures that were shown 10-12-15 years ago because doubtless of the largeness of the U. S. which keeps them in circulation longer. Perhaps I have erred in criticizing your pioneer magazine as I do not know conditions abroad. As time goes on perhaps I shall arrive at the motive. (MRS. VIOLA JORDAN, Tenafly, N. Y.)

A reply to J. A. Hardy of Folkestone.

Your correspondant states that a form of entertainment which appeals to the taste of the masses can never become an art. If I may say so prejudice alone can have induced such a remark, certainly not logic. Don't the "masses" like cheap paintings, cheap illustrations in magazines and books, cheap music, cheap music hall turns, yet does this in any way mean that there cannot be good paintings, good illustrations, good music, good plays? Just as you would not judge contemporary art by the masses of badly framed lithographs in art dealers' windows, so you do not judge screen art by mass production either. And what (I would like to know) has cost of production got to do with the quality of any work of art, be it in sculpture, painting, poetry or music? The mere fact

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that Rima or Sun Flowers cost little to create has its interest merely on the statistical side and in no way concerns art. Flowers grow for nothing, or they don't. But they are always flowers whether they be wild clover or green orchids. Or sunflowers, unless they are by Van Gogh !

I too read Miss Dorothy Richardson's article on musical accompaniment, and I enjoyed it, but apart from the fact that its value was in that it was a charming and harmonious piece of literature and not a final pronouncement on the necessity for music, it seems to me that the higher the art the more comprehensive it is, I mean that an ultimate art might embrace and unify all arts. Music may not be necessary to films, very often they would be improved without it, but where it *is* right, my own opinion is that music and the film together create an art that is a complete unity, and with tremendous power. The matter of recruiting other arts doesn't matter at all, since all arts are merely different ways of saying the same thing.

The film is *not* merely a mechanical reproduction of the art of design assisted by histrionic ability or backed up by sound. The film is a pure plastic medium capable of expressing any amount of the finest subtleties of form, movement as well as the more psychic processes of thought and mind and states of mind, emotion and psychology. In my opinion CLOSE UP is working on entirely the right lines, and I would like to thank the Editor and all his contributors for their very gallant efforts in a good cause. (MISS MARION FITZ-SIMONDS, LONDON, S. W.)

Film art has steadily declined.

I am glad to think that I am one of the thirty per cent, at any rate, referred to in the Editorial as I am exceedingly interested in cinematography, —much to the scorn of my more highbrow friends, —and its possibilities. I must confess, however, that the art of the cinema [seems to have steadily declined —apart from technique— ever since its birth. Formerly every programme used to contain one educational film, —either a travel film or the manufacture of some such commodity as cotton ; or animal life. And this seems to have been now reduced to a mere Topical Budget. As a matter of fact such films as the Capt. Scott pictures, or the Golden Eagle one, seem to attract crowds and hold them for many weeks, whereas the sensational dramas rarely last for more than a week or two. (MISS GLADYS TODD, FINCHLEY.)

FILMS OF THE MONTH

Chang.

See it a dozen times. *Chang* is the film of the year, of the age. You probably know enough about it to know what it is about. Taken by Ernest B. Shoedsack and Merian C. Cooper, who will be remembered for their previous film *Grass*, it is a record of two years spent in the jungles of Northern Siam. *Chang* has been most successfully moulded into

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story form, and works up to a tremendous climax such as we have never seen before and may not see again. The effect of this is made more magnificent and awe-inspiring by the use of the enlarged screen, which suddenly flashes on three times larger than the normal size, and by the use of Vitaphonic record of animal noises.

Chang opens showing us the home of Kru, a Lao tribesman, built beyond the village alone in a jungle clearing. We are introduced to his wife on a treadle that crushes rice, and to that exquisite, incredible fragment known as "O very small daughter". We meet her brother, we meet Bimbo seated on a fallen tree, an immaculate superhuman ape ; a beautiful ghost of an ape, with even lovelier habits. We see the day drawing to its close, we see the animals being shut up for the night, for subtitles have given us only too ample warning of the dangers of the jungle. We see Kru going last of his family and his flocks up the ladder to his home, drawing up the ladder after him, shutting the ladder behind the tall gate that shuts off the home.

Shortly then the jungle wakes, and from this moment until the end action is maintained with breath-taking swiftness. Some of the photographs were astounding, and when one realises the hours or days or weeks of waiting that must have gone to secure some of the close-ups of jungle beasts, and thinks of the thousands of feet of film that must have been sacrificed for the sake of perhaps no more than ten feet, one begins to get a perspective of the wonderful achievement these two intrepid travellers have made.

The continuity was excellent. There was not a moment that lagged. One was made to be aware of the whole jungle, not of mere episodes from the jungle. This was done most cleverly by parenthetical insertions of different beasts engaged in some different quest. The monkeys always swinging and chattering through tree tops, ever watchful, interested, wary, hanging high over a trap that presently snaps over that lithe and deadly leopard, and the two Malayan sunbears, mother and child are not likely to be forgotten by anyone who has seen them. And that moment when the curtains roll back, and suddenly the whole end of the theatre is one seething mass of stampeding elephants and destruction, is the answer of cinematography to those who profess to despise it.

Frankly the sub-titles, written by Achmed Abdulla, were bad. "Strong is the Jungle" "Ever the Jungle rose in its wrath" were most unworthy, although now and again he hit upon a sharp and poignant phrase. Beyond that the only fault one can find, without being pompous is that it was not longer. Honour to its makers !

Out of the Mist.

Another German achievement. A story of life in a German mountain village, with Mady Christians of *Waltz Dream* fame and Werner Fuetterer whom we have watched improving and advancing for some time. To appreciate it really one

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should have been oneself in German mountain villages, for in every detail it is built up on the subtleties of mountain life, knowing which, one saw the whole time how exactly it was a picture of authentic conditions and local colour and local types. And I wonder how many of those unfamiliar with the peculiar kind of sweetness one meets in rural Germany would have got the sweetness and delicacy of the moment when a butterfly wavering in a baker's kitchen wakes wanderlust in the three strolling musicians (since settled here) who ecstatically watch it ; and the cry going about "It is Spring". We knew too Spring had come to the hills, we knew what it felt like, we had seen and felt joy just this way with first butterflies and first flowers and wanderlust.

The beginning was in Winter, wind all the time outdoors scouring over the hills, tossing bare branches, shaking the lamp over the inn door where Mady Christians, hair wildly blowing, stands awaiting the return, (Prodigal Son fashion) of the son who has been in 'large cities'. The excitement indoors, the banquet, and the thickening of winter night to thick fog, from which emerge the strolling players, famished and exhausted, among them the fainting, graceful boy who is to start a grim and ruthless situation, was a triumph of direction and photography. The working out of the situation, the combination of gentleness and harshness was a delicately balanced and highly sensitive work of artistic creation. All the types and the 'sets' were right with that rightness of detail which seems to be so inseparably a part of the German mind. The mother, hard, determined, yet swaying beneath constant

blows : "A curse seems to be upon this house," she cries at last, and goes relentlessly on with her relentless planning. Her son, swashbuckling, harsh without his mother's courage or hardness, the Mayor, a plain little good man sweet with love, the servant, the musicians, the father, were exactly what they would somehow be in such a place. And Fuetterer as the boy gave an excellent performance. He was graceful, frail and had beauty, and was refreshingly antidotal to the formularised hero whose qualification seems to be pink cheeks, robustness and some absence of brain.

I do not know whether I quite liked the reconciliation through the Spring flood, but I also did not quite dislike it. However, one can find little to criticise, and the Spring flood, in itself was only too accurate. Most people have had some experience with swollen mountain torrents, and here in Montreux recently we had trees floating down the main streets, and men removing giant boulders from the highways.

Out of the Mist is a Defa production.

The Wizard of Alderly Edge.

On the 15th September the Manchester Film Society held a private show of their first film *The Wizard of Alderly Edge*. With the exception of the dark room work the film has been produced entirely by amateurs. The scenario is based on a local legend—Alderley Edge is a well known Cheshire beauty spot—and the picture is consequently a costume film.

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That amateurs should attempt a period picture is in itself pretty ambitious, apart from the fact that every costume was designed and made by members of the Society as well. As a matter of fact the dressing of the production turned out to be one of the best points about it.

The photography did not set out to establish any new standards. It was intended to be straight, clear camera work and certainly succeeded. The backgrounds were well chosen and the lighting effects, all of which were natural, helped very much in producing the fairy tale atmosphere required by the script.

The acting was excellent, though a little uneven. The make-ups were uniformly good and it is no easy matter for inexperienced artists to put on wigs and crepe hair well enough to deceive the camera.

The whole film has succeeded in capturing the atmosphere of a fairy tale, but it would perhaps have been improved by a greater variation in the distances of the camera from the players. The picture is about 800 feet and was made, including stock costumes and properties, for about £25.

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We have the pleasure to announce
for the December issue of Close Up,
an interesting article on the cinema
by MR. ARNOLD BENNETT

Additionally, there will be a full
history of the conditions governing
the making of German films, and
much interesting information from
within, including an interview with
Herr Fritz Lang, producer of *the*
Nibelungs and *Metropolis*.

C L O S E U P

No 5

November 1927

A S I S

BY THE EDITOR

Not so long ago I found myself at The New Gallery Theatre in London at the very give-away hour of eleven A. M. somewhat vaguely ready to give, for the first time, serious consideration to a new variety of Phonofilm and Vitaphone, called Movietone.

Noises with films have long been one of those matters we have felt hanging over us, like an incipient cold in the head or some other vague threat ; everybody knew that sooner or later radio would somehow link up with films, but few gave it any thought, any more than normally one thinks about dying. My own few serious contemplations of it gave the two alternatives that in its right place reproduction of sound would have value, but used generally, be wrong. "Noises off" in the orchestra had given no reassurance that they would be done ever other than badly, thunder barrels, aeroplane noises (I have an old projector in Switzerland which

I was saving to use as imitation of aeroplane engines-preferably six !) pops and bangs, door bells ringing, likewise telephones, very much out of tempo, trains starting, doors slamming ; all were most nonchalantly and haphazardly scattered through the musical scores, like things escaped or at random, though I always suspected that the man that made them must have had a lovely life !

True they had nothing to do with radio, but they were preparing the way, trains, cannons, bells, bullets would be the end of it, more or less, as well as the beginning, but on time by way of change. I did think too that if they started introducing the voice the only thing to do would be to leave the movies, (like Grandfather's Clock) "never to go again" ! Somehow Lilian Gish, let us say, being *La Bohème* through a loud speaker would have been so exaggeratedly worse than its worst sub-titles.

Thus, vaguely panicky, vaguely open-minded, very much on the scent and vaguely do-or-die-ish, we hastened to hear the worst.

1. Overture. Dismissed without comment. Very loud-speakerish.

2. Colonel Lindberg's departure for Paris and reception in Washington. Awfully good aeroplane noises, and something in the nature of a real shock. For a moment amazingly convincing. Then faint cheering, and voices, and simply a moment of the mind refocussing and questioning, what's all this irrelevant noise ? Two separate things were going on. The attention broke between them both. Then came the

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Washington Reception. A brass band, cheers, speeches, cheers. Again the more abstract sound of cheering became convincing and exhilarating. But the speeches..... My feeling is that this has much to be said for it, because I am certain that nearly the whole public would say that the Lindberg reception in film and transmission of speeches etc., and similar records of historic or topical interest, are of immense value and immense interest, and I am certain they will be popular. But I must say that the figure on the screen and the voice that was going on with it, just were unrelated. A voice was going on, very clearly, very interesting.... "That's Colonel Lindberg speaking"... "Those words are what he is saying"... no, give it up, you do not get the illusion of reality at all. Suddenly it's only *photographs*. That's what I felt. Talking it over there were many that disagreed. Some said the only reality they got from it was in the Washington reception. I think, however, all were agreed that the Raquel Meller presentation singing Spanish songs did only one thing : it focussed an unnatural attention upon her lips, and in all the somewhat elaborate settings of her two songs the whole audience, I am sure, was intent only on watching her mouth. There wasn't a vestige of reality. In the first place the sub-operative effect was not in the least adaptable to the screen, in the second place, the attention one normally gives to sheer acting, to criticism, to whatever one usually attends, was not helped but fretted by the addition of something that seemed truly extraneous. In other words, we have become thoroughly accustomed to a certain manner of presentation, now

having suddenly to cope with a new one, the mind goes off at new angles, most obvious of which is a process of attempting to capture the effect intended. What actually happened was that the attention was in spite of itself divided in two halves, one following the screen action, the other listening. *The two halves did not operate together!* Even in the first song it was impossible not to feel a kind of alarm at what it might lead to. I was already deciding that this was not a development but a restriction. If the voice is to be used it will impose the restriction of language on films, whereas now their language is universal. It is all very well to say the use of voice will be restricted to short, special films; what of five years hence? I imagine that nothing but the barrier of language will check its use.

Then we had a piano solo, and I thought of *The Hands Of Orlac*. For such a film at that, here indeed *was* a use for Movietone; for all films where piano playing is shown. How often we have seen close-ups of hands playing some sprightly tune, while the pianist in the orchestra puts down the soft pedal and delicately tinkles *Chanson Triste!* This realisation expanded, when after an address from the Earl of Birkenhead and a fragment from *Seventh Heaven*, Nina Tarasova sang a Russian song. This was somewhat epic, if one may humbly say so. Tarasova was an enchanting creature, and it was surely a grand sense of humor that decided the Fox Case Corporation, who presented this entertainment, to make use of this item to show the value of sound as against silence, while the good lady still sang lustily, and afterwards to in-

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crease and diminish the volume of sound to suit the size of any theatre. Here for the first time I rose, and felt others rising with me to a high pitch of enthusiasm. Movietone for cabaret scenes, for dancing scenes ; a possible end to that foxtrot that gurgles tardily into a different rhythm ten seconds after the ball-room scene has finished ! And someone like Tarasova in a cabaret scene would be not only art, but god Box Office art too.

In musical numbers (save for some reason the *staged* songs of Raquel Meller) and for mechanical noises ; wherever there is an aeroplane, an orchestra, a singer, a piano, bells or clamour, let us by all means have Movietone. Let us also have it with our news reels, for if it doesn't convince me, and takes something from the scene, it does add something, and is bound to be popular. But the idea of Norma Talmadge saying "Armand, I am dying," through a loud speaker would move even the most serious minded to a fit of giggles.

* * *

One thing to bear in mind is that it is all much a matter of getting used to it. A number of people still baulk at close-ups. Only the other day a man said just behind me—"These awful close-ups ! I can't understand why they have so many, the way they show up all the make up and everything." As a matter of fact they didn't. After that I looked very carefully for it, but even my somewhat experienced eye, although it knew it was there, would never have told me that it was in

the least obvious. As it so happened that this particular film was one in which make up as a white mask simply did not happen, but was in every case minimised and value given to modelling and feature, it was quite evident he was repeating an old formula he had heard in 1910. As I said before, like the words nice, nasty, morbid, dirty, clean.

One does feel however, that Movietone is a less contestible field. Close ups are the order of the day, and I personally like them, but they have and had many who cry out against them. Artists, if any such there be, and whatever they are, may wail that sound presents a new thing which is not the complete unity of the old film, and a lesser art, but Movietone is bound to come, so it is just as well to accept it. The tendency, except in the exceptions I have given, is to make flatness or photographs out of all the depth and quality of the film that was.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

NATURE AND HUMAN FATE

Comments on the Emelka Film FLOOD, Fate of Man, changeable as the moods of the sea.

Translated from the German

Throughout the world, preference is again being shown for the serious film. This is hardly to be wondered at, in

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view of the nature of the German public, fond as it is of discussions on serious subjects, even in its hours of leisure. But even the American public seems to be tired of purely superficial trash. However this may be, the so-called "mundane" theme of frills, lounge, and ball, and carnival would appear to have ceased to be an absolute condition *sine qua non* of a film scenario.

It seems therefore to be a particularly good idea, at the present time above all, to combine, in a film, plot containing subject brimful of human interest, with some great natural event. The fate of human beings, which in itself is always apt to provoke warm sympathy, can be made to acquire a symbolic meaning beyond the actual individuals, only by the manner in which the fate meted out to them is shown connected, and taking its course parallel with the phenomena of nature, which though everlastingly the same, repeat themselves in a form which varies unceasingly, and are therefore never to be wholly gauged.

Such is the theme on which is produced the latest film of the "Münchener Lichtspielkunst (Emelka)", under the title : *Flood, Fate of Man, changeable as the moods of the sea*, and which is to be shown in the near future. The film was developed in accordance with an original manuscript of Hermann Barkhausen. The clearness of its structure, and the ease with which the plot can be followed bears a testimonial to the usual advantages of an original work written direct for a film, over adaptations of novels, etc., in which concessions are more or less unavoidable.

The central figure, towards which converge all phases of the plot, as towards a central point, is a fair Norwegian girl. Conflicts are brought about through the contrast which arises, apart from human fault, by the action of fate alone, between two men, each of whom has an equal longing for her, and who are therefore irreconcilable. The special purpose of this film, however, is to produce decisive pictorial effects, by showing the sea in all its greatness, and in all the changeable aspects of its character, from idyllic peace to its most tragic horror. For this purpose it was impossible to rely on the usual tricks of studio work alone, although it was impossible to do without them altogether, because the public, however exacting it may be, cannot, of course, expect the crew to be left to drown when the wreck of a ship is shown.

Under the direction of the leading architect Ludwig Reiber, the "Emelka" designed novel and special devices, with a view to giving those complementary pictures of an indispensable character, a thoroughness in keeping with the real facts, and of such a nature as not to break the spell of the illusion. In the main, however, the public will see in *Fate of Man*, changeable as the moods of the sea, the inimitable greatness of actual natural phenomena themselves. With this purpose in view, a special expedition of the *Emelka*, under the orders of Willy Reiber, as stage-manager, with the camera-man Koch, and the filming director Sorg, and the well-known film-actors and actresses Dorothea Wieck, Helen von Münchhofen, Harry Hardt, Oskar Marion, Dr. Philipp Manning, and Karl Platen, spent five weeks on the coast of the North

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Sea. These were strenuous weeks during which they had to keep continuously in readiness, waiting for moments of favourable light conditions, and stormy seas.

During the 6 days, wherein the expedition finally put to sea from the base at Heligoland on the cutter (at five o'clock in the morning, to return only at 2 p. m.) the force of the prevailing wind was 6 to 8. When the force of the wind was 10, the Master had legitimately refused to go to sea, because he could not, in such conditions, accept any responsibility for the vessel, or for the lives of its 12 passengers. Attempts were made, at first, to take photographs on board by means of the rolling support. When this was done, the apparatus maintained the necessary steadiness in a horizontal direction, but the actor did not remain within the focus of the lens, but, following the motion of the vessel, went rapidly right up to the upper edge of the picture, and sank again to the bottom edge of the picture. It was necessary, therefore, to mount firmly four apparatus in different positions, and to screw them down securely, as a precaution against the danger of their being washed overboard. It frequently happened, however, that a breaker soon put one or other of these apparatus out of action, with the consequence that cleaning had to be done, and new arrangements made. It was nevertheless found possible, whenever the sun momentarily broke through, and the apparatus happened to be ready and available (and during the pauses of awful sea-sickness, which played havoc with some of the passengers, much to the enjoyment of the old salts on board) to film all phases of a stormy trip, with original

views of the high sea-way. The apparatus actually followed all the oscillations of the vessel, and so will the spectators as soon as the film is shown, watching horizon and clouds turning round and round within sight, as if the screen were a rotating disc.

Dr. WOLFGANG MARTINI

CHAMPS DE BATAILLE ET LIEUX COMMUNS

Cinéma, lieu commun. Et lieu commun, aussi bien au propre qu'au figuré, puisque, la lumière faite, après avoir subi les banalités de l'écran, on peut compter au plafond toutes ces dorures qui séduisent dans les salons particuliers et les salles de fêtes des palais faubouriens les boutiquiers, aux soirs de toutes leurs noces, celles de la main droite et celles de lamain gauche.

Cinéma, lieu commun. Pourtant, chaque fois nous voulons croire qu'il sera lieu de refuge à notre ennui, comme au moyen âge les églises étaient asile au crime. Mais pourquoi ces murs à fresques prétentieuses, cet écran dont nous attendions des miracles, nous protègent-ils si mal ? La rue, en dépit de tant d'yeux rencontrés déjà avait été une déception. Alors, par la faute de tous ces regards de couleur qui n'ont rien pu pour

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nous, notre désœuvrement a tout espéré de ces créatures noires et blanches, dont l'âge viril voudrait s'éprendre, comme, jadis, de la blonde et rose Gaby Deslys, l'adolescence. Du trottoir, on se disait que le merveilleux bonheur pourrait ne cesser point, puisque du haut d'un portique était annoncé : *Spectacle permanent*. La caissière avec ses ondulations plus que parfaites et son sourire épinglé, juste là où il faut, de son antre, apparut bonne déesse. Circé au négatif, qui ne métamorphoserait point les hommes en cochons, mais, au contraire, de chaque employé de banque ferait un Don Juan.

Pourquoi l'avoir crue ? Bien des Mélisandres de cartes postales déjà nous avaient harcelé de caprices insensés. Toute une théorie de femmes fatales, de grosses dondons fagotées en soi-disant impératrices auraient du suffire à nous désabuser. Mais, une minute lyrique, un coin de visage, la surprise d'un geste, toujours ont su, et toujours sauront nous faire oublier des piètres histoires. On pense au fou de Caligari, à des métamorphoses de Lon Chaney, au reflet argent d'un fleuve africain, et on ne quitte pas son fauteuil quand des lambeaux de Marseillaise et des grouillements d'hymnes nationaux avertissent d'un film héroïque. Et ainsi, lit-on, que la Slavonie et la Gergovie (sans Rire) se font la guerre. La Gergovie, la Slavonie. On peut s'attendre à tout de la péninsule Balkanique. Slavoniens et Gergoviens ont le sentiment national très développé, mais le malheur veut qu'ils n'aient qu'un pays pour deux peuples. Situation cornélienne. Et d'autant plus affreuse que nul n'est plus brave qu'un Gergovien si ce n'est un Slavonien, ce qui n'empêche point d'ailleurs que nul n'est plus

brave qu'un Slavonien si ce n'est un Gergovien. Tout cela est bien tragique et la misère des temps exige même que Pola Negri soit serveuse d'auberge. Pour la consoler on a baptisé « Hôtel Impérial », la gargotte dont elle nettoie l'escalier, en attendant qu'un général ennemi lui paie des robes en lamé or avec quoi elle baliera les marches qu'elle est en train de passer à la paille de fer.

Donc Slavoniens et Gergoviens qui se disputent une patrie, un hôtel, et Pola Negri font de la poussière dans les plaines et les maisons. D'où une atmosphère héroïque. A l'orchestre les cuivres en mettent un bon vieux coup. Père Ubu, grand expert ès questions slaves, vous qui criiez si judicieusement : « Vive la Pologne, car, sans la Pologne, il n'y aurait pas de Polonais », Père Ubu, si vous pouviez assister à ce méli-mélo Gergovien-Slavonien, de quelle voix joyeuse entonneriez-vous la chanson du Décervelage.

Hélas, il y a toute une foule de spectateurs pour prendre sérieusement ces sottises.

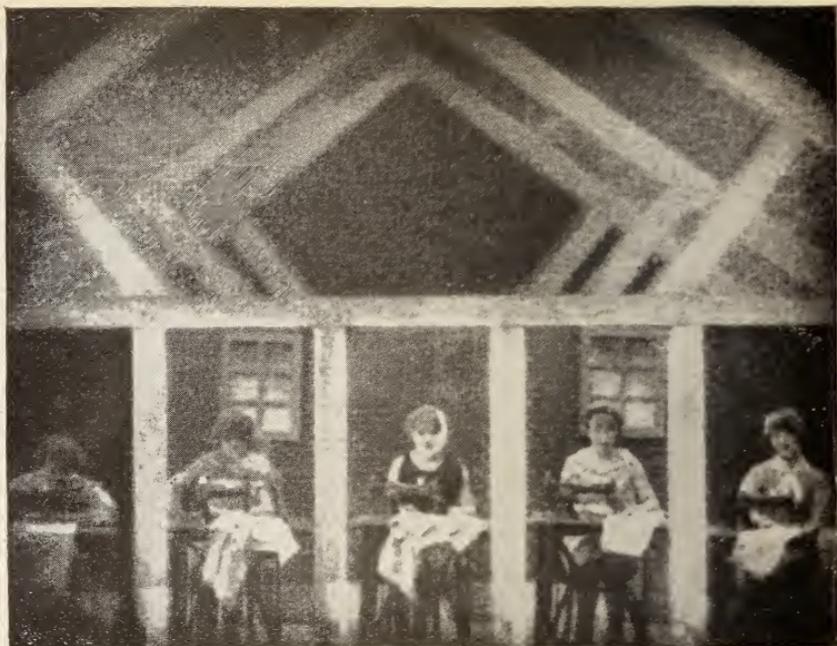
Champs de bataille et lieux communs. Pourquoi flatter ainsi la fatigue et la stupidité publiques ! La bêtise qui a tué le théâtre, peut-elle donc, seule, faire vivre le cinéma ?

RENÉ CREVEL.

