CLOSE UP
“VARIETES”

Revue mensuelle illustrée de l’esprit contemporain

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A valued tribute from S. M. Eisenstein, maker of film-history.

To K. deecherson —
Editor of the Closest —
Up to what cinema
should be
with heartiest wishes

S. Eisenstein
AS IS

BY THE EDITOR

We wish the film public a Happy New Year. We wish, somewhat dubiously, our readers a Happy New Year of films. We wish ourselves, even more dubiously, the same. Because what we are really wishing is that we had managed to catch the sound of a few good resolutions floating around. But the only things to hear, apparently, are the talkies. God bless the Merry Gentlemen who let nothing them dismay, but it comes rather hard upon us—the neurasthenic wrecks left over from all the noises-off of battle pictures, storm-at-sea pictures, aeroplane pictures, and all the pops, groans, whistles, smacks, hisses, grunts, creaks, hoots, whines, yowls and yelps that punctuate musical scores.

We are assured that it is premature to talk this way. That talkies have a great and artistic future. They are, for instance, making the Desert Song, so that clearly the films will soon be able to take their place beside the Drama, and even rise to the dignity of musical comedy! Well . . . perhaps it is premature to talk yet, both for me and the films, but it is not premature to think, and what one thinks is, God said let there
be muddle and there was talkies. What will come of it is yet impossible to conjecture. It may be that we will all be waving our hats in acclaim as the years roll by, but looking too far ahead has as little value as not looking anywhere at all. Our job, at any rate, is to keep track of the present. Talkies here, stereoscopy coming, color and television all but ready, programmes broadcast to all the homes of the world—these bright and glittering prospects fill the view. Let us not worry ourselves unduly over the fate of the silent screen. We do not have to pledge faith like Christians flung to the lions. There may be much to be said for films broadcast into our own sweet homes. If not, we shall all say it just the same, and film producers will have a new electric sign to superimpose on their night-life City Symphonies—namely, The House of Silence, which sounds a little like a Parsee mortuary, but will not be anything more dead than Giving the Screen to Screen Lovers, or emulating the Wise Old Owl who sat in the oak—'The more he heard the less he spoke.'

Is it not strange that in spite of all these threats or promises—depending on a point of view—and in the midst of all these changes, we seek, as Herr Kraszna-Krausz remarked last month, to fit films into an arbitrary set of valuations, like a suit too small, which as soon as made must be out of date?—or burst at the seams? There are whole battalions of people who go about using expressions that may do well enough for Botticelli or George Sand, but have as much to do with films, and are about as pert, as the interference of law with literature. That is to say, they employ words like form, balance, construction, as their sole limits of examination. A film judged on any and all of these qualities alone might quite conceivably
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be impossible to sit through. And, to be just, which is always unwise, probably they do have silent valuations for story or psychology, though we never hear about them. Indeed, form, balance, rhythm, pattern, construction, become—if I may again borrow Herr Kraszna-Krausz’ simile—like the graduations along their critical rulers; a system of geometry and mathematics which at its most expansive could create nothing richer than an architect’s plan. And an architect’s plan is only a beginning. To the onlooker it is the girder swinging up on the crane that has the interest. And when all that is done it is only a building until people go and live in it.

Landscapes, that Mr. Herring talks about further on, were criticised as beautiful, rich in tonal quality, amazingly delicate, or dull and under-exposed until panchromatic film came along and revalued them. But nobody said anything about that, and new landscapes with rolling cloud and beauties for rain and wind are still criticised as rich in tone or under-exposed. “Sense of form” and “pictorial sense” go, too, without challenge or change, but that was to be expected. It would appear that the pictorial sense in an early-ish Griffith had nothing less to it than the pictorial sense of a late-ish Eisenstein. And to look back at what was said of Caligari we would certainly think it better than Ten Days had we not recently seen Caligari in Berlin, and been driven out by boredom half-way through.

Analysis of method is interesting and rewarding, too, provided it is not made the basis of all critical judgment. Thus to discover that one good director does this or that and then to say that no film is well directed unless the director
does this or that is certainly an error, and one into which many critics fall.

In criticism of the cinema, as in all criticism, it is better to forget the method until you have found the meaning. Then only can criticism begin. The method of Alexander Room could be rent to tatters if his meaning were not so startlingly clear. Yet for this very reason his method has its value and its justification. A consideration of method alone would lead the critic to thinking he was a careless worker. A realisation of his meaning would prove the reverse. With the cinema, at least, and I think with every other art, too, the meaning matters most. If the meaning is clear, then the method, no matter how open it is to criticism in itself, has been actually successful and is entitled to respectful consideration.

*Storm Over Asia*, for instance, could be criticised in many ways. Some scenes are too long, one might say, there is too much weight here, too little there. Actually nothing greater has yet been made. Its strength is towering. It is entirely true to life. You remember it has pictorial beauty and rhythm and flow and pattern all the time, but these factors are overlooked or overlaid because the *meaning* never confuses or fails. To find out how much one depended on the other could be finely analysed, but would produce in the end what is evident from the beginning, that a film is bound to gain or lose what is vital by its method. Not the whole of what is vital, by any means, but something which is, nevertheless, vital. To discover what this is would be no excuse for trying to fit it into a *cliché* for use in permanent criticism. It would be for *Storm Over Asia* alone, or for any one film which was
being analysed. Thus as criticism of a film it would have profound interest, but as criticism of cinema very little or none.

Cinema swings forward when it leaves theatre behind and takes life by the throat. Not when it takes over a new technique. To use Potemkin's method on The Street Angel would not be even a quaint experiment. It could not be done, since Potemkin's method is part of Potemkin's meaning, and each is vital to each, just as the murk and Schufftan dimness of The Street Angel is method and meaning made one.

Perhaps, then, it is because they do ward off the danger of criticism becoming static and values fixed, that we can nod and smile to the future developments of the screen. It is no time yet for rule of thumb and dry as dust grammar grades and etymology. Sometimes we feel that writing about it at all is like trying to tie a collar on it. It would certainly be so if we said cinema is this, cinema is that. The fact is what we are really trying to do is to open the gate and let it out over the hills with the rolling cloud that critics will call composed or well constructed.

Kenneth Macpherson.
HAVEN'T SEEN ANY PICTURES

Haven't seen any pictures for a long time. Certainly not for six weeks. I retain vivid memories of *Mother*, shown by the Film Society not long ago, I remember with disappointment *The Circus* (for the second time), I remember that shocking piece of work, *Confetti*, with its soft, rainy name. And I saw the other day a demonstration of Moviecolour—some of the most magnificent colour photography tacked on to some of the rustiest, most asthamatical sound accompaniment ever heard.

So my horizon is clear. Periodically, I am convinced, one should wipe the screen clean of all images, that the appetite may not sicken with what it feeds on. The strain of "keeping up" with the pictures is terrific. Can't be done. Nobody can do it. And, indeed, the only way to view pictures with detachment is not to be attached to them.

With one or two exceptions writ large in the books of the film renters, criticism of the pictures seems to me to be lower than that of any of the other arts. There is such haste everywhere! Such an infinity of developments! The news and progress reported in a single issue of *Close Up* is enough to drive a man mad. Who will edit and disentangle this colossal
volume of labour? Who will be stern and unflustered and remote from its fatal coils?

Well, guilty though one feels, it is an immense pleasure to close one's eyes to the films for a time and to study the thoughts and reported advances, the significant echoes, from the world's film studios. It is like wine to read this little bit from Kraszna-Krausz on the European Kino-Congress (forgive this second puff to Close Up):

"The commercial production of films, unless its methods are changed, is on its last legs. It is now demonstrably clear that the Film is an art-form whose every connection with industry requires restriction.

"I believe that the aimlessness and pettiness of the trade houses is the primary restriction of cinematography."

These are revolutionary words and no doubt they are an exaggeration. But they contain a belief (quite sufficient to start a revolution in 1928), and they proceed from the assumption of Mr. Bernard Shaw that the amount of attention paid to a piece of criticism is in strict proportion to its indigestibility.

I do not know what it is that makes a film so easy to rave about and so difficult to reason about, nor why the first so consistently sprawls over and suffocates the second. For that is what occurs, and although it is clear enough that a film aesthetic is emerging from the overwhelming practice of cinematography, it is true also that we have been overwhelmed ever since we took film-making seriously. Truth and falsehood are still interlocked; the untruth of commerce striving alongside the truth of art.
And since I am reclining on the oars of reported speech, listen to what D. W. Griffith has been saying on this particular matter:

"When motion pictures have created something to compare with the plays of Euripides, that have lasted these two thousand years, or the works of Homer, or the plays of Shakespeare, or of Ibsen, or Keats' 'Ode to a Nightingale,' or the music of Handel and Bach and Wagner, then let us call our new form of entertainment an art, but not before. So far all our pictures, I believe, have been written on sand. The medium is perishable; the medium is far from being equal to the medium of words."

Thus speaks the man whom Mr. Messel, in his recent book, described as the first artist to enter the film world. Yet there is no doubt in the mind of Griffith that criticism has been more completely taken in by the deep conjuring of the film directors than by any of the film's sister arts. We do not sufficiently pause on these pronouncements—probably because there have been so many which are obviously inspired by the money makers. I wonder how much attention has been paid to Eisenstein's statement on the function of the sound film? Judging by the activities of the film companies, absolutely none. Just as films began in their silent form upside down, with all the weight of finance at the top and all the intelligence and imagination a pin-point at the bottom, so they are beginning, in spoken and orchestral form again. Here is a noise: let us make it attractive and the money will pour in.

I read a remark of Nietzsche's the other day that those who are good lovers are also good haters. It is the lover of the
From *Brand in Kasan* (*Revolt in Kasan*) a new Sovkino film, directed by J. Taritsch. Interesting contrast to Schufftan or glass-painted backgrounds of same type.

From *A Human Being is Born*, a new Meschrabpom-Film, directed by Jurij Sheliabushski, and featuring I. Moskvin and N. Tichomirova.
From *Kastus Kalínovski*, a Belgoskino film directed by Vladislav Gardin, one of the new Russian films scheduled for German release.

From *The Arsenal*, a new Wufku film by Dovjenko, director of *Zvenigora*.
film who is distressed, infuriated, by the onrush of production for the sake of production and for no other reason. He is not content to go on patiently appreciating films which he knows in his heart to be nonsense. But if he is content to go seeing films of all kinds continuously his reaction will become mechanical and an insidious softness undermine his taste. Rather than see too many he should see too few, preserving the freshness of his approach and the quickness of his eye. I need not point out that the whole luxurious organisation of the industry is against him in this endeavour, helping him to be comfortable rather than critical. And if one has a feeling of guilt at not having seen any pictures for a long time it is simply that one has been disloyal towards the object of one's love and that this brings a penalty. Or the thing loved has been a failure and there is a natural revulsion from it. Such was my experience on seeing The Red Dancer of Moscow, to which the only reply is "Rule Britannia"! After that first title, "Russia . . . Land of cruel hatreds, foul treacheries . . ."—the exact words I do not remember, but oh, what a Russia was this!—after these words I knew I must just sit it out in silence and that it would be some time before I should want to go to the pictures again. Yet a great many people thought this a moving and delightful film. And that is the devil of it. You cannot think about films while you are looking at them. They inhibit thinking. There is something treacherous about it. We need a few hard-hearted, matter-of-fact, disinterested persons to utter the truths about films such as I have quoted above, and we need other people to reflect upon them and carry them further, one by one, a few at a time, but steadily and relentlessly into the stream of film
practice. Let the eyes rest a little and the mind go about its business of unhurried judgment. This is what everybody would like to do and what nobody is doing. There would be shouts of joy if we could, even for a week, say, fling aside the business of film-making, the killing professionalism, and get down to fruitful, quiet, inactive survey. But it's no good. The world is too much with us, and though man is born free I see that he has just chained himself to the production of over a hundred British pictures all at once! And I dare say they will be criticised in packets of ten!

Ernest Betts.

FILM IMAGERY: SEASTROM

You do not mean a view when you say "landscape". You do not mean a cleft in rocks, you do not mean a tree, but rocks themselves and trees. Woods even more than valleys (not so much one valley) rather than rocks. And if there are clefts, it is so that the rocks will stand out the more, because of the difference in their aspect the gash will cause, breaking up the light. And if there are rocks, it is so that the valley will stand out the more.

You cannot play tricks with a landscape, any more than you can "fold a flood and put it in a drawer". You cannot make it a Balkan kingdom or the edge of the world. It isn't
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detached, it relates always to something bigger. A man who likes landscape and is at his best in dealing with it is not a man who likes tricks. He likes it for its sweep, and though he can, of course, choose it, he cannot just make it a background. He can choose which he will have, but he cannot choose what it will be. It is that already, even though what it depends on his having chosen it. There is a sweep about the word: "horizon" leaps to mind at once. There is a sweep about Seastrom. The names of many of his films show their elemental characteristics... L'epreuve du Feu, Vaisseau Tragique, Charrette Fantôme, The Wind (I quote from the books and countries, English and French, in which I found them. If you saw Les Proscrits at the Ciné Latin last spring, you think of it as that, without bothering to give it yet another foreign title in English, and I can't help that).

Similarly, when it comes to people, a landscape-man will deal with people in the larger emotions. The rocks and trees and the horizons of their characters more than the flowers in the crannies and the rabbit-warrens in the roots. But because he deals with the flood, he will deal also with any attempts to put it in a drawer, and continuing the bad habit of quoting, he will do so by relating not only the wind but the cedar floor to it. The eddies of the current may not interest him, but the depths will.

This is not specially Seastrom's, and what is Seastrom's is the lyricism which makes his landscapes lyrical landscapes. It is a Scandinavian quality, and finds itself in the films of Brunius, of the regretted Stiller (especially in Arne's Treasure), and even in Molander's Marriage there was more of the background, more pervasive influence, in consequence
more many-sidedness in one side than in American, German and most French films. And Marriage was late, not of the good period, not even a good film. But the apprehension was there. The only American films in which you get this landscape coming into its own are the Westerns. Here the earth has life. It is not for nothing that clouds of dust follow the flying hooves; the earth is exerting its parentage. The men are not rooted, but they are still related... earth is there, itself, alone in American films. Reality, of course. The Westerns are the nearest America has to an equivalent of the reality of the Russian films, and the reality comes from the fact that in these cowboy stories, fights with floods and fire and struggles to live, America is dealing with something of her own she knows about and not trying to pass off a life she has grafted on to herself. These were struggles to live.

And so are the stories of which the Swedes make their films. They are sagas, if that word helps you at all. Stories of men who had to live, had to get a living from an earth that provoked that necessity. Swedish films deal at once, simply, with the living and with the earth. They’re bound up. There is no saying “this will look better in a mountain background”, no going on location to the South Seas or building a studio sandstorm—mentally, at any rate. The mountains, as I once before observed, aren’t a background. The people are offshoots of them, another form of life. Look at the Swedish films you know. What you think of is the dragging of the chest across the snow in Arne’s Treasure, the reindeer stampeding in Herrenhofsage, the torrent in Les Proscrits, the wolves across the snow in Gosta Berling. Sweeps of country which, as Moussinac says, become “un des éléments
From *Pandora’s Box*, G. W. Pabst’s forthcoming film for Nero-Film.
At top Louise Brooks as Lulu.
Pandora’s Box.
Pandora's Box. Top, Gustav Diesel and Louise Brooks.
Under, Franz Lederer and Fritz Kortner.
From *Sex in Fetters*, a Nero-Film reviewed in the December *Close-Up*, a frank document revealing the corruptive influence of artificial confinement.

*Photos: Nero-Film G.M.B.H.*
From *Freie Fahrt* (*Free Trip*), a film made by Erno Metzner for the German Social Democratic Party. See review elsewhere.
From Erno Metzner's film *Free Trip*. 
actifs du conte’. And because of the expanse, there is the natural result that the human life in it is much more intimate, firm and close-knit. Out of protection. It has not been conserved, concentrated. It has to offer compactness for “the great common task, the preservation of mankind against the supremacy of nature”. Which is its parent. Against which it rebels. So along with the capacity to deal with expanses, and lyrically in the case of Seastrom, there is also the ability to show ordinary, domestic hedged-in life with extraordinary grace and intimacy. Power—and also delicacy. This is because the living is bound up with general life. When Seastrom made The Tower of Lies in Hollywood and his landscapes were reduced to softened orchards, and smooth hills, life in the house was still as living, still almost as Swedish, in the way details exteriorised the main theme as much as ever, even though to my taste the theme was poor.

He has made a great number of films, including He Who Gets Slapped, Name the Man and Confessions of a Queen, in America; but it is unfair to judge him too much by his American productions, his talent is clearly folded in a drawer here, and the most we can do is to look for some hints in them of what his Swedish films have shown us. The chief of these is that his mental landscapes are large, elemental—conflicts. In Les Proscrits, in the (American) Scarlet Letter, people are against the community in which they live, solely because of their finding themselves in it. His people are trying to stand up against the storm, and the film resolves itself into whether, in face of the storm, they will bend or break, oak or willow. A slight cynicism limits their endeavour to those two alternatives. If you succeed, you
compromise, with the corollary that if you compromise you don't succeed for long. You grow tired of that kind of success you are having.

In The Tower of Lies, a woman came back, "soiled", from the city. Where did she get those clothes? But though the home and the village and the community were against her, her old uncle (I think it was) had to be spared. She was his beautiful white queen, or something like it, and the myth he had of her must be kept. And it was this or nothing. But the village stormed and stormed, the storm grew; one could only bow to it—the girl left, went back to the city, and the old man, rushing down to the quay, following the boat with his eyes and all of him in his eyes, ran over the end of the pier. He drowned, but the myth was kept. I am not sure if anyone told him the girl was a whore, but I am sure that if they did, he denied it. In any case, my point is illustrated. If he had discovered, he would have died of a broken heart. It wasn't, forgive me for saying as if I were a movie star being interviewed, death that mattered, but the keeping of an idea. So Swedish, I venture to think that here was a theme as universal as that of Sunrise, though when I saw the film, under the title of The Emperor of Portugalía at the Film Society, it is true that I was not affected by the ending to anything but quiet laughter. It did not get away with it because the actual whole cumulation of the film had been simplesse instead of the intended simplicity to my perhaps more sophisticated mind. There is a certain naïvété about fundamentals in these Scandinavian films which is always a stumbling-block, but it should not be allowed to hide the terrific sincerity of their makers.
In the film which was generally released in London in October, there was Lillian Gish against *The Wind*. Against a destructive force. Against the type of life it produced, the type of men the life produced, and the woman she would be if she stayed, married to one of the men. The storm in her mind is produced by the storm of the wind. Inner and outer conflict, the outer in this case serving to throw up the inner. Like a chord or a subsidiary colour, an image. The wind is an image, the fields of snow are images, the roads and woods of *The Scarlet Letter* are images. Landscape is image in Seastrom.

All being set, consider then his imagery. But all being set, be careful not to jolt it. The landscape is not only a mauve to throw up a blue. It is a darker blue itself. It is of the same colour, it is the same mood, as that colour or mood it brings into prominence. What I said of *The Wind* shows this. Wind causes the psychological stress, but that stress is in terms of wind. It is in this, though it is used rationally, as psychological as Dr. Sachs showed the beetle to be in *Mother*, and *that* was used psychologically. Seastrom's landscapes are used psychologically, but they connect logically. They could never be mistaken for "visual subtitles" as the spring shots in *Mother* have been.

He achieves this by a very subtle adjustment between conception and execution. In the first place, he sees the wind, or some other element or surrounding, as responsible for the states of mind of his characters. But, the characters having been treated as influenced by these, these things in their turn have to be treated to relate to the people's minds, in order to bring it all out. In order to express what they are,
Seastrom makes them be something else. But they have to be themselves too. And because of this, because they are fact it is not always seen that they are image too. They have to partake of something of what they have caused for us to see that the results visible in the people were latent in them. In fact, "there is a blending of the two sets of images, the apparent and the real".