FROM STURMFLEU

(see page 17)





« Stills » from the new Alberto Cavalcanti *Neofilm* production,
La P'tite Lili, featuring Catherine Hessling.



« Stills » from the new Alberto Cavalcanti *Neofilm* production,
La P'tite Lili, featuring Catherine Hessling.



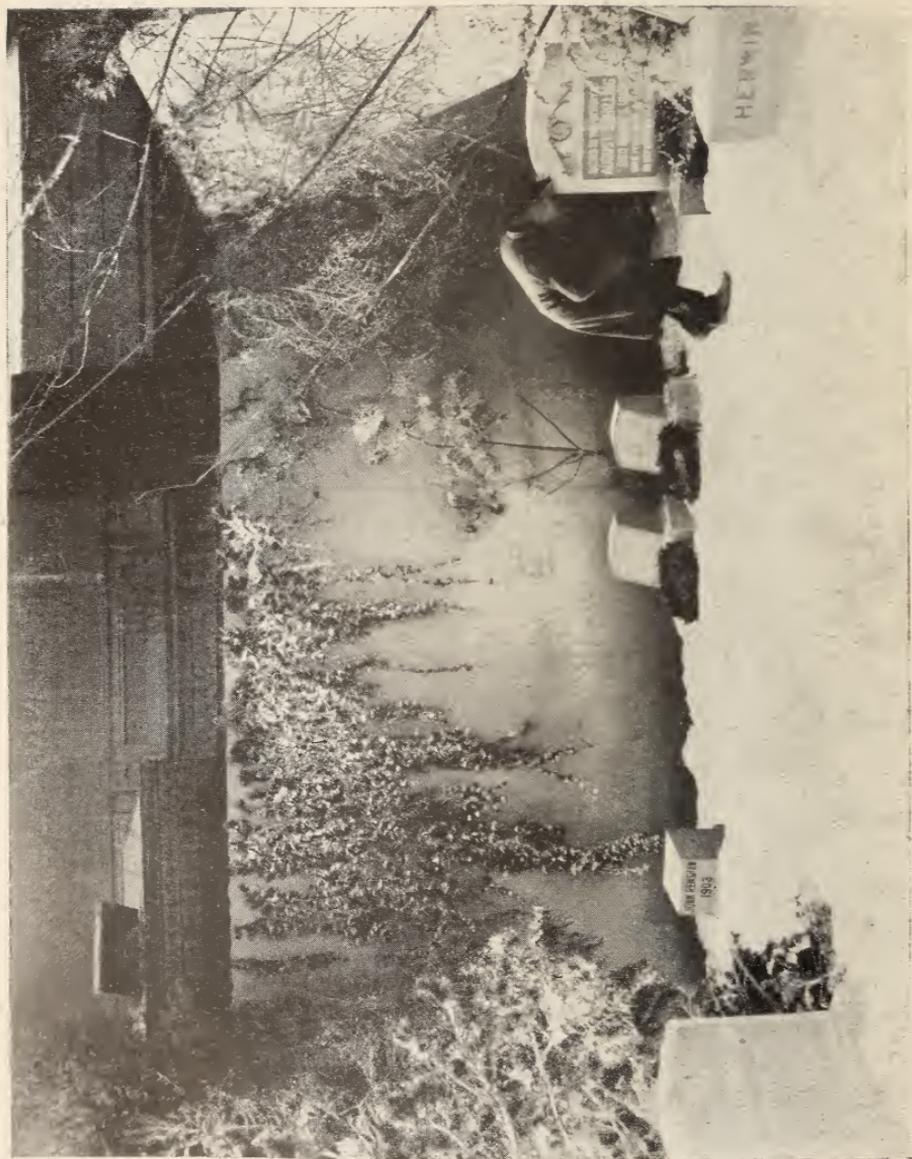
Home, if not beauty, and an exhibition of father-love by Jannings in *The Way Of All Flesh*.
It will be noticed that the "daylight" descends vertically from the ceiling.

(see page 10)



An instance of the clarity and tone-richness which make Victor Fleming's *Way Of All Flesh* so valuable a picture. Father has his beard off and becomes a Different Man.

(see page 10)



One of the insults to the eye in *The Way Of All Flesh*. The scene is a churchyard, we can tell that by the tombstones, and Jannings is reading his own epitaph. This is followed by...

A FILM STUNT WITH 150 CUBIC METRES OF WATER

The "Emelka" is now filming, at its studio in the Geislagasteig, a series of scenes, intended to complete in an effective manner the original sea pictures of its Superfilm (*STURM FLUT*) *THE FLOOD* or *Fate of Man, changeable as the moods of the sea*. Of course, however critical the public, they cannot expect the crew to be allowed to drown when a shipwreck is filmed.

In accordance with the plans drawn up by the leading Architect Ludwig Reiber, novel and special designs had been made for the purpose of giving these indispensable complementary pictures a thoroughness of expression capable of conveying a most realistic impression, without destroying the illusion.

Ten giant searchlights illuminate, with more than daylight intensity, the studio, and a large artificial pond, in the middle of which floats a vessel of the Icelandic Whaler class. On board this vessel are a few human beings wrestling, in imminent danger of their lives, with a terrible storm, amid breakers which pour over and over again on the vessel, which is thereby gradually reduced to the condition of a wreck. Now and then one of the men is washed overboard until the main mast collapses, and the vessel is smashed up almost completely.

In addition to the artificial pond, a special storage reservoir containing 150 cubic metres of water was made for the requirements of this picture, and from this reservoir masses of water several metres deep were launched upon the vessel as required, in such a manner as to provide an exact illusion of the breakers of the sea, whilst the "storm" effect was "supplied" by the giant propellers of the aircraft engines. The searchlights blaze away at a signal given by Willy Reiber, the Stage Manager, and the starting shot sets into motion the cranks of nine cinematographic apparatus. Franz Koch is in charge of the filming brigade, and we shall admire, in due course, in the leading parts :—Dorothea Wieck, Helen von Münchhofen, Oscar Marion, Harry Hardt, Dr. Manning, and Karl Platen. The scenario of this film was written by Frau Hermanna Barkhausen.

THE CINEMA AND THE CLASSICS

III

THE MASK AND THE MOVIE-TONE

The problem arises (it has been dogging us for some time) is the good old-fashioned conventionalised cinema product a more vivid, a more vital, altogether in many ways a more

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inspiring production than his suave and sometimes over-subtelised offspring? Our hero with sombrero, our heroine with exactly set coiffure, each in himself, in herself a mask of himself or herself, one with sleek dutch-doll painted in black cap of piquante elf like mahogany coloured hair, another with radiant curls, so many dolls, are treasures—boy dolls in sombreros—are they to be discarded, are we going to be asked to discard them for another set of boxes, containing such intricate machinery, such suave sophistication of life that we wonder if we really want them? *Do* we want little ivory balls for instance, pretty as they are, fitting into ivory balls, and all the intricate paraphernalia of meccano or jigsaw puzzle to tax our little minds to breaking? Don't we really want what we know, what we see, what intellectually we can aptly "play" with? Don't we? Or do we? I mean do we really want to give up curls and painted-in dutch-doll fringes, and beautifully outlined eyes and eyelashes and doll-stuffed bodies (doing for instance trapeze turns just like real circus people) for something perhaps "better"? Do we really want to discard our little stage sets and all the appliances that we have grown so used to for something more like "real" life? Well, do we or don't we? Please answer me. I am at my wits' end. Do we or don't we want to scrap our old dolls? The problem reasserted itself with renewed force at a New Gallery demonstration of the Movietone.

Here we have our little people. Here comes our heroine. Truly it is not the heroine exactly of our most' most vapid romances, of our most, most old box of dolls and paper-dolls

but it is the sort of toy that we are used to, a doll, a better doll, a more highly specialised evolved creation but for all that a doll (Raquel Meller) steps forward. It bows, it smiles, it is guaranteed to perform tricks that will shame our nursery favourites *but do we want it?*

The doll in question, a Spanish doll this time, done up in Castillian embroidery, not over exaggerated with suitable *décor* of operatic street scene and so on, steps out smiles pathetically, tragically, or with requisite pathos, familiar gestures but somehow sensitized, really our old bag* of tricks. And then wonder of wonders, the doll actually lifts its eyes, it breathes, it speaks—it *speaks*. This is no mechanical voice off, it is the vision itself, the screen image actually singing with accuracy and acumen, with clear voice and beautiful intonation, singing and moving, moving and singing, voice accurately registering the slightest change of expression (Raquel Meller with her *Flor del Mar* and *La Tarde del Corpus*) each tiny fall and lift of note following raised eyebrow or curl of lip or dejection of drooping shoulder. Voice follows face, face follows voice, face and voice with all their subtle blending are accurately and mechanically welded. They are *welded*—that is the catch. The catch is that the excellent actress with all her beauty and her finished acting had a voice as beautifully finished as her screen image but it was (wasn't it?) *welded* to that image. Her voice and herself moving with so finished artistry were welded not (and this seemed some odd catastrophe) *wedded*. The projection of voice and the projection of image were each in itself perfect and ran

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together perfectly as one train on two rails but the rails somehow though functioning in perfect mechanical unison, remained a separate,—separate entities, fulfilling different mechanical requirements. It seemed to me, astonished as I was at both (beauty of face and mellow finish of song) that each in some diabolic fashion was bringing out, was understressing mechanical and artificial traits in the other. Each alone would have left us to our dreams. The two together proved too much. The screen image, a mask, a sort of doll or marionette was somehow mechanized and robbed of the thing behind the thing that has grown to matter so much to the picture adept. A doll, a sort of mask or marionette about which one could drape one's devotions, intellectually, almost visibly like the ardent Catholic with his image of madonna, became a sort of robot. Our old doll became replaced by a wonder-doll, singing, with musical insides, with strings that one may pull, with excellent wired joints. But can we whisper our devotion to this creature? Are we all beings of infinite and pitiful sentiment? I didn't really *like* my old screen image to be improved (I might almost say imposed) on. I didn't *like* my ghost-love to become so vibrantly incarnate. I didn't like to assert my intellect to cope with it any more than I should have liked Topsy (of the old days) suddenly to emerge with wired-in legs and arms and with sewed-on bonnet and really grown-up bead bag dangling (also sewed on) from one wrist. We want, don't we, our old treasures? Or do we want a lot of new toys, mechanical and utterly proficient?

O well, there it is. I know and see and admire. I do think it is wonderful to hear and see. "Speaks for Itself" reads the slogan on the folder. But do we want our toy dog to "speak for itself" ? Do we really want our rag doll to stand up and utter ? Don't we, like the pre-fifth peoples of Attica, of Crete, of the Cyclades treasure old superstitions (even the most advanced of us) and our early fantasies ? Take away our crude upright pillar, take away our carved symbols of Demeter and our goat-herd chorus, said pre-fifth century Athenians and you rob us of our diety. Haven't we been just a little hurt and disappointed that our dolls have grown so perfect ?

Well, that is for you to say and you to say and you to say. We each have an idea and a sentiment. We are all sentiment when it comes to discarding dolls for (it seems incredible) robots. Don't look so nice, and sing so nicely at the same time, I want to scream at Raquel Meller, for I seem to be about to be done out of something. *She* is doing everything. I want to help to add imagination to a mask, a half finished image, not have everything done for me. I can't *help* this show. I am completely out of it. This acting, singing, facial beauty is perfected. This screen projection is not a mask, it is a person, a personality. That is just it. Here is art, high art, but is it our *own* art ? Isn't cinema art a matter (or hasn't it been) of inter-action ? We have grown so used to our conventions, our intellectual censors have allowed us to acclaim such silly and sometimes vapid figures. You may fall in love said our censor with things so patently outside

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the intellectual scope of your realities. You may fall in love with gilt curls or a sailor doll or a brainless sombrero image. For these were masks, images of man, images of women, the feminine, the masculine, all undistressed, all tricked up with suitable accoutrements. Then we sank into light, into darkness, the cinema palace (we each have our favourite) became a sort of temple. We depended on light, on some sub-strata of warmth, some pulse or vibration, music on another plane too, also far enough removed from our real artistic consciousness to be treated as "dope" rather than accepted in any way as spiritual or intellectual stimulus. We moved like moths in darkness, we were hypnotised by cross currents and interacting shades of light and darkness and maybe cigarette smoke. Our censors, intellectually off guard, permitted our minds to rest. We sank into this pulse and warmth and were recreated. The cinema has become to us what the church was to our ancestors. We sang, so to speak, hymns, we were redeemed by light literally. We were almost at one with Delphic or Elucian candidates, watching symbols of things that matter, accepting yet knowing those symbols were divorced utterly from reality. The mask originally presented life but so crudely that it became a part of some super-normal or some sub-normal layer of consciousness. Into this layer of self, blurred over by hypnotic darkness or cross-beams of light, emotion and idea entered fresh as from the primitive beginning. Images, our dolls, our masks, our gods, Love and Hate and Man and Woman. All these attributes had their more or less crude, easily recognised individual

complements. Man and Man and Man. Woman and more and more and more Woman. Bits of chiffon became radiantly significant, tiny simple and utterly trivial attributes meant so much. Or didn't they? I mean that is what the moving pictures have done to us sometimes. We are like pre-fifth Athenians waiting for our Aeschylus, our Sophocles, our Euripides. We are being told that the old gods won't do and we know they won't do really. We must have refinement and perfection and more intricate machinery. Now I know that this is quite right. I do know. I know and utterly appreciate for instance the immense possibilities of the Movietone in certain circumstances. If it were used properly there would be no more misunderstandings for instance (or there shouldn't be) of nations. I mean that five minutes of what I call "bottled" America should do more for the average intelligent English mind than ten weeks on that continent. Look at "Lindy". Now we have all seen this charming gentleman, alighting, arising, swooping a little, crowded and pushed and pulled here and there and which way. But did we know "our Lindy" till we saw him, till we heard him at the New Gallery Movietone performance? "Colonel Lindberg's departure for Paris and reception in Washington" read the second number on our programme. The first bit ("departure for Paris") showed blatantly the flaws of the excellent Movietone. I mean the crowds came up in funny little squeaks and whistles and gasps. Someone whistling (I suppose at random) somewhere, cut across vital and exaggerated while more important factors of group surge

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and voice rhythm were blurred over utterly. The buzz and whirr of the plane wheels was excellent but we were not particularly impressed by that as we have been so long familiar with the same sort of thing adequately represented "off" at the average cinema. The plane buzzed off dramatically but the slice "departure for Paris" was really only the somewhat usual topical budget number somewhat more skilfully presented. But that "reception in Washington" should teach statesmen better. I mean look and look and look at what I call "bottled" America and look and look and look. Turn on that reel ten thousand times and then talk to me of international understanding. Does the average Englishman understand the average American (I say average) and vice versa? Can they? Do they? If you want to understand America, I feel like saying to Lord Birkenhead (who made an address, 5 on our excellent programme) go (or come) and look and look and look at this particular reel, "and reception in Washington". Nations should understand (but they won't, with the best of intentions, do) nations. It would make life so simple really if we really wanted really, really to understand anybody. Where would be our speeches and our receptions and our conferences and our gatherings? Half of life would be out of an occupation. If we could not sit up nights hating Englishmen or Frenchmen or Italians or Spaniards or Americans (or Americans) where, where would all our energy and our spirit flow to? I mean where would we get to? We would be, like pre-Periclean Athenians, I fear, really ready for an Art Age.

Art, art, ahrt and arrrt and AHRT age. Yes, we would be ready for an art age. Turn on a thousand times and go on turning bits of "bottled" Germany, and "bottled" America, kings and presidents and the reception by varied peoples of varied kings and generals and senators and presidents and we will understand each other. Nations are in turns of wrists, in intonations of voices and that is where the Movietone can do elaborate and intimate propaganda. Peace and love and understanding and education could be immensely aided by it. The Movietone outside the realm of pure sentiment, treated from a practical viewpoint is excellent in all particulars. Oh, how we could understand if only we wanted to understand, each other. Take the president's voice for instance. In it is an America (or should I say *the* America) that many of us, even though natives of its eastern sea-coast never meet with. The words of President Coolidge cut across London mist and our Europeanized consciousness like dried brush crackling in a desert. Arid, provincial, pragmatic and plain it held singular vitality. I mean (speaking all too personally) Lord Birkenhead, standing in a garden before a hedge of oak trees (or it ought to have been, if it wasn't, oak trees) was really bottled "England" just as the president with his arid talk of republicism and his "man of the people" stunt was "bottled" and then distilled America. The Germans, we are told, are delighted and rock with mirth at the screen aspect of the French president. Well, let us rock and scream and laugh at one another. Laughter precludes a sort of affectionate acceptance. Let us laugh but let it be in temples,

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in gatherings, the group consciousness is at the mercy of Screen and Movietone. Let us understand one another. Let the Movietone become a weapon in the hand of a Divinity.

UNDERSTANDING was the diety of Athens, Mind and Peace and Power and Understanding. Know thyself (we all know) says the diety of Delphi, who is Beauty and Inner Understanding (which is mantic) and more Beauty and Art in the abstract that we all hope for. This new invention seems an instrument of dual god-head. A miracle is literally unrolled before our eyes. We are too apt to take divinity for granted. Understanding, Athene with her olive wreath, another sort of understanding, Helios with his justice and his power of divination, are both eager for new neophites. Here is an instrument of twin divinity. Tone and vision, sight and sound, eyes and ears, the gate ways to the mind are all appealed to. We are visionaries, we may become prophets. We are adepts, moving at will over foreign lands and waters, nothing is hidden from us. Apply the Movietone to questions of education and international politics and you will do away with revolutions. Well, there it all is in a nut-shell, "bottled". But are we ready for so suave simplification? Some of us will grow in outer and in inner vision with the help of this invention. Others will be left cold as they would be left inert before another Mons or Marathon. Yet it stands to reason that a new world *is* open, a new world of political understanding, of educational reform, or art (in its pure sense) even. Art, I repeat unparenthetically, may in its pure essence

be wedded not merely welded to art. I felt frankly disappointed in Raquel Meller. By some ironic twist of psychic laws, it seems impossible to be luke-warm, to be "almost good enough", Madame Meller does not lack power and personality. But some genial sub-strata of humour or humanity seemed wanting. Mechanical efficiency, technique carried to its logical conclusion do not make divinity. I felt however in Nina Tarasova and Miss Gertrude Lawrence (numbers 7 and 11 on our programme) a full-blooded vitality that nothing can diminish. Madame Tarasova registered sorrow and despair with almost oriental subtlety ; though her gesture was obvious, her real artistry redeemed her curious appearance her bulk, unwieldy as our now familiar *Chang* elephants only served by some ironic twist of circumstance to increase our appreciation. The grandeur of voice in this case seemed healing and dynamic. Madame Tarasova, magnified to the size of Big Ben almost, became as hugely interesting. One laughs, (or used to) at scientific projections, lizards like dinosaurs, beetles exaggerated out of recognition, gargantuan night-moths, flower petals that would enclose Cleopatra's Needle. We used to laugh hysterically at these things, but now we take them for granted. So for the moment the spectacle of an operatic singer complete with voice strains our credulity. Voice and body beat and pulsed with what dynamic energy. We laughed of course. But as I say, didn't we use to laugh in somewhat the same fashion at the exaggerated antics of enormous ants and hornets ? We are used to nature, expanded and ennobled past all recognition, now we must again

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readjust and learn to accept calmly, man magnified. Man magnified, magnified man, with his gestures, his humors, his least eccentricities stressed to the point of almost epic grandeur. Art to conceal art. Is there any more damaging revelation than art revealed? Art is cut open, dissected so to speak by this odd instrument. Movietone creates and recreates until we feel that nothing can remain hidden, no slightest flaw of movement or voice or personality undetected. It is odd how damaging this double revelation is to some otherwise (we should think) unassailable artistes, while others apparently not so fine, emerge unscathed and smiling. Gertrude Lawrence for instance endured this double ordeal with wit and subtlety. The screen Gertrude Lawrence, at first sight a slim mannequin, became animated with fluid inspiration. Her gesture and her speech blended, in this case completely *wedded*. The pure artist perhaps cannot be assailed, and certainly Madame Tarasova and Miss Lawrence stood this trying ordeal valiantly.

There it is. We stand by our own gods, like or dislike, there is no possible strict standardization to be arrived at. We cannot weigh and measure our affections, we cannot count and label our wavering emotions. I like this, you like that, X or Y or Z like something different. Personally, though I admit the brilliance of this performance, I was not totally won over by it. I think for a long time we have perhaps unconsciously, accepted, as I said earlier, the cinema palace as a sort of temple. So I say yes to anything having to do with reality and with national affairs and with educa-

tion then the Movietone is perfect. The outer vision, yes, should be projected, the outer sound, yes, should be amplified and made accessible. Everyone should have access to great music as easily as to books in libraries. This Movietone places people and things, catalogues them. It is excellent as a recorder, as a corrective of technical flaws, or as a means of indefinitely protracting artistic perfection. Art under this magnascope can be dissected and analysed. As an instrument of criticism, yes, as an instrument of international understanding, yes and yes and yes. As a purveyor of ideas and even ideals, yes. But somehow no. There is a great no somewhere. The Movietone has to do with the things outside the sacred precincts. There is something inside that the Movietone would eventually I think, destroy utterly, for many of us. That is the whole point really of the matter. Is our temple, our inner place of refuge, to be crowded out with gods like men, not masks, not images, that are so disguised, so conventionalized that they hold in some odd way possibility of some divine animation? If I see art projected too perfectly (as by Raquel Meller) don't I feel rather cheated of the possibility of something more divine behind the outer symbol of the something shown there? The mask in other words seems about to be ripped off showing us human features, the doll is about to step forward as a mere example of mechanical inventiveness. We cannot worship sheer mechanical perfection but we can love and in a way worship a thing (like Topsy with her rag arms) that is a symbol of something that might be something greater.

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We feel fearful that our world may be taken from us, that half-world of lights and music and blurred perception into which, as I said earlier the being floats as a moth into summer darkness. Like a moth really we are paralysed before too much reality, too much glamour, too many cross currents of potentialities. There is too much really for the soul to cope with and all these out-reaching odd soul-feelers that you and I and Tom Jones and the shop girl and the barber and the knife boy have sometimes felt threatened with odd maladies. We want healing in blur of half tones and hypnotic vibrant darkness. Too mechanical perfection would serve only I fear, to threaten that world of half light. We hesitate to relinquish our old ideals and treasures, fearing we may lose our touch with mystery by accepting the new (this sort of Euripidean sophistication) in place of the old goat-herd and his ribald painted chorus.

H. D.

JANNINGS IN THE WAY OF ALL FLESH

Father wakes, stretches, gets up. (This takes some time.)
The children wake. There are six of them, so this also takes

some time. The last two, as their cot shows, are quite young. But Father is quite old. He has a beard. Germans have beards, however, when they are quite young. Yet Father's knees are stiff, so Father must be quite old. Where is Mother? She would explain, but she is not here.

Never mind. We must watch the children doing their exercises. Perhaps there is no Mother? Or perhaps she has a Heart of Stone and does not love her children well. Which is it?

They are all in the bathroom now, Father superintending. Brush, spit, gargle, spit. Very pretty. The Mother must be—but no, here she is saying breakfast is ready. You remember her from *Stella Dallas*, the woman who put the Love in Mother. So if Belle Bennett is kept downstairs with the breakfast while the camera follows her husband's nursemaid activities in the bathroom, something stronger than mother love must be at work. It is father-love. All that business with the children was not the Smile that hides an Aching Heart. It was Father feeling holy, ritualising the tooth-brushing and earwashing. Father is a Simple Soul.

But why that old man's walk, as if he were bowed by the cares of the world? Well, he is a big man, and that is the way of all flesh upon knees. Also, Father is Jannings and Jannings is Preparing the Way for something. The walk and the beard—they have been made to catch our eye, so we must wait. But we wish the walk was not so irritating. It has caught our eye by being unlovely and it is a pity we must wait until some significance atones for it. The director has not

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succeeded here. He is Victor Fleming and he is doing his best for Jannings. America can appreciate a Great Artist too. America can be German too. That is why the film is taking so long, why we are watching so much. You remember *Vaudeville*. It is like that ; pounding, pounding. The method gives a number of "moments", and we admire Jannings for taking longer, say to light a cigar, than we had believed possible. He has control, he can draw out details to their breaking point. But what is it all leading up to ? Where is that inner quality that makes these details if not aesthetic, expressive ?

We are too restless. It isn't, is it, that we are quick, can see things more easily ? that for us one symbol, not six, suffices ? One child, as it were, being washed, not six. No ; it is that we are so used to the quick-lunch counter, we cannot appreciate a banquet when we get it. *That* is what the film is saying,—taste the finer essences, Watch Jannings.

We must. That is why the film was made ; and in order that we may watch him, the duties of father and mother, the smacking and sanitation of his children, are combined in him, while his wife is left as a rather fidgetty governess whose gestures consist of flicking her hands. You have to imagine a ruler at the end of them, and then they are rebuking. Or a handkerchief and they are waving goodbye. But the ruler and handkerchief are called into play not by the hands but by their surroundings—and by our need for them to be doing something when they flick. Belle Bennett can be better than this. But watch Jannings.

Breakfast is over. One child has been smacked and one has been carried out with the usual apprehensive gestures. You simply must not think of Chaplin now, it would be fatal. The children are given their satchels and Father sets off with his attaché case. The point illustrated by the satchels and case is that the Little Men will one day be Big Men like Dad ; also, if you like, that August Schilling is a child at Heart. A Simple Soul.