There is a scene in The Scarlet Letter where Hester and her lover are lying in a dell. "The feeling of threatened and short-lived peace so evident in this Seastrom landscape is built up by a number of small touches; rocks, sharp flags pricking up at the lovers, who are themselves at the edge of the water, and a background whose roots and undergrowth call to mind the conventions which have the lovers in their grasp" (Herring, Films of the Year, 1927-1928). That was thought fanciful at the time. We may have progressed since then, but in any case there is this instance from The Wind. Lars Hansen, who has married Gish, has tried to kiss her. She has registered loathing, after he has won, with a new and sudden expression that completely renovates the incident (Seastrom nearly always gets the unsuspected out of his casts). He flings out of the room, and she, shut up, with the wind outside, starts pacing up and down. Hansen, outside, strides about. Gish is facing things and both are working something out. We only see the boards of the floor and the feet. But the boards seem to matter most. They are not quite alike, because they are run in different directions, the angle is different, so, through noticing this, we get the fact that they are both boards much more. They are there, impassively, while the feet walk about and work things out above them.
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Gish, of course, knows it can’t go on much longer, she is, after all, married to the man, and the man is damned if he sees why it should go on much longer, since she is, after all, married to him, and what is marriage for? He took her in a mug of cocoa when she arrived. The cup lies on his floor. The hopes he had, the kindness he was prepared to pay her. Here, drink this, I made it myself. The cup lies on the floor. Of course, he kicks it. The alternating rhythms on the still floor are broken. The act follows the mental decision, and the kicking of the cup is the visual expression of the decision and preparation for what he has decided. He goes into her room, through a door, onto another set of boards. We scarcely notice that he has left his room, because the continuity of the action has been set up in our minds by the boards. The feet meet, Gish’s draw back. Well, how important the floor has been.

I mentioned the intimacy of Seastrom in home scenes. The birth of the calf was not good in The Tower of Lies, but in this newer film, Gish is at work with the people she lives with, and the woman is ripping a carcass. Everyday stuff. But watch the way Gish draws her skirts as she passes the carcass to fetch an iron. You find that for the first time in weeks at a London cinema, you have a state of mind pure before you. Gish, of course, moves beautifully, even under Fred Niblo’s direction in The Enemy, and Seastrom, of course, understands motion and the waves of motion, notice the way the dance stopped, and the floor emptied and the people swept down to the cellar in The Wind, while one or two waited on the empty floor busy barricading the door and the typhoon hung over the town outside—to return, more or less literally, to the
mutton; when the children came home, they ran to Gish, and the mother was left with blood on her hands and the knife; she put it down but it made no difference. The children were instinctively repelled, and no one knew it but she and them. When her husband came home, she smeared the blood away, but he greeted Gish over his wife's shoulder, and she was jealous, and the carcass hung there. She could not help having to slice and scrape it. But the children turned from her, from the blood and knife part of her.

Very simple. Three images and only small incidents. They were allowed to be small, they were not in the least Germanic, not Lupu-Pick-Wild Duck-ish. They were not piled up till by their accumulation they became significant, as do the incidents in Czinner films. They were rather the turning over of the whole which reveals these facets as it turns. You tell a whale by the water it spurs, yet there is water all round. It isn't the whale that makes Whale evident, but the water it has taken in from the surroundings and then spurts up.

When Gish is alone in the house, there is another instance of the peculiarly simple and potent use Seastrom makes of his imagery. Turning it over as if he were looking at it and would be very surprised but quite pleased if you noticed it too. The wind comes. It breaks a window pane. She stuffs a coat in. She makes things fast. The shelves sway. A lamp is knocked over, it sets fire to the tablecloth. These are little things, results of the wind. To put it out she has to take the coat out of the pane. Then the wind comes in again. All this is actual, but it is one of those rare occasions when actual representation gives us state of mind more
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clearly than purely psychological interpretation would. Tricks, dissolves, all that. Here, we follow her, we run round, doing hopelessly small things against the wind, wondering how long it will be before the shelves fall, wishing the dog would stop barking, till we are terribly in the girl’s state of mind. But in Manhattan Cocktail, a nice light film, a girl is told that 5,000 dollars will bail her young lover out. She walks down the street and, of course, sees everything in terms of that sum. It beats in on her brain. Dorothy Arzner, usually intelligent, uses tricks so that the figures swim before her eyes. This is all right once, but we do not want them to merge on every fur coat, on every pearl collar she passes. We are there before, that is it. Seastrom knows this, and the windstorm is done by actuality, the room just sways a bit, that is all. At the same time, since this is not an appreciation of Seastrom, he is never very interested in tricks. There was good technique in Charrette Fantôme, but The Divine Woman shows very little use of recent improvements, which I use deliberately, because if you have a firm conception, truquages will not hurt it, and it is foolish not to avail yourself of anything that gets you there most cleanly. Now, Seastrom uses old tricks, but not new ones. He uses the ones that were new when he was developing. Now he is quite capable of outdated clumsy visions in The Divine Woman and emphasises the new lover treading on the cap of a former that has fallen to the floor. In The Wind, Gish was against Nature. In The Divine Woman, what is Garbo against? Her own nature? You have to consider. It is true that you see most of a Swedish film after you have seen it. You see then something different, something underlying.
Whereas in Eisenstein or Preobrashenskaja, you see more intensely. You hold in your hand what you had grasped before with the Russians. The first thing that you get from consideration of *The Divine Woman* is cynicism. At first it has seemed an ordinary film (and it never becomes a very extraordinary one) of a girl who loved a soldier, became an actress; became the mistress of a producer to go on being an actress; and gave up being both in order to settle down with the soldier. But simply because Seastrom has earned respect, you look more closely, and that rewards you. For one thing, there is the shape, as I tried to show in giving the plot. Then, the way the girl got what she wanted, and, as the action swung between actress and love, the director’s emphasis swung between “divine” and “woman”. Was it by mistake that the divinity was so very tinsel? Then again, it was remarkable that for once Seastrom was so little occupied with his background. The stage, furs, flowers, receptions... you would have thought all this would have been seized on. God knows, it has been often enough.

Well, the furs and the chrysanthemums are there, but they’re not insisted on, not even stressed dramatically, certainly not relished visually. They are background. Miss Arzner brings her backstages to life, but here Seastrom suddenly concentrates on the woman. He concentrates on the effect of the furs and flowers on the woman. In his old habit, but it is not in his habit to show only the woman. I do not think this is because the woman is Garbo, a star, because Garbo is handled much less as a star than she has been in America. He is not too impressed by her importance or her beauty, which is good for all of us, and Garbo becomes amus-
CLOSE UP

ing, and gets laughs as a laundry-girl and does Bébé Daniels' stuff. None of this is because this is a picture Seastrom did not bother about. When the great actress breaks down she cries, "I can't go on. Oh, God, I'm done for. I hate it all"! And in all the numbers of times we have seen an actress break down on the screen, we have never heard one say quite this. It may not have been Seastrom's, but the way it fitted into the spirit of the picture, and the fact that there was a spirit, was Seastrom's. A logical sequence; consider the placing of the "I hate it all", at the end. Realising why she is done for. One is done for if one hates it. Swedish and Seastrom. The best things in life are free; that is flung at us in most films, what would Queen Pickford have had for a motto without it? But here they are free, they are the best, because one has paid for the worse things.

The director felt cramped with this story and its setting, especially, why not? the setting. So he took the most elemental thing, the woman, and did what he could. I have dealt with it like this, because it will be possible to see it in England (think of that!), and it may seem a contradiction of what I said about landscape and background.

Naturally, there is not very much imagery in it. Plenty of symbols. The most clear image is the soldier's cap, which runs through. It is through his first dropping it that he met Garbo, and when he is arrested it is left behind. It is an image, different from the clothes he steals for her while she is trying on better ones at the theatre. There are more symbols than images because the film progresses dramatically, but the use of the cap has interest, because as an image it links past and present, and the past scenes in a film are the
horizon. The cup in The Wind did the same. It was on the floor from another scene, which it led back to. It took the place of that scene and held it visible while another one went on. Seastrom’s images do this. They carry on. They represent the whole while a larger part of it than themselves is filling the attention. Stones in the foreground, rolled down from the rocks at the back. They show the scale, and however dramatically important, they remain in themselves small. His imagery rarely has close-ups. It has to be looked for. It is part of the atmosphere, the unemphasised, limpid, clear air we breathe, whose effects we feel after. There is nothing startling about it. It is either the whole background, or a feature in the foreground that relates back to it.

His films progress dramatically, which is the thing that prevents him ranking among the few. The thing that prevents Swedish films from being, save in part, among the few great films. Seastrom’s outlook is primarily dramatic. Swedish films are primarily dramatic. Their use, and the use they make, of stories shows this. “Leurs films restent des contes populaires auxquels le metteur en scène a communiqué une part d’émotion personelle et assez largement humaine pour que nous ne la subissions pas impunément. Une telle formule ne répond, certes, pas aux fins vraies et idéales du cinéma, mais elle n’en est pas moins une des premières formules complètes.” (Moussinac; Naissance du Cinéma.)

But is is because they are Swedish that they have “atteint à un lyrisme large, inconnu jusqu'alors à l'écran, si ce n'est pas dans quelques films d'Ince : calme tragique, sérénité noble et puissante de quelques scènes . . . des Proscrits . . . Je ne sais rien de comparable à l'intimité de leurs intérieurs
CLOSE UP

reconstitués’ avec une simplicité étonnante. Il n’y a presque rien et tout y est . . . Ils ne craignent pas d’éliminer impitoyablement tout ce qui pourrait encombrer l’action et nuirait à l’ensemble. . .”

This lyricism, this force of “nuances du sentiment exteriorisé par une geste ou la lumière d’un regard ”, this broad landscape, these torrents that sting so, this air that cuts—all this make up their gift to the screen, bringing these things to us as they are, giving them their importance. The Swedish cinema may not be true, pure cinema; but the cinema there is in them is pure, and their own, which is why they breathe a nobility unlike any other films’ nobility—the spectacle, to quote Freud, “that men can offer when in the face of an elemental catastrophe they awake from their muddle and confusion, forget all their internal difficulties and animosities, and remember the great common task, the preservation of mankind against the supremacy of nature “. 

ROBERT HERRING.

“PROPAGANDA”

When Pudowkin’s Mother was shown by the Film Society it set London agog for a week. The weekly ration of film news in every paper was largely taken up with Russian films and their producers. Some openly praised the film. Most
others did so inadvertently with faint and rather inept damns. But the really amazing thing was the almost total agreement that it was robbed, on account of the propaganda in it, of greatness and its title to art.

Now the objection to propaganda in art has an ancient sound. Its revival, adapted to the occasion, of course, smacks more of an old prejudice than a reasoned conclusion honestly reached. One is attracted less by the cogency of its promoters than by their naïve admission to the cinema's art status. But the point needs to be treated.

In the circumstances it will be better to sheer away from hoary dogmas, from green-room and art club metaphysics, and let the merits of the new art advance its own cause.

If we could conceive of a version of the film purged of its propaganda and yet retaining qualities at all worth while it would be an excellent method. But it is beyond conception. And this is its strongest advocate. But there is an even more convincing way. To compare the achievements of *Mother* with those of other outstanding films generally regarded as propaganda-less.

Leon Poirier's *Verdun* suits the purpose admirably. First because of its general recognition as a non-propagandist film. Second because it could be seen while the impressions from seeing *Mother* were still hot in our brains.

It will be necessary to stand off from personal attitudes towards political hues or moralist bias if we are to get the correct slant. We must objectively regard them as parts of a whole. We are obliged to do so, for we knew it is impossible, even for a moment, to imagine the films with these components expunged.
CLOSE UP

As a film Verdun had much to it, yet there is no gainsaying that in something vital it was lacking. Some potent power to move and sustain emotions as did Mother.

No absence of beauty can account for this. Beauty was in one as in the other. Perhaps in Verdun pictorial beauty was the greater. Poirier’s sense for it was notably strong. His use of cinematography suggesting sustained heavy gunfire and widespread joy of armistice bells spoke of his knowledge and sympathetic grasp of the expressiveness of modern technique. These things so far were good.

Where, then, the lack? Sincerity? We think not, for we know that no danger and no sentiment was spared to effect realism and exactitude. Sincerity was present to a fault. In all these salient things Poirier’s work paralleled that of Pudowkin’s Mother.

Like the Russian he, too, was fired with an idea. And to be so moved by an idea as to represent it via some art medium is to invest that medium with life. But it is propaganda, too. Even if Verdun did not impress us as such it cannot be taken that the intention was not there. An early caption tells of Poirier’s conviction that the story of Verdun would redound to the everlasting glory of France. This conviction was as real as Pudowkin’s allegiance to determinism, and was exactly that which made the story worth the filming.

But by a strange contradiction the French producer here, at least, revealed that he was a greater believer in realism than he was a realist. The greatness of his faith was that having stated his case in a caption the very truth and realism of events would themselves bear him out. So realism became the end rather than the instrument. And beauty and realism
notwithstanding, it was a pictorial record we were given, not a moving dynamic art. We were allowed to look on, but we were not made to feel.

We were spectators of a strange humanity going through the monotony of the daily round, having destruction for its task in place of building; laying waste, the chosen alternative to tillage. Come day, go day, a hopeless fortitude. A situation without origin, without objective. A confusion to which sub-titles often added instead of giving it clarity and coherence.

With Mother it was otherwise. Pudowkin soon swept us from our seats and forced us into becoming emotional participants. Nor were we allowed for one moment to retire even to the curbstone complacently to look on. We were on one side or the other. For or against.

Whether or not normally we share his morality or dissent from his politics, for the time being we are his. In his determinism there is no place for the realism of the onlooker, only for the reality of the participant.

To him human motive is an affect of causation. Until we not only meet but join his characters it is his object to recreate causation in us. Then we can no more withhold our sympathy than if we were reacting to personal experience. Thence their life is ours and we are carried along with them. Always he is insistent, knocking and rousing; knocking and stimulating. Making our objective inevitably alike to theirs.

All known technique is made to subserve this end. When that fails the ceaseless pressure of his necessity mothers the inventions that make Pudowkin’s technique his. There were hints by some who disliked the propaganda in Mother that the
greatest good, if any, that might come from the film was the lessons in technique it had to offer to American and European producers. This is sheer inability to appreciate the vital thing about it. Without the same intentions blind copying would prove as abortive as mere imitations of Pabst. Angle, cut-back, dissolve or mix are sterile mechanics when not enforcing some objective significance.

In this light realism and reality have a different import. No clearer expression of this difference can perhaps be found than Pudowkin's own words (too long to quote here) in the preface to his manual of "Film Direction and Scenario Writing" on editing an "Explosion" and "Prisoner's Joy".

To talk of How or of What is done is digression, except that it serves to illustrate the creative force behind it. His technique is not the product of innate genius. It is the outcome of a deep feeling and firm conviction which has lighted on the cinema as the medium to express it. And it is the measure of his propagandist desire that he cut, experimented and edited; and above all even eschewed that which, however pictorially real, did not express his meaning, and express it exactly.

We had to feel and thoroughly know what freedom from prison would mean to us; to experience the terror of an explosion bursting over us. It is not enough to witness betrayal. We must betray or be betrayed.

But we were not made to feel the glory of remaining in a fort from which there seemed no escape, or that there was tangible reason for the daily dodging or delivering of decimating gunfire.
CLOSE UP

Had this been done with insistent cinematography Verdun would have sprung to life, have had meaning, and have become creative art. But it would have expressed viewpoints and have become propaganda. What alternative? Proportionate to the forceful stressing of its theme is a film’s coherence, unity and completeness.

Without these there could be no complete art. Factual truth and realism are indispensable touchstones, too, but without thematic unity they have no more creative art than an illustrated guide book or a casualty list. But we have seen that thematic unity is saying something, stressing it, and forcing it home, in other words, is propaganda. In varying degree this is just as noticeable in European and Hollywood as well as Russian productions.

Meanwhile we have Verdun without propaganda; an artifice unresolved and languid. In Mother, propaganda undoubtedly, but something alive and whole.

You take your choice.

Hay Chowl.

THE COMPOUND CINEMA

Leon Moussinac, that excellent French critic, has called the film the first of the cinematic arts.

But the youngest critic establishes his viewpoint by exclusions.
CLOSE UP

The youngest critic says: "The film’s idiom is silence. Silence is a cosmic virtue."

The youngest critic says: "The film’s frame is the film’s circumscription. The flat film in silence is the supreme film."

The youngest critic is absolute, but never exact.

The inference to be drawn from Moussinac’s words is the complete answer: "There are a variety of possible forms in the cinema. The flat silent film is but one form."

The flat silent film without prismatic distortion is the first form of the cinema: Murnau has said as much. Within this category itself there are numerous subdivisions, according to content, sequence, harmonic organization, performance, attitude. There is the genre film, the poster film, the film of social commentary direct or comic . . . from these derive the films of various stylizations, of complex organization, and eventually the film of graphic or cinegraphic distortions. There is the film built on counterpoint, simultaneous or sequential counterpoint.

Counterpoint is an indicator to the compound cinema. In relation to the sonorous film this has been already stated in different terms by Kliesler and the Russian directors. Kliesler did not fully or definitely state the contrapuntal or balance basis for the compound cinema, but he did suggest a union of various ingredients towards the end of an opto-phonetic art. He relegated speech to television. This was in August, 1928. On May 26th, 1928, there appeared in The Billboard an article by me on “Radio Entertainment”, which said: “Television is the speech-sight medium. The medium of direct imparting and impermanence. The movie
is the art of silent visual plastic fluidity. Speech is a monstrosity in the movie. ... Television is the sight medium which stresses speech.'’ I wish to modify this. The present cinema, known as the movie, is the art of silent visual plastic fluidity. But I must also modify Mr. Kleisler. If speech may not be stylized for the cinema, utterance may. The explosive utterances: Oh, ah, or sounds like Te-te-te, which the remarkable Jewish Theatre of Moscow has used as a rhythmic detail in one play by contracting into T’T’T’ and expanding into Taa-Taa-Taa. I give these as instances. To utilize sound the principle of rhythmic fluidity must be exercised, or, as the Russians have expressed it tersely in the October Close Up, counterpoint. I have developed that viewpoint in two essays written some time ago, awaiting publication in two American journals: The Arts and The Musical Quarterly. As an hypothesis, consider a film so arranged: beginning in silence and a black screen it enters optically or visually into a graphic moving composition to which follows a counter composition of sound, unaccompanied by the screen (except perhaps by a linear equivalent to the music), to a simultaneity of sound and sight. ... This is a simple illustration which may indicate the new optophonic composition and scenario. It may suggest the utilization of the color-organ to create fluid color equivalents. This is making of the fault of the sonorous film, namely that it tends rather to separate sound and sight than to synchronize them, a virtue.

The objection to sound cannot be absolute. It can be only on objection to the compounding of it with a form intrinsically silent, the first form. In the typical confusion of the cinema entrepreneurs (a confusion typical of mankind), a not fully
CLOSE UP

realized form is being thwarted, and a new form is being prevented. The new optophonic film needs another viewpoint than the optic film. Yet why are we just now raging about the imposition of the talking picture? Was not speech always present in the film, and is it not still present in the films of the very directors objecting to the talking picture? What logic was there ever in lip-movements imitating the talking picture? If the movie needed or wanted naturalism, it had its own instruments to obtain it. Every one has contributed to the confusion present in the movie, inventor, investor, impresario ... actor, audience. ...

Premature compoundings were attempted from the first, deliberately or in unawareness: in the musical accompaniment which attempts to render every point in the film, in the lecture-movie combination (Alexander Black thus introduced the motion picture), in the German kino-oper, in the American presentation, etc. Max Reinhardt has suggested that possibly the presentation indicates a compounding of stage and film. Why not, if the compounding is planned as a unit with one harmonious end in mind, a rhythmic pattern? The combination is hybrid now, because two separate units are being used. Such combination was used as a vaudeville act by Hobart Bosworth in "The Sea Wolf" years ago. American vaudeville has known it long as a "stunt". Piscator and Meierholf have used it more pretentiously. The Russian Ballet has suggested the film's use in the dance. It is as yet only a possibility as a singular pattern of the cinema or stage.

The Russian directors expressed a disinterest in the stereopticon and color films, but is it not possible that depth and
color (as differing from the present tone or color-value film) may create their own mountings? I cannot see how this can be opposed. It is like an objection to sculpture because it is not painting, or to a painting because it is not an etching. The depth film provides its own category, the color film its own. If the color film could achieve fluidity, it would be at once on its way to singularity. There are certain things that cannot be combined, harmonized or crossed. The confusion of the evolving silent movie with sound is an instance of this reciprocal hostility. But certain other things permit crossing—the abstract frieze, for instance, and the sculptural mask accept paint.

The handicap to the creation of independent forms in the cinema is largely literalness. It is evinced in a film like *The Crowd*, which demanded a less chronological and a more patterned production. It is evinced in speech-mimicry. Literalness is the absence of concept. It is matter-of-fact, cautious and fears organization on a plastic basis. It has kept the so-called epic film from being epic, and it is at the source of the inability of directors to incorporate the inferences of the subject-matter of films into the treatment. Alexander Bakshy has stated this well as the failure of *The Crowd*.

Literalness has kept the movie from utilizing its possible rhythms, to be found in the movements of the cinema, which, as Mr. Bakshy has said, are four: the film or pellicule, the camera, the player, the screen. Only now is the screen as an instrument beginning to be used, in the magnascope or phantom screen, in the triptych. Several years ago Mr. Bakshy offered a plan to use for symphonic, contrapuntal pictures of scope a screen within a screen, a multiple screen
CLOSE UP

receiving its images from one camera, not three cameras, a screen subdividing and blending the action for dramatic and rhythmic effects. Nothing has come of it as yet. Nor is the enlarged screen being utilized for its dramatic and rhythmic effects. Eric Elliott calls it a close-up. That is its present use. But considered as a movement, not of the camera, but of the screen, it offers magnificent plastic opportunities in its gradual enlargement and diminishing, with the illusion of advancing and receding movements.

These are a few possible compoundings of cinema. There is the possibility also of color and animated cartoon for stylized ballet-like films. The projection of slides on the side-walls of the Studio 28 in Paris suggests a fanciful possibility: a film which will move not on one screen, but will utilize a moving projection-machine projecting the film in a rotating movement within the reach of eyes following the rotation. This may be a method for the stereopticon cinema.

Harry A. Potamkin.

STORM OVER ASIA—AND BERLIN!

Storm Over Asia, Storm Clouds Over Asia, or the Heir of Genghis Khan, as it is severally called, at the time of writing is being prepared for the Berlin cinema. This is the new film of Pudovkin, and is to be the big sensation of the winter season.
The story of The Heir, or, better by far, The Storm, is, we gather, to be considerably modified for its German release. I therefore count myself extremely fortunate in having seen it, by kind courtesy of the Soviet Photo-Kino Abteilung of Berlin, in Pudovkin's own original version.

Storm Over Asia, following Mother and The End of St. Petersburg, as it is, but will not be, is an astounding and stupendous thing. All that Pudovkin had, and all that we mean when we think Pudovkin in Mother and St. Petersburg, are here made still more perfect, and still more convincing. The unfathomable thing that we call the Pudovkin method (in the same way that we talk of the Eisenstein method, or the Hollywood method), a thing that is not style or mannerism, but a state of mind or soul—a kind of permeation we call typical—reaches here its classic zenith. In this film, extraordinarily long and involved and inter-woven, we have, first of all, a masterpiece, and then we have Pudovkin. In his meticulous statement of a great, impersonal theme, he has also caused us to say, "Ah, this is the real Pudovkin completely revealed". It is important, this, because it does several things at once. By achieving something almost superhuman, the very human quality is stressed. Mother was Pudovkin, so was St. Petersburg. You found out from these a great many things about Pudovkin. But in the end it was Pudovkin that evaded you and the films that remained, whereas with Storm Over Asia you feel you have traced something, and that you have the clue to the way Pudovkin's mind works. I mean that when you think of Mother and St. Petersburg you can think of them as apart from their maker, like flowers or countryside, whereas with Storm Over Asia it is
more like some new, strange building, you say how wonderful, and then you wonder who built it. This may be, and perhaps is another way of saying, that the gigantic conception of the film is actually superhuman, and that Pudovkin is, for all his greatness, human. And that for this reason the mesh is here and there a little loose and we are able to peep through.

I will say now that nothing greater has yet been achieved. Until Storm Over Asia I weighed that in the end nothing greater and more stark than Eisenstein’s Ten Days would be accomplished. I think I stated originally that Ten Days and St. Petersburg were equally great, although in this I differed from most critics, who preferred St. Petersburg. Seeing both films several times I differed even more, and chose for its towering ice-pure hardness Ten Days. St. Petersburg was more rarified, and therefore softer. Pudovkin focussed on two peasants. Eisenstein on fifty—a hundred—a thousand human faces, caught for a second by his camera in some action that gave them to us as poignant and real.

Pudovkin’s “human-interest” was a concession, a gesture to guide people to compassion. Eisenstein recorded, not as a reporter, which people have said, but like some superfine instrument of science for measuring wind or the weight of clouds.

Now comes Storm Over Asia, and however they quieten it and calm it down, it will remain Storm, with lightning and thunder and rain and wind and fury.

The first shots are of sky. Long, leisurely shots of angry cloud. Then of land with small bare hills, and great distance. Pudovkin’s new experiment is to reveal things to you
CLOSE UP

in three stages. Far off, nearer and then near. It is sometimes very successful, sometimes too slow. Once at least he reverses it, showing you first of all a woman standing by a hut watching her son ride off. The second shot, further off, is the same, with distance between, so that remoteness begins, and the quiet undulations of the land. The last has only the now familiar miles of empty, barren-looking hillocks, and far off the tiny block of the hut, and the even tinier figure, hemmed in and enclosed by loneliness. This is clever and poignant, but two or three times in one film is enough. And sometimes the camera was oblique for no reason. Which is very like trying to be clever, proving one maintained critical coolness. Certainly the mesh was loose now and then, and certainly one was able to peep through. It would be pert or narrow to allow this to take importance. The fabric, as a whole, is something that matters so vitally. It is, indeed, an amazing thing to plunge from the half-lewd idiocy of the average film to this. The contrast is a kind of crevasse over which there is no bridge. The average film concerns itself with things that don’t matter happening to people who don’t matter, set in a treacley irreality of sex-charged commonness. This mildly pernicious grime is spread out in ever-thickening layers until finally, if something—some storm over Europe—does not invade the cinema manufactories, sweeping it away like the invading army on the hurricane in Pudovkin’s film, it will choke every one of us.

I see that Storm Over Asia will be considerably modified for Berlin. The “invading army” is probably not stressed there as British, the commander’s scare-crow, well-bred wife will be allowed to be a vaguer symbol. I have a feeling,
though I may be wrong, that the young Mongolian will not be marched out alone to a bleak and lonely spot to be shot down as even animals should not be shot. And certainly the grim and ghastly scene of rescuscitating the same Mongolian will not be allowed to pass.

It is anti-British, they told me. But what forcibly occurred to me was that if the film were cut so that it was not seen that sympathy were with the Mongolians, and were then shown to a British audience, certain sections of the audience would assuredly say, "that's the stuff to give 'em". This is not vindictiveness on my part but another way of saying what probably nobody else will say, that Pudovkin has been no harsher than that class deserves. The film is by no means anti-British. It is certainly and definitely anti-militaristic, and therefore not particularly kind to the classes that seem to go on caring nothing about war and living their lives in readiness for it. In this, at bottom, it is entirely pro-British, and any Briton worthy of the name might well have been proud to have made it. Naturally, it would be forbidden here. Even more so than Potemkin. But what would happen if it were shown would certainly be far less impartial than my comments.

The action, says the synopsis, is located in Mongolia, whose insurgents fight for their independence against foreign troops, who have forced their way into Mongolia with the object of conquest. That is what you might call tactfully worded.

The film begins in the already mentioned hut, where Bair, the young Mongolian huntsman, has a valuable arctic fox fur which he intends to sell in the town for as high a price as
possible to help his invalid mother. The cupidity of others there leads to a fight, during which a small holy charm is dropped. The old woman picks this up, and when Bair goes off to the town she gives it to him to wear.

In the town the traders bring in their scats of fur tails and receive in exchange a few coppers. Bair enters and his fox fur is produced. The official recognises it as an extraordinarily fine specimen, but throws Bair only a few coppers, flinging the fur down with the pile of cheap tails.

Bair's indignation rises. The shocked faces of his fellow-countrymen who have seen the shameful transaction, stare at him, wondering what he will do. He is thrown out for violence, but comes back to fight, and the official is killed there.

By a coincidence, says the same synopsis, he is witness of a fight between insurgents and the intruding enemy. While the fighting is going on the British commander and his wife are getting dressed to attend a Mongolian festival. The analogy made between the preparation of the commander's wife and the devil dancers, both donning absurd trinkets, absurd head-dress, absurd clothes and absurd masks, is obvious, and because it is Pudovkin, not obvious. It is, apart from anything else, a consummate piece of pure cinema. The rhythm and tempo of these scenes of preparation are to be compared only with the greatest moments of great films.

Bair has joined the insurgents. The festival drags on and on, incantation, incense, gongs, cymbals, dances, incense, cymbals, gongs. The commander's wife, in her Patou gown and tiara, wearing her set, tired smile, sickenested by the fumes
and exhausted at the protractions, stands by her husband’s side, “doing her bit”, going on with her smile, and quick, furtive glances. This is all wonderfully achieved. It is not the direct thing that is emphasised. Pudovkin uses more the undercurrents. The amiable faces are all watching. The commander’s wife becomes a classic symbol—a symbol shown-up. Her silly “good-breeding” is the thing she clings to, sensing the hostility and the exotic oppositeness of what is going on around her. Messages come from the war zone.

They are delivered with smiles and in whispers while the ceremony is going on. They are whispered to the commander and both he and his wife smile. Everybody smiles. His adjutant goes out, and Mongolian faces stare round, and there is slight nudging among the Mongolians. The dance scenes which follow—authentically filmed for the first time, and for this reason alone of absorbing interest, do undoubtedly, however, unbalance the composition. To talk this way, as I have stated in my editorial, is quite wrong and misleading unless it is carefully explained what is meant. And what is meant here is that the dances took up too much time and diverted attention from the story. A useful parenthesis, which overstepped its legitimate limit. Alone and for itself alone this sequence was very fine, full of movement and mysticism and speeding up; capturing the orderly abandon and the crescendo of the dance. The accompaniment of cymbals certainly needed no sound synchronisation. The rhythm of the cymbals here can be compared only to the now famous machine-gun sequence of *Ten Days*. So one goes, peeping between the mesh where it is loose, and bit by bit
there is nothing that is not extremely fine. It is then a question of final balance, of unity.

Riding home across the gaunt, desolate country, the commander and his wife are pursued by horses. The woman, who is tired out, bursts into sobs. The car stops. It is their own forces come to take care of them, for trouble is feared.

In the subsequent fights Bair is taken prisoner. The next sequences may not be allowed to stand, where a British soldier is instructed to take him out and shoot him. The two go out together. It is very clever here the way in which the complete barrier of language makes the two men like strange objects to each other out of another world. Bair’s hands are tied. The English soldier is won by his bright and confident smile, that has all the courtesy of the East in it. He offers a cigarette. Bair cannot take it, as his hands are not free, and is unable to explain that he does not smoke. The soldier strikes a match. Bair then shakes his head, still smiling, and the cigarette falls. The soldier stares at him in surprise until the match burns his finger. He feels now that he has been merely foolish, and thrusts Bair forward. It is raining. The country is deserted. He commands Bair to walk forward. Takes aim and shoots. Bair turns, wounded, but unable to believe. A second bullet doubles him up, and he falls headlong down the steep, wet slope.

Returning, the soldier’s puttee comes undone and streaks through the puddles. He stoops to do it up again. Indoors they have searched through Bair’s belongings, and found the sacred charm his mother gave him—the same which had fallen from another man’s pocket during the first brawl for the fox
CLOSE UP

fur. Inside this are papers proving—apparently—that Bair is a direct descendant from Genghis Khan, and that he has therefore a right to the throne of Greater Mongolia. They immediately conceive the idea to present a monarchy in Mongolia against the ‘‘red influence’’, as this would not only consolidate their own position, but assure also the support of friendly foreign powers. But the order for Bair’s assassination has already been carried out. They rush out and meet the soldier in the street doing up his puttee. Bair’s body is brought from the swamp into which it has fallen, and eminent surgeons operate to save his life—perhaps the most grim and bitterly ironical scene that has ever been filmed, and one, which ironically also, will quite certainly be clipped out by the censors. The tidings of the new prince fly through Mongolia, and people, men and women, come to peep at the body which seems more than dead and more than at their mercy.

Bair recovers. People come to sit and look at him. He no longer smiles. They dress him up in absurd silk clothes. Fussy, tittle-tattling parties take place, and at last Bair, propped on his stick, is put into a Western evening suit and brought to a large gathering as the Prince of Mongolia. One of the guests, a young woman, is wearing the familiar fox fur. His eyes blaze. He tears it off her neck. She goes into hysterics. There is confusion. It is the first thing that Bair has done, the first sign of rebellion he has made since he became the plaything of the monarchists. Finally, with the same consummate irony, the man who in the beginning had lost the sacred charm, the real heir to the throne, is pursued into Bair’s house, where upstairs Bair is being dressed by the ladies in flowing robes.
CLOSE UP

He is shot by the military like a rat in a corner. Bair is seized then with mad rage. He tears off the robe, snatches a sword, and cuts his way; possessed and demoniacal through the house, wrecking everything. When the astounded people come to their senses and try to follow, the same possessed fury carries him through them, and he jumps from the window. The army is attacking. Bair is on a horse leading the insurgents. Storm begins. And with it, symbolism begins, overmastering the end of the film. Storm rises and becomes cyclone. The invading army is swept back. Trees with it, men rolling, guns blown over. Bair and his followers ride triumphantly behind, following. The film ends wrongly and suddenly on a wild crescendo of storm and wreckage and the triumphant ride of the Mongolians. It was not a rounding off, nor was it successful symbolism. The suggestion of supernatural intervention, the general wild firework display had nothing very suggestive in it. The end was rather a pity. According to the synopsis it ends with Bair riding into the distant steppes. This would be better, because the problem dealt with through the film is not resolved by a hurricane at the end of it, which was meant to say that this was dealing with the problem and this was the end of it. The problem remains, and Bair riding into the steppes would indicate this.

Storm Over Asia is not, however, a film to criticise, but for the starved lovers of film art, to be devoured greedily and gratefully. It will last forever.

K. M.
PREJUDICES

That the prejudices against which we have to fight are legion is scarcely a matter for complaint. For those who approach the art of the film in a state of prejudice (and do immeasurable damage amongst the reading public that is looking for a leader amidst the maze of conflicting opinions) are, unfortunately, not aware of their condition.

One of the most redoubtable of the prejudices recently beginning to put forth blossoms is that which favours the drawing of parallels. All of us, it would seem, are more or less instinctively inclined to seek a standpoint from which it is possible critically to survey a work of art: a method of judgment justified perhaps in regard to those branches of art that can look back upon hundreds and thousands of years of development, but, in relation to the films, entirely out of place.

As an art-form the film can scarcely be said to have a past. Or, if one holds that such a past exists, it becomes necessary to realise that in the end it is relatively unimportant and meaningless. For everything that has been prepared to date is preparative work, temporary work, or, if you prefer, work that on technical grounds is destined to be relatively short-lived. (Neither must it be forgotten that at the end of about thirty years almost nothing remains of a negative.)
we do not even know whether we have a film-style, and the few works that to-day are described as classics will probably in the course of a few years, in face of what ought to come and what must come, be cast aside and forgotten. If, even now, we look back a little, we can clearly see that work which a few years ago was regarded as setting a standard is to-day considered mistaken and almost useless. In so saying I do not, of course, mean to suggest that such work has actually been useless. On the contrary, it has powerfully supported the development of film art. But we ought not to make the mistake of criticising freshly created work in relation to what is past. By each small technical innovation the art of cinematography is so fundamentally influenced that at once new possibilities arise, new paths are opened up of which hitherto we had not dreamed.

We must also bear in mind that the film, since it owes its strength to the multiplicity of its possibilities, becomes tedious and uninteresting the moment it exhibits a tendency to uniformity. It is unfortunate that the majority of people, insufficiently equipped to face the unfamiliar, and preferring, therefore, what they know by heart, are unable to meet fresh developments with clear eyes and minds. Why should it be demanded of a director who has once produced a film of a certain kind that he should go on reproducing his success for a life-time? Do not suggest that we make no such demand, for we do make it, without being clearly aware of the fact, and in a way that does not betray itself at the first glance. The result is a kind of serialisation which, no matter how perfect it may be, is found presently to be wearying us by reason of its uniformity. The film should be as various as life.
From *The Flame in the Fog*, a Japanese film directed by J. Shige Sudzuki. Nearly the whole film—concerned with Japanese Chinatown—was made in fog, as seen in the above illustration.
Bantsuma (Tsuma Saburo-Bando) one of the most famous of Japan's character actors in two roles from films by J. Shige Sudzuky.
From *Bamboo*, a comedy made for Universal in Japan by J. Shige Sudzuki.

*Planet*, the first impressionistic film made in Japan. Story, designs and direction by J. Shige Sudzuki. Unlike *Caligari*, the actors are made up to blend with the décot.
Capital Punishment, by J. Shige Sudzuky from a play by Oshimoto.
Eugen Deslaw, the young Ukrainian director of *La Marche des Machines*, who has now made a new abstract film entitled *La Nuit Electrique*.

Joris Ivens taking a scene for his new film *Pluie* (Rain). Photo: Germaine Krull.
Henry Victor and Marie Glory in a scene from *l'Argent*, Marcel l'Herbier's film for Cinéromans.

Alfred Abel and Marie Glory in a striking décor from *l'Argent*. 
Preparing the scene below from *Les Nouveaux Messieurs*, Jacques Feyder's film for Albatros-Sequana, which has been banned by the French Government on account, it is said, of a tendency to ridicule the Chamber of Deputies.

The scene above as it would have appeared on the screen, with Albert Préjean in front.
Albert Préjean in *Les Nouveaux Messieurs*, Jacques Feyder's film which has been banned by the French Government.

Albert Préjean on the platform in *Les Nouveaux Messieurs*. 
CLOSE UP

For although it is said that there is "nothing new under the sun," I still believe that life transforms itself daily and seldom puts the same menu upon the table a second time.

The worst sufferers are the so-called "big" directors. Faced with their productions one feels impelled to launch out with one's whole intelligence which, as often as not, has not the smallest pretext to engage itself, and the cleverest of the critics do not escape the danger of singling out the weaknesses of the new film which, it is alleged, were not present in an earlier work—always forgetting that the same reservations, in another form, were made with regard to the other films. So long as these criticisms are purely personal opinions they are permissible. For every one has the right to prefer the film of the year X to the film of the year Y. But it is a great mistake to assert that the former is the more valuable. No creators of films who are to be taken seriously will pretend to have produced immortal works. They aim solely and singly at showing the way. And the way changes almost hourly in an art which is still ignorant of its rules, which does not yet even know whether it has any rules.

Why, for example, is it incessantly demanded that Dupont shall repeat his Variety? The scenario and the idea of Variety are alleged to be superior to those of Moulin Rouge. In what way? The one scenario was built up, like the other, upon an incident so common-place as to ensure, at the hands of an indifferent director, a complete failure. Has any one of those who draw comparisons between Variety and Moulin Rouge taken the trouble to-day, in 1928, to see Variety again? And if he has, can he honestly and without prejudice declare that it is the better film? Hardly. Of Variety, loved years ago,
we have only a memory—and memory is a powerful intensifier—hence the enhancement of past experience and error in regard to the new film.

Is it perhaps desirable that Pabst should repeat his *Joyless Street*, Paul Leni his *Waxworks*, René Clair his *Entr'acte*, Cavalcanti *Rien Que Les Heures*, James Craze *Jazz*, and Griffith *The White Sister*.

Is it not better to patronise their new films, revealing fresh possibilities, and, forgetting what they have done to date, concentrate our interest upon their latest works in order to draw from them what they have to impart? For when it comes to the point what is it that we have to do? To go forward! That our path may be a mistaken one is not the point. If it brings us something new, and with art it always will, we should assent rather than go on talking about "the good old times". Such an attitude is justified by the artists themselves. For if one asks them what they feel with regard to this or that earlier work they will answer almost without exception: "It no longer interests me; what matters to me is the film upon which I am now at work."

And the critics, those who wish to lend their support to the evolution of the film (the others we may regard as negligible), should possess this sense and only this, the sense of renewal. All other critical work, since it is fruitless, is condemned to death from the outset, must die through sheer lack of sap. The art of the film, in particular, needs the powers of those who look forward only. We can abandon the business of reminiscence to the other arts.

Jean Lenauer.
"American films, sharp as steel, cold like the poles, beautiful as the tomb, passed before our dazzled eyes. The gaze of William Hart pierced our hearts and we loved the calm landscape where the hoofs of his horse raised clouds of dust."

Quite so. True, true, perfectly true. Something, at any rate, did pierce our hearts, and we did love the calm of the landscape whereon the wild riders flew, the dust-clouds testifying to their pace. Just those things and as they were, unrelated to what came before and after. And to whatever it might be that had preceded, and to whatever it was that might follow, the splendid riding in the vast landscape gave its peculiar quality. We were devotees of the vast landscape and the wild riding and all the rest passing so magnificently before our eyes.