Father goes with that click-click step to his Respected Position at the bank. He puts on his working coat, takes off his cuffs. By these signs shall ye know the man. He pats his beard. This beard is the symbol of respectability, of pride in being a Family Man. When it goes—but stop, stop, you are anticipating. There is quite enough you cannot help seeing, don't, I beg you, let your imagination go on ahead. Jannings is rebuking an office-boy for stealing sixpence. He explains that one step may cause one's downfall. Home truths ? Rubbish ; home chat. All this is supposed to give an air of reality. We *are* seeing how he lives, aren't we. But it is a series of acting tricks. Where *is* that inner quality ? Don't be in a hurry. We're not with Segrave ; we're on a steamroller. It moves slowly but it grinds everything. Everything that is in its direct path it grinds exceeding small, like the mills of God. Yes, it must be a good picture to make you think of that.

Jannings is home again, asking his favourite son to play his favourite tune. You think at once, this is the last time Father will see his home. That *Wegenlied* is dramatic. See, he is

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going out ! Perhaps he leads a double life. Again the film reproves you for the filmishness of your mind. He is at his club, bowling. He wins. He pats his beard. We have seen Werner Krauss bowling too, in *Die Hose*. Perhaps we liked him better, though his play wasn't so spectacular. Now they are having drinks. Father enjoys his victory. (Krauss was good, wasn't he ?). They want Jannings to have more beer. He won't, he says, thank you. Just one, they urge. Will he, won't he ?

His wife is on the telephone. Clearly, he did. He will come home drunk. Happy honest Father will come home Drunk. You are wrong ; this film is not a bad film. Why won't you realise that ? Wife was answering the bank. You must not go thinking ahead like this. Watch Jannings. It's all very slow, but there's plenty of it. Why isn't your mind occupied ? It finds it easy to disconnect from the eye, does it ? Yes, I know ; but Watch Jannings. He is being sent to Chicago with important bonds. This is the train. A Bad Woman is opposite Jannings. Ear-rings and feather boa and picture-hat—you know. This is before the war. She wouldn't take us in, but she takes herself in and, more important, she takes Father in—finally. Not at once, Nothing happens at once. That is where they think they've got psychological subtlety, but they haven't. Jannings has lost his ticket. Ah ! it is in his case with the bonds. We, entrusted with bonds, would button them up, sit on them, hide them—we wouldn't put them with our ticket that we are going to bring out in a crowded carriage. But August is

a Simple Soul. Although he makes proverbs to the office-boy, what does he know of the Wicked World ?

The hussy is after the bonds. She captures August. She laughs a great deal, throwing her head back, wagging one forefinger. She wouldn't take us in, but she takes Father in.

When this film is shown, people will probably say that Belle Bennett and Phyllis Haver are too "stagey" compared with Jannings' *mar*-vellous naturalism,—“out of the picture.” But the picture *is* Jannings ; his wife and this woman are seen through his eyes (that is why they are obvious). These images are not representational, but expressive, and that must be remembered. It is one of the few technical subtleties of the film. Elsewhere the camera records, and that is enough.

The minx flatters Father into having his beard off. (She does not want to be suspected nor to have him recognised). They go to a Haunt. They Drink Too Much. Watch Jannings. Do you remember the elephant in *Chang* ? They trampled the houses, broke them into bits (I *am* watching Jannings)—they made everything clear, but they left nothing standing.

Jannings' beard has gone. As he joins her, his walk is different. So that was what it was—that we should see how different he looked when it was off. It is thus a Great Character-Study. *If* he must look, (not seem but look) young and abandoned at one point, make him look older before and after. What art. The film has been conceived from the wrong end.

Jannings waking up in a sordid room is good. Jannings dazed and bewildered is good Jannings. And so is Jannings

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seized with fury at finding the bonds stolen. He fights the thief on the railway track. By a very clumsy accident the man is killed. Father stumbles off. He looks at the river. He sees in the lights flaming accusations ; he sees them too often, once or twice was enough to change Murgatroyd to Murdered. A newspaper reports August's death "in defence of his trust." So he can never go home again. He takes to selling chestnuts. He grows a Beard again. You see, he is regretting The Past.

Years later, a placard announces "August Schilling, the great violinist". We were right about the *Wegenlied*. Father gets a place in the gallery. His son is not so great that a beggar cannot, without waiting, walk into the front seat. (Camera considerations). The encore is "a Piece my Father taught me". I say ! Jannings weeps over the gallery rails. Dirty, dishevelled, heartbroken.

It is moving ? So was Old Bill. It is also funny, watching the new devices of prolonging the emotion. Father creeps about after his family, watching them leave church. Snow is falling. Hazy effect on the old man's shoulders and hair, contrasting with the sharpness of Belle Bennett's mourning. He peers in at his own home (*O, Stella Dallas !*). There is, we knew there would be, a Christmas tree. The Children are very kind to their old Mother. Father is seen by a policeman. Comerlongerme. But the violinist interveness. Spirit of Christmas, constable. We are spared the fade-out to Bethlehem, but the feeling is there. Young August has his dad's kind heart, he offers Jannings warm coffee, but he does

not recognise him. Father can bear no more. He stumbles down the street. Is the snow feathers or salt ?

There was a prison scene once. They cut it, but that is how the film was made. Everything you can think of. Pile it on. Happy home. . . . too much to drink. . . . the spirit of Christmas. . . . poor old dad. . . . touch of a vanished hand. What I mean is, it becomes funny after a time. There is a hint of tears behind the deepest laughter, but there are positively guffaws behind this grief. Give that Gulpny Feeling, and you're an artist.

Well now, really. This is the Great Piece of Acting. But what is the use and where is the beauty of it ? We do not need the films for this. It "made the directors cry". I don't wonder. And isn't that a very easy thing to do, to make people cry ? Easier than making them laugh, or exhilarating them by the beauty of the flow of images.

Jannings acting intensifies, it does not transfigure. That is what I say about Jannings. He can impress himself on the general atmosphere, but he cannot express that atmosphere. Put him in water, and he will swim ; put him in mud and he sinks, he becomes mud. *The Way of all Flesh* may deceive because of the air of reality the cinema gives, but it is only too truly all flesh. There is no spirit. Don't blame the movies. Blame our minds. We're not ready yet. Here is the instrument, and this is what we make of it. *There* is the reason for our tears.

ROBERT HERRING.

CRITICISM AND THE FILM CRITIC

Probably French criticism of films is keener and more serious than our own. So far as I am aware, there are only one or two books in English of a critical kind, the latest of these being Mr. L'Estrange Fawcett's *Films : Facts And Forecasts*. Iris Barry, in *Let's Go to the Pictures*, mentions eleven books on cinematography in her bibliography, but only two of these contain the stuff of criticism. The others are educational, scientific, autobiographical, and so on. The best is Vachell Lindsay's "Art of the Moving Picture", (now out of print), and even Vachell Lindsay goes off his head occasionally (which is not a bad thing to do), especially when he is writing about Douglas Fairbanks.

This paucity of critical work is the measure of our intellectual interest in motion pictures. Perhaps the best attempt to understand the theory and art of the film is contained in a book called *Naissance du Cinéma*, by Léon Moussinac. I would also mention *Le Cinéma* by André Delpeuch, and a well produced work, *L'Art dans la Russie Nouvelle*, which Ed. Rieder has published, in Paris. Doubtless there are others which I have not been fortunate enough to discover.

The field of criticism is not yet explored, for the sufficient reason that, it is not yet worth exploring. In this country, at any rate, film criticism is in a state of chronic muddle. I do not mean by this that there is simple disagreement among the critics. That is the one cheerful feature of the situation, and indeed of all criticism whatsoever. I mean that no *credo* has been forthcoming to give clarity and consistency to what we read about films, and I think this may be put down, first, to the fact that the thing criticised is badly wanting in direction itself, so that when new films are discussed there are no solid reference points or "touchstones", as Matthew Arnold would have said, to give balance and ballast to discussion. Aesthetically and commercially films are still in a state of chaos, and the business of bringing critical attention to bear on them is rather like trying to make a neat parcel of a broken egg. Can't be done, my dear sir.

In the second place, criticism which is to be taken seriously must be free, and the freedom of the critic in our particular world is an open question. The weekly reviews, though they say what they please about the drama, do not care, as yet, to honour the film play in the same way, though they will have to do so before long. The Sunday papers which count, while giving a column to a play now and then which the critic himself declares to be second-rate, look fretfully upon the photoplay as not yet justifying sound critical attention. I should be the last to dare the opinion that they were wrong in this attitude. But one day they will have to change it, thought for the time being resistance is healthier. The mo-

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tion picture world is conceited enough, without being given (too hastily) a crown of wild olive from the intellectuals.

In the third place, I do not think sufficient allowance has been made for the hypnotic influence of the film upon those who criticise it—an influence which has tended to give absurdly disproportionate praise to a large number of “masterpieces” which have since gone into the melting pot. Perhaps I use the phrase “hypnotic influence” a little carelessly, but it is difficult to account for the astonishingly fulsome judgments that appear so frequently about current film productions. I will give but one example, and leave the psychologists to fight it out among themselves. *The Woman of Paris* was certainly regarded as a superb and brilliant film when it arrived a year or two ago, but to-day it is treated with far less respect. In fact, we don't yet know a good film when we see one. We are incapabale of ranking a picture as masterly,—as a permanent contribution to film literature—in the same way, for example, as Mr. Birrell ranked “The Constant Nymph”.

Fourthly, pictures are at present so overladen with technique that all praise and dispraise tends to centre round this aspect of them alone, and to the neglect of others. Ideas? Who ever looked for anything so childish! Yet Ruskin, however suffocating and pompous many of his judgments (however Victorian, according to our mind, that is to say) was illuminating enough when he declared that the best works of art were those which contained the largest general stock of ideas, with due consideration to form and treatment.

No decent film criticism can arise, that is to say, until a balance has been struck between the form and the content of films, the structure and the idea. "Vaudeville" is still regarded as a masterpiece on account of its remarkable production values. Only an ignorant person would dispute the fine technical finish of this picture, and its admirable acting. But who would care to hazard its place among films, say, twenty years hence ?

If we are to see good film criticism we must obviously, and first of all see good films ; and in this venture the critic has enormous influence. But his position is difficult. It is the daily papers, with their tremendous power, which make or mar the picture, but it is the daily press which asks for new as well as criticism. The picture at whose first presentation somebody gets up and "protests", or at which seventy-seven members of the aristocracy are present, is from this point of view a better picture than the one which is produced by Stroheim but has no princely or ducal eyes to admire it. Hence we get reviews of films which are half criticism and half something else. Sometimes we get brilliance and perception amid this tangle, but the single and unshakable attitude which the critic should take up, (not unmixed with human kindness) is on the whole denied to him. In any case, there are films which no man of intelligence ought to be required to review and, in the notice of which he does a positive disservice to his subject, and finally to himself. When a film critic encounters a film he strongly disapproves, he loses his temper (which is admirable) but gives the picture the best adver-

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tisement it can have by a bitter attack upon it. Bad pictures should not be flattered but ignored.

In the meantime criticism should draw on and encourage and make an imperative clamour for films of high merit. And the only way to do this is to make it clear what is meant by a good picture and encourage the artist-director (who already learns), to go on. I once had the dubious honour of running a symposium on this subject to which a number of well-known authors contributed. Out of much that was informing I drew forth the ultimate opinion that a Sainte Beuve or Saintsbury was badly needed to clear up the muddle. For if it is not the function of criticism to dispose of its material *in order*, to discover beauties and lay foundations and build up a fine fabric of critical cloth, flinging away what is not wanted, then some of criticism's main functions have disappeared.

This indeed is the business of film criticism now : to know what it is about and to let us know. It is by no means an easy task, for we may find that in one or two respects the functions of criticism need some sort of reorientation in film matters. The qualities of permanence must be established. So long as it moves, the picture can be a tiger or a lamb. It is for the critic to tame the tiger for the circumspect lawns of modern civilization and to give food pasture to the lamb.

ERNEST BETTS.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

V

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE HOME

Short of undertaking pilgrimages we remain in ignorance of new films until they become cheap classics. Not completely in ignorance for there is always hearsay. But these films coming soon or late find us ready to give our best here where we have served our apprenticeship and the screen has made in us its deepest furrows. It is true that an excellence shining enough will bring out anywhere and everywhere our own excellence to meet it. And the reflected glory of a reputation will sometime carry us forth into the desert to see. But until we are full citizens of the spirit, free from the tyranny of circumstance and always and everywhere perfectly at home, we shall find our own place our best testing-ground and since, moreover, we are for *THE FILM* as well as for *FILMS*, we prefer in general to take our chance in our quarter, fulfilling thus the good bishop's advice to everyman to select his church, whether in the parish or elsewhere near at hand, and remain there rather than go a-whoring after novelties. The truly good bishop arranges of course that the best, selected novelties shall circulate from time to time.

Meanwhile in the little Bethel there is the plain miraculous

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food, sometimes coarse, sometimes badly served, but still miraculous food served to feed our souls in this preparatory school for the finer things that soon no doubt will be raising the level all round. And we may draw, if further consolation be needed, much consolation from the knowledge that, in matters of feeding, the feeder and the how and the where are as important as the what.

Once through the velvet curtain we are at home and on any but first nights can glide into our sittings without the help of the torch. There is a multitude of good sittings for the hall is shaped like a garage and though there are nave and two aisles with seats three deep, there are no side views. Something is to be said for seats at the heart of the congregation, but there is another something in favour of a side row. It can be reached, and left, without squeezing and apologetic crouching. The third seat serves as a hold-all. In front of us will be either the stalwart and the leaning lady, forgiven for her obstructive attitude because she, also an off-nighter, respects, if arriving first, our chosen sittings, or there will be a solitary, motionless middle-aged man. There is, in proportion to the size of the congregation, a notable number of solitary middle-aged male statues set sideways, arm over seat, half-persuaded, or wishing to be considered half-persuaded. Behind there is no one, no commentary, no causerie, no crackling bonbonnières. The torch is immediately at hand for greetings and tickets and, having disposed ourselves and made our prayers we may look forth to find the successor of Felix making game of space and time. Hot Air beating

Cold Steel by a neck, or, if we are late, an Arrow collar young man, collarless, writhing within ropes upon the floor of the crypt whose reappearance will be the signal for our departure. Perfection, of part or of whole, we shall rarely see, but there is no limit to vision and if we return quite empty-handed we shall know whose is the fault. The miracle works, some part of it works and gets home. And sometimes one of the "best" to date is ours without warning.

For any sake let everyman have his local cinema to cherish or neglect at will, and let it be, within reason, small. Small enough to be apprehended at a glance. And plain. That is to say simple. The theatre may be as ornate, as theatrical as it likes, the note of the cinema is simplicity. Abandon frills all ye who enter here. And indeed while dramatic and operatic enterprise is apt, especially in England, to be in part social function the cinema, though subtly social, is robbed by necessity of the chance of becoming a parade ground. One cannot show off one's diamonds in the dark. Going to the cinema is a relatively humble, simple business. Moreover in any but the theatre's more vital spaces it is impossible to appear in an old ulster save in the way of a splendiferous flouting of splendour that is more showy than diamonds. To the cinema one may go not only in the old ulster but decorated by the scars of any and every sort of conflict. To the local cinema one may go direct, just as one is.

For the local, or any, cinema the garage shape is the right shape because in it the faithful are side by side confronting the screen and not as in some super-cinemas in a semi-circle

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whose sides confront each other and get the screen sideways. The screen should dominate. That is the prime necessity. It should fill the vista save for the doorways on either side whose reassuring "Emergency Exit" beams an intermittent moonlight. It is no doubt because screens must vary in size according to the distance from them of the projector that the auditorium of the super-cinema (truly an auditorium for there is already much to be heard there) is built either in a semi-circle or in an oblong so wide that the screen, though proportionately larger, looks much smaller than that of a small cinema, seems a tiny distant sheet upon which one must focus from a surrounding disadvantageously-distributed populous bigness. The screen should dominate, and its dominating screen is one of the many points scored by the small local cinema.

For the small local cinema that will remain reasonably in tune with the common feelings of common humanity both in its films and in its music, there is a welcome waiting in every parish.

DOROTHY RICHARDSON.

FURTHER BRITISH PROBLEMS.

"Now mind, the one thing I don't want to see is—your face!"

To how many film actresses, and actors, would you have

loved, at one time or another, to say that ? Sometimes when you have been subjected to two hours of enormous heads, religiously pressing chins to throats in order to make the eyes nice and large, it would be some faint satisfaction to hurl such a criticism from your two-and-sixpenny seat. (Pray Heaven you may not be foolishly led to do so, at least not so long as there is a law of libel in this wretched country !)

Yet I have heard directors shout these very words through a megaphone in the stentorian tones peculiar to directors. Directors are, of course, above any law.

It is not to one unfortunate delinquent that the directors thus bluntly express themselves, but to two or three hundred 'actors' and 'actresses'. Strange to say the directors are not torn limb from limb, for these pathetic beings expect such treatment. What does it matter to them that the most natural and expressive means of conveying emotions to an audience is denied to them ? They have nothing to do with emotions. They are faceless puppets of British directors !

Perhaps you may be tempted to put too light a value on the mere 'supers' of a film. Recall then "Faust". The vivid and striking personalities of the villagers in Faust's home town will be remembered long after the film itself has been forgotten. Remember also the wonderful character and flexibility of the crowds in Russian films.

In "The Golem" the crowds showed an extraordinary intelligence. They moved in rhythms and cross rhythms with the sureness of ballet dancers. They gave the beautiful effect of being actuated by one creative mind. The director

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could play with the endless patterns and rhythms as on a musical instrument. How much of the artistic success of the film was due to the crowd work must remain uncertain, but how much the general effect of the film would have been lessened, if the crowd scenes had been treated with the average ineptness, may well be imagined.

Not only can intelligent crowd scenes bind a good picture into an artistic unity, but they can also save a mediocre picture from itself. Anyone who has seen the Russian film "Ailita" will have realized that.

How sad then that the British super must be faceless ! True, Jannings managed to express emotion through his back in "Vaudeville", but can you picture a crowd of British extras registering (oh ! detestable word !) emotion with their backs ? Fantastic thought ! What British star has one tenth of the technique of Jannings ?

Your patience having become by this time exhausted, you will cry out, "What is all this talk about faceless men ? Why must British supers have no faces ?" I will answer you. "Because there are so few British studios."

Any active film producing centre attracts thousands of men and women, of every nation, with a certain deadly fascination. In Hollywood the casting office can lay its hands on negroes, Chinamen, dwarfs, bearded women, at a moment's notice. Men and women who are types. Men and women whom the director need not be afraid to show upon the screen, men and women who defy detection because they are genuine. On account of the enormous production schedules carried out

by the film companies in America, these men are in constant demand, and can afford to keep themselves in comparative comfort. Could they do so in England with its occasional pictures? In England a super who specialized in jockey parts might find that one racing picture was made in the year.

(Let us hope, in passing, that directors will give the race track a rest, and will they please note that the above was only by way of illustration).

The more desirable men and women who might be willing to seek film fame in the crowd are compelled to find work in other occupations, and when their solitary chance arrives they are unable to take it. How can they leave their business for a few days in such an incidental manner? Thus it is that British extras are the queerest crowd on earth. Casual labourers of every description, sandwich board men, loafers, unemployed, and a sprinkling of 'society' who are snatching another thrill before film acting is added to the growing list of exhausted sensations. I have mixed with, and spoken to, thousands of these men, and the producer who dared to show their faces on the screen, when they purported to be Chinese or Hindoos, would undoubtedly raise a laugh with more in it than good-natured heartiness.

They are indeed a motley throng!

The only way the producer can suggest the exotic is by changing their clothes. It may be the thought that nothing good can come of such material that makes him do even this so badly. I have seen 'Japanese' extras sporting occidental

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shoes, while trousers, also unmistakably occidental, demurely peeped from underneath their oriental brothers !

Once again the hands of the British producer are tied even if they do not know it. Their crowds are colourless because they are faceless. But you may protest that this difficulty will vanish with the so-called British film revival.

I doubt it.

Have the British film companies the initiative to build sufficient floor space ? If they have then they have kept it hidden under many bushels in the past. A director who had his last picture cut by the middle of June told me that he could not begin turning on another story till September, because he could not find a vacant studio. One company for fifteen years has had to hire another studio each time the director wanted a big set because their own studio was of ridiculously inadequate proportions. An art director complained to me the other day that the balance of his composition had been completely spoilt. When the carpenters came to execute his design they were compelled to cut the top off his set to make it fit into the studio ! The labour of reducing the entire set in proportion would not appeal to British workmen ; in any case no one thought of it until too late.

New studios, when they are built, barely keep abreast of the times. In a few years they will be old-fashioned once more. There is no idea of being a little in front of the times, and I have several plans and projected plans in mind when I say this. All of them are too small, and most of them badly situated. They should stand in their own grounds with

ample facilities for exteriors and such scenes as lake scenes. Then transport would be eliminated and organization made easy. Compare the vast studios at Neubabelsberg which had its own Zoo, with some of the British studios in the most unprepossessing streets of outlying suburbs.

If the Wembley scheme matured. If...

No, I fear we shall always have too meagre floorspace. Where would the technical men be found for enormous new studios? Workmen assure us that the youngmen who went through the war did not trouble later to apprentice themselves to skilled trades. I fear, too, that England will find the same old crowds turning up at the studios, no matter how high the quota. The former manager of a large circuit of British cinemas told me that directly after the Films Bill had been outlined he was deluged with offers to come in with men to make 'quickies'. A 'quickie' is an old film with a few modern sequences inserted. There is no work for crowds in 'quickies', only for a handful of third-rate principals and the English market will soon be flooded with them if these men have their way.

It is so easy to find problems for the British director, but does the British director care? A British director once asked his assistant. "Why does the camera man get such a large salary? What's the camera for anyway?"

The answer he got was: "What is the use of putting up big sets if they are badly photographed?"

Do British directors care about camera angles or psychological stress? Do they? Do they respect art or even life?

Some time ago an aeroplane had to fly through a French

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street and drop bombs. Explosives were laid in the ground and loose sand and earth, together with a few dummies, placed on top. These mines were wired and fired from a central switch board. Obviously it would have been too dangerous to drop bombs from the plane as the crowd would not have known beforehand where the explosions would take place. The simple expedient of firing them from the ground gives the same appearance on the screen, and the crowds are able to give the mines a wide berth. However lack of foresight on everyone's part nearly caused a nasty accident. The explosion damaged the wings of the aeroplane, which was flying fairly low. The rather ludicrous result was that the plane was within an inch of being down with its own bomb.

Did the producer care? Did he sympathize with the indignant pilot?

He shook with uncontrollable laughter!

On another occasion spectacular explosions in a war film nearly led to a catastrophe. The shots were taken but the director was displeased by the artificial way in which the supers dodged the danger area. He ordered a second rehearsal, without explosions. In the middle he silently countermanded his order to the electrician. There was true alarm on the supers' faces that time. One or two of the extras, who had been hit by clods of earth, fell on their neighbours with bitter reproaches!

Maybe it is silly to take directors, that is British ones, too seriously. It is perhaps more philosophical and soothing to treat them like a certain expert diver.

This diver, with two others, had been called in for a particular sequence which later perished in the cutting room. The director spent a long time explaining to the expert how they were to dive. When he had finished, the other retorted softly, "I don't know what you have said sir, but we will do it!"

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

MATINEE

.The young man took my ticket and tore it. I passed on to dark where curtains hid young girls smelling of face powder. They had hung Greta Garbo, hair back and tousled staring morosely. It did not seem that that was it, she would loom out not that way. Here is the organ playing brisk notes falling like mulberries in a fountain and drum sounds clattering. . . This way please, her torch flickered over the half ticket the young man had torn in half. I remembered his hands were red. The young girls stood inside a curtain, my left eye was dazzled by light reshaping. Something was happening on that screen but I had to watch carefully for the small dance and slanting fugitive beam. Greta Garbo, the young man, the black frame. A titter through the piles and huddled rhythm of

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black forms sitting. More drum notes from the organ, lollop founder. Where is that light ? An empty row of plush extends before its ray, arm rests and the bright gleam of a cigarette tray for a fractional space, my left eye perceives cones waving down darkness, pallid elongations sliced by up-drifting cigarette smoke. Beside my right eye are splashes, faces, I get photographic semblances of lives, peoples' thoughts brush consciousness, I get the different sense of different minds seeing things differently, and two in the row were annoyed because I got across their vision. I was contrite enough, I got their annoyance, and a girl and a boy were not looking at the film, I got that though I did not see them, I got that they were busy being in love, I got that, I crept along the empty plush row and groped across a shoulder and collided with a knee. I was contrite, I said excuse me as I had learnt from the Americans, I was rather glad I had said excuse me and not sorry or pawdon. I sat down.

I sat down in a little flurry, it is a job getting into a cinema in the dark, I had a lot on my mind I thought I was near to seeing the way things should be, I mean I had an inkling. Something was getting across to me, I had got peoples' impressions, faces, splodges had given me the clues, I was receptive, something was running in to me. I heard organ notes and Greta Garbo would not loom out in that way, she was not that way, her eyes were not real when they did that thing below her eyebrows, but the light broken across my eyes by glass, by the glass of her frame on the stairs the fuschia coloured stairs, that was interesting. Reginald Denny this is, he

is funny, I am getting impressions.well this looks like the end, I have arrived at the end, apparently everything is getting right.

I was saying getting right, it is the end it is Reginald Denny. *I am settling in.* I am beginning to get things. Yes this is the end, I shall move toward the centre when it is over if there is a seat. The young girl and the light, her small torch skidding over my torn ticket, this way please. I am beginning to settle in.

Three climax chords, and the organ prolongs. . . Curtains slide together, I can hear the suave mechanism, the END waves and bounces across them, vague lights seep, one sees architecture, one sees gold, and backs, one satin back in front of me, a grey skirt (she is not going to move) I had collided with her, grey skirt and a bag of black watered silk, a soft gloveless hand clenched on the tortoiseshell clasp, a black satin back, brown suit, Jew's hair, an empty seat, the row goes on with two women then a woman and a man and a young woman, light goes higher, ruddy, gold ornament, flowers.

. . . .Well, I will get at something, here is the orchestra the stage. . . now that is wrong, they are going to do Vaudeville, now that is all wrong. Now I am most annoyed, that is just what they would go and do, what is the idea anyway, they are seeing it all wrong, we don't want this sort of thing, yes I know, here they are, one two three. . .a whole procession, yes dancers, and a bad show, and vaudeville is all wrong in the movies, they shouldn't do that, one sees why they do

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that, they did that with Greta Garbo, that stare on the stairs, getting the quality of her eyes all wrong, getting it all wrong, they would go and do that, one sees their process of argument, one sees they think they are improving their show with this sort of thing, one sees they think these vaudeville shows better than movies, the superior thing, what a clumsy idea, they would go and do something like that. I came to see a movie, I was beginning to settle in, I was beginning to get at something, I was beginning to see things.

They will go and spoil it all, now this is too much, this iswhere the hell are my matches, is that fat woman going to sit beside me? Well that is better, she might have sat beside me, and she has already dropped her handkerchief, well let her drop her handkerchief, I don't mind people dropping their handkerchiefs in movie shows, there I have dropped my cigarette case. No one would do all this so differently, one would. I know, I know, that long corridor, I want to think that out today, I want to get that long corridor, not that thing with arches, something simple, not bare, simple. Oh well, it's restful sitting here, I am blurring in, yes all that colour, that lighting, people come here to be happy, there is a feeling of *freeness* here, one relinquishes. One does sink in, fade in, I was forgetting the people behind me, they are watching the vaudeville, the boy and the girl who were busy being in love are watching the vaudeville, I used to think the man with the organ sat at the side somewhere out of sight, I wonder how he does those drum notes, there's something so much more right and intelli-

gent about all that, I prefer the organ there's something unspontaneous about the orchestra, you get it watching them stuck up there in violet light, the organ vrooming and slightly hurdygurdyish goes better, it marches, but the orchestra. . . I know in straight photography you don't get the impressions of things, aeroplanes for example, really aeroplanes suggest noise and power and distance, one feels that when one sees them blowing grass behind and the trousers of mechanics. . . That's how I would do it, photograph the engines, superimpose close-ups of the blowing trousers of mechanics, and blowing grass, and glide the camera about near-to a little drunkenly across wings and the body like an eye a little frightened, and show in the same drunken way in peeps the blowing grass and cloudy skies. . . . You don't get the feeling you get really when they take a photograph simply of an aeroplane starting, you don't get the feeling you would really have, it doesn't mean much, the photograph doesn't get across what happens when you are actually standing beside an aeroplane with its engines going, and the thing to do is to get across the *impression* you have of that aeroplane not to simply turn some photographs of it starting. The blown trousers and feet moving across blown grass and blown wildflowers and something of the usual delay, and a mackintosh blowing and surging, close-ups of propellers and bustle. That's where they go wrong, they don't get across the feeling of things, because the external aspect reacts differently in a photograph from the real thing, they got that well in the chariot race in Ben Hur, they did get the feeling one would have, it was not so

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much the thing seen externally, but impressions, the galloping legs of horses, the freize of white rearing horse heads, the blur of chariots following in the close ups, that is the line to take, that is what I mean about this long corridor, I want to get the impression, the feeling one would have as that figure hurries stooping. And tottering along that corridor, then rigidly across a long room, (not an ornate room, an impressionistic room I think,) rigidly as though people might be watching from galleries, galleries must be suggested in the room, and pillars of gaunt stone in the corridor, overlapping so you cannot see between them, or. . . .the camera is to hurry along beside the figure so there will be glimpses through pillars, perhaps rain beyond, not a vista. . . .the camera can skirt round and swivel, get the hurrying figure from side and front, hurrying and swerving with the figure.

.Oh it's *Lya de Putti*. Well now, this is better, yes, yes, what a difference, what is it about the movie? There is some definite hypnotism, something with the changing forms and regroupings, it is a sort of abstraction, the elimination of 'colour' is definitely something to do with it, I do know they do this sort of thing so efficiently and so badly, the acting is so bad, and I often wonder how it came about that people go to a show and are impressed and moved by situations and tomfoolery that if they met in real life they would call incipient insanity.

. Yes, well I am getting something, I know it's lovely, *Greta Garbo* in a frame with glass, and light flung across my eyes. I wonder if all the cigarette trays screwed on all these

seatbacks are polished, light caught one of them, I must look, it must be a job polishing them all, but I expect they are lacquered, now I am beginning to get things again, they have forgotten in the row behind that I came in late, I seem to get the people behind, and not the young woman beside me, she is behind barriers, I think something in her is conscious my mind is working, overhead currents, things *do* go on in the air, she is a reposed young person, but I believe she has a problem in her life that uses up energy, there is barrier between her and reception, I don't get her, but I get the people behind, and I get a sense of people's attention directed on the screen, but more than that, the *feeling* of the theatre, there are deft arrangements in this theatre, and there are girls with torches and fuschia carpets, and a slope to the floor, it all means something, it is restful, there has not been anything much here but peoples' entertainment, you have a sense of obliteration, you are non-existent, you can sit still and your mind works away, works away.

I was trying to get that corridor, and the figure hurrying through, then starkly across the long room, then turning down a narrower and darker corridor, finally into a room, I see that, no Lya de Putti, I didn't see it the way you are coming down those stairs, I see the value of stairs, I know you create form and geometry, you get my mind to seeing other things, I am not seeing Lya de Putti nor the others with her, they move, there are probably points here and there, but regroupings mean things, you cross a room slowly, well I want to make this figure cross a room slowly, your close up has no meaning,

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I see it *has* a meaning but I want the close up of that figure, the face with purpose, I would somehow contrive my close up differently, along the corridor, dark sliced with triangles of half dark and cubes and oblongs and parallelograms of half dark and half light cutting and criss-crossing to fall and slant across the face, keep the face moving, move the camera with the face.

It's not Lya de Putti when you do that, it is a photograph, there is not illusion, it is simply Lya de Putti looking silly, I would have it thus and thus, and there is no need for that sort of set, Lya de Putti looking short haired but they do the same thing with her as Greta Garbo. It is not even Lya de Putti looking silly, the illusion is not made, you don't get the impression you would really have looking at the photograph of Lya de Putti, the thing is to get over the impression you would have, how do you do this except accidentally ? There are ways of beginning films, they should start with an atmosphere, scooped out of parts of lives, not begun elaborately with introductions, this thing of Lya de Putti means nothing, there is something quite different you get in the meaning of geometry and plastic tone depths. Films should begin in the middle, end in the middle, it is this summarising and explaining away, Greta Garbo for instance, Lya de Putti for instance. I wonder what they thought of Lya de Putti as Anna Karenina in a blond wig ? Of course how dreadful breaking up the feeling of the cinema with that dreadful vaudeville. Vaudeville. Lya de Putti, back to Lya de Putti, she did this same

stunt in Vaudeville, they are so unimaginative, they don't see the thing is to get the impression things would make on your mind, that aeroplane for instance, it gave one no sense of journey, it had to be treated with blowing grass somehow, you have to experiment about until you get the right effect. I am settling in, there is real rest in the cinema, your mind gets pure detachment, you get at things, things get across to you, yes that walking across a room, make it different, make it poignant with shadows or psychology, or what was that film with a street, they showed a corner and no sky, and ramshackle stone buildings, and only one long trail of creeper lifted slowly and wildly in the wind. That meant something, there might have been not much meaning but there was no sky and the one straight trail lifted and fell, you heard dead leaves rattling along gutters, and the frothing of wind upon chimneypots. And you got gloom and the feeling of desertion that might suddenly clatter and give way to feet or noisy voices, but you got that normally here was an empty street. People have these ideas, people do these things but here is Lya de Putti just looking tiresome, and all the dead platitudes. I am getting down to something, I like cinemas, H. D. is right *light takes new attribute*. H. D. says *master of shrines and gateways*. It is that, shrines and gateways, one knows what that means, we have seen light doing things. I would have that figure and the brush and deep folds of a cloak hurrying, tonal greys and dark greys of stone and impression of galleries, there are different ways, there are different ways to show what one means, one

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can show what one means, I can see what it all amounts to, we have great power behind us, *something more than ordinary power*. I am settled in, I am getting things, I am seeing things, I am not seeing Lya de Putti, I am not seeing Greta Garbo, they are less real than the boy tearing my ticket, than the girl with this way please, the beckoning torch, the splodges, the faces behind me, less real, but aeroplanes and people should give the impression, should create the illusion, there are ways and means, and here is efficient camera work but it doesn't grip, it doesn't grip.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

Le film dort dans sa boîte métallique, replié mille fois sur lui même, substance inerte, mystérieuse. On ne sait de lui pas grand, chose, car on n'en parle encore que sur les affiches. Superproduction... est le terme qu'on lui applique, par défaut de simplicité. Il y a le titre en longues lettres demésurées, qui éveille la curiosité, fait naître le désir. Ce titre caresse les sens du public comme un parfum troublant. Des éloges pompeux dans les colonnes des journaux, où l'on effleure la trame

du film en évoquant une suite d'images où l'art confine au vice, mais où tous deux sont si bien entremêlés que le diable lui-même n'en saurait faire la distinction. Et le grand soir arrive... la lumière transpose les petits rectangles magiques sur la surface de neige de l'écran, créant une suite ininterrompue de tableaux, parmi lesquels se glissent, de temps à autre, quelques chefs d'œuvre. Une intrigue a pris corps. Les beautés, les laideurs ou les platitudes du film sont tirées une à une de leur obscurité, passent en hâte devant le rayon lumineux, apportent leur tribut au mouvement général, puis retournent aussi brusquement qu'elles en étaient venues, dans leur prison circulaire.

La machine origine la vie, une vie factice, il est vrai, impalpable, mais tout aussi réelle néanmoins qu'une création littéraire, laquelle ne présente que des mots ingénieusement combinés, tandis que nous avons là des images plus suggestives. Le Livre, disent de nombreux détracteurs du film, est supérieur, car il expose une infinité de nuances, il est art, tandis que la pellicule n'est que *duplicata*. La réalité est toute autre cependant. La littérature est certes un moyen puissant de réalisation d'idées, mais elle est au cinéma ce que la description d'un paysage est au paysage lui-même. La photographie nous donne une liberté plus grande de sentir à notre tour. Le texte est déjà trop personnel pour que nous ne subissions pas en quelque sorte sa loi. Les moyens d'expression en art cinématographique sont infinis. Il y a plus de traits dans la nature qu'il n'y aura jamais de mots pour les dépeindre. L'image est l'impression directe, la source de presque toutes nos sensa-

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tions, elle ne lasse pour ainsi dire jamais parce qu'elle est vie. En est-il de même d'un alignement de mots, si éloquents soient-ils ?

FREDDY CHEVALLEY.

SAUCY SUZANNE

An Ufa film.

Ellen Richter again, set in a much too over-worked theme, but for all that Ellen Richter, and a witty production. Everybody should see this film when possible if only for the sake of the incomparable Richter, a great and a beautiful artist. The story is trifling and impossible, which after all, in such a film, matters little. Suzanne is an inn-keeper's daughter in a tiny Rumanian inn. Soldiers descend and drink, and there is merriment, and a love-at-sight *dénouement*. The "he" in the *dénouement* is a nobleman. He gallops off when the bugle sounds, into the night. So much in retrospect, for time has elapsed since then, and Suzanne has become a famous Spanish dancer, and this vision of the past has risen because the nobleman, now impoverished, has joined the company as a crack rifleman. Then a very much in-the-rut, back-stage story unfolds. But is it done so very well, or does it simply happen that we are in a good humour ?

No, it is good. A splendid effect of an elaborately staged

revue is achieved with fades and mixes and superimposed pictures, a margarine magnate and his family and son are caricatured with just that restraint you would almost never find in such a theme. The party given in Suzanne's honour was a most sardonic and humorous touch. Oh, those relations ! And Ellen Richter, with consummate wit and consummate beauty and with acting so electric that it almost gave off sparks, made slaves of the whole House. "Isn't she marvellous," you heard on every side. She frolicks and storms through the film like a cyclone ; you are lifted off your feet and haven't time even to protest or wonder why ! It doesn't seem to matter that it is the old (almost doddering) story of temperamental star and career versus Love. The thing goes with a swing, that is what matters. And Ellen Richter matters. She is as great a comedienne as she is tragedienne. See it.

BOOK REVIEWS

The Motion Picture Cameraman by E. Lutz. Price 10/6.

This is a useful little book, designed for beginners, and we would like to add, warmly recommended to beginners. Its purpose is to give an outline of moving-picture photography with explanation of technical problems. Mr. Lutz wisely did not attempt too much, but what he has done is well done, and anybody who reads it carefully is bound to

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have an outline knowledge of the principle of this highly individual art. His chapter on lenses is specially well and clearly written, and deserves very careful reading. The beginner must ruefully realise that before he can go very far he must understand about lenses ; here is his opportunity. It is interestingly written, and simplified with diagrams. Focal length need no longer be a nightmare. You are given ways in which to experiment with focal lengths. You are told how to make trick pictures, streets lighted at night, ghosts, mirror reflections and images, wild beasts walking down a busy city thoroughfare. How to use models is explained, as well as the combination of life-size sets and models in one set. Much of it is, of course, merely outlined, and will leave the reader brindling with queries. Perhaps that is to the good. He will, if nothing else, realise that there is indeed much he has to learn before he can begin to handle his camera efficiently, or with confidence as to the results of his work. Value for its price.

Films : Facts and Forecasts by L'Estrange Fawcett. Price 1 guinea.

It is a pity that there is still so little literature dealing with the films from any critical or technical point of view. Almost all the books published to date apologise for themselves, or even if they do not apologise, are not up to the minute as regards outlook and perception. There are a few completely

technical books on cameras lenses, etc., useful but not always simple enough for beginners, or else completely uninspiring. *Films : Facts and Forecasts* by l'Estrange Fawcett (Bles. 21/-s.) contains many points of value, but it is marred by an attitude of mind or point of view belonging rather to 1914 than to now.

Much of the information is of great interest, particularly the statement that the big American cinemas pay their rents by letting out the buildings above the cinema ; a practice forbidden in London. Why? Curiously enough, many small bookshops catering to the more intelligent sections of the public have told the same story : they let out the rooms over the shop to pay their rent, and thereby can afford to consider the tastes of the minority. The detailed description of the American cinemas, the discussion upon the evils of blind booking, of the state of the Canadian, South African and Australian markets, are valuable and should be known much more widely than they are. But it is a pity that so obvious a distaste for many forms of modern life is allowed to obtrude upon the excellent summary of economic facts.

One does feel that here is a man who has studied the screen deeply and conscientiously. He does not mind, for instance, saying quite definitely "Confusion has reigned supreme on almost every occasion when I have visited a studio, be it in Los Angeles, London, or Berlin." This, and many facts laid bare for the first time, stand on their own ground and are indisputable, but complete confidence is shaken, and a number of statements called into question by a none too sparse

CLOSE UP

peppering of such comments as "If circumstances had allowed us to develop along our own lines steadily and surely, if the war had not checked our production at a crucial moment, the British film might have retained as significant a place as the British theatre. We should probably have had little difficulty in selling our pictures abroad, because they would have been unusual and distinctive." So far as an unprejudiced observation of the British theatre can penetrate, the British theatre is negligible from any artistic standards. It certainly is not "unusual" nor "distinctive". Such a statement coming on top of much that is sheer commonsense and much that is of uncommon interest arrives as somewhat of a shock. It puts one on guard and makes acceptance of the work acceptance with reservations. Patience in compilation, care and forethought are all in evidence. It certainly is a book that no follower of the film should miss. There is something to learn for everybody, and there should be much debating on the strength of it. Acceptance with reservations !

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It is not joy that waits for you here.

When he shook his throat from the upturned collar of his weatherproof and regained pride.
There was a club foot of rock and erosions had continued it in a leg. The family stronghold
set on the instep, wary with watchtowers. It was an attempt at shelter from Atlantic
s, seen only obliquely from the sea, but the wind made arcs and tormented it with catcalls. . . .
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d shake under impact. Tide crashed against his feet. " . . . leads to an immense
max :

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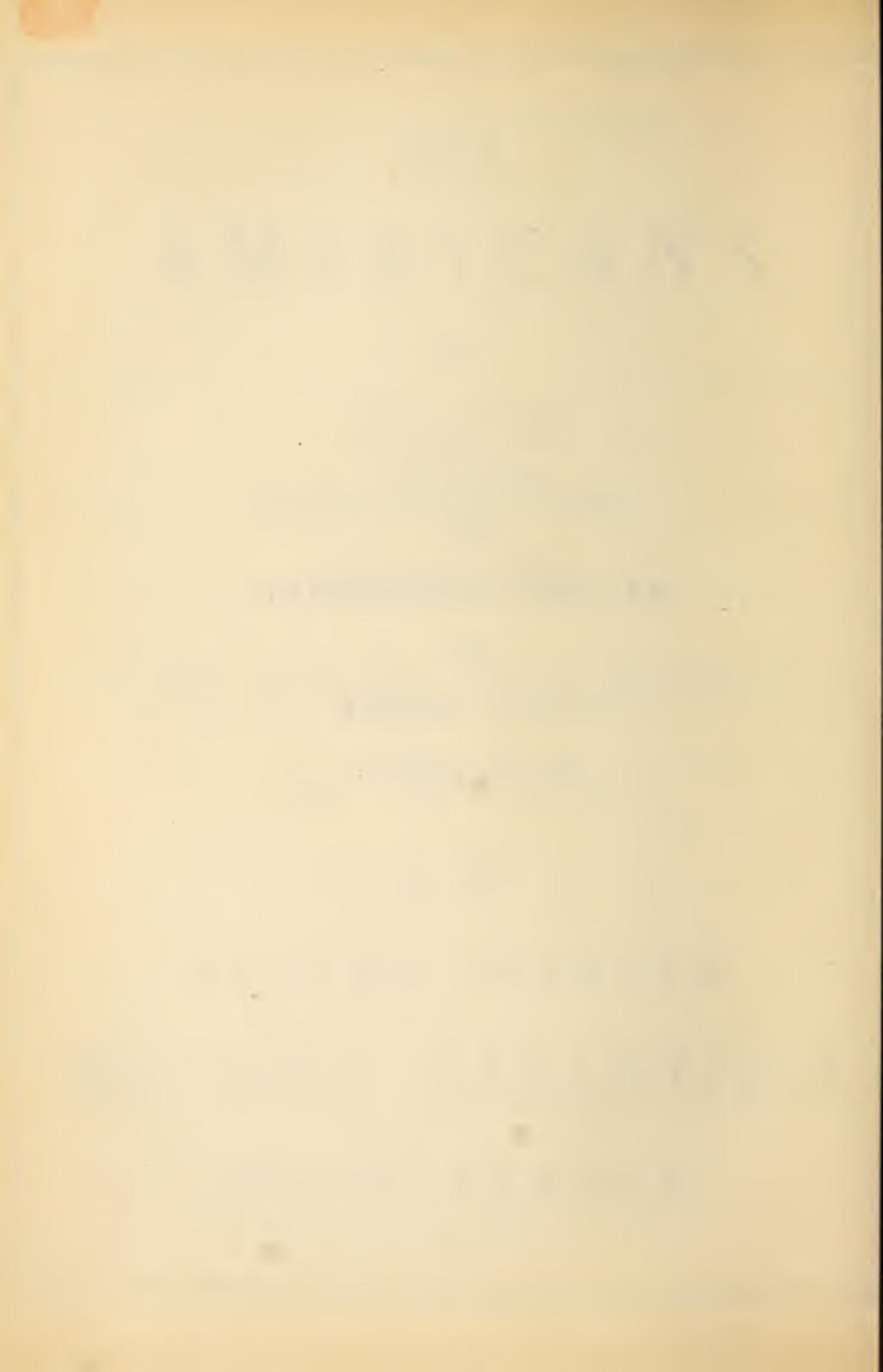
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ERROR



An interview with Fritz Lang was erroneously announced for this issue. This month the director interviewed is G. W. Pabst



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C L O S E U P

No 6

December 1927

A S I S

BY THE EDITOR

At last I too will quote names.

Would it be fair to Epstein if the London County Council calmly knocked off the famous hands of Rima without so much as breathing a word of their intention to him, simply because the hands were not in accordance with their artistic concepts? Or a nose off a Greek god in the British Museum for the same reason?

Would it be fair to Augustus John if everybody emulated the late Lord Leverhulme and sent him back his portrait of them with the head cut out?

Would you call it fair to Osbert Sitwell or André Gide or Thomas Mann if any one publishing translated editions carved up the chapters and disembowelled the contents out of recognition?

What sort of chance, if this were done, would there be for art and artists, for thought, philosophy, reason, beauty, jus-

tice ? Well, it is quite beyond argument, you can see how unspeakable, incredible and fantastic such procedure would be. You might even call me mad for suggesting it. What an outcry when anything is remotely attempted in this way, what societies for protection of rights exist, how safe you are if you write or paint, compose or carve. Yet (yes, I am sure you are there before me) men who make films are expected (but not asked) to suffer the bitterest insults and undergo the deepest humiliation in respect of their creative work.

Any cheap nonentity in official status can at will work desperate havoc with beautiful work, snipping wildly in every direction. Any illiterate judgment backed by official scissors is openly and acknowledgedly permitted to hack its stifling prejudices across the work of genius ; genius that has spent long hours in the cutting room, perfecting, adding final touches, (as Epstein might polish lovingly or Picasso add minute last flicks of the brush) is subjected to indignities beyond any justification. Somebody hacks a thousand feet from the middle of his film, destroying balance, destroying everything, then announces calmly "That is better". Adds perhaps a dozen filthy sub-titles to make up for and clumsily explain the mutilated continuity. Translate such procedure into terms of any of the other arts and its monstrosity hits you between the eyes. For nobody can go on any longer pretending that the film is in its new aspects on a par with the old seaside "Fun Halls" with the automatic peep shows. It was, but that is over. That attitude to the cinema should have passed with the general passing of the lath and plaster, pseudo

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Taj Mahal-ish movie kiosks of savourless, dingy streets. True in those days cutting was less important, though still rather a rebuke to the maker, but now today it is exactly on a par with any wanton destruction of artistic work.

Let me quote *Joyless Street*. Pabst was talking to me about this film, and the story is tragic but good. Germany would not back him, and eventually money was forthcoming from France. He made the film in thirty-four days working sixteen hours a day. When completed it was ten thousand feet in length, roughly the same as *Ben Hur* or *The Big Parade*. France, on accepting it belatedly, promptly slashed out a couple of thousand feet as well as every single "shot" of the street itself. Since then bits have been added and bits taken away. Vienna, for no discoverable reason, extracted all the Werner Krauss sequences, so that he did not appear in the film at all. Russia found it necessary to turn the American lieutenant into a doctor, and turned Krauss into the murderer instead of the girl. Finally, after having run a year in Germany, an attempt was made to censor it there. In England at the Film Society it hung together in shreds. But of course in Switzerland, when it was shown, most of the English left the theatre. In England, naturally, there are no "questionable houses". The English felt they ought to imply this. So they left. So impressive. America next clears its throat and utters. America says "This is not real" and "This is not true". All America, of course, lived in Vienna just after the war, the whole of it, so it ought to know. A mere Viennese wouldn't. However, the best thing really is to do

as England did. It didn't mutilate. It cut it out altogether. And one thing I know is that the English (no not that class that walks out in Switzerland, but the workers) given the film straight would be the first to praise it. But the mediators and others say no.

And this, you will gather, is only one instance of what happens to every director. Was it *Rien que les Heures* that Cavalcanti sent out with ten sub-titles to have it presented in due course with over fifty? *La P'tite Lillie*—a ten-minute film—they could not even leave alone, but cut the sequences that showed the whole film story was a song only. Foreign films *do* get to England, but isn't it like some process of awful starvation that they are almost always, when finally they are released, skeletons of their former selves? *Secrets Of the Soul* lost (except for the sheer student of psycho-analysis) all meaning. *Metropolis* was a complete flop in every sense. They took out (one felt rather tore out at random) every moment the film had. And I forget who it was, but somebody filled it with Sunday School axioms.