But however devout our feelings it did not occur to us to express them quite so openly and prayerfully. And, I beg of you . . . has not the quoted tribute a strange air? An air at first sight of being an extract from an out-of-date hand-book.
on the year's pictures, part of whose compilation had been entrusted to a youth with literary ambitions, and a somewhat exotic youth at that, and therefore a youth who properly should not have been the prey of the wild west film? And yet here most certainly is *cri du cœur*, with no question of tongue in cheek.

But young Englishmen of no period, and under no matter what provocation, are to be found gushing in these terms. Gush they may. But not quite in these terms. A young Englishwoman, then? An aspiring and enthusiastic young Englishwoman writing to suggest to other aspiring and enthusiastic young Englishwomen exactly what they think about the movies, and well understanding the heart-piercing and the adoration of the landscape,

But though the sentiments may be thus accountable, the expression of them remains a little mysteriously not an English form of expression until—turning the page to discover in whose person it was that *The Little Review* at any point in its thrilled and thrilling career should have waxed lyrical over the movies in their own right, as distinct from their glimpsed possibilities—one finds the signature of a French writer, one of the super-realists who had hoped the war would have rescued art from romanticism, had been disappointed and, having enumerated the few artists who in Europe were giving the world anything worth the having, looked sadly back upon the movies in their pristine innocence.

With the strange unsuitability of the English garb to the sentiments expressed thus cleared up by the realisation that the article was a literal translation, one could give rein to one's delight in the discovery of this genuine feeling of the day
before yesterday, even though immediately one was forced to reflect that this wistful young man, given the circumstances and the date, could not possibly have seen any FILMS.

Accepting, therefore, its French reading, I have set down this tribute in the manner of a text, first because with an odd punctuality it came to my notice immediately on my return, from a first visit to London's temple of good films, to get on with the business of extracting forgotten treasures from a packing-case, and also because its sentiments chimed perfectly with certain convictions floating uninvited into my mind as I talked, on matters unrelated to the film (if, indeed, at this date any matters can be so described), with a friend encountered by chance on my way home from The Avenue Pavilion.

I had seen, in great comfort, and from a back seat whose price was that of the less valuable portions of the average super-cinema, The Student of Prague. This film, I am told, though excellent for the date of its production, a good play, well acted and likely to remain indefinitely upon any well-chosen repertory, has been out-done and left behind by films now being shown in Germany and in Russia. It is approved by the film intelligentsia, including psycho-analysts who delightedly find it, like all works of art, ancient and modern, fuller of wisdom than its creator clearly knows. And it was most heartily approved by a large gathering of onlookers, revealed when the lights went up, as consisting for the most part of those kinds of persons to be seen scattered sparsely amongst the average cinema crowd.

For me, personally, and before the human interest of the drama began to compete with whatever conscious critical
faculty I may possess, it joined forces with the few "good" films I have seen at home and abroad in convincing me that the film can be an "art-form". There is much in it I shall never forget, and that much was supported and amplified in a way that no conceivable stage setting can compete with. The absence of the spoken word was more than compensated. Captions there may have been. I remember none. Clear, too, was the rôle of the musical accompaniment, though this was now and again a little obtrusive, and one grew intolerant of the crescendo of cymbal-crashing that accompanied every great moment instead of being reserved for the post-script, the final discomfiture of the wonderful devil with the umbrella, surely one of the best devils ever seen on stage or film? The same uniform cymbal-crashing did much, a week or so later, to spoil the revival of Barrymore’s Jekyll and Hyde, first seen in England to the tune of the Erl-könig, itself a work of art and fitting most admirably to Barrymore’s achievement.

But the rôle of the musical accompaniment was clear, nevertheless, its contribution to the business of compensating the absence of the spoken word, its support and its amplification that joins the many other resources of the film in deepening and unifying and driving home all that is presented. Conrad Veidt on any stage would be a great actor. Conrad Veidt moving voiceless through the universal human tragedy in surroundings whose every smallest item "speaks to the occasion", has the opportunity that at last gives to pure acting its fullest scope.

I left gratefully anticipating such other good films as it may be my fortune to see. Yet within and around my delights there were, I knew, certain reservations at work waiting to
formulate themselves and, as I have said, taking the opportunity, the moment my attention was busy elsewhere, of coming forward in the form of clear statement.

The burden of their message was that welcome for the FILM does not by any means imply repudiation of the movies. The FILM at its utmost possible development can no more invalidate the movies than the first-class portrait, say Leonardo's of the Lady Lisa, can invalidate a snap-shot.

The film as a work of art is subject to the condition ruling all great art: that it shall be a collaboration between the conscious and the unconscious, between talent and genius. Let either of these elements get ahead of the other and disaster is the result, disaster in proportion to the size of the attempt.

The film, therefore, runs enormous risks. Portraits are innumerable. The great portraits produced by any single nation are very few indeed. And the portrait that is merely clever or pretentious; be its technique what it will, is no food for mankind. But the snap-shot, and the movie that offers to the fool and the wayfaring man a perfected technique, is food for all. It can't go wrong. It is innocent, and its results go straight to the imagination of the onlooker, the collaborator, the other half of the game.

The charm of the first movies was in their innocence. They were not concerned, or at any rate not very deeply concerned, either with idea or with characterisation. Like the snap-shot, they recorded. And when plot, intensive, came to be combined with characterisation, with just so much characterisation as might by good chance be supplied by minor characters supporting the tailor's and modiste's dummies filling the chief roles, still the records were there, the snap-shot records that
are always and everywhere food for a discriminating and an undiscriminating humanity alike. "Sharp as steel, cold like the poles"; of landscape calm or wild, of crowds and all the moving panorama of life, of interiors, and interiors opening out of interiors, an unlimited material upon which the imagination of the onlooker could get to work unhampered by the pressure of a controlling mind that is not his own mind.

I was reminded also that the Drama, for instance, the Elizabethan drama, became Great Art only in retrospect. Worship of Art and The Artist is a modern product. In the hey-day of the Elizabethan drama the stage was despised, the actor a vagabond and a low fellow.

It may be that the hey-day of the film will come when things have a little settled down. When the gold-diggers, put out of court, shall have ceased to dig, when the medium is developed and within reach of the vagabonds and low fellows, when writing for the film shall no longer offer a spacious livelihood. Then, by those coming innocently to a well-known medium, the World's Great Films, the Hundred Best Films, will be produced. And, since history never repeats itself, they will probably be thousands, some of which, it would seem, have already been made in pioneering Russia.

But the movies will remain. The snap-shots will go on all the time. And there will always be people who infinitely prefer the family album of snap-shots to the family portrait gallery. And this is not necessarily the same as saying that there will always be irresponsible people, people who are happy merely because they are infantile. Much has been said, by those who dislike the pictures, of their value as evidence of infantilism. It is claimed that the people who
flock to the movies do so because they love to lose themselves in the excitement of a dream-world, a world that bears no relationship to life as they know it, that makes no demand upon the intelligence, acts like a drug, and is altogether demoralising and devitalising.

Such people obviously know very little about the movies. But even if they did, even if they cared to take their chance and now and again submit themselves to the experience of a thoroughly popular show, it is hardly likely that they would lose their apparent inability to distinguish between childishness, the quality that has of late been so admirably analysed and presented under the label of infantilism, and childlike-ness, which is quite another thing. The child trusts its world, and those who, in all civilisations and within all circumstances, in face of all evidence and no matter what experience, cannot rid themselves of a child-like trust are by no means to be confused with those who shirk problems and responsibilities and remain ego-centrically within a dream-world that bears no relation to reality.

The battles and the problems of those who trust life are not the same as the battles and problems of those who regard life as the raw material for great conflicts and great works of art. But only such as regard the Fine Arts as mankind's sole spiritual achievement will reckon those who appear not to be particularly desirous of these achievements as therefore necessarily damned.

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON.
INTERVIEW WITH CARL FREUND

"A year ago," said Carl Freund, "I should have spoken to you about panchromatic; to-day I shall speak about colour."

I was not very anxious to talk about colour, a subject on which I have very definite views, but Mr. Freund was enthusiastic and he has a gift of communicating his enthusiasm.

"I saw," he continued, "a Movietone, and I said to myself this must have colour; then I saw a beautiful seascape in colour and I said this must have sound. It is a new art; colour and sound. A new generation of directors and cameramen will be drawn into the films to deal with the new problems; the men without culture will HAVE to go."

A few feeble and stereotyped protests were brushed aside. He asked me to think of Chang in natural colours with sound; of the herd of infuriated elephants thundering into the camera.

"Surely," he asked, "that is not theatre? The difficulty is that no one has seen colour on the screen; modern colour processes are all crude. Colour, when it is introduced into full-length features, will have to be perfect; but there will still be black and white pictures just as there are etchings and paintings. As for sound—please notice that I don't say speech—I felt the need of it myself when I was making Berlin. During the first presentation I put ten men from the orchestra..."
CLOSE UP

in the gallery, and distributed another ten men in the boxes so that there was in the auditorium the actual sensation of being surrounded by sound. In fact, I may claim that Berlin was almost the first of the sound pictures.''

Tired by his eloquence, Mr. Freund finished: "You do see that colour and sound do not mean stage, don't you? And anyway, you must admit that it will be interesting."

I made Mr. Freund assure me that he would be as satisfied with his lighting effects in colour. I even brought up Mr. Elliot's argument that the eye is trapped by colour, and does not travel as it does from black to white. He retorted that so often you do not want the eye to travel, and you have to put the background out of focus to ensure the eye being held.

Then Mr. Freund asked me a question. What films did I like best? I determined to be quite honest and told him that Russian films seemed to me to be the most significant.

Mr. Freund beamed.

"I like the Russian films best also. They convey atmosphere in one shot, and the German film takes hundreds of feet of film to do it. Russian films are a question of angles and cutting; the camera work is 'topical', but I like it. I am longing for the day when I can work 'on the spot', like a journalist who scribbles on his shirt cuff; for the day when there will be no studio and no lights."

What an amazing statement from Carl Freund, one of the greatest experts in the world! I wanted him to elaborate, so I asked: "Don't you feel that studio shots, which you have lit yourself, are more your own than exteriors?"

"That is what they tell me in Germany. When I say I want no studio, and no lights, they think I am mad... But,
Mr. Freund, one light, just one? . . . I hold that what you see is yours, much more than what you make."

"How," I thought, "he must have loved working on Berlin."

"Yes," he continued, "I admire the Russians; they have groups of educational experts, dramatic critics, cameramen, lighting technicians, who discuss the films. What we want in moving pictures is more of the architect, of discussion and thought. A picture should be cut before it goes into production."

I brought the conversation round to America. I suggested that he might like to go there.

He shrugged his shoulders. American films were improving, but they put such a severe handicap on the cutting by using well-known stories. Perhaps when they had seen a few more Russian films in Hollywood . . . (another shrug). Only the other day he had seen an American film in which a girl was rescued from the water with wet clothes; that was an advance! Of course, if one must sell oneself, it is better to do so to the American commercialist, who paid so well.

"A good film is not a national thing," he pointed out; "we have had Potemkin, Verdun and Chang."

I felt that it was time to introduce a personal note, so I questioned him on his own films.

"Tartuffe, photographically, was quite interesting. The beginning and the end I took in the modern style, allowing the artists no make-up, and using 'angles'; while the middle section is soft focus, gauzed and artificial. Berlin was photographed without one person seeing the camera. I would go into a public house, three or four days before I intended to
shoot, and bribe the management to instal some powerful lights. After a day or two patrons accepted the lights and ceased to comment. My camera, electrically driven, I would hide in another room, while I sat in a chair in the bar itself and pressed an electrical contact. I always contrived that an electrical fan should be placed near the camera to drown any faint sound that might reach idle ears. Using hypersensitive stock, I managed to get everything that I wanted.”

Other pictures, Mr. Freund intimated, did not bring such pleasant memories.

“What of the Society, Mr. Freund, that you founded for the absolute Film in Berlin?”

“There was not sufficient support; we had to give up the performances. Myself, I am a purist, I am not sure that I like all these absolute films, so many of them are drawing. Film is celluloid coated with silver emulsion, and should be used to record light and shade. I think of all the experimenters I prefer Man Ray.”

“But you approve of individual amateur experiment?”

“Certainly; I believe that there ought to be a flourishing amateur club in London. It is the way to make directors. There ought to be a competition, and then a show at the New Gallery attended by all the directors, cameramen and critics.”

His enthusiasm made it impossible to doubt that he was genuinely interested.

During our conversation Mr. Freund hinted that he had an idea for a film. I do hope one of our Wardour Street magnates lets Mr. Freund make this film in England; it is exactly what is needed to save (or win) the prestige of the British film.

O. B.
UNE POIGNÉE DE FILMS NOUVEAUX!

1re Décembre, 17 heures. Dekobra ou Ciné-Club? Fâcheuse coïncidence. Le public genevois éprouve une perplexité bien compréhensible car il n’est pas accoutumé à pareille abondance; ces situations-là se produisent rarement dans notre ville où les manifestations de réel intérêt se succèdent à intervalles assez courts, il est vrai, mais ne provoquent pas aisément des embouteillages.

Ciné-Club a fait un louable effort en vue de rendre ses séances plus abordables; aussi voit-il avec plaisir le public affluer à ses guichets. Les cartes d’adhérents réduites, pour la nouvelle saison, de frs.14.— à frs.5.—, trouvent un écoulement rapide, et le supplément de fr.1.— qui sera perçu à chaque séance n’épouvante personne, aussi la jolie salle de l’Étoile sera-t-elle assez coquettement garnie lorsque, avec un notable retard fort excusable d’ailleurs, Ciné-Club fera précéder sa première séance de l’allocution d’usage.

Cinq films composent le programme, ce sont :

- Préméditations—Le Cabaret épileptique—
- Cinq minutes de cinéma pur—Photogénie de l’or Zvenihora (fragment)
CLOSE UP
dont Ciné-Club a pu heureusement disposer grâce à l'obligeance de Mr. de Jarville. Cinq films de métrage très court, dont la projection ne dure pas longtemps, mais qui paraissent d'inégal longueur en raison de leur intérêt. “Le Cabaret épileptique” et le fragment choisi de “Zvenihora” offrent des répétitions qui ne renforcent ni ne confirment les premières impressions, tandis que “Photogénie de l’or” doit à sa nature probablement l’extrême brièveté de son passage à l’écran. “Cinq minutes de cinéma pur” ne paraît pas son âge, et seul “Préméditations”, qui est, nous semble-t-il, le meilleur des cinq films, offre à la fois loisir et intérêt tout au long de ses simples images. Le thème en est heureusement conçu : Un écrivain est à sa table, prêt à noircir tout un lot de belles feuilles blanches. Il n’écrit pas encore, l’inspiration est pénible. Que diable ! il ne manque pas de sujets, mais dans quel milieu situer l’action de ce nouveau roman ? Au fait, il lui vient une idée, il évoquera la Bourse, la fièvre de la spécula- tion, le financier aux prises avec le hasard. Quel thème magnifique ! La plume court, alerte, sur le papier, mais bientôt elle ralentit—l’écran évoque la Bourse, le tableau qui accuse la dégringolade des cours, le financier cossu qui consulte ses cotes, fait l’inventaire de ses espèces étalées au sein d’un coffre-fort robuste, et songe comment il pourrait faire pour engager cet argent, qui n’est pas à lui, mais à la fillette dont il a chargé des intérêts... la plume s'arrête pour de bon, l’imagination de notre écrivain dérape sur un sol trop lisse... boulette de papier sur le plancher. Froncement de sourcils, ah ! quel métier que celui d’écrivain ! Mais voici surgir une autre idée : parler de misère noire, complète, irréductible... la plume repart, et à nos yeux
apparaît le plus parfait des vagabonds, sordide et misérable à souhait, qui n’a qu’un banc pour litière et les poubelles en guise de garde-manger ... mais il paraît que ça ne va pas non plus, car une seconde boulette de papier tombe auprès de la première, sous la table de l’écrivain. Alors quoi ! Notre homme accouche encore d’une idée, il va évoquer les braves qui assurent le maintien de l’ordre public, souligner l’appétit de gloire qui les soutient dans l’exercice de leur fonction ... un agent de police prend place sur l’écran, prototype du corps tout entier des défenseurs de la loi. Il reste immobile à l’angle de la rue, fier de ses larges moustaches et de son uniforme, et dard ses yeux soupçonneux dans les allées obscures ... cela paraît marcher tout seul, lorsque notre écrivain plante là son roman et froisse la dernière feuille de papier qui va s’aligner avec les autres. Harassé, il s’endort sur la table. Le rêve, heureusement, seconde l’imagination en combinant les idées premières, et c’est ainsi qu’il s’empare du financier, du pauvre diable et de l’agent de police pour se livrer à ses ébats. Le choix semble prédestiné tellement il est heureux. Le financier songe à écluser ses difficultés en faisant disparaître la fillette gênante, ce qui lui donnerait la jouissance de l’argent, le vagabond est là derrière la fenêtre, qui regarde avec avidité le coffre et réalise mentalement le coup magnifique qu’il pourrait faire. De son côté, l’agent s’est approché, flairant quelque occasion intéressante de se distinguer. Chacun prémédite l’avenir à sa façon et les images traduisent rapidement les pensées. Après une suite d’hésitations, de confiance et de crainte, tout se dénoue de la façon la plus heureuse ... le financier jette à terre le verre contenant le poison qu’il allait faire boire à sa petite protégée,
CLOSE UP

le pauvre diable rentre son revolver et de même l'agent de police. Adieu fortune, bonne chère ou croix d'honneur, le financier retrouve ses soucis, le pauvre son banc et l'agent regagne philosophiquement son coin de rue. " Préméditations " est un film de réelle originalité.

" Le cabaret épileptique " présente des passages très réussis, mais l'intérêt de cette bande faiblit au fur et à mesure de sa projection. Il y a trop d'insistance, ici et là.

" Cinq minutes de cinéma pur " explique parfaitement ce qu'on est convenu d'entendre par " cinéma pur ". Il s'agit là, essentiellement, de jeux visuels et l'enchantement n'y étant soutenu que par la nouveauté, il est de toute nécessité d'éviter les répétitions et les longueurs, condition qui semble avoir été remplie ici. La luminosité changeante du verre, des pierreries et des bijoux y est à merveille exploitée par une série de fondus et de mouvements rotatoires. La projection de négatifs de passages ajoute au caractère spécial de cette bande.

" Photogénie de l'Or "... force nous est de convenir qu'il s'agit moins ici, en réalité, des qualités photogéniques de l'or que de celles du corps féminin. Si l'or a ses propres réverberations, attendons le film en couleurs qui en fera ressortir la richesse, mais là encore d'autres métaux moins précieux feront sans doute le même effet. La petite bande ci-dessus n'en constitue pas moins une succession de tableaux fort réussis, ce grâce aux mouvements rythmiques exécutés.

Le fragment projeté de " Zvenihora " ne donne pas précisément la note qui distingue la production soviétique. Il a probablement été choisi parce qu'il forme à lui seul un épisode complet, et non en vertu de sa valeur propre, car les
qualities de l'acteur Nademsky qui interprète le vieillard sont, dans cette partie, imperceptibles.

Un nouveau journal vient d'être lancé à Genève: La LORGNETTE, et c'est avec grand plaisir que nous en signalons l'apparition. Consacrant ses colonnes aux sujets aimables et souriants, il peut être considéré, de ce fait, comme indispensable au public genevois! Le cinéma y a sa large part, et la rédaction de cette rubrique importante a été confiée à Mr. Arnold Kohler, de Ciné-Club. Les vues personnelles de Mr. Kohler, en matière d'art cinématographiques, valent par leur originalité, leur sincérité et leur absolue indépendance. Les lecteurs de "la Lorgnette" auront donc le privilège de lire, deux fois par mois, une chronique fort intéressante des films.

FREDDY CHEVALLEY.

THE CINEMA IN PARIS

Two films have been shown to us recently: Les Nouveaux Messieurs, of Jacques Feyder, and Les Deux Timides, of René Clair, two films which may be discussed together because both are the work of two great directors, and both, alas! have been equally disappointing.

Feyder's even more than that of René Clair. For in my opinion it was a grave error to adapt a play by Robert de
CLOSE UP

Flers and Francis de Croisset for the screen, thus making a film that was witty and intellectual but not cinematographic. It would be easy, for instance, to recount Feyder's film by the details alone and yet provoke not a single laugh. It is intelligent and delicate, but not at all "cinema" from any point of view.

Furthermore, it is aggravated by Feyder being essentially a director of dramatic films, a fact easily to be observed in his last film, where there are several tragic scenes toward the end which succeed in a remarkable and moving manner. Evidently he must suffer from the incompatibility of being obliged to make a comic film when clearly he is more suited to dramatic films.