Clearly something ought to be done. Nothing actually much more scandalous could exist. In the realm of logic, for any man to scoop out scenes from any film made by any artist, good or bad, is equivalent to accusing him of bad taste or indecency or even (remembering frequent official attitudes) crime. And men like Pabst, Murnau, Grune, Cavalcanti, should not be expected to bow before such implications.

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For such a state of affairs it is not a solution that is needed but reparation. The only thing of course is an efficient system of protective copyright. How is this likely to come about and when ? Not until every director recognises his power and becomes dictator making his own conditions. A combination of directors working together would soon and without undue difficulty turn the tables. The public must have its films, but if the directors refused to supply them except on their own terms, not one here and another there, but working in definite co-operation, then their work would finally be treated with respect. There would be deadlock at first and fracas, and an interesting crisis in the cinema world. But take this from me. I'm dead sure the public is right on the director's side. The public doesn't want films on the principle children are allowed certain books by their parents and not others, the public is more mature than that. I have said before, the public, the real, constant cinema public knows a good film and would give anything to see good films. What it does not want is a wide range of middlemen making sure that it sees if possible only bad ones. Out of somewhere the incredible myth has arisen that the public is getting what it wants. "What the public wants" in the way of films has long been understood to be trivial compounds of tribulation, pathos, laughter (preferably through your tears) and a "happy ending".

Consequently it is as a rule pathos without the dignity of tragedy, tribulation that could be quickly remedied by an O-Cedar Mop or a slight flair for repartee, and meretricious gaiety whisked in like a panic so that the public shall retain its cheery and benevolent attitude. Good stuff this for the class that reads the penny novels. But there are other novels too, and other classes. And actually it is not good stuff even for the penny novel public. A new range of apprehensions, understandings and needs has swept cleanly across the world in the last ten years. It is dangerous and destructive to go on with the old ones that led to an incredible world butchery now only too laconically remembered.

Russia is now using the cinema and using it to educate its people, to make them see sensibly, to make them understand, to refute the mediaeval falsehoods on which civilizations are built and broken. In other words, the cinema is in the hands of men intelligent enough to realise that sane knowledge of sex, hygiene, government and religion is a foundation that does not collapse when the building is all but finished ; that myths of sorcery and patched up feudalism will not meet the needs of a new world. Contrariwise our cinema, almost every other cinema, is in the hands of men who do not say, but deeply and inwardly reason that it is safest to play down to mob-consciousness. At the same time they spend much of their time wondering about wars and revolutions.

Whichever way you look at it, there is a deep problem and a thorny path. If the cinema is to be saved for art (and that more direct reason for art—education in its widest and best

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sense) old gods will lie in the mud as profusely as do soldiers' corpses in France.

The giving up of an old belief does, as a matter of fact, far less harm than retention of it ; the catch being that a new order demands faith in something ; demands the relinquishing of what has been secure. Too much of life is on the principle of clutching at straws so new orders are not popular. The passing from one to the other is over a chasm. So the easiest thing is to stop still, only life won't let you.

If, on the other hand, the cinema is to be left to cheaply flatter the mentality of those who accept war, disease, crime and gruesome suffering, it will have signally failed in accomplishing what no other medium can do one half as thoroughly, and will deserve whatever heavenly wrath may descend upon it.

Let us begin to get it right now. Lies have been stuffed into us for so long, or what is worse, truth pruned, preened and pepnotised, that finally we deserve a little truth in the raw. As all the world has heard, for instance, the beautiful heroism of Edith Cavell is now being made the subject of a film. Pauline Frederick was originally to have the part, but British feeling ran so high they had to choose instead a British actress—Sybil Thorndike. All one can say to these film makers is exasperating idiots ! True, Germany has made and now makes part two of an elaborate militaristic war film, *Weltkrieg (World War)*, but we have seen so much in this vein, bombs, shells, wounded, advances, retreats, and the other way round, that they no longer mean much, and never did

mean much more to applauding audiences than Douglas Fairbanks in the *Black Pirate* or Buster Keaton in *The General*.

The Cavell story is a different matter. Edith Cavell was everything that has been said of her, but she got herself trapped—as did thousands of others—in war. And if war is not a parlour-game people must expect to endure the consequence and incident of war. I am certain that Edith Cavell herself would have been the first to say do not make this film. She herself said, remember, patriotism is not enough. Were the story to be treated solely as a document to show the rabid filthiness and crime of war as war, and one were sure there would be no hint of an attempt to show the crime of Germany making war on England, all would be well. She was shot. It was ghastly enough and terrible enough, but if we must have wars we must have murders. It is equally terrible that there are men to-day all over the world desperately and horribly injured. One disabled ex-soldier is quite as tragic as the story of Nurse Cavell. Say all this on the screen repeatedly and you are saying truth. Say anything else and the lie will help repeat another Cavell story and all the butchery over again.

And what will happen with the Cavell story is that unless it is presented with all the paltry bigotry called patriotism, the mob will thunder it is wicked and a lie. I mean by this that the Cavell tragedy has been used and will be used again as an excuse for ugly, out-at-elbow spite (I cannot find in it the depth of hate) made doubly cheap by running alongside it a shallow glorification or hero-worship, sufficient to make the

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man who won't use his brain feel righteous while venting ugly and destructive sentiment. How useless to deny that we shall hear again on this account "Those brutal Germans ! "

Perhaps it can't be helped. Men still love war. I mean there are thousands who went through the last who clamour for the next. These are often highly efficient in some profession or trade and pass as peace-loving citizens. Danger, therefore, is in waking mob-hysteria, a madness that will cause nations to scream equally blindly and without feeling either for or against war. At *Hoppla Wir Leben* for instance, a Red play combined with film, now running in Berlin, every time an anti-war sentiment or anti-militaristic gesture takes place there are whoops and roars of applause ; a completely febrile, un-seeing gush, exactly the same thing only the other way round that made decent men and women into wholesale slaughterers. And there is not much good in that. To dish up the Cavell story by way of pandering to misdirected pity and even more misdirected indignation is about as commendable as admitting a smallpox patient into a theatre full of unvaccinated pleasure-seekers.

On the other hand *The King of Kings* may possibly be prohibited. It is not dangerous to depict the Christ, but bad form. If only there never had been such a thing as form and only just such a little commonsense instead !

* * *

Well, so it is. So with censoring. So with cutting. Never mind danger but *do* mind form. I mean good form and bad

form, popular appeal. There are two ways to popular appeal, let it be adroitly pointed out. Appealing to the worst is one, appealing to the best is the other. Middlemen muddle the two. They think the best is worst for us and the worst best. They concentrate mostly on the to be or not to be of rape scenes. As if virtue had anything to do with undue stress on the physical.

We must come back to this point : directors must fight for copyright. If they believe in themselves and their work they must fight, not one here and another there, scattered and at random, but in one definite, organised body. Let a body be formed now, let something drastic be done, let a society be formed, a trade-union sort of dictatorship, not chary with ultimatums. For clearly pictures cannot be made without directors. Let us get down to talking now, to beginning to unravel, to beginning to sketch out a plan of campaign. First of all then, cooperation. Cooperation, not among German producers, among French producers, among British producers, among Russian producers, but among *European* producers ! Not French pictures, not English pictures, not Swedish pictures, but *European* pictures. For there is Europe's only chance, artistically, financially and ultimately.

Metropolis came to England and was eviscerated to death's point. Apart from any question of artistic justification (for certainly only the best sequences were deleted) sufficient indignation was roused to cause a retaliation in which a British picture, already bad, was cut in Germany and thereby made so impossible that audiences hissed it off and demanded their

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money back. Such wild behaviour may be well enough for a kindergarten recreation-hour, but is hardly within the legitimate scope of an invalid industry where constant care and night nurses are urgently essential. To quote again, a house divided against itself. . . . and the European house makes war each storey with the next.

On October 22 at the Hotel Adlon in Berlin, Ray Rockett, Production Manager of First National Films, illuminated the cinema world with two or three profound remarks. He said he had come to Germany to study intensively German production methods. He said if asked had America anything to learn from Germany regarding method he would answer yes. Germany could make films so much more. . . . cheaply ! Be warned. Cheaper American films. See them spilling over the world like the Mississippi flood. And Europe hasn't got an ark.

He set too an example (and this bears vividly on my point) of contrast between German and American methods. Quoting Alexander Corda, who is now directing in America, he said he had never known a director who worked so quickly and cheaply. The secret was that when he arrived in Hollywood he thought he must follow out the same methods as in Europe ; that he must keep within a financial limit, and not only direct, *but cut too*. "With us," said Mr. Ray Rockett, "the director does nothing but direct." The cutting and editing have no more to do with him than has the financial side.

As a matter of fact most European directors going to Amer-

ica *do* cut their own films. The others don't. The principle is unparalleled, but only about twice as preposterous as leaving the compositor to decide what parts of your book he will and will not print.

This being the rule in America (and I have too an article for you next month on how American pictures are made) there is nothing to be said. The director has nothing to do but direct. Naturally he won't want to fight for more work. With us in Europe it is different. The only real creative work in film making, namely cutting (and incidentally the most exhausting) is done in America by a paid staff. If the director has aimed at subtle effects (he hasn't, but let us suppose) nobody in the cutting room is likely to know it. I want you to read the articles on Pabst this month which will show you how cutting should be done, and indeed how films must be made if they are to be anything but "ordinary programme features". When Pabst emerged finally from the cutting room he brought with him a perfect work of art with *Joyless Street* and now with *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney*. Each was individual, complete ; each was Pabst. There remained and now remains for the censors and their confederates war dances, tomahawks, and all the unpunishable offences.

KENNETH MACPHERSON.

DIE LIEBE DER JEANNE NEY

(*The Love of Jeanne Ney*)

AND ITS MAKING

An U F A filmd by Pabst

Joyless Street became famous over a slow, too-drawn-out period of years. In spite of attention, admiration, demand, it did seem that everything was done to try to keep it from being a success. Now after a few years, in spite of those who tried to stop it, it has been acclaimed.

Now comes *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney* from the same director, and with it the question, what is going to be done about this film ? Here is a work of art, quite complete and quite individual, with technical perfection and astonishing beauty, and it is most doubtful if twenty per cent of the real cinema enthusiasts will have the chance to see it. Or if they *do* see it, in what state of mutilation and emasculation will it be ?

The whole film situation is in crying need of reform, for conditions are made incredibly difficult in every instance where a film stands apart as a work of art or beauty, and before anything can have real weight behind it, there must be support from the public ; the public must demand and go on demanding the good films ; to accept them is not enough. To see them if they come your way is not enough, simply because unless it is realised that you and you are demanding

something better and something better all the time ; that there is a considerable part of the population clamouring for good films and a diminishing of cheap, flaccid and un-applied ones, there will be no more good ones. As things are the better a film is the less is its chance of success. That is not the fault of the public, for there is a large and ever increasing percentage of people who want the best there is to see, it is partly the fault of bad organisation, lack of provision and foresight and initiative, and partly the fault of intermediaries ; wretched people who get between you and the producer in neat, almost militaristic array, waving aside what is not innocuous or peurile or base.

The genius producer can exert pressure at his end, but alone he cannot fight the monster that is choking him ; the public must lend its weight. The producer is the wedge, but the public is the sledge hammer that must drive it through.

So then, what are we going to do about *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney* ? I have said this is a film that makes film history. It is better than *Joyless Street*, more complete in some subtle way, swifter in action, more breath-taking not so tragic, more dynamic.

Pabst said "You have no idea how difficult it is for us to make good pictures, of how I had to *fight* to make this picture. It is really terrible. They want us to make only films in the American style. And I say to them, we are not Americans, we *cannot* make pictures in the American style, (even if we wanted to) for the whole of our mentality is different. To make American pictures we must *be* American in our mind,

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and that we cannot be, do you see ?” We did—only too well.

With each new film in this category the fight grows steadily harder and harder. It doesn't end either with the making of the film. Rather that is where it begins. This will not do, we cannot have that, you must do this, you must cut out that, you must add in the other thing. As example, there is a scene in *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney* where a young Communist quite simply accompanies the girl, Jeanne, into a church. He has just come from the Crimea, and has been with her for the first time, walking through the poor streets of Paris, loading her with flowers from the market flower-sellers' baskets. It is a scene full of warmth and deep feeling and the ardour of young people for whom there will be (one feels) brief and flaming passages of sheer loveliness. They are dazed by each other, covering their feelings with gaiety and gay tributes. The passing into church was a half-hypnotised, small adventure.

“All they have said,” Pabst could laugh at this, “is that a Communist would not go to church. I say to them, ‘I am showing that. . . this. . . Communist. . . does. . . go. . . to church.’ ‘Oh, but a Communist doesn't go to church’. ‘Well I am showing you *how* this Communist did go to church’.”

There may not be now or ever a world fit for artists and heroes to live in, but there definitely is a world where artists and heroes must be allowed to exist, and they are not going to be hounded out of it through lack of fighting. This film, then, let us say, has got to be the success it deserves to be. The answer is well how ? What can we do ? Firstly we

have your goodwill ; you want to see this film. *Close Up*, backed by a large number of producers wants you to see this film. Why then can't you see it ? Doesn't it seem rather unreasonable and far fetched ? You see your position. In between us and you lies a most impertinent and arbitrary barrier that has you at its mercy on its one side and the producers at its mercy on the other. Then *down with the barrier*, have it down, smash it, blow it up with dynamite. It is cheating you and defrauding the producers ; it is ruinous wasteful and unscrupulous. And all the branches that constitute this faction control the film world. I am in a position to state that soon there is going to be an organised movement to turn the tables and to bring some sort of reason and order into the existing chaos, and then your support will be valuable while the sparks fly.

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Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney, then, stands at this minute as an example of perfection unprotected utterly. Perhaps nobody again will see the film as I saw it in a projection-room at Neubabelsburg, set starkly on the screen unhelped by any suavity of music or surrounding. What an improvement this was ! Here was the medium straight and on its own, and all the stronger for it. It had a bite to it seen that way it could never have had with the blur and ornament of music.

The story begins in the Crimea, and right at the beginning there are scenes that will make a happy hunting-ground for the censors, a scene of Russian officers and women getting

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drunk. For this scene one hundred and twenty Russian officers, including seven generals came in their own uniforms, working for twelve marks a day. Pabst supplied vodka and women, waited, and then calmly photographed. Not one of these scenes is offensive in any way, and every one is strong and sonorous, so that the effect on the film itself is like some deep, vital root. But it is on account of this strength and the uncompromising treatment and the exquisite photography of those scenes that they will probably have to suffer.

We meet Fritz Rasp first, in a room apart from the orgy, lolling, in some way a complete, congenital scoundrel. The suggestion of unpleasantness, the repellant atmosphere, come across instantly ; and yet you feel at the same time, here is a man who is not giving way to this lower instincts, but being what he is because he *is* what he is. Throughout the film masterly acting and masterly directing carried on this impression ; that whatever crime and depravity he was capable of, he was being completely himself, with a kind of genius and sheer contempt for his fellow creatures.

Next emerges Uno Henning, a young Swedish actor, another discovery of Pabst. This was his first picture in Germany, and as long as it is by no means his last we shall be satisfied. There was objection again to the fact that he was not "well known". It did not seem to matter that here was not only an ideal type for the part, but a rare nordic quality of intellect and personal charm that you could no more discount than you could discount a Veidt or—in his own way—a Krauss, or the Garbo that was. Of course it is as well to

bear in mind that after *Joyless Street*, Greta Garbo waited a year in vain for another European contract, and although she desired to stay no offers were forthcoming. My personal fear is that we shall next hear of Henning in Hollywood.

Most felicitous in her part is Edith Jehanne, who played in *The Chess Player*. Her greatest attribute is a deep sensitiveness, a living the part she plays. In *The Chess Player* she was blurred by maudlin and inapposite sentimentality. The director spent his energy in getting her into touching situations, and drivelling over her generally. Here she goes through the film like an arrow, unblurred and definite and admirable. Her power is in her eyes which give the dual impression of defencelessness and courage. Pabst moves her through his film bringing out both these qualities until the power of it is almost stunning.

There are moments of exquisite beauty. One of them is after the murder of her father as she and Uno Henning as the young Communist stand transfixed by one another and shattered in so many ways, but still without relinquishing what has not yet been spoken. Another follows shortly as Jeanne leaves the Crimean town for Paris. With a simple black oilskin, she leaves her house for the boat. Rain is falling heavily, and the roads are deeply rutted and in large puddles from the traffic and guns which rattle past her. Groups of soldiers stand about, others hurry past through the rain. She swings through the bustle both conscious and unconscious of it. On the outskirts of the town, where the roads are ploughed out of recognition, with huge puddles splashing in the

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rain and bare trees dripping, she comes face to face with Henning. They stand a long time in the swirl of wind and rain, then go straight to each others' arms. Presently she goes on again as before, leaving him. He stands there while she continues her way to the boat.

It is a simple scene, yet handled with such poignancy and sensitiveness one's hair literally stood on end, and it *will* stand on end quite frequently in the course of this film.

Another moment that emerges is after the church scene in Paris at night. The two lovers have gone with complete naturalness and disarming honesty to a cheap Montparnasse hotel. (Who but Pabst can paint in so surely and boldly these cheap and tawdry hostels ?) From their room they look down across the street at a wedding party going on. The contrast may be meant as a comment on marriage, but it fitted there with the stab of perfection ; a deft, intensely moving slight moment, yielding in some way, curious beauty, nervous and restrained and intensely spiritual. In the cold morning light, a glance toward that same window reveals the wreckage of the marriage feast. The amazing manner in which the impression that the happiness of these two was some swift and ephemeral thing, too swift perhaps, and too intense and too unconscious, was all the time conveyed, can be no secret of technique, but some profound, dynamic genius.

It is noteworthy how realism in the settings cemented the realism of the characterisation. It is noteworthy too, that realism in the settings never obtruded or took possession of the story, as it might have done say in the rain scene, but

blended in, not running even parallel, but inevitably intertwined. The Montparnasse scenes, for instance. Here, it is true, the camera and cameraman were hidden in a vegetable cart. But who thought out that lighted sign outside the Montparnasse hotel? There is, too, a scene in a train. Pabst had for this a goods wagon built up as for the camera a third class compartment in order to be able to arrange distance and lighting, normally impossible in a railway coach. The effect of the passing countryside and the motion should be enough to put an end to studio "compartments" with canvas "scenery" going past on rollers.

It was clever of Pabst to be able to think out—yes, anybody might have thought of it, but who has?—a Paris that is not the Paris of the Films, a place of Moulin-Rouge, cheap cabarets, carnival streamers, apache dancers and views of the Rue de Rivoli. Paris suddenly became real, Paris suddenly *was* Paris. It was almost a shock to realise *Paris could exist on the films*.

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Now, as to the making of this film, here is the answer to much criticism, and an example of the only way films can be made if they are not to be in the penny-plain category. There were fifty eight working days and Pabst was there for twelve to sixteen hours per day. Once they worked thirty-six hours on end without ceasing. Everybody had to be kept awake with strong drinks. It was not that they were behind schedule time, but that Pabst dominating, and driv-



M^{lle} Edith Jehanne, the star of *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney*, a new film made by Pabst, who directed *Joyless Street*. She will be remembered in *The Chess Player*. After this, however, she will be remembered in *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney*. Let us pray America does not swallow her up.

Courtesy of Ufa



Uno Henning, a young Swedish actor, who plays opposite Edith Jechame in *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney*. This was his first film part in Germany. He is now acting on the stage in Stockholm. But we hope he will go quickly back to films, and to Pabst.



Fritz Rasp (you will recall him in *Metropolis*, the man in the flat black hat and frock coat). Thank goodness he is at last given an opportunity to show what he can do. His performance in *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* is astounding. People should reserve their cries of "genius" until they have seen him in this film.



Uno Henning again and a dramatic moment in the government office in the Crimean town. See next page



Vladimir Sokoloff, as irresistible as his smile. He was in *Out of The Mist*. Unhappily Europe has lost him now. *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* was his last part here. He has now sailed for America. We will miss him.



The government official attempted to shoot him, and his Red companion has shot the Government official. Jeanne has hurried in and found her father dead and the man she has fallen in love with, but not spoken to, standing

Courtesy of Ufa



Thus.



In the Soviet offices. Jeanne has sailed away for France. Sokoloff (at table on right) has her address and is about to give it to her despairing lover.

Courtesy of Ufa

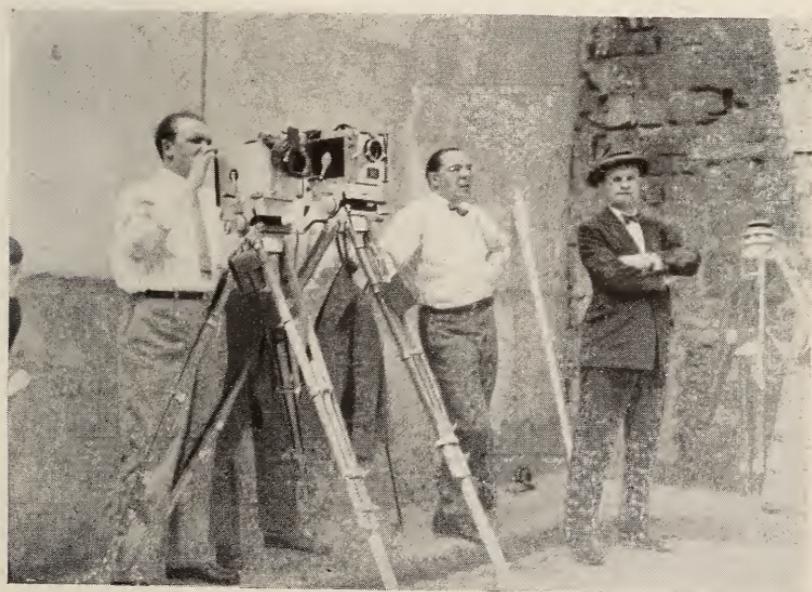


On location. Some of the staff, with Pabst in the centre, next to Edith Jehanne. Uno Hemming leads a supporting arm. This is taken in the grounds at Neubabelsburg. Note the lamps behind.

Courtesy of Ufa



The joys of cinematography. In Montparnasse, waiting for the sun. On the left Wagner, the cameraman and Pabst take a disconsolate stroll. Brigitte Helm is in the taxi.



Still waiting. The company was in Paris for six weeks out of which period there were only ten possible working days. Pabst in centre, Wagner on the left.

Courtesy of Ufa



Still waiting. In the background Uno Henning. In one scene twenty five metres of film took a week to take. The sun, of course had to be in the same position all the time during the scene, and it refused to shine at the time required.



Sun at last. Brigitte Helm, the blind girl, is led to the taxi by Edith Jehanne. In another scene, where the same taxi is used outside a station, people insisted on trying to engage it at the moment they were about to photograph. The actor driving it did not speak French, and there were complications.

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ing his creation, knew that in that particular scene there was no rest until it was ended. Everybody else might be falling to sleep, but he perhaps because of it, could go on with a kind of desperate drive, possessing scene and actors alike. Of these fifty eight working days, ten only were in Paris, although the company was there for six weeks. This was purely for reasons of light, and some days only ten minutes work could be done.

The task was not made easier by the fact that Pabst had a cosmopolitan company quite a number of whom could not speak German. Edith Jehanne could not speak at all, and Uno Henning could speak but imperfectly. Nobody who has not tried it can appreciate the tremendous difficulty of directing in different languages. But Pabst seems to enjoy difficulties. In *Joyless Street*, having been already warned that Greta Garbo was almost impossible to photograph, (it was her second film) he promptly engaged her and found that this was indeed true, for the simple reason that she was so frightened he could do nothing with her. At the end of a fortnight he was in despair, and unable to sleep at night, when the idea came to him to turn the handle of the camera more quickly, so that her movements would thus be slowed down. This meant, of course, the rest of the cast had to be rehearsed again in order that their movements would accord. That is to say, they had to jerk their movements so that they would not seem disproportionately slow in comparison with Greta Garbo's now natural movements. This procedure was adopted throughout the entire film.

But coming back to *Jeanne Ney* ; when finished Pabst

retired for some weeks to the cutting room. He told me there are two thousand cuts in the entire film. As I saw it one was not conscious of any. When I said this he explained his method. "Every cut is made on some movement. At the end of one cut somebody is moving, at the beginning of the adjoining one the movement is continued. The eye is thus so occupied in following these movements that it misses the cuts. Of course," he added, "this was very difficult to do."

Contrast this method with the crude and utterly unapologetic cutting of nearly all the films you see. But what will happen to this work of art when censors, renters and others start chopping it up? The principle will be like trimming the edge off rose petals with scissors to improve the shape.

But, as I saw the film, it was flawless. Lighting, photography (by Wagner who photographed *Warning Shadows* and now photographs the new Fritz Lang picture) were so suave and unstunted you might not be aware of their excellence (unless you were "in the know")—which is the way of perfection. It was a completely individual work. One mind had conceived it, dominated it, and created it. Contrast, again, this impression with the loose and scattered feeling of the American films. Meanwhile let us acclaim Pabst as a genius, and you who want to see this film, help as much as you can by asking for it at your cinema. It was released in Germany in mid November. (I wonder how much they cut it there?) If we do not cry out for it it may lie in Wardour Street forever. Remember, *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney*, an U F A film.