It is the failure again of the want of insight of French producers. To make use of the extraordinary capacity of a man like Feyder to film utterly uncinematic adaptations proves that it has not yet been understood what the cinema owes to us. For Feyder is a director who will make—I am certain—very good films in America, where he now is, and then only will France know what it has lost.

Technically the film is well photographed, without, however, attaining perfection. The cutting lacks a certain consistent force, which is explained probably by the anticinematic requirements of the scenario. His direction of Henri Roussel and Gaby Morlay is perfection; especially in the later scenes, where he makes his personality felt very strongly in a splendid and moving manner.

It transpires, however, that the censor has refused to pass Feyder's film, since there are several scenes in the Chamber,
treated actually in a fantastic and sufficiently charming manner. It is not very astonishing; these gentlemen of the French censorship are completely lacking in a sense of humor and understanding, and it is a rare thing that a film which departs a little from the popular run of mediocrity is not forbidden or cut by the French censors, who are unfortunately by no means at the end of their tether in making themselves ridiculous in the eyes of the world.

*Les Deux Timides*, the film of René Clair, taken also from a play by Labiche, as was *La Chapeau*, as regards the scenario, reveals the fault that the subject matter is not sufficiently fertile in excitement or amusement, some scenes are over long while others seem quite empty. But this is certainly not the fault of René Clair, but of his producers, who have probably forced him to make a film of normal length instead of letting him turn out one of those charming and short “bandes” which he is able to evolve with that perfection that is part of his own mordant and satirical whimsicality. This film has lost just a little of the cinematic strength so clearly evident in his preceding films.

It becomes more appreciable and less important when one understands that the great satirical quality of René Clair was not allowed full liberty.

The acting of Pierre Batcheff is worthy of the greatest commendation. This actor has at last found a director who knows how to direct him, and it is a great pleasure to see his rôle of a timid man in which he is astonishingly natural.

The cutting is very good. I like the photography less, which at moments is rather flat, especially in the interiors. There is, and this is quite natural with René Clair, a crowd
of surprises and gags which reveal the rich inventiveness of his brain, and I believe that it is the most important French film of the year.

Eugen Deslaw has shown his experimental film, which he modestly calls *La Nuit Electrique*. It is a kind of documentaire on the lighted advertisements of large cities, Berlin and Paris. With great economy of means Deslaw attains a real forceful mobility. There is great progress to be observed from his previous film, and he has succeeded in giving to these apparently cold advertisements a sense of life.

I met Joris Ivens (the technical director of the Film Liga of Holland) a few days ago, who spoke of the work he has already accomplished and also of his projects.

He has finished *Pont d'Acier*, a cinema poem on a moving bridge near Rotterdam, and has just signed a contract with the Studio 28, where the film will be shown from January 15th.

He is now cutting his film *Duel*; the first Dutch film from the original scenario of Last, of which the mise-en-scene was directed by H. Franken, with Ivens in charge of the photography and cutting. This film, which is almost a thousand metres long, will cost little, and from several documents Ivens showed me, I think will be very lovely. There are no professional actors, and the collaborators have contrived to make their people act as well as if they were professionals.

"I have used," he said to me, "a new method of expression with regard to nature. I wanted to express nature subjectively, that is, as the person in the film should see it, according to his state of mind. I think I have secured the effect I wished."
He is now finishing a film *Pluie* (Rain), an abstract of cinematic rhythm. I have seen several fragments from it of a powerful beauty. Here is such a film as Holland ought to make, for Holland assumes in rain aspects of a quite personal beauty, a beauty, moreover, which can only be called photogenique.

The Film Liga has already shown Feyder’s *Visages d’Enfants* and Germaine Dulac’s *La Coquille et le Clergyman*, this year. Next month René Clair is to show some fragments from his work and there is a chance that Ruttmann and Pudovkin will also go to Amsterdam.

This tiny country that has no cinema industry shows a serious interest in the film that many larger countries might well envy.

Edmond Greville, a young director who has already given us proof of his cinematic capacity, is at work on *Minuit*, from his own scenario. Vanda Vengen, a Norwegian actress, will be the star.

Jean Lenauer.
COMMENT AND REVIEW

Film Curiosities.—No. 1.

Dracula—Produced by Murneau in 1920.

They say that Dracula was produced without the consent of Mrs. Bram Stoker, who afterwards took legal action to prevent the film being exhibited, and even went to the length of ordering that all copies should be burnt. In Paris they call the film Nosferatu le Vampire; perhaps that is meant as a disguise. As a curiosity it is not without interest and it has often been quoted; but to-day we expect so much from our films (The Peasant Women of Riazan had sociological as well as great dramatic importance). . .

The film opens with the beautifully composed pictures typical of Murneau (one spot light on the hair, now turn the face slightly and another spot light . . .). But this! Is this overacting, or is it my fault for not entering into the spirit of the story? It is unquestionably a faithful transcription of the book; vampires sink back into coffins of cursed soil, bats hang in dark raftered corners, Alfred Abel (Count Dracula) wears a fearsome mask adorned with jagged fangs, while Margaret Schlegel (poor heroine) faints repeatedly.
Murneau wanted to give the public a thriller, and when a slow procession of coffins winds out of the town, preyed on by the undead it is thrilling, but a glimpse of the Count himself brings a smile to the lips. "That's a vampire," one thinks, "and isn't he funny?" If Dracula had been a little less determined with his teeth and nose, had looked more or less normal, one might (given the right mood and a romantic temperament) have thought: "Well, most devils do look like men," and indulged in an orgy of shivers.

The "kick" of the picture is a series of shots of a vampire-haunted boat. One by one the crew fall victims to the strange malady and die. The mate commits suicide by throwing himself over the side; the captain ties himself to the wheel. Then the boat cuts through the water without any guiding hand; the sails billow out in the breeze. Lonely vessel cutting through the phosphorescent waters of the night. Of course that is right! I have always felt that these wonderful ships with their intricate sails had a life of their own, it may be in the power of the undead, but, freed from the attentions of the living, it lives by itself.

I must confess that certain shots in Dracula's castle, and the fly-eating lunatic gave me a tiny shudder, but the shudder came principally from memories of the novel read surreptitiously by candlelight at the age of ten.

Werner Krauss is in the cast.

Oswell Blakeston.
CLOSE UP

A RUSSIAN FAIRYTALE

At the Grafton Cinema in Tottenham Court Road the Society for Cultural Relations with Soviet Russia presented Morosko to a select audience. Some years ago the film was given a West-End presentation at the Polytechnic, and I believe that this film could be rented privately by Close Up readers should they feel that they would care to see an early production of Mejrabpom-Rouss.

It is a Russian fairy story and was directed by Jeliaboujski; but a rather curious fairy story. The legend tells of "Old Father Frost", who likes to spend his cold evenings in the company of pretty village maidens. Sub-titles tactfully refer to the maidens as "brides" of Morosko, the Spirit of Winter; but to minds educated under the auspices of the British Board of Film Censors and the Sunday Express it might all be easily mistaken for gentle propaganda for Mormonism.

There is the peasant mother who spoils her slut of a daughter, and wakes up her step-daughter with a savage kick so that she may start at sunrise to draw water, chop wood and wash clothes. She is a lovely character, this peasant woman. First her head is on the right, then her head is on the left; determined to avoid looking directly towards the camera. In real life one has met these women who never look one in the face, whose gaze is painfully shifty; they pour out luke-warm tea in suburban drawing-rooms... The peasant woman has a little pig and a goose in her living room, but true to type, her husband is kept well in his place. His only recreation seems to be scratching the pig (large close-up)!
CLOSE UP

Ugly daughter, however, sits stiffly in a chair and fills her cheeks with Polish nuts, spitting the thin shells on newly-cleansed floor, so, of course, the mother wants to know why the beautiful step-daughter has not swept away the litter. Useless for the industrious maiden to explain that she left everything spick and span before she went to draw water from the well. With broom of twigs she restores order and returns to the pails of water. She crosses the snow. Someone next to me said "Look at her shadow." How impressive it is to see shadows on the snow, the white sheet seems spread for an immense cinematograph show of its own. Have I just been blind in the past, or have the American dramas of the snowy regions really never given us these shadows?

In fairy stories the ugly and bad, although they can see for themselves just how dull a time the beautiful and good are having, invariably suffer pangs of jealousy; and the mother, who forgets that she is sacrificing the wielder of the broom of twigs, commands her step-daughter to prepare for a long visit. The daughter packs her trunk, and in an authentically domestic scene shares a last meal with her father, who is to drive the sleigh.

"Now," says the mother, "take her out and give her as a bride to Morosko."

Tears do not soften her heart, and the entreaties of her husband are met with blows from a whip. It is evident that Morosko has a bad name in the neighbourhood, for the mother does not expect to see her step-daughter alive again. Indeed, when her father leaves her in the middle of the forest (harlequin costume of shadows as they pass under the trees) the beautiful one sinks to her knees in absolute despair. But
CLOSE UP

Morosko turns out to be a veritable Santa Claus, with the agility of Douglas Fairbanks, who conducts the preliminary flirtation from the top of a tree; neither does he forget to show his appreciation of the maiden’s gentleness. The father arrives in the morning to discover the ex-bride of Morosko decked in pearls and surrounded with treasure chests.

The mother is considerably "taken-back", but resourcefully dispatches her own daughter to seek the favour of the generous Morosko; while the beautiful, but I am afraid no longer so virtuous, step-daughter cooks the evening meal in silks and jewels.

A dog tells the mother that her daughter has not found favour with Morosko and has been chilled into death.

In passing it is interesting to note that it is a perfectly legitimate touch to make a dog talk in a fairy story, and that it is a successful one, but what on earth would it be like on the talkies?

The village gathers to examine the frozen body of the idle daughter, at the same time taunts the mother, who finally reconciles herself to her step-daughter. The film ends, as all fairy tales end, with a grand wedding of the heroine to an eligible suitor; who presumably is not told about Mr. Morosko. To my mind the picture of married life depicted in the early part of these fairy-tales gives a nice cynical twist to the so-called happy endings.

OSSWELL BLAKESTON.

While leading (let us hope) a pleasant life at Oxford, Clifton and Potsdam (see last page), Mr. Eric Walter White has contrived to write a little essay on (I suppose) rhythm and the cinema. I am not very definite about it because I received my copy from a friend who had read it twice in an effort to review it and found no enlightenment beyond the fact that Mr. White considers Walt Whitman to be the forerunner of the cinema.

The first few pages tell us that with the invention of print, literature is no longer a temporal art, a preparation for one of Mr. White's clever sayings, which may excuse the irrelevancy. To explain the so-called obscurity of modern poetry, he say: "... at first reading the poem is unintelligible, in fact, it cannot be understood until the last line has been read, the complete circle described, and the poet's image recreated three-dimensionally in the reader's mind."

Quite a satisfying thought, but Mr. White then remembers that he has proposed to write about the cinema; and his reflections on the cinema are so muddled that I am not surprised that any fourth-rate person should find them unintelligible.

"It was impossible that the cinema should continue to take orders from Lady Literature and live below stairs." Excellent. But Mr. White goes on to tell us that the cinema has cast off the shackles of literature because the recent Charlie
CLOSE UP

Chaplin films have been made without scripts. It looks very much as if Mr. White does not realize the difference between a novel and a script. A modern script is the film, cut and finished. Again, when tackling the subject of rhythm, Mr. White confounds the reader by mixing up in an alarming manner, without any apparent discrimination, examples of rhythm in the film, as a succession of lighted oblongs thrown by a train on a station wall, and rhythm of the film, as a sequence of villagers hurrying to a marionette show crosscut with close-ups of the show man’s drum.

I must confess, too, that I do not care for Mr. White’s notion of regarding the cut as a caesura; I never think of a cut as a pause, but a pounce. However, there are many excellent thoughts to be disentangled. Mr. White points out that the value of the abstract film lies in the abstract shot, that such films as Emak Bakia become more valuable when looked on as pages from an artist’s note book.

On page nineteen I find the sentence: “But although during the last few years the cinema has drawn forth a host of ephemeral literature . . .”

The sentence still stands.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.
HOLLYWOOD NOTES

Hollywood is accepting with keen satisfaction the reported indifference of European producers toward vocalized films. This lack of interest is not only eliminating the fear of foreign competition, but is serving also as a spur to the activity of the Hollywood producers. Convinced now of the permanence of the spoken photodrama, they are bending all their efforts toward perfecting it and controlling the market before the European producers are ready to recognize the advent of the new cinema era. The situation suggests that history is about to repeat itself. Years ago, while Europe was debating the worthwhileness of the silent drama, Hollywood was busily at work, and when the world awoke to an interest in the movies, Hollywood, fully equipped and established, alone was in position to dominate the market and adequately supply the demand for the new form of popular entertainment.

* * *

Talking pictures are not only creating many radical changes in established producing organizations, but are also bringing new companies into the field. One of the latest of these, and one of the most important, is the Sonoratone Corporation. Its special purpose, aside from entering into direct competition in the American market with established companies, is to produce films for the German and French markets. By means of a recently perfected invention, foreign-language dialog will be synchronized with the action of the pictures. It is reported that Warner Brothers are also preparing to use this device for invading the foreign markets, which will include Italy and Spain as well as Germany and France.
CLOSE UP

The first of the year will see no less than seventy full-length phonofilms in various stages of production by the different Hollywood companies, in addition to those already released. Paramount-Lasky alone will have twelve complete-dialog pictures, besides ten containing singing and spoken sequences. The schedules of several of the companies include the filming of musical productions. Warner Brothers are doing *The Desert Song*, one of the recent musical hits of the American stage. United Artists are preparing an original phonofilm production of the same general character, written by Irving Berlin. Fox has a "Follies" photophone picture under way, directed by Edward Royce, long identified with the famous Ziegfeld Follies.

* * *

Educational Pictures, an organization which has heretofore specialized in two-reel comedies, is preparing to make a series of phonofilm revues. These productions are designed for use by film exhibitors as prologs or *entr'actes*, to give variety to their regular picture programs.

* * *

Lionel Barrymore, veteran actor of the stage, and who made his talking-picture debut in *The Lion and the Mouse*, has now assumed the rôle of director, under the M-G-M banner. *Confession* is the title of his first directed phonofilm; and in addition to himself, in the stellar part, the cast includes Christiane Yves and Yvonne Stark, two French actresses, Carrol Nye, and Robert Ames, a popular stage favorite. Milles. Yves and Stark do not speak English, but as their
rôles in the talking picture are those of French women speaking their native tongue, they are appropriately and congenially cast.

* * *

Typical of the many changes resulting from the inauguration of talking films, is the reopening of a number of the abandoned New York studios belonging to some of the older Hollywood companies. This has been brought about by the demand for experienced stage actors, singers, and musical performers, whose regular engagements keep them in New York. The three-thousand-mile distance between Hollywood and the eastern metropolis has now been reduced in time to about two days, through the use of airplane transportation, so that the inconvenience of sending players, directors, writers and others back and forth from Hollywood is almost negligible as compared with that of the earlier days when picture production for a time was divided between the two coasts, pending the final decision as to the permanent location for the industry.

* * *

The speaking-film version of Barrie's *Half an Hour*, directed for Paramount-Lasky by William de Mille, has been released under the title of *The Doctor's Secret*. It will be recalled that Barrie's *Admirable Crichton* experienced a like titular change in its film translation; appearing on the screen as *Male and Female*. Why the picturization of his *Peter Pan* was not called *After Dark* or some other equally titilating alias has never been explained. However, movies are made for the masses, and while *Half an Hour* has drawn its thousands to the theatre, *The Doctor's Secret* will draw its tens of thousands to the cinema.
CLOSE UP

Napoleon’s Barber, a one-act stage play, has been phono-filmed by Fox. The character of Napoleon is played by Otto Matiesen, whose previous screen work has been especially notable in several art films, including The Tell-Tale Heart and The Last Moment. Natalie Golitzin plays opposite his Napoleon as the Empress Josephine. Frank Reicher is cast as the barber, Helen Ware as the barber’s wife, and Phillippe de Lacy as the son. The picture was directed by John Ford and marks his twenty-fifth production for Fox.

* * *

William de Mille has severed his connection with Paramount-Lasky and is now associated with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer.

* * *

The success of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer’s White Shadows in the South Seas has prompted these producers to undertake another picture in the same locale. The story chosen for this second venture is John Russell’s The Pagan. Ramon Novarro will enact the leading rôle. Others in the cast are Renee Adoree, Donald Crisp and Dorothy Janis. Under the direction of W. S. Van Dyke, who did the other South Sea picture for M-G-M, the players are at present in Tahiti, and their work on the picture will probably keep them there until the latter part of January.

* * *

Students representing the University of Sydney, Australia, recently held a debate on the subject of motion pictures with students of the University of California. The question was, Resolved that the world would be better off without the films.
CLOSE UP

The Australians took the affirmative and based their arguments on the contention that motion pictures have led adolescents and women into anti-social conduct by creating a demand for excitement; that picture titles are written in slovenly English and are therefore subversive of good speech, and that the films' portrayal of life is false, exaggerated and misleading. The debate was held in the auditorium of the Los Angeles campus of the University of California and was largely attended by the student body and the public. The decision on the merits of the debate was left to the audience, which rendered its verdict in favor of the Californians, who defended the negative side of the question.

C. H.

The film made on board the Krassin of the expedition to rescue some of Nobile's party was to be shown in Berlin, at the Mozartsaal, during Christmas week. It is said to be not only of extreme "documentary" interest, but also remarkable for its photographic quality. It is to be hoped that it will be shown also in London.

The response to the forms included in Close Up asking for a modification of the censorship of films in England has been very gratifying. But in view of the continuous encroachments upon the intellectual right of the individual to decide upon what he shall see and read, it is necessary to make even
CLOSE UP

greater efforts. The February issue will be devoted largely to the question of censorship in different countries, and we hope that many well-known directors, authors and scientists will contribute their views. We request especially, therefore, that all those readers of Close Up who have not yet signed the form of protest will sign and forward it immediately to the London office. Blank forms for signatures can be forwarded to readers upon request. This is a very definite way for you to help the cause of cinematography. Before you read the rest of the magazine sign and send in your form, collecting as many signatures as possible on the back. The more signatures the wider and more powerful the protest. Remember this has been planned in order that you may be able to see and enjoy the serious and important films which in present conditions are kept from you by an unnecessarily arbitrary and only semi-official organisation, whose need to reorganise is fast becoming the gravest crisis the film has yet known. If something is not done and swiftly, the cinema as an art will perish!
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From a new British Screen Productions film made in Lapland by two young Englishmen, Ben R. Hart and St. J. Clowes. Of special interest as the Laps religion does not allow them to be photographed, and there is very little record of them in consequence. See story in Comment and Review. Left: one of the types in the film. Right: Enok, one of the little leads who would ski 12 miles home to his mother.
From the Lapland film of British Screen Productions. Right to left: St. J. L. Clowes, Ben R. Hart, Nils Nilsson Skeim, a rich Lap, one of their first friends, who consented to this picture as a sign of his friendship for the Englishmen.

The hut they lived in for some weeks with reindeer meat as their only food.
Censorship is England’s Prohibition Law. And like any other prohibition law has doleful and disastrous consequences. To expect to keep a people pure by giving it Forbidden Trees has age-old precept to show up its foolishness. Yet it is true that control of a mass is a tricky business, and certainly in all the muddle of organising civilizations, the crowning problem is the problem of keeping order, and of preventing the "Thou Shalt Nots" from becoming "I darned well will"!

To this end grim punishments, of which the grimmest is to be deprived of life itself, have been assembled like a hurried and unorganised army to beat back the "anti-social" instinct man automatically manifests when confronted with a taboo which affects his personal right of choice.

An individual reasoning for himself, and without fear of invasion from outside, is often able to arrive at sane conclusions for his own, and, shall we say, for his child’s welfare. He would, for instance, guided by modern principle,
take pride and pleasure in giving adequate, sane and honest instruction, and answer all questions truthfully. Health, sanitation, physiology, personal and general, psychology, sex-knowledge, together with full details and preparation for what other children would be apt to say, and why, sociology in a wide and applicable sense; all these—to outline a scheme—would be taught so that the child would know where it stood and how it stood in relation to life and to itself and to its parents. Equipped with sufficiently balanced, sane and competent knowledge there would be little likelihood that in early or later life it would succumb to the tenuous and sectarian vices indulged in by the repressed, the misinformed and thwarted. All vice, it need hardly be said, is the result of natural impulse mis-functioning through a parasite growth of guilt. And guilt-complex is nearly always primarily due to having learnt things, and arrived at states you know you are not supposed to know or to have arrived at.

Instruction along these lines would be simple with one child. It would be more difficult with two, unless you began—as certainly you should begin—at the earliest possible age that the child is capable of accepting knowledge. If you wait until consciousness of a world without has been born in the child it is too late, because by that time it will be formulating a scheme of conduct; in other words, it will have begun a process separating itself into an entity apart from life, and realisation that life functions apart from and not subservient to its own need. In other words, again, self-consciousness. Put two children together who have reached this age and they will watch for each other's reaction before committing themselves to response.
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So, then, consider the multiplied difficulties of trying to instruct a hundred children with such consciousness, and go on from there to the gargantuan task of trying to educate an adult population.

The difficulty and uncertainty, if not the impossibility of obtaining logical reaction from an adult population, set, as it were, in a class-room, is the direct cause of all the hedging, the muddle and restriction, out of which, like out of a flourishing dunghill, has leapt the hearty weed of censorship. Censorship is not to protect them from misrepresentation and damaging falsifications, but to deprive them of any fact not flaccid enough to permit the condescending acquiescence of thankless old maids, and children salacious through misunderstanding and neglect.

The British Board of Film Censors, of which the President is the Right Hon. T. P. O’Connor, M.P., was formed in 1912 or '13 by the cinema trade, appointed by the trade and paid by the trade. Since then it has been laboriously striving to obtain compulsory powers, and to obtain a stranglehold on the trade that appointed it. In spite of its encroachments, the trade accepts—except on very rare occasions—its judgment as final, and probably because a trade censorship is considered a lesser evil than a State censorship, the trade, with a powerful organisation that covers nine-tenths of its members, has the right to punish by exclusion—to quote the Right Hon. T. P.’s words in his lengthy article on censorship in the Times Cinema Supplement of February 21st, 1922—all those who do not loyally accept the decision of the Board of Censors.
This approach to compulsory power, which the Right Hon. T. P. avowedly craves for, and which actually would be no less evil, and a greater farce than a State censorship, has been fortified considerably through the acceptance of the Board’s decision by a large body of the licensing authorities throughout the country.

The somewhat acid farce of such an arrangement can be realised when films like Joyless Street, Potemkin, The Tragedy of the Street—to give three well known and classic instances—films which have been shown with varying degrees of freedom all over the world, are absolutely and irrevocably banned. And the reason given in one of their sort of police court, third-degreeish circulars of 1927 is contained in the following:

Amongst the many factors involved in arriving at an equitable and satisfactory judgment, consideration has to be given to the impression likely to be made on an average audience which includes a not unconsiderable proportion of people of immature judgment.

I love the "not unconsiderable proportion". And I also love the censors deeming themselves the right people to give an equitable and satisfactory judgment on what is suitable for people of immature judgment!

If you read through their various proclamations, decrees, ultimatums, threats, brags and promises, you become more and more dizzy with the boggy confusion of their innuendos. The list, which I am going to quote later, not without blushes, is so indecent that if it came from any but a recognised public society for protecting peoples’ morals, this issue of Close Up would be burnt by the common hangman, without a doubt.
The Board is guided, it says, by the broad principle (though it means, surely, the straight and narrow one) that nothing will be passed which is calculated to demoralise the public, extenuate crime or vice, or shock the just susceptibilities of any section of the public. That is its tone, all the time, the "nothing will be passed that"... never "everything will be passed except"... Always, "now then, now then, move on there", never "Come in. How are you"? In no sense is it ever concerned with dealing with sane or needful aspects of its mission, but spends its time understudying the sanitary inspector. Its whole preoccupation is with the—so to speak—drainage system of morality. Not that a good drainage system is not a very important thing, but it isn’t everything. The resultant naïveté would be permissible if it was a group of children sailing refuse down a gutter, but this is looked upon as unpleasing even in the nursery.

Among forbidden themes are those "which are in violation of good taste". Don’t say thank God yet. Don’t think of Victor McLaglen smacking Carmen’s behind, or goldfish falling down old ladies’ décolleté, but hear this: "such as a father making love to his unknown daughter, or a brother to his unknown sister. Such situations are repugnant, and in every case the Board has insisted that the sub-titles should be altered so as to remove the unwholesome complications". The italics, as we say, are mine. The rest I do disclaim. But what, may one politely enquire of a father making love to a daughter he does know is his, and why if a brother can’t make love to an unknown sister (these dreadful family ties) could those Beau Geste boys carry on like they did, and Nils Aster get away with what he did in Sorrel? But keep
them guessing is also the motto of this unimpeachable Board. Keep them guessing! well, isn’t that the first law of professional seduction too?

Verboten, then, are "Cases in which the imminent intention to rape is so clearly shown as to be unmistakable; also stories depicting the lives of immoral women (O Lord, this ought all to be in italics) and scenes of street soliciting, ‘White Slave’ traffic, and procuration”.

Now you can see why men fainted off in batches of twenty when confronted with Dangers of Ignorance. A film called Shadows Over Love, made with similar intentions, was recently shown in Berlin and evoked roars of laughter from an audience that was less dangerously ignorant and knew what was falsification and what wasn’t.

So far I have been pulling out plums. But for the guidance and instruction of bewildered Continental salesmen, as well as for the assimilation, if such indigestible material can be assimilated (and I hope it can’t) of all Close Up readers, here is one of the lists of what have been, and will continue to be, prohibited.

Religion.

(1) The materialised figure of Christ.

(2) Religious rites and ceremonies treated with irreverence, or in any way calculated to bring religion into contempt, and even when the treatment is reverent, exception is taken if the ceremony is of such a sacred character as to be unsuitable for dramatic treatment.

(3) Irreverent introduction of quotations from the Bible or Church Services to produce comic effects, and equally the comic introduction of Biblical characters, Angels, Gates of Heaven, etc.,
CLOSE UP

etc., which is extremely offensive to a large majority of the audiences in this country. (Angels comic? Bible comic? Shame, T. P.)

POLITICAL.

(1) Subjects which are calculated to wound the susceptibilities of foreign peoples, and especially of our fellow subjects of the British Empire. (No chance for the Nouveaux Messieurs here. But we seem to remember a film called The Red Dancer of Moscow, and others better and worse that were not expelled. Presumably Russia has no susceptibilities to wound?)

(2) Stories and scenes which are calculated and possibly intended to foment social unrest and discontent. (Tosti’s Good-Bye to all Russian films. But the answer to that is you can’t foment unrest and discontent unless it is already there, and is anybody going to do anything about it?)

SOCIAL.

(1) The nude, both in actuality and shadowgraph.

(2) Swearing, or language in the nature of swearing, in titles or sub-titles.

(3) “Orgy” scenes and similar incidents oft-times incongruous and generally superfluous. (Exit first reel of Jeanne Ney).

(4) Incidents which bring into contempt public characters acting in their capacity as such, i.e., officers and men wearing His Majesty’s uniform, Ministers of Religion, Ministers of the Crown, Ambassadors and Representatives of Foreign Nations, Administrators of the Law, Medical men, etc. But why the assumption, please, that there are incidents which do bring public characters into contempt? I don’t think that was any less spiteful of T. P. than that it should have been!)

(5) Embraces which overstep the limits of affection or even passion, and becomes lascivious.
(6) Impropriety of dress and deportment, including suggestive and indecorous dancing.

(7) Offensive vulgarity and excessive drunkenness, even when treated in a comic vein.

(8) Scenes connected with child-birth, such as puerperal pains, which are considered too intimate for public exhibition. (In other words, keep your pains at home.)

(9) Subjects dealing with venereal disease, or any other matters suitable only for Hospital or Medical Lecture Theatre.

(10) Stories showing any antagonistic or strained relations between white men and the coloured population of the British Empire, especially with regard to the question of sexual intercourse, moral or immoral, between individuals of different races.

**Questions of Sex.**

Already quoted. More to follow.

**Crime.**

(1) Scenes demonstration methods of crime which might lend themselves to imitation. (Are we a nation of uninspired criminals?)

(2) Subjects dealing with the "drug" habit, the Board believing that the exhibition of this vice with its insidious allurements involves the danger of spreading the pernicious habit? (Say, Citizens, do you stand for that? Potential dope-maniacs, nice thing to call us indeed!)

(3) Prolonged scenes of extreme violence and brutality. (That you may believe that all the world is kind.)

(4) Hanging scenes, and the depiction of actual executions, treated seriously or in a comic spirit. (Comic again! But recall that Entertainment Tax was charged for sightseers visiting the spot of the Mahon murder!)
From a new Wufku film, *Calumny*, by Stabavoj, who made *Two Days*. 
A detail of a prison set in course of construction for a film Alexander Room is now working on, *The Ghost that Never Returns*, based on a novel by H. Barbusse.

From Kastus Kalinovski, a Belgoskino film directed by Vladislav Gardin.
CLOSE UP

(5) Stories of which the sole or main interest is that of crime and of the criminal life, without any counterbalancing element of love or adventure. (I’d like to see any criminal let off because of love or an adventurous life.)

(6) Themes calculated to give an air of romance and heroism to criminal characters, the story being told in such a way as to enlist the sympathies of the audience with the criminals, whilst the Constituted Authorities and Administrators of the Law are held up to contempt as being either unjust or harsh, incompetent or ridiculous.

(7) Organised knuckle fights. (Which is just what we need!)

Cruelty.

(1) Scenes of cruelty to children and incidents which appear to involve the infliction of cruelty on animals.

Well, that does not leave a very clear field, does it? While lingering on this list only to add that the title of a notoriously doubtful book is not allowed, even if the film is treated in such a way as to be inoffensive, I must leave you to try and cope with it while I turn back to a second list which forbids more crisply these additional items:—

Indecorous and inexpedient titles and subtitles.
Making young girls drunk.
Brutality and torture to women.
Commitment of crime by children.
Criminal poisoning by dissemination of germs.
The practise of the Third Degree in the United States.
Murders with realistic and gruesome details.
Fights showing extreme brutality and gruesome details.
Gruesome incidents.
Actual scenes of branding men and animals.
Women fighting with knives.
Doubtful characters exalted to heroes.
Improper exhibition of feminine underclothing.
Reference to controversial or international politics.
Scenes calculated to inflame racial hatred.
Scenes dealing with India and other Dependencies by which the
religious beliefs and racial susceptibilities of their people may
be wounded.
Antagonistic relations of Capital and Labour and scenes showing
conflict between the protagonists.
Disparagement of the institution of marriage.
Misrepresentation of police methods.
Holding up the King's uniform to contempt or ridicule.
Scenes in which British officers are seen in a discreditable light
in their relations with Eastern peoples.
Protracted and harrowing details in deathbed scenes.
Medical operations.
Excessive revolver shooting.
Advocacy of the doctrine of Free Love.
Seduction of girls and attempts thereat treated without due re-
straint. (Medal for this one.)
Attempted criminal assaults on women.
Scenes indicating that a criminal assault on a woman has just
been perpetrated.
Salacious wit.
"First Night" scenes. (Are readers able to explain?)
Scenes dealing with or suggestive of immorality.
Indelicate sexual situations.
Holding up the sacrifice of a woman's virtue as laudable.
Infidelity on the part of the husband justifying adultery on the
part of the wife.
Bedroom and bathroom scenes of an equivocal character. (Are
equivocal scenes confined to bedrooms and bathrooms?)
Prostitution and Procuration.
Effect of venereal disease, inherited or acquired.
Illegal operations.
Deliberate adoption of a life of immorality, justifiable or extenu-
ated.
Disorderly houses.
Women promiscuously taking up men.
Dead bodies.
"Clutching hands." (Can readers again help?)
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Animals gnawing men and children.
Realistic scenes of epilepsy.
Suggestion of incest.

Please excuse me. I am not responsible, and apologise. But it is only right that you should know, and it is to be hoped you will try and do something about it. Read the protest form enclosed and if you agree sign it, and collect all the signatures you can. This sort of thing is holding up the world. I cannot leave it without a few quotations from the Right Hon. T. P. O’Connor’s article.

"There are always conflicting considerations which have to be balanced . . . . with the duty of drawing the very thin and uncertain line between necessary restrictions and the full artistic liberty of the new art."

Full artistic liberty! God is love, there is no pain!

"I do not want to labour the point, but I do want the public and the trade to realise that the work is done with considerable labour and with vigilant attention."

"My duties are of a somewhat different character from those of the examiners. I am, as it were, a court of appeal, and I am always called in when a new principle has to be established."

"In the case of one film I had to see it five times after my examiners had already seen it two or three times. Even a slight relaxation of the necessary rigidity of certain principles would bring upon the Board of Censors a flood of other films in which there would be the danger of extending our indulgence because of our relaxation in just one case."

"We were entrusted by the War Office and the War Trade Department with the work of censoring films for exportation during the War, and were thanked by both Departments for our services. The work of our Board has also received the approval of
the Home Secretary and the Under Secretary. When subjects come before us which raise questions of public policy—such as our relations either with Foreign Powers or the Dominions—we asked the assistance of the public departments which are concerned with such subjects, and we have invariably received that assistance with readiness, and have always arrived at a united judgment."

Ladies and gentlemen, here is the extent of the Full Artistic Liberty of the New Art. Let me leave you to solve the puzzle of finding it.

Kenneth Macpherson.

CINEMA IN JAPAN

History of the Japanese Cinema.

It was about 1905 that the film was introduced to Japan. A cinematograph, which was invented by Marley, and a kinetoscope, which had been invented by Mr. Edison, were taken by two different tourists to Japan. These two wonderful moving pictures, as a matter of fact, astonished the peaceful people with an ancient history and traditions in the Far East. But it was impossible to provide these imported machines with electric light enough to set them in motion. Such being the case, oil-engine dynamos were often used. It was said that in some small towns the electric light went out
From Pudovkin’s masterpiece *Storm over Asia*, reviewed in *Close Up* last month. Bair (Inkischinoff) is brought out as the Prince of Mongolia, and sees the Commandant’s daughter wearing the fur which was taken from him under false pretences.
Bair (Inkischinoff) left, brings his valuable arctic fox pelt to sell. From *Storm over Asia*, Pudovkin's new film.

Bair, enraged, snatches the fur from the shoulders of the Commandant's daughter.
Vivid and beautiful landscapes enhance the power of Pudovkin’s masterpiece, *Storm over Asia*, a Meshrabpom Film.

Mongolian peasant cart from *Storm over Asia*.

*Photos: Courtesy of Prometheus*
Photos: Courtesy of Prometheus

Storm over Asia has the first scenes ever photographed of the Sacred Festivals in the Lamaseries of Mongolia.

Inkischinoff who plays the part of Bair in Storm over Asia.
From The White Secret, the film of the Krassin, Nobile rescue expedition, said to have been banned in Moscow by request of the Italian Government.
From *The White Secret (Icebreaker Krassin)*, the official record of the Nobile rescue expedition.
Icebreaker *Krassin* steaming through an ice-bound sea.

The steering wheel of the *Italia* is found on the spot of the catastrophe.
From the Wufku film *The Eleventh Year*, a wonderful survey of modern conditions in the free Ukraine.
CLOSE UP

owing to the films having been screened with these machines. This funny story is remembered in the districts. About 1907 some films were produced in Japan, but they were nothing but moving pictures, and served only to satisfy the curiosity of people.

Most of the first films that were imported to Japan were French ones. Among the rest, there were many of the comedies which were made early by Pathé's. The most sensational of the French films in the Japanese cinema world of that day was Z[Gigoma], which was made by Eclair. From the screening of this picture, a question arose among many educationists. And this has given rise to the discussion of necessity for censoring films.

We call this the first period of the history of the Japanese film. The state of film production in this period is not worth mentioning. But some of our famous novels had begun to be filmed already. Many Italian films were also imported, though not so many as French ones. They were generally more voluminous than French ones. The best known of them were Itara and Chines. Some German films were also imported. With the outbreak of the Great War the European films ceased to go to Japan; and we saw the tremendous activity of American film production overspreading all the country. But by that time the art of film production had considerably developed at home. Amidst the financial fluctuations arising from the war were raised the cries for encouraging the national industry; and the number of foreign films screened became decidedly few. Then appeared the golden age of Japanese films, and it was the second period.
Surprising was the development of our film world during the period between 1921 and 1925. Hitherto the programme of a cinema house had contained both Japanese and foreign films. The year 1921 saw the building of many cinema houses where Japanese films are exclusively screened. Accordingly the business of production became very brisk and busy. In 1920 the Japan Cinema Company and International Film Company were established. Soon afterwards the Shochiku Kinema Company was founded. With the establishment of this last company began the third period. This company sent some of their staff to America to study the American film world, and secured a number of all the excellent machines available, as well as engineers, and started the business of production in Tokyo. Most of those who now are conspicuous figures in many film companies have, in fact, at one time worked in this company.

The great earthquake, which broke out in 1923, destroyed the film production which flourished in the eastern part of Japan, and a new world of production has arisen in Kyoto. The only company that has remained is the Shochiku Kinema Company.

Kyoto, the old capital of Japan, abounds with old works of art and ancient edifices; so that it is suited for the production of dramas of the old school. And the progress of this kind of production is so remarkable that it is rapidly acquiring great popularity. In Japan, production of dramas of the old school has a wider scope, and is cheaper than the filming of stories or plays of the new type. The companies that make "old-drama" films are far more numerous than those which
CLOSE UP

make "new-play" films. According to the statistics for 1928, there are seven "new-play" production companies, while there are at least ten famous "old-drama" production companies. As for the smaller companies belonging to the latter class, there may be about forty in number.

Regarding foreign films, American products were imported during the war. And the Universal Company first established a branch in Tokyo. Though it declined for a while owing to the encouragement of national industry, yet it has begun to gain its former ground since 1925. Then Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, United Artists, Fox, First National, Paramount, etc., established their respective branches in Tokyo, and thus have come to vie for the market. In 1928 Tokyo recovered from the blow dealt by the earthquake, and the construction of great buildings was nearly at an end. All the proposed cinema houses are now finished, and the foreign films are entering their golden age.

In the meantime, many of the minor productions had been endeavouring to distinguish themselves by publishing some special kind of work; so that there were some vigorous fights for securing players and supervisors. In 1927, the Universal Company, of America, entered into combination with the Bandô Tsumasaburô Productions. Bandô Tsumasaburô (Bantsuma) is one of the famous actors in Kyoto; and some sensational films were produced jointly. But the combination soon broke up under conflicting circumstances.

The production that dominated in the Japanese film world of last year was, as it should be, the Shochiku Kinema, which has had comparatively a long career. This company has a
"new-play" production unit in Tokyo and an "old-play" production unit in Kyoto; and in addition purchases masterpieces of the minor productions. There are three hundred cinema theatres which are under the direct management of this company.

Japanese films are not exported at regular periods. But some of the films produced by the Universal Company of Japan have been screened in New York. It will be some time before the Western fans can understand the films representing the strange customs and queer beauties of the Far East.

**Japanese Film Production.**

All Japanese productions were formerly provided with daylight stages. But they are now altered for dark stages on account of the development of electric lighting. The method of production is quite similar to that in Europe, though not on so large a scale as in America.

The unique points in the Japanese film world are as follows:

That a production company has its own supervisors, photographers and actors; and that they are not employed by free contract.

That they belong to a certain company, excepting those who are employed for temporary work.

That a company must make at least seven sets of films because it has cinema houses of its own and screen some particular films there. (These reasons will be comprehended under the heading of "Permanent Cinema Houses.")
CLOSE UP

Minor productions find their existence so difficult that they are soon obliged to break up, for they have no cinema houses of their own, and there is no cinema agency in Japan.

It is difficult to film plays of the new school, for they are strictly censored, and social and moral problems rigidly controlled by the authorities. Consequently, subjects of production are carried away to the past ages, where there were quite different social institutions, and where characters of the old type move freely.

There are some ambitious producers who have made "films of to-morrow." But these films are mere imitations of Western ones, and often prove failures from a commercial point of view. So we may be permitted to arrive at the conclusion that, unless some special forms of films are invented, films of the pure Japanese type may remain successful as "films of to-morrow" rather than those of the Western type.

PERMANENT CINEMA HOUSES.

If there is anyone who thinks that Japanese buildings are of bamboo and paper, he will be greatly in the wrong. Such a hut may have stood a hundred years ago. Our present-day cinema houses of the new type are as excellent as any of the European ones. In each of them is contained one speciality which you cannot see in any other country. This is the existence of ben-shi or explainers. A ben-shi (literally, speaker) explains not only the title of a film, but speaks the dialogues that pass between the principal characters thereof. It is quite an independent occupation. Each ben-shi has his
own art. Some of them are so popular among the fans that they are often said to affect the fate of cinema houses.