K. M.

THE FILM "STORY"

One can only judge by one's own experience. My own experienced is limited. I have not spent every evening of the last twenty years in film-theatres. But so far as my limited experience enables me to judge, I consider that America has no artistic importance whatever in the world of the cinema. Technically, in the matter of camera-craft, it has had importance. Commercially it has had, and still has, great importance. The financial methods, the absurd extravagance, the indifference to economic principles which have characterised film-exploitation in America would have ruined any industry with less rich opportunities and less vast fields of activity than the films. One hears rumours of the perilous position of some of the big companies. The marvel is that they have not all gone bankrupt.

As regards the artistic future of the film it would not matter—provided that Chaplin were saved—if all Hollywood were swallowed up in an earthquake. The loss of life would be terrible and deplorable : the domestic tragedies would be agonizing ; tens of millions of simple souls would sincerely mourn in five continents ; but the artistic future of the film world would not suffer in the slightest degree. I have never—Chaplin's work apart—seen a good American film.

I have rarely seen one that was not artistically revolting. Not one of the famous American directors has left a permanent mark on film history, or produced anything that would not deeply grieve the judicious.

I must specially except Charles Chaplin, who, in addition to being a great actor, is a great producer. "The Gold Rush", while not perfect in some essential matters, was a great film. It would bear seeing twice.

The future of the films seems to me to be in Germany. I have seen dreadful German films. One of the silliest and worst was "Metropolis". But I have seen two relatively good ones, "The Last Laugh" and, still better, "Vaudeville". "The Last Laugh" was too long, too confused, and too sentimental in the middle ; but towards the end the director pulled himself together and created real effective comedy which was conceived with a true appreciation of the medium. The photography frequently had beauty.

"Vaudeville" told a convincing story, spoilt only by lack of attention to detail. Surely it must have been obvious to even the common intelligence that no gymnasts engaged in dangerous acrobatic feats every evening could possibly have indulged in the nocturnal excesses which the strong men of "Vaudeville" permitted themselves. The photography was beautiful. By which I mean that the pictorial composition, both statically and dynamically, was beautiful. The eye was again and again charmed by beautiful pictures made out of men and women and out of common interiors. To achieve this was a feat.

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And I have seen finer compositional results than those of "Vaudeville". A few weeks ago, in Berlin, a small party of which I happened to be a member was given a private performance of a film (I will not name it, as it is not yet released) whose photography in my opinion reached a higher level than any film has ever reached before. It was an almost continuous series of lovely pictures. The beauty of them thrilled us. And the acting was fairly good. But the story told by the lovely pictures was contemptible. It had no intelligible basic idea, nor any convincingness, nor any characterisation, nor any beauty. The plot was involved, obscure, and slow in movement. And the invention of illustrative incident was puerile. Indeed the story was merely foolish.

I mention this film because it suddenly crystallised my critical notions about the present state of development of the cinema. It constituted a superlative illustration of the fact that while the graphic side of the cinema has been most satisfactorily advancing, the dramatic side has been most unsatisfactorily lagging behind. The creative brain which conceived and executed the graphic side in a manner to win the respect of the artistically educated seemed to possess no critical faculty capable of handling the dramatic side in a way correspondingly adequate.

Apparently the leaders of the cinema have not yet grasped the fundamental truth that the most important part of any creative film is the story itself, and that all other parts of the enterprise are merely parts of an effort to tell the story.

In other words they forget, or they disdain, the central reason for their work. They are so excited and so busy in 'producing' that they lose sight of what it is they *are* producing. The act of creation interests them far less than the act of 'putting over' that which has been created. In the judgment of the master-brain of the affair, the author is subordinate to the interpreter. The master-brain thinks first of how much he can spend on the business, not of how little. Instead of trying first to derive strength *from* the main theme, the master-brain tries first to give strength *to* the theme. The master-brain is occupied with extraneous ornament instead of being occupied with dramatic essentials.

Any story will serve for a star-producer. And if by chance he gets hold of a good story he is sure somehow to ruin it by preposterous additions. I have not yet seen a first-rate story told in a first-rate style on the screen. All the new stories, contrived *ad hoc*, are conventional, grossly sentimental, clumsy, and fatally impaired by poverty of invention. The screen has laid hands on some of the greatest stories in the world, and has cheapened, soiled, ravaged, and poisoned them by the crudest fatuities. This charge applies less to Germany than to other countries, and it applies most of all to America ; but it applies to Germany in a very serious degree.

Even Charles Chaplin shows immensely less talent for devising a tale, and the incidents of a tale, than for any of the subsidiary branches of film-work.

It is no answer here to say that the big public demands

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bad stories. The big public may or may not demand bad stories. I am discussing, not the commercial aspect of the screen, but the question of its artistic progress. I am thinking of art and not of dividends. Those who think first of vast expense and vaster returns will never do anything for the film as an artistic vehicle. In regard to finance I will only say this,—that it costs less to do an artistic film than an in-artistic film. Chariot-races, the dividing of seas for the passage of hosts, conflagrations, battles on water and battles on land may make an audience stare, but what grips and moves an audience is the simple spectacle of human emotions clashing one with another.

The remedy is clear. If and when a producer acquires the true sense of proportion which alone will enable him to perceive the relative importance of the different parts of his job, he must, unless he has himself the gift of creating character and contriving event, find somebody who has that gift—in terms of the screen. Useless for him to go to established and therefore middle-aged masters of literary narration. To all these distinguished artists the screen is still a novelty. The film-medium does not come naturally to them because they were not familiar with it in their formative years—the only years that count in the making of an artist. The producer must discover young men who went to the cinema as children, who cannot remember the time when there was no cinema, and who will take to the screen as a duck takes to water. The older men who accept an invitation to the screen are bound to resemble ducks endeavouring to fly. They may

fly, but their flight will be laborious, maladroit and pathetic.

All which is obvious ; the obvious, however, is often useful.

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ARNOLD BENNETT.

LA FACE HUMAINE A L'ÉCRAN

IV

YEUX, NEZ, BOUCHE.

Jusqu'à présent on a considéré que la photogénie des yeux dépendait toute entière du coefficient personnel et des aptitudes naturelles du sujet : cela échapperait donc tout à fait à la technique. Ce qu'il y a de vrai dans cette idée, c'est que les mouvements des yeux, pupilles et prunelles, sont des réactions impossibles à commander et par suite très difficiles à éduquer. Cependant on a pu remarquer que l'adaptation forcée de l'œil à des réactions lentes, telles que par exemple l'habitude de regarder au microscope, détruisait la photogénie de l'œil. Il n'est donc pas ridicule de penser que l'adaptation de l'œil à des réactions vives, telle que pourrait la procurer par exemple l'habitude du tir aux pigeons, agirait

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de façon directement contraire. On sait aussi que l'habitude de regarder les objets proches donne aux yeux certaine douceur inexpressive, tandis qu'au contraire l'habitude de regarder des objets lointains leur donne l'apparence de la force. Mais il faut plusieurs mois pour que de semblables résultats puissent être atteints.

La première chose qui a été bien remarquée et utilisée, c'est qu'on pouvait, par des jeux de lumière, faire paraître les yeux plus ou moins enfoncés sous l'arcade sourcillière : selon que l'influence le reste du visage, l'enfoncement des yeux donne plus d'intelligence ou plus de tristesse à la physionomie. Les yeux à fleur de tête au contraire donnent une impression de niaiserie réjouie. Quant à l'exorbitation des yeux que produirait l'épouvante, elle est tellement difficile à simuler que presque toujours le spectateur reste partagé entre l'émotion que l'acteur voudrait produire et l'envie de rire. Aussi la plupart des grands acteurs ont renoncé à cette expression. Ajoutons d'ailleurs que, pour que cette expression soit sensible, il faut que le visage avance vers l'objectif, tandis que l'ensemble de la mimique de l'épouvante consiste bien entendu à reculer. Les éclairages qui ombrent les yeux, pris fort nets à quarante cinq degrés environ, au-dessus d'une tête fortement inclinée en avant, produisent une impression tendue difficile à interpréter par le spectateur : puissance et mystère du sphinx. Au contraire un éclairage pris de plus haut et plus de côté, découvrant et faisant briller une partie de l'œil, donnera l'impression d'une intelligence aiguë qui se réserve. Un effet que Griffith a obtenu avec plein succès sur

Lillian Gish, c'est de faire contraster dans ses yeux des lumières et des ombres fort diverses, ce qui produisait un bel effet d'irrésolution. Par malheur ces effets si simples à produire et si puissants exigent l'immobilité de la tête ; c'est dire que leur emploi est fort limité.

On peut aussi essayer de modifier l'enfoncement des yeux dans la tête au moyen des bains d'eau chaude ou froide. Ces massages, auxquels l'œil est très sensible, produisent deux effets successifs et contraires : l'eau froide dégonfle l'œil d'abord pour le regonfler ensuite, l'eau chaude le gonfle d'abord et le rougit pour le soulager ensuite. Comme il faudrait appliquer le maquillage par dessus ce bain d'yeux, seules les secondes réactions sont pratiquement utilisables.

Les contrastes de noir et de blanc, les maquillages presque géométriques, ont donné aux écoles allemandes et russes quelques effets saisissants, mais dont l'inconvénient est évident : si c'est le premier aspect du personnage qui saisit, par la suite le jeu de ce personnage sera nécessairement privé de toute souplesse. Il semble plus rationnel de se contenter de souligner les traits naturels. L'épilement des sourcils est un moyen presque mécanique d'indiquer une élégance équivoque. Noircir le tour des yeux pour les agrandir est un artifice vieux comme le monde. Noircir le dessous de l'arcade sourcillière pour renforcer le dessous de l'œil est un procédé qui a donné à Barrymore l'expression énergique dont il a su limiter l'emploi. Il faut éviter, malgré tous ceux qui veulent faire du cinéma une symphonie en noir et blanc, d'employer ces noirs en opposition avec un plâtrage épais de la figure :

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ces couleurs intenses, en tuant les ombres naturelles, produisent des espèces de têtes de cire pour coiffeurs, fastidieuses au bout de deux minutes de jeu.

Comme chaque expression morale des yeux vus de face est une *composée* de quatre ou cinq mouvements dont aucun ne se commande consciemment, comme par ailleurs la tentative de commander consciemment les muscles des yeux produit rapidement une fatigue insupportable, il restera pendant longtemps encore plus simple de demander à l'acteur de mimer telle ou telle émotion. Il en résulte que l'effet produit sera encore la plupart du temps un peu incertain. J'ajoute qu'en présentant les yeux toujours de face on leur a fait exprimer presque uniquement des émotions passives. On n'a presque pas utilisé l'œil de profil. Pourtant le froncement du sourcil, les variations très visibles de son épaisseur, la masse des cils, visible de profil seulement, et qui souligne remarquablement les mouvements des paupières, mettent parfaitement l'œil en valeur. D'autre part, en proposant seulement un objet à l'œil de l'acteur, qu'on filme de profil, on peut obtenir, par la présence ou l'absence de sa prunelle, en composition avec les mouvements précédents, la plupart des expressions actives, et aussi quelques-unes des autres.

* * *

C'est également pour le profil que vaut le nez : le froncement du nez diminue l'épaisseur des ailes d'une manière presque aussi visible de profil que de face. Par ailleurs ce

froncement abaisse légèrement le bout du nez, donne au nez tout entier une expression plus rigide qui à elle seule, et bien mieux que les froncements de sourcils, peut donner l'idée d'une énergie calme et majestueuse.

C'est ici le moment de parler des lunettes. Elles tendent presque toujours, pour le spectateur, à boucher l'œil, ce qui produit, selon l'expression du reste du visage, tantôt un effet de bêtise, et tantôt un effet de mystère. On peut changer, soit par les mouvements de la lumière, soit par les mouvements de la tête de l'acteur, l'angle selon lequel la lumière frappe les lunettes : de l'angle de réflexion totale qui empêche absolument de voir les yeux et offre à leur place deux reflets glacés, on peut passer à une arrivée perpendiculaire de la lumière, qui montre les yeux comme si les lunettes étaient absentes : effet qui serait fort utile pour faire attendre, puis révéler par les yeux seuls un personnage jusqu'alors mystérieux. On peut naturellement varier ces effets soit avec un monocle, soit avec des lunettes à verres en demi-cercle, soit encore en faisant apercevoir les yeux par dessous les lunettes. Par ailleurs, en faisant monter ou descendre les lunettes sur le nez, on obtient des effets d'un comique facile, sur lequel il est inutile d'insister. On peut aussi à volonté grossir le nez en y mettant deux tubes faits de plumes d'oiseaux qui ne gênent pas la respiration. Mais cet effet aussi est bien grossier. Enfin toutes les coquettes savaient, même avant l'invention du cinéma, qu'en employant une poudre plus foncée pour le nez que pour la figure on l'agrandit, et qu'avec une poudre plus pâle, on le diminue.

* * *

Quant à la bouche, elle ne peut presque jamais agir seule. Il faut considérer qu'elle est le point d'arrivée de toutes les émotions tristes, qui sont pour ainsi dire centripètes, et le point de départ d'où s'irradient au contraire toutes les émotions gaies, qui sont centrifuges. C'est un effet fort simple, et toutes les nuances en sont fournies par la plus ou moins grande vitesse de cette propagation. Chaplin, par d'imperceptibles mouvements de sa bouche presque close sait faire de ses lèvres, surtout dans la *Ruée vers l'Or*, comme un rivage mobile où viennent aboutir les ondulations de la tristesse, presque invisibles à leur passage sur les joues, et visibles à cette fin seulement.

Toutes les autres déformations de la bouche résultent des mouvements des joues, lorsqu'elles sont vues de face. Jusqu'à présent on n'a bien réussi que les mouvements purement horizontaux, rire, sourire, colère, ou les mouvements verticaux, comme la moue. La moue, en élevant la lèvre supérieure vers les ouvertures du nez, est la mimique qui se refuse à l'odorat. Elle est difficile à employer, parce qu'excessive elle est banale, et faible elle risque d'être mal comprise. Pour la distinguer de la parole ou du baiser il faut, au lieu de mettre la bouche en O pour faire la moue, lui garder une certaine largeur, et faire remonter, en même temps que la lèvre supérieure, la pointe du nez. On a également mal compris les effets qui pouvaient se tirer de la bouche vue de profil. Des varia-

tions de l'épaisseur des lèvres et de leur passage l'une sur l'autre dérivent de la façon la plus simple toutes les expressions de la sensualité. Il est assez curieux que, alors que cette mimique est l'une des plus perfectionnée chez l'homme et chez l'enfant, elle soit restée rudimentaire à l'écran. Enfin bien des expériences ont montré que toutes les mimiques qui veulent représenter la parole sont fort dangereuses. Elles peuvent prendre quelque majesté et quelque vigueur dans un effet d'ensemble, et encore il faut qu'elles soient dominées par des expressions du visage ; mais le Chant de Noël de Chaplin et la Marseillaise de Gance sont des modèles si difficiles à imiter qu'ils peuvent bien passer pour des exceptions.

JEAN PRÉVOST.

FROM A WORK IN PROGRESS
" THROUGH A BLUE GLASS "

" LIGHTS "

That gentleman shouting for lights is not reciting Shakespeare. He is the camera man, or lighting expert, haranguing the electricians in a queer jargon of technicalities and corrosive expletives.

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“Choke that baby you. . . yes with a nigger. Where are the blood pockets. . .diffuse these suns. . .shake them up. . .”

There are two schools of lighting. The Continental school, and the American school. The Continental lighting, generally associated with soft focus photography, gives prominence to important objects and employs eldritch half lights, while the American school seeks a uniformly lit, hard photograph. The camera man, who is not reciting Shakespeare, is probably of the ‘straight’ school, as opposed to the ‘effect’ school. He will dilate against the others, if you encourage him, and accuse them of choosing the easier path.

“Queer lights,” he will begin, “aided by soft focus cover a multitude of things. The more difficult is the clear lighting like the early Keystone Comedies and Mack Sennett productions.”

The others shake their heads sadly and say nothing, which shows more control than most directors on the subject of lights. They chatter incessantly and one or two go so far as to insist on their suggestions being carried out.

“Well,” as the electrician remarked, “it is all in the day’s laugh.”

The laugh for the electrician is long and loud. If he is detailed to work under the roof, to look after the top lighting, he has to work at a constantly rising temperature, never less than one hundred and twenty degrees ; whereas on the floor, he not only runs the risk of being electrocuted by unwieldy lamps, but he comes under the direct sway of the camera man. There is a great deal of rivalry to be baked !

When I came to this chapter on lights I went round to all the camera men that I knew and asked them if they could give me some practical information about lighting for a beginner. When you are filming a title you can work out how many feet of film to give it by allowing two feet of film for the first three words and one foot of film for every other two words. I thought that there might be some such formula for lights, which I had never heard of, allowing so many lights per square foot of floor.

The camera men were indignant. How could they commit themselves to a definite statement when it depended on the way the lamps were burning (how much current, whether diffused or not, etc.) and the make of the lamp itself ?

So I was thrown back on my own resources. Personally I think lighting is a matter of temperament and, that no one will ever be able to light a set to anybody's, except possibly their own, satisfaction unless they find it comes naturally to them. However, I started to think of the 'whys' of many things that are part of one's second nature. It is very difficult, but perhaps some of the following hints may help.

Before proceeding I should like to record the fact that one camera man answered me very rudely. He said, "Tell them what an arc light is, I am sure they don't know."

Just to please him, plainly it has nothing to do with the reader, I am going to devote a paragraph to the *ARC LIGHT* ; for a knowledge of arcs is necessary both on the floor and in the projection room.

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Studio lighting is always being improved, there are new lights which do not hurt the eyes, and others which give depth and character to the face without make-up, but in every case the principal is the arc light. I know of an artistic film, which was only shown privately in this country, that was lit solely by candles ; but that film was made under the supervision of a Russian artist. In a commercial studio we make pictures, we do not paint them !

At present the intensely bright light of the arcs forces the electricians working on the larger lights to wear green glasses which completely cover the eyes ; while many sensible people on the floor sport—you have to 'sport' these things don't you ?—shades that would fill a tennis player with professional jealousy.

A small schoolboy, or any other monster, knows that the resistance offered to an electric current passing through a conductor manifests itself in heat, and with the arc lamp greater resistance is offered because the carbon electrodes are separated. The coefficient of resistance of the intervening air is so high that there is a localization of resistance and heat.

Both positive and negative pencils of carbon, which are the terminals in a circuit, wear away ; the positive becoming cupped or hollowed. The director takes this as a personal affront to himself. When a lamp has to be reloaded he blames the electrician !

The upper carbon rod of an arc light is cored, that is it is drilled through the centre and packed with powdered car-

bon. This is the positive electrode. Smaller and solid pencils are used for the negative electrode.

When an arc light is burning there is a tenuous arc mist. Sometimes this becomes very pronounced and threatens to spoil photographic 'clarity'. The arc mist is due, as a rule, to impure carbons, which have been too heavily cored or copper coated.

The carbons may burn in any position. In a Westminster they burn at an angle; in a Duncan Watson several burn together; the Barden burns larger carbons. It has been found better to set the carbons horizontally when the light is more evenly spread.

In the studio the electricians are told to 'flood' it when the lighting is to be more spread, and to 'spot it' when the lighting is to be more concentrated. Both these operations are carried out by adjusting the carbons.

I am afraid that it is impossible to give a list of the different makes of lights used in the studio as these are always changing. New ones are coming on the market and old ones—vanishing into British studios! A common type is the Kleig, but the Weinert is an improvement on the Kleig as it is fitted with reflectors. A practical light for ordinary purposes is the Winfield, known affectionately in the studio as "Winnie". A 'baby' is a baby spot light. Overhead lamps are called 'domes'. A 'sun' is a large and very powerful arc light, it gets its name from its circular shape. A 'blood pocket' is an electrical device to produce splashes of blood on the actors. There are also lamps which give the effect of

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passing clouds, which are smeared on a roller, and if the lamp is brought sharply into focus thumb marks can be seen on the clouds !

If a spot light is too sharply focussed it is possible to burn a hole in an actor's face. Beware !

When lights are carried about for exteriors they are run on an automobile. In exterior work lamps are often used which in the studio would take all the features from an artist's face—I mean photographically ! Occasionally the light on exteriors is too strong, then the harsh light is softened by strips of white cloth nailed above the outdoor stage. For exceptional exterior work, such as scenes in caverns, the lighting is supplied by magnesium torches.

As I have already observed there is no rule of thumb for the number of lights to use and where to place them, but you will be able to work out your lights if you do as I tell you. The golden rule that I would give you is, "Look for the shadows". Another second is ; "Make up your mind at once whether it is going to be a 'straight' or an 'effect' lighting."

You think that doesn't get you very far ? Come, experiment.

Here is a set. You want to light it for an ordinary straight daylight shot. Place one lamp anywhere in front of the set outside the range of the camera. Immediately you will notice the heavy shadow which tells its tale of studio construction ; therefore you will want a lamp to counteract the shadow of the first. So you can go on placing your lamps until

the set is brilliantly (only in one sense of the word) lit. Please don't think that I am advising you to light a set like this, I am only presenting you with a preliminary exercise.

You will have found out one or two things by doing this. You will have discovered that you frequently want a spot shooting down a wall from the top of a set to 'lift' a shadow. (You may use a spot like this on exteriors to suggest the illumination of a street lamp.) You will realize too that often you want a lamp shooting on to a set, and yet keep its rays shaded from the lens of the camera. This is done with a 'nigger', a large black-board in a frame, rather like an easel. Again you will know that it is difficult, when there are several lights on a set, to find out whether a light covers a certain object or not. To discover the range of lamp you must wave your hand in front of it, and you will see the shadow on the object.

When the actors are in the set you have another indication of how to place your lights. You can, and should, throw some light on to them. Experience will show you that in a 'close-up' you will get a shadow of the nose thrown on the face, if your lights are too near. This difficulty must be overcome by 'diffusing' the lights, that is by placing a frame of some material in front of them. Silk is softer than linen, and oil paper makes the light still more spread. The actors would have a very worried expression in a 'close-up' if you did not diffuse the light, besides they would be candidates for a severe attack of Kleig eyes. There is the alternative of using soft mercury vapour lamps which cast no shadow, but the camera

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man will not be content much longer with mercury vapour lamps. For one thing they make the actor's hands, unless he uses excessive 'make-up', look like those of a nigger. Another point to remember is that the lights must be switched off and on before a scene so that they burn brightly during the take.

When you commence to feel a little confidence in your ability to light a set you may use what are known as 'banks of light'. These are bright groups of lights which operate together. Turn a 'bank' directly on a set, that is only give your set some front lighting (caution : this is exercise number two) which is behind your camera. The set will be flat. It requires side lighting to bring out the dimensions of actors and properties. The Germans are fond of having little front lighting and bringing up the characters in the background. This is remarkably 'cinematic' if it is not abused.

I imagine that an American camera man would have put a semicircle of 'Winnies' round it, I know a British camera man would !

In every studio that I have been in, no matter what the size, I have found that the carpenters have a great love of building the sets dead against the wall so that the cameraman has great difficulty in placing his back lighting. Good photography means good back lighting. Let the beginner secure this first. After that he will find many hints from the set itself as to where his lights should go. Shine a sun through a window, or place a diffused light behind stained glass. Windows generally have no glass but wire netting is put in

for distance effects. If there is a mirror in the room it is not a bad plan to concentrate all your light upon it, and get a natural reflection. A realistic effect can also be obtained if there is a lamp hung in the middle of a room by arranging your lamps in a circle round it, this is only applicable to close-ups or the lamps will be in the picture. Arches, doors and even fires present opportunities, while glistening vases and tall pots are obvious prey. For example, you might place the hero and heroine by an archway for a 'close-up'. Pick them out with a sun, and catch the girl's hair from the back with a spot, with a high-light on the pot at her feet ; but our friend, who does not recite Shakespeare, would say that I was teaching you some naughty tricks.

When you are picking out people with lamps be careful not to get double reflections of countless lamps in their shirt fronts, though of course this will not be possible if their clothes are of the regulation yellow ; but the same warning applies to eyes. Neither should you forget reflectors when you are lighting your set, these give roundness to the faces of the artists. If a girl has blue eyes you will find that a reflector will 'take the pupils out'. You must use a gold reflector.

Exercise number three is to have little front lighting and to point what lighting there is towards the camera. Not into the lens but in the direction of the camera. This will give you a silhouette effect.

The next thing that must be studied for correct lighting is ACTINTISM, the colour values of your set. The best colours

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for sets are browns, yellows, greys, black and white (if you will allow me to include the last two in a list of colours). The colours with actintic value are blue and violet, while the other end of the spectrum, namely the reds, have little actintic value. Blue photographs as white and red as black. That is why a ruby light is used in a dark room. It has little actintic value, and does not affect sensitive film. The make-up on face of artists might influence the lighting. With exterior work the camera man must grade from dazzling snow clad fields (good actintic value) to stuffy little streets (actintic value absent). He must remember that light and shade are his media and he would be a poor cameraman indeed if he overlooked the subtle half-lights, and indulged only in startling black and white effects.

For amateurs I am told that there are some portable lamps on the market, but the amateur can take reasonably fair pictures if he uses an ultra-rapid lens with a stop of fl. 9.

The beginner is sure to make mistakes, there are so many difficulties in his path, too many for me to discuss, and many again which are common trials with the kodak snapper, such as 'halation' (the white aura). He will find a lighting test an advantage. This is usually taken before using a big set. Should things run smoothly for him let him not forget those who are responsible for most of his success—the patient electricians. Everyone should spread the doctrine of studios built with good accoustics, and save twenty years of the electrician's hapless life. Or would it after all be doing him a good turn ?