The invention of the vitaphone, movitone, and phonofilm seems to have been very popular in Europe and America. The part which these machines play, you may imagine, is played by the _ben-shi_ in Japan.

The film is accompanied by Western music. This is nearly always the case with the Japanese film. Some cinema houses have, of course, a large symphony orchestra, but there is none provided with a pipe organ.

The average programme is a matter for wonder indeed. A single programme contains three big films. For clearness sake, let me quote two programmes of a cinema house where foreign films are exclusively screened:

- _Sunrise_ ... ... ... Fox Film.
- _Pajamas_ ... ... ... Fox Film.
- _Silk Stockings_ ... ... ... Fox Film.
- _Ben-Hur_ ... ... ... M-G-M.
- _Hot-News_ ... ... ... Paramount.
- _News Reel_

I don’t discuss here whether such combinations are good or not. Such a set as films shown above is screened twice daily at 1 and 6 p.m., except on Sundays and holidays. On Sundays and holidays they are begun _three times_; at 11 o’clock a.m., 2 o’clock p.m., and 6 o’clock p.m. It is the same with those cinemas where Japanese films are shown.

No restrictions are imposed upon children by law, though formerly there were some. As for accommodation, it is quite the same as that which we see in Western countries. The
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only difference is that every cinema-goer can have a beautiful programme free of charge. Some of these programmes are so beautiful indeed that they may be considered as works of art.

CLASSES FOR CINEMA GOERS.

In Japan, as in any other country, townsmen are different in their degree of cinema appreciation from country people. It is a remarkable fact, however, that even city-people are becoming more interested in those films which have been popularised. There are also a class of fans who are apt to grow mad about their own favourite players.

POPULAR JAPANESE CINEMA PLAYERS.

Plays of the old school:
Bandô Tsumasaburô (actor).
Sakai Yone-ko (actress).

Plays of the new school:
Sudyuki Denmei (actor).
Hanabusâ Yuri-ko (actress).
Kurishima Sumi-ko (actress).
Natsukawa Shidzuë (actress).

POPULAR FOREIGN PLAYERS IN JAPAN.

Actresses:
Janet Gaynor.
Clara Bow.
Pola Negri.
Lya de Putti.
Laura La Plante.
Actors:
Charlie Chaplin.
Werner Krauss.
Emil Jannings.
George Bancroft.
Ronald Colman.
Douglas Fairbanks.
Gary Cooper.

J. Shige Sudzuky.

PURITANNIA RULES THE SLAVES

We have our likes and dislikes. It has been found that it is safer, simpler and, that best of all compromising words, expedient, to know what they are; and so it has become allowed that we should have our likes and dislikes. But the most important thing is that we should be allowed our likes. Otherwise we concentrate on the dislikes, which is at best (if you look at it that way) passive and at worst negative and destructive. It tends to Keeping Things as They Were, to Preserving the Sanctity of Home and Civic Life. It tends to this, and it positively demands that the sanctity, etc., should be preserved and not allowed to progress or grow or do anything helpful. England has reached the state in which sanctity is kept, but not loved.
And in England, in films, we can only have the Home Secretary’s likes. It is most important that everyone should have their likes. Then we know where we are, and what we are doing. Otherwise, we do nothing rather badly. But in England to have what you want is rather indulgent, and to be anything but misdirected seems to incur flying in the face of Providence, so it is easier to be stationary. When one urges that good films should be shown, now and again, in England, one does not mean that all and only Russian films should be shown. One wants it to become the natural thing for good things to be shown in England, instead of the natural thing to prepare special, if any, versions, for that strange country where the Alhambra is full on Saturday nights, but no one knows why. When one says that English films are not good, one is not saying that they are not Russian. Being Russian or English or Tibetan or Irish Free State means nothing in face of something that is good, good, good, except that it gives a label, a department to go to. . . And yet those who accuse one of critical imperception, saying not all Russian films can be good (and they aren’t), turn round with equal peevishness if one refuses to condemn tout Hollywood, because at the moment Hollywood, you see, is being condemned. It is in the state of mind to do so. If you have a state of mind, you need not think. Rule one. So we have to insist childishly, like this, that we want liberty to see and choose, to be allowed to see and choose for one’s self, and not to be kept in a state of mental pre-puberty. This does not relate only to films, it would be better if it did. But it relates to the whole English state of mind. That state of mind which Keeps Things As They Were, and also, Things From people
till, at their most impressionable age, they are dragged into the bathroom and given a douche of facts for which they are not prepared and which they are at once enjoined to suppress; so that, instead of being a controlled and useful entity, this knowledge disseminates stealthily through the whole system, distorted and dangerous, because isolated. Come into the bathroom, indeed! Come into the garden . . . yes, Maud.

Sex again! Why can’t you keep off it when you are talking of the censorship, and don’t you realise that you are putting off a great many people who might be inclined to agree with you because you imply that all you want from relaxation in films is more stress on the bedroom scenes. . . . But don’t you see that the very way in which you at once leap to that conclusion shows how much you yourself run on that, how much you are suffering, how you are unable to think of sex seriously, as at the bottom of things, because you have been brought up in this English way, regarding it as a thing to forget about except when the port goes round, or on weekends, or in, God save us, Paris, or on late extension nights? It is extraordinary how very stunted it all is.

Someone wrote a book in which the sex wasn’t quite the same. The Attorney General observed forthwith that nothing more “corrosive or corrupt” had ever been written. And if he didn’t believe it himself, I have no doubt he thought it incumbent on his office to say so. This was not a pornographic work—and that, you see, is what made it so “corrosive”. The fact that it was a worthy book which no one but those interested in the subject would trouble to read; the additional facts that its price, style and length put it
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beyond those in search of pornographic punch, and that Diderot's *La Réligieuse* was translated and published at the same time, and that *Adonis Bar* can be straightforwardly imported mean nothing, because it is possible that it was more an affair of the press and publisher than of the author. But nevertheless, the fact did emerge that the legal men thought they could get away with it on the British public like that, and that it was established that neither intention nor execution can prevent a book from being obscene, which is a truly remarkable finding.

It is fair to say that only one other book has, I think, been censored since the War ... but how many have been prevented from being written, and how many have not been able to be published because the public would not stand for it and, much more important, the libraries would not buy it? It is all a question of perspective, and the English habit is to alter the perspective when it sees something it does not like at the bottom of it, by putting mirrors there, in the Schufftan manner. Lowes Dickinson felt impelled to write to *The Manchester Guardian*, "it is an obstinate and familiar habit of the English to get rid of facts that they don't like by pretending that they don't exist... But questions such as are touched on (he does not say 'treated', we can't do that yet) in Miss Radclyffe Hall's book are not disposed of by such treatment. To boycott them merely means that they are driven underground, with the usual results of blackmail, cruelty and folly". And, since I am using academic support, let me quote Mr. F. L. Lucas in *The Observer* of December 30th: "Properly thought about, a spade is not a spade, but a mystery... Really, one wonders that some
people are not too nice to get born at all.’’ But the explanation is simple; we get over the difficulty by using the gooseberry bush, and any enquiries about this are silenced by calling it the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil.

I have mentioned once or twice something called the English State of Mind. Let me, for the benefit of foreign readers, explain it. It can be seen in operation in South Coast hotels, where large persons stagger out from the dining-room at half-past two, to get their places for tea in the lounge at half-past four; it can be seen in Oxford Street any afternoon, where thin and elderly females with paper bags spend hours buying a superfluous hat three farthings cheaper, and are so tired, they’re only ready to be amused when they stagger into a kino because there is half an hour before they need go home yet; and their husbands represent it, lunching heavily in city grill-rooms from twelve to three, till they have such heads that they, too, are only willing to Go to the Theatre to be Amused, my boy. And all over the clubs, the barbers, anywhere where men read evening papers, it can be seen. Puritania ruling the waves with one hand and making tea or cocktails behind her shield with the other. And it has all been satirised by Noel Coward in “Our tastes are very far from Oriental, we have a very fixed idea of fun. The thought of anything experimental or Continental we shun”.

The results of this delightful coma can be seen in Lewes, England, where Rodin’s Baiser could not be put up. In Birmingham, England, where Pavlova could not dance with bare legs. In Bournemouth, England, where Foolish Wives was not booked. In Tonbridge, England, where mixed bathing was forbidden. In London, England, where
Pirandello's *Six Characters* at first could not be shown, where they got excited when two women got drunk in *Fallen Angels*, though on extension nights... and where *Natur und Liebe* can, of course, not be shown. You see, it is serious, and the least gay of nations is by far the most frivolous. Yet the films that are shown include *Sorrell and Son*, *Beau Geste*, *Mother Knows Best*, *The Singing Fool*, *The Jazz Singer*. These are not indecent; there is no reason they should be banned, except that they are rotten films and unhealthy. And any psychologist knows what they mean. So it is silly to ban *La Tragédie, Bett und Sofa* (when the gripping *Thou Shalt Not* comes through) and to cut *Metropolis* to fit the state of mind. You can imagine the thrill at the trade show of *Secrets of the East* when it was found that a woman's navel has been "passed". We pass things like that in England, a solemn and terribly funny business.

But you are right, there are other things than sex. There is politics. This allows us to see an American-made film of the Russian revolution in which a bride is bayoneted in bed on her wedding night and the Red Flag appears in colours, when *Ten Days* is forbidden. And what could be more likely to incite miners and the poor and downtrodden generally than *Our Dancing Daughters*? Then there is the colour question. The time is not thought "ripe" for Negro films. And there was bother over the cast for *Porgy*. And there had to be a white half to *Dover Street To Dixie*, and Alberta Hunter had her best song in *Show Boat* given to a white actress to maul, though it was Negro in rhythm and feeling. There is religion. Such a play as *Ehen Werden in Himmel Geschlossen* would be impossible in London. It may not be a good play, the
whole idea may be cheap, but it is important to feel that one can write such a play and can get it produced. One wants to be able to decide one doesn’t want to by being able to, and that the authorities will never understand.

We are ruled on the principle that the truth is bad for us, that things musn’t be faced, that fresh air encourages germs. Look at the bulletins over the King. No one was taken in, everyone put up with it. Look at the film censorship. It is not a Government concern, though the Government’s power in and through it came out over Dawn and Potemkin. But if the C.E.A. and the K.R.S. liked, they could get rid of it. But altering it might hurt the least of these, my children. We have been told so long that it is better to do something or other than hurt the least of these, that we are all become little ones. What we should have been doing is to get the little ones away from the state in which they can be offended by anything but stupidity and blindness. But we have preferred to lift up our eyes to heaven over an offering of British goods and say, we are but little children weak. And our words have been heard. We are but little children weak. But supposing we weren’t? What would have happened? To begin with, a young man making one of his first films would not have chosen the story of Underground. It would not have been possible, at the end of the first year of the British trade revival, for a trade paper to risk losing its advertisements so nobly by saying, “Half the British directors who have made films this year ought never to be allowed inside studios again. Half the studios that have been used this year should be scrapped forthwith and half
the heads of production firms should retire gracefully from a business to which their proved incompetence is a menace.’’

In the words of Corbusier, “We throw the out-of-date tool on the scrap-heap... This action is manifestation of health, of moral health and of morale, also.” But we don’t, in England. It is better to keep things as they were.

And why is it that instead of a Corbusier or a Mendelssohn or a Poelzig we have Lutyens? Why do we build cinemas like the Regal and the Empire and the Astoria, and none like the Titania or The Universum or the Beba Palast? Where are the English composers akin to Ravel, Meisel or Gershwin, the poets like Hughes or Cummings? Why are the good books written in English not published in England? Where is the English Querschnitt, or Variétés, or Transition, or Dial even? And why is there instead that amazing spectacle, the English weekly illustrated press, filled with the doings of a group of people sufficiently numerous for them, their friends and their imitators to make them pay? Why are no good English films possible? Not because of ugly actresses and young actors who don’t know how to behave, nor because the lighting is bad and photography poor, but because there is no spirit, no urge and no desire to do anything but make money and keep “Things” as they were. Things happen in England, they can’t help it in an island; floods and a lifeboat disaster, and mining distress, and cranes fall on people and gas blows them up, and nobody makes a film of any of these real happenings. I know of only one film that can be called English that has any kick, and that is Drifters, by John Grierson, and that is good because he is hardy enough not to have to go about in an overcoat. Most
of us, if we want to live in England, have to wear coats and mufflers and fur gloves. Fur gloves don’t make for a light touch, nor is clear thinking induced by a cold in the head. We are all muffled up, and kept warm by Puritania.

The whole state of mind of that elderly lady, about whom the only thing elastic is the sides of her boots, is summed up in the fact that unusual films are given the title of "Adult", and the ordinary ones "Universal". It is unusual, you see, for mentalities to be adult. Really and truly. It is different abroad, but with us, it is the minority that are thought "adult"... and it isn’t a compliment, it’s a concession. It is also true, and I hope I may be allowed to say it, that when Close Up was printed abroad, bookstalls fought shy of it because anything printed abroad must be pornographic. This is why, and all these things are why, serious art, modern, experimental, living art, answering needs as well as giving pleasure, isn’t produced in England: why we have become a laughing-stock not only to the nations abroad but to the more intelligent among ourselves. Gentlemen, for, of course, we have been talking over the port and the ladies have gone—God save the kinos!

Robert Herring.
"TIMES IS NOT WHAT THEY WAS!"

On January 12th the Times Berlin Correspondent reviewed *Storm Over Asia*. The Times no doubt desired, and quite rightly, to be up to date in its report of the cinema sensation of the season, but it is greatly to be feared that its good intention will have rather badly miscarried. For already people abroad who have seen the film and the review are asking if the news is reported more competently than the film was criticised.

To begin with, it is very clear that, authorised or unauthorised, the Times critic took it upon himself to give England’s answer (more answering back!) and to set England’s standard to a film which was—in his own words—silly enough and irritating enough to presume to criticise British foreign jurisdiction. His reply has all the self-conscious, silly simper of the Commandant’s wife at the Lama festival. “*Storm Over Asia,*” he wrote, “the latest Russian film to be shown here, has been received with lyrical enthusiasm, though admittedly as a *Tendenzfilm.*” (A *Tendenzfilm* is one with a propagandist tendency; when the tendency is considered to be against Germany it apparently becomes a *Hetzfilm* and arouses indignation.) Just, in fact, as any
Soviet film in England becomes an "instigatory" film and evokes a kind of rabies. The Times correspondent, in order to be able to enjoy what he thought would be "really notable", had, it appears, to prepare himself resolutely to close his eyes to the propaganda. Could anything be more admirable than a resolute preparation to close one's eyes when expecting to see something "really notable"? Would only that T. P. O'Connor would do as much!

Here, in his own words, he makes himself, without apparently minding it, a target for the very same withering scorn with which Pudovkin has revealed the tendency among the British upper bourgeoisie to take it upon themselves to imitate the first gentleman and lady of the land, instead of facing any situation for themselves. So many thorns of repression and precept have sprung up and choked them, that they can only close their eyes resolutely and hope they are looking like what they are trying to. But even mimicry is an art, and bad mimicry, like bad burlesque, is the portion of Laugh Clown, Laugh. Apparently our friend succeeded with his portion, for he found Storm Over Asia "one of the silliest of films". So far, so obvious!

If you had assumed that the gentleman taps with a stick and is led by a dog you find out soon enough it is only a temporary condition, for he alludes to a type he has seen "familiar in Russian films, which usually accompanies a word to a native with a blow". But somebody's eyesight is playing him tricks, for the writer has seen nearly all the Russian films in Germany, and the blows that might come in this category are occasional blows from military bullies and foremen in factories. But a military bully is not an unknown thing in
CLOSE UP

any country, and neither is a brutal over-seer. The blow on the face was also, as apparently the Times correspondent is unaware, one of the customary military aggressions during the old régime, and to try to show people with better understanding than his own that the final destruction of such a custom could at worst be no more barbarous and brutal than the custom itself, is not, except to the guilty conscience, advocating butchery.

The White Russians, says the correspondent, wear uniforms resembling British. And to show that he was not deceived by this or by the Commandant’s name being Ungern Sternberg, he puts his words White Russians in inverted commas, and says that the General and his staff look as like British officers as a Russian producer can make them. It is true that a Russian producer would have his work cut out to reproduce the species, but the writer could not but feel he had very well succeeded, and that Pudovkin had been kind to the point of mercy, taking into account the opportunity he had for retaliating for what we are not sensitive enough to mind presenting as our notion of contemporary Russia. Indeed, Pudovkin’s manners, like the manners of all Russians, it is hereby proved, are far more courteous than our own. So be it.

Our correspondent next relates how the General orders captured Reds to be shot in the manner of one saying "Pass the salt". Did he expect him to weep? The story of Bair, the young Mongol hero, is then related, and how he was captured, shot and left for dead. How a document found among his effects appears to show he is a direct descendant of Ghengis Khan.
"The machiavellian General" has Bair resuscitated and patched up by Imperialist doctors. "The two bullets fired at him," says the critic, "have apparently inflicted about 20 wounds, and the patching-up process is shown with much surgical detail." But not enough, obviously, to let the scornful critic realise two bullet wounds. And perhaps he overlooked that the wounded man fell several hundred feet down a slope, a misadventure not calculated to allow its victim to escape unscathed. Be that as it may, his confusion over the end of the story is too muddled to disentangle. But he arrives at the conclusion that the picture "is evidently intended for the Indian bazaars and the native quarter of Shanghai." Yet apparently he does not mean it as a compliment!

One does begin to realise, however, at long, long last, why films of Rin Tin Tin make money!

K. M.

_Storm Over Asia_ has in Germany been passed as a work of art, and as such is subject to great reduction in taxation.

The crowds during the first weeks of _Storm Over Asia_ were so dense in the street that it was necessary to call out a special police control for those endeavouring to buy tickets.
A NEW HOLLYWOOD

A new Hollywood. A changed Hollywood. A Hollywood temporarily bewildered; groping for its bearings in the maze and confusion of its overlap dissolve from the past to the future. For the moment there is no present. Behind, the mute film with its background of assurance and success. Ahead, the vocal film with a blank horizon. No midway roadstead for deliberation and decision. The transition from the Hollywood of yesterday to the Hollywood of to-morrow has been as sudden and abrupt as one of Hollywood’s own camera-trick time lapses.

To paraphrase a recent witticism, Hollywood has passed from cinema to chinema. And through no more choice or wish of its own than the acquiring of wings by the Mesozoic lizard. Involuntarily equipped for flying, the pteranodon was obliged to take to the air. And, similarly, vocalized Hollywood has now no alternative but to talk and sing. The advent of the phono film gives it no choice if it would survive and continue to garner the golden shekels.

The Jazz Singer, a cinematic sport, born of the financial desperation of an erratic producing company, is primarily responsible for the transformation of Hollywood. Clumsy and unlovely as it was, it caught the public fancy. It
aroused a clamor for more. It evoked in unstinted measure the type of applause that alone is of interest and meaning to Hollywood—the clink of coin. And then and there the day of Hollywood silent drama was over.

The novelty-loving public, already becoming captious of the movies with their monotonies and limitations, seized upon this first specimen of the phonofilm with new-born enthusiasm. Thereafter it would save its pennies for the talkies. The cinema was dead. Long live the cinema!

The protagonists of The Jazz Singer were on the brink of bankruptcy as producers of silent films. Now they are again on their feet, jocund and opulent. Their initial venture in vitaphone, together with its several successors, has already boosted their financial profits from zero to a million dollars a month. And this with only a small fraction of the picture houses as yet equipped for the showing of phonofilms.

An illuminated sign of the times. Illuminating, too. A sign which brother producers of Hollywood could not ignore if they would. And in the face of it he must indeed be a visionary who would ask Hollywood to stop and consider the potentialities of art awaiting development in the silent drama.

Rather let the seeker after art rejoice that Hollywood has turned talkie. The silent picture with its latent possibilities is now free from the overshadowing commercialism of moviedom. Free to create its own development as an independent branch of cinematography. The situation is one devoutly to have been wished for.

Hollywood for the present has ceased to be a competitor or an obstructionist in the field of cinematic art. On the
very eve of a condition ripe for the creation of art, Hollywood
has reverted frankly and whole heartedly to the elements of
business. The talkies have thrown it off its balance and
thrust it into a wrestling match with new managerial
problems and with serious financial menaces. Its thought
and energies are centred on the practical, the utilitarian, the
technical.

Readjustments, eliminations, additions, innovations, ex-
periments. Changed outlooks. Novel hazards. Fresh
pioneering. Everything for the nonce topsyturvy.