I dare not leave this subject without comment on the new patent—the light dome. This will be of tremendous interest to would-be stars, for its inventor claims that it will make a woman of sixty look like a girl of sixteen. I tremble if it is to give new life to some of the old stars. Its secret lies in the fact that the lights never fall directly on the face but are reflected. Its drawbacks are that it can only be used for ‘close-ups’ and will encourage a plethora of emotional ‘close-ups’.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.

THOU SHALT NOT SEE...

It depends where you are of course. If you are in Germany you may not see *The Big Parade*. *Potemkin* is banned in England and the scenes of the workers’ revolt are cut out of *Metropolis* in Italy. Different countries show different versions of *Joyless Street*. Here you may see this, there you are allowed that. Almost nowhere may you see a film as the director made it. And that is what I complain about.

There are many things one does not want to see. The cinema is so direct that much that is bearable in cold and clogging print becomes violent and shocking on the screen. One does not want to see blood oozing out of an elderly

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woman's hand as in *The Silver Lining*. That contributes nothing and it breaks up a great deal. One did not see the actual murder in *Vaudeville*. The darkening bowl of water was sufficient, it was imaginative. One does not want, perhaps, to see men killed as they are killed in war (but one does want the spirit of war, not the spirit of war after war). One does not want more sex, more vice : and there are plenty of ways of being thoroughly nasty and evading the censor. But often there are no ways of producing a fine work and passing all the censors, all the little men who snip and slice. I am not referring to the cutting that is done before a film is shown. That may be necessary, though you cannot get speed into a slow film merely by shortening it (look at *A Glass of Water*) and reducing length may, after a certain point, only create new faults—loss of balance, of rhythm, of continuity. But I do think that foreign distributors and small-town renters are too enthusiastic with their nice big scissors.

Pabst's *Secrets of the Soul* was originally, I am told, a good film. So good that the analysts didn't like it. As shown in England it was so childish that the analysts wouldn't acknowledge it. But if we don't know this we think Pabst has made a stupid film. O yes (we say), Pabst ! He's made some good films, but *Secrets of the Soul*, now. Very odd wasn't it ? Perhaps the others were flukes, do you think ?... After all, how are we to judge ? We see what we are given and we are given what is thought good for us. Certain things are good and certain things are bad.

It was admitted that if the application for performance had

gone through the usual channels, *The King of Kings* would not have passed in England. It was admitted that it might be a sincere work, but there was a rule that no film showing the Face of Christ could be passed. That was all. No Face. *Ben-Hur* got over this with a series of rather undignified tricks and feelings were apparently spared. It may be that we prefer to keep our own conception of Christ and not see someone else's on the screen. But we remain unmoved by the hundreds of Nativities, Last Suppers and Crucifixions in the picture galleries ; and if it is seeing an actor that we object to, why are we not upset when we know that many of the Madonnas were sat for by painter's mistresses ? Perhaps there is something blasphemous about movement, and Old Masters are, anyway, sacred. But it is curious that the temporary, human attributes may not be represented when the spiritual may be and the miracles faked. Certain things are good and certain things are bad, and nothing in the spirit of this presentation can alter that fact. We may resign ourselves to this, though I do not see why we should, but if we move about we find that the conception of these things varies from country to country, though the general law, *Thou Shalt Not See*, holds still.

In England, for instance, *Kraft und Schönheit* may not be publicly shown. "The nude is rude." We are the most athletic nation but we can't get used to our bodies. When the Film Society showed Mr. Betts' studies of sport, you could feel the little gasps when the running clothes faded to reveal the muscles working. The idea, I think is that All Flesh is

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Dust, and dust is dirt. So the ways to Health and Beauty are blind ways to us, though every dirty comedy has bathing belles and mannequin shows put in *solely* for sex appeal ; and we fill our programmes, our papers and our shop-windows with illustrations of ladies in corsets and in studied negligés that none but the most successful courtesan would aspire to. It is better to think of courtesans (successful ones) as we look at a paper than to think of beauty (I apologise) as we watch the screen. Better to dream about Ninon than look at Helen. Perhaps it is. But we ought to be left to judge for ourselves. Meanwhile, those who want vulgarity and real indecency are allowed to revel in the seductive swathings of Helen in the film version of Mr. Esrking's book. Because the garments (with "It" written all over them) are there, it is all right.

Then there is that peculiarly British institution which, being British, I must call a cloak-room. It is natural that this usual office should appear quite often in hotel corridors : the travelling habit of my race have seen to that. So it is not more or less inevitable that a shot of a hotel corridor in a film should now and again contain a door with the welcome but oh, so embarrassing, words ? After all, we give our little girls replicas for their dolls' houses. We buy them at Hamleys' and then pretend they do not exist on the films. That door will be deleted from two films I saw in Berlin when they come to England. They are "unnecessary". Now what *is* unnecessary is that tourists should be able to say little else but "Où est le W. C. ?", when that is the first sign or greeting they give, and THEN insist in stories being altered, doors dele-

ted, and events distorted in the cinemas. No one would want many scenes next door to the bathroom ; there is such a thing as taste, (and absence of it is not made up for by prurience) but when such a scene *does* happen, why not let it ?

At the same time, not only England is odd. There is Ireland. Ireland's national feelings have to be considered, but so must her morals. In order to get *A Woman of Paris* shown in Dublin, a neat little sub-title had to be inserted, explaining where Edna Purviance got her money from. Yes, an aunt died and left her a legacy, so she lived comfortably in Paris !

There is America, too. Certainly there is America. She produces a "flaming picture of a modern siren". She makes the Garbo a vamp and the British people cut hundreds of feet out of *The Flesh and the Devil*. Well, for *Vaudeville* to be shown in America, Jannings had to marry his dancer. That made it moral, so Kansas booked it. But of course the dreadful things that sprang from this alliance were a terrific indictment of marriage. The story was really less moral, only no one noticed it. Mr. Fawcett, too, tells a story of *The Scarlet Letter*. This austere tale came to Quebec. But it wasn't austere enough, and Hester Pynne had to be made a widow.

Seastrom must have been surprised. It just taught a Swede not to put a native puritanical author on the screen ! But Seastrom probably was not thinking of Quebec when he made his film. Why should he have been ?

At the same time, he should have been. It is (clearly) not enough to go ahead on a movie, making it as good as you can,

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and leave it to others to like it or not. For if they don't like it, they won't have it. That's the trouble. They will take it, and hack it about. And it is not only the small towns. The makers of billiard tables are now upset because billiard tables in films are usually shown in haunts of the underworld. They complain of the bad effects on billiard saloons, on the sale of tables. . . . So you must remember everybody's susceptibilities. Every small town's, every watch-committee's. You must take into account everybody who uses his position in one field to have a voice in another. Then, when you have considered how not to offend them, you must study how to please them. After that, you may make your film. If you can. But how can you? A good one, I mean?

There is no inducement to the artist : there is every deterrent from the making of good films. A director ought to be able to copyright his work. Then we should know what we were getting. We don't, now. Libraries ban a book they consider "unsuitable". What they do not do is to get the book, rip out what they don't like *and* then sell the version as the complete book. They don't publish an expurgated *Ulysses* as the real thing, they don't "clarify" *Rustic Elegies* or take *Tess* and cut out Angel Clare and Alec D'Urberville. Publishers don't do this, but film-publishers do. We have, when we read a book, a chance to judge the author : we can't judge a director by the film we see, because we are only seeing bits of a film. And not bits he has chosen, either. Von Stroheim's *Wedding March* is being cut by von Stenberg, just as his *Greed* was done by someone else. A director can-

not, you see, control his film. It may be bought, and utilised to fill out some older picture ; or bits of another picture may be put into it to give it the necessary kick, punch, pep and sparkle.

So that the sequence you were so careful with may go, the contrasts you built up so carefully may vanish. Who will know ? We shan't ! We shall only think that the contrasts are crude and that the story jerks. There are so many movies we have wanted to see, movies in which people we respect have collaborated. When they come, they mean nothing. Can there be great films ? Well, *can* there ? The answer is, Not often. The result is that to stop people cutting what they don't like, directors placate them by putting in what they will. It is the only way. Give the mob its glamorous dancing, make the illegitimate baby die. Even if your business men must have a perfectly equipped office to draw finger-nail plans on a table-cloth, put in a dancing. Some one else will, otherwise. Something will have to make room for it.

When this is applied to the world-market, it is disastrous. Politics, of course, enter here. There are several Russian films, waiting in London, but it is not advisable to show them yet. But apart from politics, there is national temperament. German films are slow. They cut out Baldwin's grave from the English version of *The Student of Prague*. It was too Germanic. But why shouldn't German films be Germanic ? And why should they be, as they are trying to be, American ? And why should America turn out long heavy pictures with

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all the German detail but none of the German significance ? They are trying to live down the type of distortion known as "typical movie", are they ? But this is distortion, too. It is all distortion. We want character, national character, individuality, urge—not this dreary standardisation which blind cutting to suit the world-market is leading us to. So what are we to do ? We know that the films, an art to a few, are entertainment to the many. We know that the trade knows what is entertainment. And so it ought, it is its job. But it ought to know a great deal better. There is a great deal of the public that is dissatisfied, is NOT entertained. And why don't they cut the improbabilities—the pearls left under an open window in *The Silver Lining*, the door left unlocked in *The Chess Player* ? Why, above all, don't they tell us they, *are* cutting ? We have a right to see. If you don't like the edited version and we all say so, it is worth showing us the original film. Then we can judge. If we don't like that we can go back to the firm's version. And don't treat us like children, with *Thou Shalt Not See*. Tell us this is the English edition ; don't use the foreign criticisms of the foreign film to put over your own hashed-up selection from it.

We want to be able to judge for ourselves. We want to know what we are talking about. It is much better publicity that we should, for you can't stop us talking even if you can stop us seeing. And supposing the public financed the directors, instead of the firms. What would happen then ?

ROBERT HERRING.

G. W. PABST

A SURVEY

What intelligent reader would buy books haphazardly because of the way they were piled in a window or because of the wrapper or the title? The book buyer knows his publishers, that a volume bearing such and such an imprint will probably interest him or that this other will be no doubt too crudely written for his taste; he knows his authors and will probably leave an order that every work issued by the few of his selection shall be posted to him on the day of publication. Of course there are thousands who never buy books at all just as there are thousands who never enter a cinema and there are plenty who buy without discrimination but it is always the intelligent minority who make or discard an author just as it will be the intelligent minority who will eventually make or discard films.

The ultimate value of a film depends upon its director. He is to it what an author is to a book. Actors are only the characters. They may be good or bad according to a director's capacity just as the heroine may be the wooden figure of a newspaper serial or the sensitive Miriam of a Dorothy Richardson novel. Over and over again the inexperienced will rush to see actors they have admired in a film, only to find

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them shadows lacking coherence, in the next picture, because in the hands of another director they become either false or what they dream of being, instead of what they actually are. (The classic example of this being Greta Garbo after she left Pabsts' direction.)

But how far is the intelligent minority aware to date either of the more important directors or of the nature of their work? This is partly due to that bad transference from the theatre of featuring the actors (almost the least important element in the film) rather than the cameraman or the director. I say least important because with a good photographer or director anything may happen, the most trivial face or gesture may become of value, but if direction or photography are bad, great beauty or great talent will appear merely mediocre.

Is not one reason however for this lack of knowledge the absence to date of a literature or a "bibliography" of the screen? Isolated examples only of a director's work may come one's way. It is hard to decide whether a single film is a happy accident or a link in a chain of achievements; whether there has been retrogression or development.

It is in an effort to remedy this defect that I want to attempt some estimate of the work of G. W. Pabst, whose films have interested me more to date than any others I have seen.

Mr Pabst formerly worked a long time for the theatre. Four years ago he decided that as far as the art of the future was concerned, the theatre had no possibility of development. Since he came to that decision (and we can imagine it was not an easy one to make) he has made six films. Unfortunately

I have seen only three, though "stills" from the others convince me of the sincerity and interest of all his work.

The three films which I have seen are *Joyless Street*, *Secrets of the Soul* and *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney*.

I came late to the cinema and I came because of *Joyless Street*. For years it never occurred to me that movies were worth consideration. I actually went to Hollywood without the slightest idea that they made films there and was much perturbed and quite uninterested when famous stars "shot" scenes under my bedroom window. Enthusiasts on my return to Europe occasionally persuaded me to a cinema. I did not dislike them but felt they had no link with my particular development. Then one wet dismal afternoon in Switzerland I went to *Joyless Street*. And saw what I had looked for in vain in post-war literature, the unrelenting portrayal of what war does to life, of the destruction of beauty, of (as has been said) the conflict war intensifies between those primal emotions, "hunger and eroticism".

It was all too right. Of Greta Garbo much has already been written in CLOSE UP though it will be hard to forget her as a symbol of beauty in war as she stood (right at the beginning) in the queue in the dreary street or that other moment when the whole end of destruction was in her gesture as she stood staring by the window at the finish of the film. Whether rescued or not does it matter? People are as the butcher was, or there would not be war, would not be hardship, would not be misery. Knowing this actual contact becomes comparatively unimportant, all escape tinged with phobia. But

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beyond Greta Garbo, the other types were so perfect. The young selfish man, loosed of restraint because battle had wiped away the reward of thrift or decency, the little South American millionaire causing misery yet with such kindly instincts beneath his thoughtlessness and vulgarity, the completely amoral "toughness" of the woman who kept the house, and more than any of them the girl who murdered for her lover with the whole history of an oppression (race, person or idea) in her eyes, as she seemed to go slowly mad with realization of horror yet never to lose consciousness, and against this the scholarly old man quite unable to cope with modern life, all these were to the last gesture, right.

Yet I read a short time ago in an American paper that *Joyless Street* was distorted and untrue. And that will be I fear, the immediate criticism of Pabst's pictures. Because average people, average critics, *dare not face* the truth in his films. (Just as at the showing of the English official war film, "THE BATTLE OF ARRAS" the comment across the cinema was, "they ought not to show the corpses and the wounded!" People love cheering the men trickling forward against shells but they obliterate without sense of wrong doing what waste and suffering a battle must entail.) For myself I could only say after seeing *Die Liebe der Jeanne Ney* in the Neubabelsburg projection room, "it is too true." For actual threads of thought appear in front of one, actual life, actual pain, actual moments of beauty, passed through a mind that is as the machine that records heart beats or the sensations of a leaf.

So *Joyless Street* recorded the whirlpool of destruction that

is war as *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney* records the awkwardness and cruelty of changing, not yet adapted civilizations. Not banners and glory and spiritual rebirth as old ladies and newspapers and the leaders of nations preached in 1914. But death and the loosening of barriers and the shattering of decent impulse. First one gate goes, then another, with intellect and beauty, as always, the first sacrifice. The old scholar, the children, the young beautiful girl. Or the two lovers in *Jeanne Ney*. The right to think, to individual judgment, even the right to sympathy. No book has put down the reaction of defeat on conquerors and defeated alike as *Joyless Street* has done. For this reason no doubt it was censored or forbidden or mercilessly cut in every country where it was shown or attempted to be shown. And no book (except H. D. in her short story *Murex*) has so caught the sense of beauty broken by war.

It is the thought and the feeling that line gesture that interest Mr Pabst. And he has what few have, a consciousness of Europe. He sees psychologically and because of this, because in a flash he knows the sub-conscious impulse or hunger that prompted an apparently trivial action, his intense realism becomes through its truth, poetry. He himself said once in conversation. "What need is there for romantic treatment? Real life is too romantic and too ghostly." And his drab rooms and their inhabitants, so cruel or blindly brave, so infinitely of life with all the problems of modern Europe surging about their hands or faces, become not only this actual world but abstractions of reality, like the myths men

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made of long ago seafarings or fights, like the statues men made through these myths, of pure ideas.

And people clamour that films are not art ! No play I have ever seen or read has affected me so profoundly as *Joyless Street* or *Jeanne Ney*. I wanted to cry out at each, I know this, I know that beauty is a gull in a storm, I know exactly how destructive human hunger can be, but knowing this, if one is to live, there is a limit to endurance of vision. For to watch them is to face what all if they could, would willingly forget.

BRYHER.

CONTINUOUS PERFORMANCE

VI

THE INCREASING CONGREGATION

It is the London season. Not a day must be lost nor any conspicuous event. And the cinema, having been first a nine months wonder and then, almost to date, a perennial perplexity, matter for public repudiation mitigated by private and, with fair good fortune, securely invisible patronage, is now part of our lives, ranks, as a topic, alongside the theatre and there are Films that must be seen. We go. No lon-

ger in secret and in taxis and alone, but openly in parties in the car. We emerge, glitter for a moment in the brilliant light of the new flamboyant foyer, and disappear for the evening into the queer faintly indecent gloom. Such illumination as there will be, moments of the familiar sense of the visible audience, of purposefully being somewhere, is but hail and farewell leaving our party again isolated amidst unknown invisible humanity. Anyone may be there. Anyone *is* there and everyone, and not segregated in a tier-quenched background nor packed away up under the roof. During the brief interval we behold not massed splendours bordered by a row of newspaper men, but everyone, filling the larger space, oddly ahead of us.

“What about a Movie ? That one at the Excelsior sounds quite good.” Suggestions made off-hand. A Theatre is a rarity, to be selected with care, anticipated, experienced, discussed at great length, long remembered. But a film more or less is neither here nor there. May be good may be surprisingly good in the way of this strange new goodness provided for hours of relaxation and that nobody seems quite sure what to think of. It will at least be an evening’s entertainment, a welcome change from talk, reading, bridge, wireless, gramophone. And the trip down town revives the unfailing bright sense of going out, lifts off the burden and heat of the day and if the rest of the evening is a failure it is not an elaborately arranged and expensive failure.

There’s pictures going on all over London always making something to do whenever you want to go out specially those

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big new ones with orchestras. Splendid. Its the next best thing to a dance and sure to be good you can get a nice meal at a restaurant and decide while you're there and if the one you choose is full up there's another round the corner nothing to fix up and worry about. And it's all so nice nothing poky and those fine great entrance halls everything smart and just right and waiting there for friends you feel in society like anybody else if your hat's all right and your things and my word the ready-mades are so cheap nowadays you need never go shabby and the commissionnaires and all those smart people about makes you *feel* smart. It's as good an evening as you can have and time for a nice bit of supper afterwards.

It is Monday. Thursday. The pence for the pictures are in the jar beside the saucer of coppers for the slot metre. But folded behind the jar are unpaid bills. In the jar are three-pence and six halfpence... "Me and 'Erb tonight, then we'll have to manage for Dad and Alf Thursday and then no more for a bit. . . . Whatever did we used to do when there was no pictures? Best we could I s'pose, and must again."

"Never swore I wouldn't go again this week. Never said swelp me. Might be doin' worse. Its me own money anyway."

"Goin' on now. This minute. Pickshers goin' on now. Thou shalt not ste. . . . Goin' on and me 'ere. It won't be, if I pay it back. . . ."

And so here we all are. All over London, all over England, all over the world. Together in this strange hospice risen overnight, rough and provisional but guerdon none the less

of a world in the making. Never before was such all-embracing hospitality save in an ever-open church where kneels madame hastened in to make her duties between a visit to her dressmaker and an assignation, where the dustman's wife bustles in with infants and market-basket.

Universal hospitality. See that starveling, lean with loathing, feeding his unknown desperate longings upon selected books, giving his approval to tortoiseshell cats. He creeps in here. Braving the herd he creeps in. His scorn for the film is not more inspiring than the fact of his presence.

And that pleasant intellectual, grown a little weary of the things of the mind, his stock-in-trade. He comes not for ideas, but to cease in his mild circling, to use the cinema as a stupifier, forty winks for his cherished intelligence. He will go away refreshed to write his next article.

Happy youth, happy childhood, weary women of all classes for whom at home there is no resting-place. Sensitives creep in here to sit clothed in merciful darkness. See those elders in whose ears sound always the approaching footsteps of death. Here, now and again, they are free from the sense of moments ticked off. See the beatitude of the stone-deaf. And that charming girl lost, despairing in the midst of her first quarrel, who would no more go to an entertainment alone than she would disrobe herself in the street. But this refuge near her lodgings opens its twilit spaces and makes itself her weepery. Refuge, trysting-place, village pump, stimulant, shelter from rain and cold at less than the price of an evening's light and fire, drunkenness at less than the price of a drink. In-

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struction. Peeps behind scenes. Sermons. Homethrusts for him and for hers, impartially.

School, salon, brothel, bethel, newspaper, art science, religion, philosophy, commerce, sport, adventure ; flashes of beauty of all sorts. The only anything and everything. And here we all are, as never before. What will it do with us ?

DOROTHY RICHARDSON.

RECENT FILMS

It is doubtful whether Jesus Christ can pass the British censor. He is, however, going strong in other parts of the world. In Germany the film broke at the first range of subtitles two or three times, and there were whisperings of rampant superstition. However, after ten minutes, and while the orchestra went over the same *motif* six times, things mended, and we were given a view in colour of Jacqueline Logan trying to look like Mary Magdalen in the usual décolletage that never was seen in Jerusalem, or indeed anywhere outside a Hollywood studio. A half yard conforming with essential requirements of propriety, and eight yards or so on the floor. Black Botticellian corkscrew curls draped her forehead. Some elderly American citizens (Wall Street variety) undisguised though in wigs and trappings pushed each other ;

faces with the usual courtesy of cinematic antiquity. They vie for smiles from Jacqueline, whose eyes you feel are aching from trying to appear beetling. She pushes *their* faces. A Hollywood, tame leopard roams placidly round. Jacqueline hops on her chariot and sweeps off into the noonday heat.

By this time it seemed quite natural to be contemplating a furtive exit. Then a blind child emerges, and we realise we are about to meet the King of Kings. We do. Beyond the fact that Mr Warner sat with an arc lamp just behind him to give that effect of silver lining usually associated with heroine's hair, he looked grave, and dignified, and more spiritual than most paintings of the Lord. Ernest Torrence and Joseph Schildkraut as Judas and some more, in alien garments, stand about. The blind child is made to see. Then in bursts Mary Madgalen, décolletage, corkscrew curls and all. She says the usual tush and pish. Then she begins to get scared, or a little uncertain (you can't easily tell which from her acting) so says tush and pish again with more vehemence. Soon however (much business with silver lining and gauzy close ups) a conflict with her better self begins. The usual superimposed symbolic figures of Temptation maul at her. She begins to look sick. Then she too is healed. Then, let me see, what happens next? The King of Kings goes through a rigmarole of raising the dead, healing the sick, etc. You see him being the Daily Help (almost from an Agency) of anybody who runs after him. You could not gather for a moment that he had any mission more divine than a panel doctor has. Except of course for the silver lining. But Warner was defi-

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nately—in himself—a figure of beauty. They *might* have given the part of Christ to John Barrymore. His expressions were sensitive and intelligent, and intellectual.

Later the film improves. The *render unto Caesar* episode, for instance, had all the old obvious slapdash of pantomime villainy, but it was redeemed by Warner, who broke across it with sincerity. The *cleansing of the Temple* was (except for wrong crowd psychology) good. Some of the compositions were excellent. The Temptation was bad. What Satan offered seemed to be military pomp. Christ, of course, was a complete pacifist. The treatment and psychology of Judas was illiterate. The story of Judas is in reality, as regards dramatic and emotional strength, almost more vivid than the story of Christ. The story of the two in some concentrated form would make a dramatic masterpiece. Judas in this film was simply a pantomime attempt at a beast.

The latter scenes did achieve some sort of power, and made it, as a film, worth while. The latter scenes were very sincere, and, evidently, deeply felt. The earlier scenes were unfelt. They meant little or nothing to the producer, although they seemed to have meaning for Warner, whose performance was consistent throughout. The utter waste and stupidity, and at the same time the inevitability of the scenes of betrayal up to the crucifixion were well shown. The danger and brutality of mob-hysteria were excellently illustrated. The outstanding scene is where Christ and Barabbas stand at the top of the Senate steps while Pontius Pilate asks the mob to choose. The complete rejection of the thing that will help them be-

comes symbolism almost. You feel de Mille is saying *you crucify the thing you need most*. And here, at last, is appreciation of the nuances of courage and suffering. The situation in itself, of course, is graphic, as a situation, and applies now as then. But de Mille certainly rammed his points home. The innovator is always to be feared and hated, whereas the murderer we can more or less cope with.

The Crucifixion was a little artificial, but again sincere, and the three figures on the hill with the crowd below (said to have been composed from Renaissance paintings) formed a dramatic and forceful composition. The effect of the figure nailed to the cross was so well done that the illusion was rather shattered by the realisation that here was an actor who must be supremely uncomfortable. The earthquake was what some will call "cardboardy". But the effect of precipices grinding on each other seemed to me good. The resurrection was simply sketched in, but it served the same purpose as the epilogue to St. Joan, to show that Christ only began really with his death. Really it is a bad film, and an undistinguished film, but it is a sincere film, and a film with moments of beauty photographically and dramatically and spiritually. It did not seem to me very perturbing that no actor can convincingly appear like the Christ, or impersonate the Christ. Neither did it seem to me—as some have said—blasphemous. In parts it was absurd, and the beginning was undignified. The crowd scenes were not good except occasionally. There was a dreadful little boy—Mark. The raising of Lazarus was a little dour, and seemed the cheapest hocus pocus. As

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probably it may have been. Anyhow it is an interesting film, if only on account of its subject. But we must congratulate Warner for a rendering that could not have been more gracious or more graceful. It would be illogical to object that religion should not be made an excuse for money making as long as there are collection plates in churches, or again, when entertainment tax is charged to hordes of pleasure-seekers visiting the premises of a murder.

A Cecil M. de Mille Film.

BED AND SOFA

Here is an example of the newest Russian non-propagandistic film, a simple story almost crudely told, yet astounding in its sheer uncompromise. *Bed And Sofa* is a story of modern Russia and of poor people, and the cost of production must have been negligible. Nearly the whole action takes place in a tenement room. The usual technique is almost ignored, and havoc is made of time sequence by reckless cuts, by unrelated continuity, by every fault that the amateur can make. And yet here was a film that gripped and had genius. Its very unevenness gave it an odd power ; almost, one might say, created a new technique. It should be played without music, and its staccato movement would be in accord. Music made blur, or attempted to bridge over, which was a mistake.

Played in silence the almost cubistic pattern of short, vivid moments would have been really powerful.

Briefly the story is of a man and his wife, and the housing problem of modern Russia. The two live, as has been indicated, in a tenement room. The husband seems a cheery, animalistic young man, stretching and smiling beneath the bedclothes. His wife is young too, but less cheery. Indeed you observe instantly a curious sulkiness in her ; that kind of introspective brooding that can permeate a whole house. She prepares breakfast desultorily and with an air that suggests repudiation of her surrounding circumstance. The slightly bedraggled, ever so slightly slatternly appearance she presents in some way gives stress to her beauty. You notice she is beautiful, then that beauty is marred in her by something unbalanced or unadjusted ; by some dissatisfaction that is deeper and more dangerous than circumstances seem to call for. The feeling is that through ennui she would be deliberately capable of anything, but at the same time not through strength but weakness of character.

Later the husband brings back his friend. He has nowhere to stay, and the husband offers him the sofa in the corner of the room as a bed. On the morning following the new young man is up early and preparing breakfast. There is elaboration and courtesy in his attitude which tells its tale to the wife. She watches him, half sulky, half amused. She has acquired over-night a hard, wariness of expression, something furtive and covert and false. So when the husband goes away to work a few days, it is inevitable, that under the pres-

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sure of the atmosphere created by her sensual and destructive indolence, and by the feeling of being cooped up in such cramped space with this young man, (toward whom it is clearly indicated she entertains feelings only of morbid curiosity) the obvious should happen. The young man moves over from the sofa to the bed. There is no nonsense about it. There is no atmosphere of a love affair, or of illicit beauty. It is deliberate, cynical, and part of the room with its shabby curtain over the door and its untidy table and general litter.

The husband comes back and finds out. He becomes angry more through his wife's attitude than because of what he has discovered. She pretends shame, but there is something taunting and triumphant behind it. The husband stamps out in a rage. A little reflection convinces him he does not live in a world of mock heroics ; he is comfortable at home, so he goes back. He is a little aghast when his wife and the young man retire for the night. It is now *his* turn to sleep on the sofa.

The young man and the husband remain good friends. They play chess together. Now it seems inevitable that the young man should order the wife to make tea. How different this from his waiting on her a few days back. She, very reasonably, refuses. The situation is full of dissatisfactions, pent up feelings. The two men play their games together. She sits at the window: The room gets on her nerves. Her furtiveness and treachery become more pronounced. While sitting at the window a motor car with strong headlights dashing past startles her. She starts forward in her chair, then sinks back to her despondent mood.

There is another subtle moment when she is seen again, only in daylight, at the window, a long, shallow window, with rain pouring down. Her husband, finally exasperated, is again going off. He leaves. You do not see the door because a curtain is hung across the passage. But you see the curtain billow up, and sink back as the door slams. Then the wife suddenly runs out after him. She leaves the door open, you can tell this because again the curtain blows up, and papers lift, then blow off the table. Her feet are seen running past the window. They come back together, both dripping with rain.

We have discovered at last what it is, why her brooding has become more intense. She has gone to an hospital to stop motherhood. We would remind *Close Up* readers again, that birth control is completely legalised in Russia. Films, showing in detail the dangers of irregular abortion are freely shown, and all information supplied.

While waiting her turn, clearly very frightened, she sees from the window first a baby in a pram, then a child with a doll. These two symbols came like a hit between the eyes. Until this moment everything had been stark, exact and undeniable. Suddenly we were back with the old technique, the old sentimentality. Suddenly the psychology was going to bits. Until this moment her type had been remorselessly painted in, so that you felt now that the sight of a baby at such a time would repel her ; would shake her certainly. Here was no type of motherhood. She was far too self-centered, too occupied with her own needs to feel anything but phys-

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ical fear of the ordeal before her in the operating room. She creeps out. Presently her tears fall on a small plaster ornament. She goes off in a train. At the end of the film the husband and his friend stand in front of the mirror with the ornament and her note, scratching their heads.

The amazing quality of this film was that it presented life as it (let us admit it) so often is, and not as most of us try to pretend it should be. Here were human relationships blurred and adjusted, as human lives always are, to suit surrounding circumstances. People are usually wise enough not to carry their principles to the point where they cease to become principles and become instead stupidity or destructiveness. That is what this film says. It says there is no morality except the special morality adaptable to different circumstances, and it goes even further, pointing out that any morality except the morality adjusted to governing conditions of one's particular life is so much hearsay, not even considered as remotely in existence. Some people might hold up their hands at this film. They might say "But this is impossible." Their indignation would reveal the fact that they realised how exactly true, common, and, to be frank, natural, the lives of these people were.

It is a pity that we are not likely to see the film as widely as it should be seen, (it has had a great success throughout Germany) if only on account of the fact that it is the most recent and most complete example of the modern Russian method in cinematography. It is an historic film, and probably better in many ways than *The Mother*. You cannot

compare it with *Potemkin*, which belongs in the propagandistic class. But our advice to everyone who can is to see it at all costs. It is one of the most momentous contributions to film progress yet achieved.

The principal parts are played by Ludmila Semenowa, as Vera, the wife ; Woldemar Fogel as the husband, and Nicolei Bataloff as the friend.

HEIMWEH (Homesickness)

A *Terra* Film by Max Glass, with Mady Christians and Wilhelm Dieterle.

A certain distinction holds the attention in this film where attention is strained by too much unrelated incident. The story is of Russian exiles, and has some excellent acting. It opens with a surge of wild faces, an effect both startling and dramatic. Revolution.

Near by a great palace is silent. The General rings and nobody comes. He goes to the top of the stairs angrily. Nobody answers his calls. Presently Lydia (Mady Christians) comes from her room. She goes down the huge staircase to find out what is the matter. She finds one servant remaining only (Wilhelm Dieterle) who tells her they are abandoned. These opening scenes with the atmosphere of suspense and the deserted palace and vague uneasiness or impending calamity were well achieved. Later they flee... to Paris. (Is

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there no other city but this ?) There, in a pension, are the Russian refugees, well to do, but mourning while one of them plays national airs at the piano. They looked like victims, but one didn't feel for them as one should have done (and as one did feel later in some of the café scenes). I don't know why, unless one was simply bored with the obvious, or that penned up together they had doddered into a kind of sentimental senility. Anyway, one watched these elderly, affluent people surreptitiously wiping their eyes, with a heart of stone. Too many themes were brought in, and kept on accumulating new incidents, all of which had to be borne in mind while waiting to link them on to some climax or main incident ; so that after a time, when the main incident did not come, there was a feeling of being overburdened. It would have been a rare satisfaction to relinquish the whole load, "ah, that is what it was all leading up to," but it was not to be. Consequently, the immediate feeling when the film was over was that it was good, but. . . something had happened, because there was a "but" and the mind was too confused to know what. Afterwards it became clear that it had merely broken down under its cumulative load ; the story had not gone with a swing or with a growing inevitability, but in undulations all good enough in themselves yet not wholly one unity.

Nevertheless, *Heimweh* is almost, if not quite, an outstanding film. Mady Christians gave a rare performance. In the opening scenes, it is true, there was an impression that unduly restrained acting was not allowing her to be herself, so that a little later, when she entered the drawing room at the pen-

sion waiting for a beau to ask her to dance, and immediately revealed again that buoyant and witty charm so exclusively her own, the fact that everybody was delighted became evident through immediate gurgles of affection from every part of the house.

Wilhelm Dieterle gave support. Now and again one waited for his morose unhappiness to lift in vain. A little contrast in mood would have deepened the effect of his brooding. Much of the suffering was unnecessary.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

An interesting experiment is to be made in Germany this winter when ten directors will choose a certain scene, direct it in their own way, and then contrast the differences of method. A second experiment will be the cutting of one particular scene by the same ten directors, again each in his own way. It would be highly fascinating to see the results of these experiments, and would afford a valuable work of reference to the young director, and indeed to all interested in the technical side of the screen.

Kyser is making a film at the Neubabelsberg studios financed by and for the Lutheran church. We wandered in on a

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hillside setting with a huge crucifix in the foreground. Shortly after we left it crashed to the ground, severing two fingers of a mechanic who was holding a wire support. This gave a somewhat grim significance to a similar scene built up in the same place a few days later. The hill was there but the crucifix wasn't. The usual gnarled trees gave the usual ghostly effect, aided by the poisonous green light of the mercury vapour lamps. A small platform containing chairs supported an intent audience of wives and relations. As usual the Debie Parvo, Model L camera was in use. These are easily the most popular in Germany. Indeed we did not visit a set where they were not in use.

Fritz Lang works on his new film "in private". When we peeped in he was engaged in "shooting" an hotel bedroom. A young man in a bright magenta suit lounged in the hotel doorway.

Wagner, who photographed *Die Liebe Der Jeanne Ney*, was intent over his camera (a Debie again) and carpenters were filling the studio with more huge buildings in the Metropolis style. We had to walk on elevated boards, as in a flood, as they were "tarring" the road.

Lang said he expected to finish the film in January. It will be another super-film.

POINTS FROM LETTERS

Your correspondent, Miss Fitz-Simonds, is concerned with the question whether the film can become an art and with the question whether music is necessary to a film.

As to the first ; I admit that Mr. Hardy, whom Miss Fitz-Simonds was answering, was wrong in stating that a popular form of entertainment can never become an art, yet I think Miss Fitz-Simonds will agree that since much practise and experiment is required before the film can be made a purely artistic medium, and as the cost of such practise and experiment is comparatively enormous, it will be a long time before anything approaching perfection can be produced.

As to the question of musical accompaniment, I believe that a film may be shown without music if it does not require it, but if music is used it should be composed for and with a film. At present music limps after the film as best it can. The music used in cinemas to-day was never written to accompany a particular film and however suitable a piece of music may appear to be it can never be saying the same thing as a film it was never intended to accompany. Unless the music is composed for the film, or the film composed for the music—as in the case of *THE ROSENKAVALIER*—the accompaniment will never be in perfect harmony with the film. (TOM LYON, LONDON.)

I am just an ordinary picturegoer with more than an average interest in the screen because movies and reading are my favourite pastimes ; indeed, I seem to have grown up with the cinema. (No, no, no ! I am not as old as all that !) My opinions may be of no value and I have no practical knowledge of the film-industry—but, I do think there is artistry in movies, I believe you are right in suggesting that the screen is an art. I used to think that the screen would never be universally recognised as such until it was supported by the music. Literature could flourish because its patrons were individuals, the cinema was essentially a plaything for the masses and

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until the day arrived when every middle-class home had its own projection-machine and film libraries were in every town—or unless each community had an art-picture-theatre—the screen was bound to be no more than popular entertainment. How could it be otherwise? The general public didn't voluntarily support art or literature, and they wouldn't patronise artistic movies. That the public doesn't support artistic movies is a quite well-known fact. I live in the seventh largest town in England and which is reputed to be highbrow. When a dancer comes here her applause is mostly titters, an intelligent play is acted to a half-empty house, an artistic film unreels itself in a seventh-rate picture-theatre. I saw "Caligari", "The Street", "The Last Laugh" and "Salome" at places that any other person of hygienic habits, excepting a most intense picture-fan, would refuse to enter and sat among people whose comments on the film were natural, but scarcely complimentary, and generally accompanied by swear-words. Not that I was revolted, these critical expressions are often most amusing but one objects to them during the showing of a particularly inspired production. However, I think now that the case of movies is but a matter of time; every day people of intelligence are being reconciled to the "stupid things" and artists from different spheres are interesting themselves in this new mode of expression. Moreover, thanks to Germany, film directors are treating even programme pictures with an increased originality and discrimination than they did four years ago, and now it needs but a good journal representative of the modern idea in films to take the place of the old-style magazines that are composed mostly of publicity stuff.

Films will never attain the dignity and intelligence of literature even if they ultimately surpass the beauty and artistry of paintings; the art of the cinema is not intellectual; it is at its best, to my mind, when it expresses simple, human problems, because the screen has a reality, a naturalness, that is lost on the stage, cannot be caught in paintings because of their immobility, and exists in only the greater novels. Even many paltry West-erns have this atmosphere of life and human-ness. May I suggest that you make your book a little less literary by publishing *intelligent* interviews with and portraits of artistic directors and distinguished players, by showing stills of scenes remarkable for their beauty of settings or light and shade, and by keeping in touch with studios all over the world devoting a couple of pages to important current activities of various companies? (STANLEY WALLIS. BRISTOL.)

Film Society : Notes on the 17th Programme.

1. EGGELING : Eggeling, the pioneer of absolute films was "a man who believed fanatically in his work; a man who spoke of art without sentimentalising over it, logically, soberly, always aware of why and wherefore". (Kurt). The *Symphonie Diagonale* shown here is of great interest to us. The basis of his work is line, and his patterns are mainly the varying positions on a two dimensional plane, the screen, of his one dimensional figures, in contrast-distinction to the patterns of Ruttmann and Richter which are usually flat two-dimensional forms moving in three dimensions. The screen is a blackboard to Eggeling and a window to Richter and Ruttmann. His more complex *Symphonie Horizontal-Vertikal* seems less pleasing. No-one continues his work.

2. RICHTER : Richter is a prolific absolute worker, and a pioneer. This *Rhythmus* is one of his least attractive works. Rhythm is essentially the quality which, as a whole, the film lacks. Perhaps the copy had been rejoined and was not in the order originally designed five years ago. It gave the effect of pieces, of which only one is striking, when the two sides, or the top and bottom, of the screen move toward one another.

3. BILLY'S BIBLE 1912 : Certainly from the Golden Age. Before experience taught how easily a restrained gesture can be interpreted by the spectator. But perhaps it was necessary to gesticulate to the audiences of those days, not only the technique of film story-telling but of film story-reading advances. A Lubitsch of three years back, then a marvel of ingenious and gentle hinting, is obvious to-day. Note in this film one shot where Billy, filling the water bottles, suddenly looks up startled and runs. The savages pursue him running in front of the camera and not until the gay clothes they are wearing, which suddenly obscure the picture, recede some distance in pursuit of him, do we perceive the cause for his alarm. This could not be more neatly and dramatically composed.

4. THE FACE ON THE BAR ROOM FLOOR : It is good, instructive, for us to see a really bad Chaplin. The essence of his art is the subduing and hiding

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of himself. Even when, in his proper character, its face or person is most active, it is a false and hoaxing jollity or sorrow, its real feelings are still masked and shy. Therefore, when he presents a burlesque, the Don in *Carmen* or the tragic painter in this film, and he merely exaggerates and mocks the expected behaviour of the conventional type portrayed, without retaining beneath it any special feelings at all, we are instantly aware of the emptiness. His burlesque is more a Dumb Crambo than a live creation. Conklin and Purviance on the cast list only appear for scarce seconds, others play the chief supporting parts.

5. POLYCHROMIDE COLOUR : The writer abhors colour. He is an apostle of the black and white league. (He is even an apostle of the silence league and levitates his gorge at Movietone, Phonofilms, etc.) Besides there is no logical reason why colour, if admitted should be natural. But let us be charitable, with a purely investigatory and inquisitive charity, and have a look at what 'natural' colour can do. Obviously results vary very much indeed with varying circumstances. In the bad weather at Giggleswick scarcely any colour is seen at all. But in several places we are pleasurably astonished. One of Betty Faire's hats, the silver fish, the white and red Japanese Goldfish, and one amazing shot of shadows and lights on ice with a pink skater give a hint of a quality that might convert us if it could be reached more often than very rarely. Evening light is interesting and the street lamps via supersensitive stock make us feel privileged to be present at the beginning of an important adventure. The eclipse of course is a subject, like a war film, that carries an impressiveness of its own irrespective of the quality of its treatment. But it must be recognised that here the colour is an unqualified success, and enhances and heightens the drama of the subject.

6. TOLSTOY : A veteran of eighty, surrounded by his family, acclaimed by his people, walking through the snow at 5 a. m., leaping lively onto horseback. What would we not give to see thus Tolstoy plain in youth, in middle age ? We know in theory that future generations may hear a great man speak from the disc, may see his form move on the film, but when before have we had so vigorous an object lesson, presented before our eyes a record of a man so many of us were too young to apprehend ?

7. TARAS BULBA : This belongs definitely to the class of illustration films. Instead of being utterly changed, adapted, transmogrified into its new form, as Shakespeare from Holinshed, or von Stroheim from Lehar, there is a

whole host of films which are merely faithful and literal transcriptions of their subjects. This is the curse of Swedish films, where literary respect is such that every director obediently inserts each sideplot and detail of the novel, however complex and confusing, starting a thousand hares that are not run to earth. It is to be so in France, where the ignorant superstition of illiterate and conscience stricken film men together with the pretentious impertinence of Academicians combine to agree that nothing adapted may be altered, novels and plays must in future be just photographed. Not that a faithful film illustration is always without value independently from the book or play from which it is made. *Greed* is probably better than *McTeague* for all its deliberate attempt to be only the same ; although the incidents are merely imitated and the film has no existence separate from the book. *Raskolnikov* by the originality of its treatment becomes an interesting, a creative criticism of parts of the Dostoievsky story. But *Taras Bulba* adds nothing of any kind to the Gogol story. It is illustrative and nothing more. Any merits of the film are the merits of the story. Any charm of character is aroused by the likeness of the character to Gogol's conceptions. But, since the story is such an excellent story, and many of the characters so attractive in the story, the film holds one's interest. The great moments in the story—the death of the younger son, the death of the elder son—are not botched ; they have the same power in writing and in picture. And lusty old Taras himself, an actor manager from Kiev, has the personality of Gogol's Taras. What a bear ! When he is overwhelmed at the end he falls as a very tree of the forest. But the production is entirely crude. There is only one cinematic movement, the entry into the besieged town, the panning camera on the starving inhabitants. Much of the minor acting is terribly tawdry, its worst moments were cut by the Film Society's editors. The film was left by Ermoliev at fourteen reels, at his request it was reduced by the Film Society to seven. Its performance was largely marred by the music, which failed to seduce the spectator's attention until the middle of the film and often was out of step. This was the fault not of the musical director, but of unforeseen circumstances ; all the old film joins of five years back started to break in rehearsal, which had accordingly to be abandoned while the film was made ready for the show itself. (IVOR MONTAGU, 43, Leicester Square, LONDON, W. I.)

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A reply to Miss Marion Fitz-Simonds

Dear Sir,

Are we giving films a chance ? We seem to be very anxious nowadays to rush about and dogmatise. So it is little wonder when some of us apply our pre-conceived ideas and half-baked theories to the comparatively new Films.

All Films can be placed into two classes : Motional Design and Narrative Cinematography. The latter will eventually supercede the Stage as the leading form of Drama. It is technically superior, but artistically it will never exceed the best examples of the Stage. For if it did, it would trespass into the former division of Films :—Dynamic Art.

Only one purpose can be superior at one time—either the Emotional force or the Abstract idea.

The Abstract film, the Absolute film. What vast possibilities, what incomprehensible achievements may be attained with this new medium of expression. But we have few or no chances of seeing examples of Abstract films. The *Film Society* help a little, but as we only see each example once or twice, we cannot fairly form an opinion from such meagre experience.

That is my view of the Film : to you who are devoting to it a life's study, my opinions may seem a series of platitudes. However, allow me to reply to certain criticisms of a former letter.

The Film *may* unify the Muses, and the result may be like Dr. Johnson's walking dog. The greatest works of mankind are those created solely by the individual. Consequently, the greatest film—which will unify music, art and the Drama, as well as Literature if sub-titles will still be tolerated—the greatest film will be made by a director combining the geniuses of Beethoven, Van Gogh and Shakespeare—pardon !—Mozart, Rembrandt and Tchekov.

And by a mathematical deduction, it would seem that we may have to wait 10,000 years before this super-producer is born.

And then, probably, an audience of Supermen and—women will be prepared to acclaim this genius, being able to appreciate all three muses simultaneously. Wonderful !

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No, the Narrative Film will be no better than the Opera or the Ballet : delightful and quite entertaining ! But not ethereal.

However we have prophets among us who write to *Close Up*, asserting that the Film is a "pure plastic medium of expression" (What would Mr. Roger Fry say ?) which is a presumption analogous with that of a cannibalistic tom-tom beater giving an opinion on the Rasoumoffsky quartets. By which I mean to point out that we are quite innocent of the development of the Films as a medium of expression. Yours etc. (J. A. HARDY. Now of LONDON. W. 2.)

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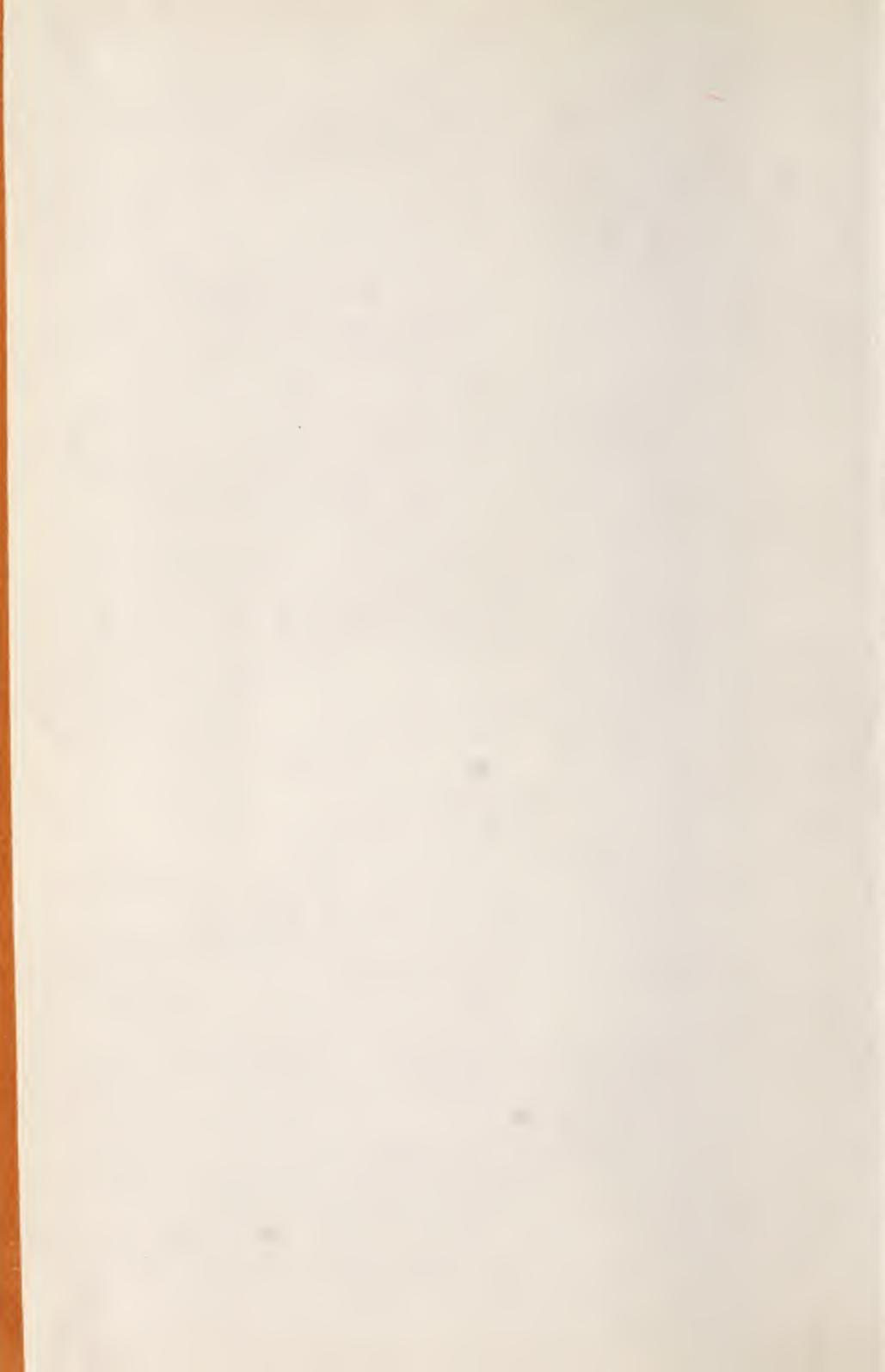
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