Stars of the silent drama not worth their presence as extras
in the spoken drama. Assets turned of a sudden into liabili-
ties. Famed actors with alien accents folding their purses
and returning to Europe. Pretty faces and figures banished
for lack of pretty voices. Lofty-salaried pantomimists, yes-
terday imperious and hobnobbing with the gods, to-day
scared into timorous condescension at thought of failure as
vocal actors. Temperamental Goudals, Garbos and Murrays
reduced to convent meekness. Fear, uncertainty, bewilder-
ment.

Experienced scenarists replaced by stage playwrights.
Jazz singers and jazz composers, minstrels, and vaudeville
comedians installed in high places. Thousands of dollars
worth of prepared scenarios reduced to waste paper. Feverish
competition for the rights to stage plays, musical shows,
revues, operas, popular songs, dialogued stories, vaudeville

Gone the old glamour and bustle of the studio lot. Whispers, tip-toes. Gone the busy bang of hammer, and
the sputter of kleigs; the megaphoned directions; the talk and laughter off stage; the presence of onlookers; the insouciance of the actors, unbothered with ought, but appearing well in their close-ups and knowing little what the picture is about, and caring less.

Gone the open-door stages; the hospitable sets. In their place massive, sound-proof walls enclosing the silence of the tomb. Great woollen shrouds—echo mufflers—blanketing the set. Cameras hidden in closets. Lights flashing mute directions. Attendants holding their breath. Actors strutting their stuff before invisible lenses and speaking their laboriously committed lines to implacable microphones.


CLIFFORD HOWARD.

FILMING A SOUND PICTURE

Inasmuch as sound pictures are made in the tomb-like confines of sound-proof stages, very few persons, even among the studio workers, are privileged to look inside and see what makes a "talkie" tick. The procedure is both fascinating and dramatic and quite unlike the filming of a silent production.
CLOSE UP

The mere watching of one scene from Interference, for example (the Lasky-Paramount first phonofilm), would have given the observer an entirely new conception of the painstaking effort entailed in producing pictures that talk.

Roy J. Pomeroy, director of the picture, sits in a chair giving last-minute instructions to the players, Evelyn Brent and William Powell, featured with Clive Brook and Doris Kenyon in the film.

Giant doors swing shut at Pomeroy’s signal. A peculiar silence dominates the stage. Now and then a whispered conversation is heard. Voices trail off strangely . . . all resonance and echo have been banished. Incandescent lamps flood the set with light. Strange camera “tanks” . . . soundproof booths . . . crouch on the edge of the set. Microphones are suspended over the players’ heads.

A pair of eyes look down upon the stage. They belong to an engineer who sits in a tiny room tucked up under the ceiling. It is isolated with plate-glass windows. The man studies the positions of the “mikes.” He is the “mixer.” He hears everything through giant horns. His duty is to regulate the volume of the voices that are picked up by the “mikes.”

Downstairs a voice is heard over a telephone. It gives the magic word: “Interlock!” The familiar cry of “Camera!” is never heard here. “Interlock!” has supplanted it. It means that cameras and recording machines are synchronized and ready to go.

A bell rings somewhere outside . . . a signal for carpenters to cease work. Someone says: “Ready! Quiet, please!”
A green light glows on a switchboard. The buzzing of conversation dies away. The doors of the "tanks" are closed and locked... the operators sealed in soundless tombs. The musical notes of a three-toned horn are faintly heard... the final signal.

A red light flashes. The operator signals Miss Brent and Mr. Powell. They have been watching him. Now the cameras are turning. The microphones are "alive" and sensitive to the slightest sound... coughs and sneezes are taboo...

Thus the scene begins.

Every word uttered, every sound made by the players during the scene, is recorded with their movements. In a tiny room upstairs a machine puts these sounds on film and disc. A knock on the door... the ringing of a telephone... tender greetings... a fit of coughing... the gurgling of a drink... the soft cadences of a woman's voice... anger... a torrent of fury... a scream... the closing of a door... silence...

Invisible and with the speed of light these sounds travel upstairs to the inscrutable machine, a machine that puts the breath of life into inanimate celluloid. A tiny photo-electrical cell transmutes the eloquent nuances of the players' voices into minute lines of gray and black and white. Tiny lines, less than one-tenth of an inch in length... delicate shadings of light... millions of them... warm voices on cold film.

Red and green lights vanish from a panel. Machinery stops. The scene is over. Giant doors swing open.
shine floods the sombre stage. The sounds of studio life return... hammers... saws... Ford trucks... pugnacious tractors. The sound stage has returned to the world of audibility... for a few minutes... then... back to the tomb of modern make-believe!

SONORAFILMS

We who still plump solidly for the superiority of the silent film have no cause to be over-jubilant. We have received some nasty jolts of late. That these have come barely a year since we were waiting (and wondering a little anxiously) for sound films to make their debut, is an added reason for concern.

Then it was thought that the greatest harm from sound films lay in the arrested development of cinema, just when the art was beginning to stretch its limbs with a feeling of individuality and independence. There was no thought that the double medium would ever encroach, actually threatening to swallow the silent medium, assimilate it and regurgitate anything in the nature of a plausible unification of the two. It was merely a question of how long it would take before living down their novelty vogue and reverting again to the silent screen.
When Movietone came to town how those views were confirmed. It was good fun. But how really gleeful we were. Changing the Guard at Buckingham Palace was as amusingly juvenile as A. A. Milne. But what a travesty of truth in sound and rhythmic movement. Supposing—it was thought—they do perfect the reproduction of sound (and I hear that even hard-boiled scientists shake their heads over this), well, there is the question of movement and suggestion, and all the trickery of psychological stuff, which will prove too elusive to be assisted by sound. Trapping alligators might be quite a thrill, singing (sopranos excluded) not bad, but . . .

Then came The Jazz Singer and ough “Ma-a-a-mee” ; we were entitled not only to see the citadel safe, but the siege lifted sooner than we had hoped.

Some then went to see The Terror. And if those who didn’t, seemed to read that Terror was its first, last and middle name, even to patient and traditionally tolerant trade critics, they may be forgiven for leaving it at that. Odds, so far, were with the silenteers.

Then up pops Al Jolson again with The Singing Fool, and the writer for one piped down. Not that the art was affected as such. At its highest the film reaches nothing greater than the level of musical play. Some ingenious “panning” widens a little the horizons of the stage, that is all. But it gets across and holds the public. Wholely because of Al Jolson, of course. He is the most powerful, and thereby the most dangerous propagandist of treacly senti-
CLOSE UP

ment the world could wish for. With astonishing unself-consciousness he lets fall emotional viscosity that would cloy the tongue of the goofiest and love-lorn. And although we cannot sink into the comforting oblivion incident to the silent cinema palace, his voice and immense personality get for him a ninety-nine per cent. contact with the audience. And that is more than good enough for business.

There's the rub. It will pay. So the day of raising the siege becomes more remote; the diversion of cine-art development more protracted, perhaps driving it to the art gallery or the repertory hall for highbrows; and its return to popular appeal increasingly difficult.

Had it not been for the tri-party Russian manifesto on the contrapuntal uses of sound in the films, a visit to the Vita-Phonal Home-Towners would have re-imbued our hopes. Even so, that film convinces that Al Jolson alone did everything for The Singing Fool and made the talkie possible as a feature length.

Home-Towners couldn’t do it. It couldn’t get along. A slap of the face is less effective on the record disc than a tap of the drumstick in the orchestra. If necessary at all, the telephone sounds better and less distracting when done by the effects man. In fact, as a whole, there was nothing worth while which could not have been better done before the footlights.

So it was a reasonably contented silenteer that went along to see The Melody of Love at the London Rialto, intending it to be the last experiment of its kind until Pudowkin should
rout us thoroughly with a sonorous Germinal. But that silenteer got a jolt that modified his decision.

Not that The Melody of Love is in any way dynamic. By no stretch of imagination or generosity can it be called a good film even. But those who have thought sound synchronisation, with all the trickery of modern technique, an insuperable difficulty are here proved all wrong. And that makes it interesting.

It may go unrecorded in film history, but to A. B. Heath, of Carl Laemmle productions, will really be due the distinction (or discredit, according to feeling in the matter) for having done that which would establish the sound film permanently.

Its theme is legion, as the title more than suggests. Considering this, Heath, cinematically, got a lot out of it. Continuity, though imperfect, was surprisingly maintained. The action, though slowed down because of the obvious and well-known microphone difficulty, was by no means the wearisome business for which, to be quite honest, one was already prepared. The voice added to the interest, and the awful gaping silences which characterised even the speaking sequences of The Singing Fool, were effectively bridged. Undoubtedly the spontaneity of a bunch of doughboys glee-singing whenever they came together would be heaps more malleable than the paraphernalia and preparation of cabaret, and doubtless helped Heath considerably in splurging the talking and singing smoothly into the purely action and cinematic sequences. But that these latter are successfully synchronised, too, is the really interesting thing.
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There are mixes, and superimpositions symbolising the entry of America into the war. Later troops aboard ship, frequently cut-back with an excellent shot of the seas surging and swirling over the rudder from the boat’s screws, then troops drilling and marching in well-chosen directions, superimposed to give balanced rhythmic movement across the screen. But we do not get the sounds which correspond with these visual images. No nation-proud, raving, irrational human voices, no sound of tumbling, foaming waters, none of those crisp, rhythmic sounds and soundlets which accompany marching bodies of men. All this is done with fanfare and orchestration, very ingeniously, too. And this, although it may not seem so at first, is the most hopeful portent. I mean for the silenteer.

If the real sounds cannot be done and kept up, excuses will have repeatedly to be found for “cutting-in” the orchestration. And as orchestration seems likely to remain the dominant feature of synchronised films possessing any cinema qualities at all, it means no more than that the orchestra has been but removed from its well and tucked inside a panatrope. A change musico-commercial rather than cinematic, for the essentials of silent cinema remain.

HAY CHOWL.
A SOVIET FILM STAR

MARTHA LAPKINA.

Martha Lapkina’s face is that of a person accustomed to gazing down at the ground; not from any surliness, but from professional habit.

Martha Lapkina had been a hired worker from her ninth year. From her ninth year she worked on the land. She looked after the farm animals. She suffered want. She toiled. But she never lost heart, and in her work and all her duties she was quick and alert. After the revolution she worked on the soviet farm at Konstantinovka. And there Martha would have passed the rest of her life but for a chance incident, but for the fact that chance led to Martha’s humble back being required.

Martha had never thought about the cinema. She had no time, and she was so ignorant. When a photograph was taken at the soviet farm, Martha came because they all came, and they were all flattered at the thought of taking part in it.

And this was what happened.

They started taking the photographs, but there was no heroine for the picture. The directors of The General Line
Bee Amann and Gustav Frohlich, the leading characters in the new Joe May super for Ufa’s Erich Pommer Production, Asphalt.

Brigitte Helm and Leo Peukert in The Scandal of Baden-Baden, an Ufa picture. Both these films are scheduled for English release by Gaumont during 1929.
Two impressions from *La Nuit Electrique*, a new film by Eugen Deslaw.
From *Duel*, a new film by Joris Ivens: Above Ivens is making some exterior shots on a boat.
Umbrella effect from *Pluie* (*Rain*), another film of Joris Ivens.

Vanda Vangen, the "vedette" of *Minuit* (*Midnight*), a film by Edmond Greville from his own scenario.
The Magic Clock. A note on this film appears in Comment and Review.

From Jean Grémillon's film *Gardien du Phare*, for the new Société du Grand Guignol. Note the excellent lighting.
From a new Russian comedy by Barnett, who made the very piquant *Moscow that Laughs and Weeps*. This is called the *House in the Trubnaja Square*, and is a satire on the lower middle-class life of the occupants of a large block of flats in the city.
From *Free Trip (Freie Fahrt)*, Erno Metzner's film made for the Social Democratic party of Germany. See note in Comment and Review.

From the new Emelka super *Waterloo*. A Carl Grune film photographed by Wagner. Blücher's troops entering Wavre after the Battle of Ligny. The village of Wavre was constructed in the Emelka studios at Geiselgasteig.
From *Waterloo*, the enormously successful Emelka superfilm; directed by Carl Grune and photographed by Wagner. The storming of the Belle-Alliance inn.

Wellington at home. Wellington (Humberstone Wright) in foreground. From *Waterloo*, Grune's spectacular triumph for Emelka. The film is certain to be sold to many countries.
for two months ransacked the railway stations, the lodging-houses, the factories. They toured the villages. They summoned the women for inspection by pealing the church-bell. They examined them; they looked at thousands of faces.

Reduced to despair, the producer, Eisenstein, even resolved upon a step utterly repugnant to his nature—he resolved to try using an actress for the part. Now began an inspection of actresses. Nothing came of it. The actresses were insulted when the first question put to them was: "Can you milk cows, plough, guide a tractor?" Proudly they answered "No". And there the matter ended. The directors again began to search far and wide. Finally, from weariness, no doubt, they thought that they had found what they wanted. They began to take the photographs. And they saw that there was something wrong. At all events they took the photographs by preference from the back.

And finally, one fine day, the heroine... got tipsy, and did not turn up for the photograph at all.

And then there entered the Soviet Kino, with her humble back, the modest and homely worker, Martha Lapkina.

Martha had no wish to leave her home and go away with strangers. But she agreed for the sake of the money. She took her little boy, and set off on her wanderings together with the film company. What places one has to go to!

From the first photographs it was clear that Martha was extremely responsive and easily adapted herself to the requirements of the cinema.

Eisenstein considers the most important part of the work with the individual actor to be the observation of the details
of his or her natural behaviour. The important thing is not rehearsing, but studying what the actor does instinctively. Afterwards these studies must be pieced together in the context required for the particular task in hand. Something like the classical example of Dourof* with the hen which played the zither. It was not difficult to teach the hen to play the zither. The difficulty was to grasp and to turn to account the ordinary movements of the hen's feet when it was scratching up rubbish.

But Eisenstein is not Dourof, and Lapkina is not a hen.

And the result obtained was not at all like that obtained by Dourof. Martha not only photographed well. She worked (this is not meant as an insult to professional actresses) with an unusually quick grasp of the meaning of the producer. Even at times when she was not herself in the photograph, Martha would be following with her eye all that was taking place in front of the apparatus. She worked with the minimum amount of rehearsing. Rehearsals bother her, and, to use her own expression, only confuse. All that is needed is to explain the requirements to her in simple language—what, where, how and why. Martha tries it over, never relaxing her attention for a moment. You ought to see her face when the producer is explaining to her the task in hand; how every muscle of her face and body is relaxed; how she is wholly absorbed in preparing herself for satisfying the requirements. You ought to see how Martha works through a whole succession of scenes arranged for quite different purposes.

* Dourof was a famous Russian trainer of animals. His menagerie contained performing rats, mice, hens, sea-lions, etc., etc.
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There is one episode in the picture: Martha goes to the dairy. She enters quietly. Suddenly she sees that the peasants are dividing the first profits. Money has disappeared. Only a trifle remains for distribution. Farewell to her dreams of a bullock for breeding! Martha looks at the dull faces around her. Alas! what darkness and ignorance! Like an angry mother defending a beloved son, Martha hurls herself on the treasurer of the dairy; she rushes through the crowd, barricading the door with her frail body. The peasant attacks her. She does not relax her hold. She endures. The peasant flings her face downwards onto the handle of the separator. Martha is bent up with pain. Still she endures. The agricultural director comes in. The money is recovered. The agricultural director helps to put matters right. The peasants listen to his words. Martha’s face, with its high cheek-bones, is lit up with joy; the grey, slanting eyes are radiant.

The simplicity and readiness with which Martha adapts herself to the required mood effaces with suspicious ease all the distinctions between an illiterate hired worker and a professional film actress. Fortunately for the latter, the laurels of the cinema are without interest for Martha. She is back in her village, and it is doubtful whether the walls of our cinema studios will ever see her again. She has even refused a position as work-woman at the Kino factory.

And one more interesting fact. It often happens that actors meet one another again. After many years they suddenly come across one another somewhere or other. They meet behind the scenes to have a chat and exchange reminiscences . . . Martha, too, experienced a reunion of this kind. It was
with the bullock, Fomka, the hero of *The General Line*. Martha reared Fomka as a calf at the soviet farm at Konstantinovka, and received a medal for him. And then, after four years, she met him in the film-photographs in the province at Riazan, where Fomka was serving in the soviet farm as a model breeder.

In *The General Line* Martha and Fomka contend with equal rights on behalf of communism and of the new man.

P. Attasheva.

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**CENSORSHIP IN FRANCE**

A common fault for the foreigner is to imagine that France, a free country, has freedom in all its domains. This is to be explained, perhaps, by a looking backward, a remembrance that the Great Revolution took place in France, and that ever since the French people have enjoyed an absolute sovereignty.

Alas, nothing is less true! The censorship repulsed victoriously in literature and the other arts, repulsed also in the Press, rebounds with a fanaticism which could well be employed elsewhere, on the cinema.

The cinema, being the last born, suffers terribly on this very account. It is not good enough, one must think that an almost complete misunderstanding of its functions on the
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part of the producers should complicate its already difficult life. And each time a director tries to escape from an ever-present banality, the censors hurl themselves upon his work and cut at random.

What do they cut? Everything that they consider subversive. That is to say, everything that might teach to the multitudes of cinema goers what they prefer to remain hidden. Everything that seems immoral. Meaning that one must not teach the cinema amateurs that there are cases where a man loves a woman even if he is not married to her; that there are thieves that the police sometimes don’t catch; that there are beings who give themselves to vices such as morphinomania, cocainomania, etc. The people are supposed to know nothing. This is most agreeable to the detainers, to be able to leave them in this state, avoiding thus protest or revolt.

In France nothing is feared as much as the Russian films. The Soviets represent to the French censors the perfect incarnation of every conceivable vice. And they have discovered the neat solution of quite simply forbidding all Russian films, on the pretext that they do so because, in terms of the contingent, the Russians do not take any French films, therefore theirs cannot be allowed on the screens of France.

The case of Les Nouveaux Messieurs is typical. Feyder allowed himself to ridicule the politicians, and to reveal their lusts. Could there be a greater crime? The censors, obedient to government directions, forbade it. I learn now that the ban is to be lifted. And I regret it sincerely. Why? Because this interdiction, which made even the most submissive spirits rebel, might have brought about a blessed event—the disappearance of censorship.
It is for this that we must work. It is not enough that such paltriness should be broadened to a state of wider indulgence. We have the right to demand the total banishment of the institution. We do not need a tutor who, worthy official, thinking only of earning his living, has no personal ideas, and has nothing to do except obey orders. We are already adult enough to reject for ourselves what we consider unsuitable. If in all other realms of thought free expression is possible, why should the cinema alone be not?

Because children might see films which might perhaps have a bad influence upon them? I do not think that this pretext is justified. Bad films perhaps do impress children in an undesirable way. But it is exactly here where the misunderstanding occurs. The censors and ourselves have vastly different conceptions of the good and bad film. We consider that a film with Huguette Deflos is a bad film; this woman, with her bad acting, would leave any child with a regrettable memory. His spirit might well be vitiated by the strutting of Jean Angelo, by the films of M. Perret. These things are bad cinema, it being understood that they give to a childish sensibility a completely false notion of life and beauty and ideas. The young person impressed with this transposition of life would be led assuredly into false ways. But such films are never censored. They are not found to be subversive.

And now. Why not change this method, why, under the pretext of the protection of children, forbid us to see a cinematographic work of value? One no longer puts, so far as I am aware, all books into the hands of immature spirits.
It is we who are guilty of this state of affairs. The feebleness of some, the unwillingness of others, are the causes. The Free (?) Press does not dare utter a word, the influential people devote their energy to their own very personal affairs, and so it goes on. Celebrated authors with a voice that would be heard fail completely to interest themselves; it does not encroach on their interests, so why make efforts? Youth spends its energy in ridiculous bickerings, and its initiative goes in the fray.

It is necessary that the directors of the whole world rally to fight the horrible pest. One forgets too often that they do not know what happens to their films in foreign countries. If an association were formed it would have representatives in every country to disclose the abuse of films by the censorships, and perhaps by this means enough indignation would be roused to cause the total disappearance of its abominable guardianship. But even so, we have still to fear the weakness of those interested. If people say they do not see the use of protesting against the interdiction in block of Russian films in France, one can only feel an immeasurable sadness. For men of worth have said it, and they have not the right to be so shabby. I give this instance because it is a symptomatic one, and proves how little anybody has understood what is the matter.

Censorship, especially in the way it is executed, is worthless and not compatible with human right. There is but one thing in the whole of the sorry affair which is, in spite of everything, agreeable for us. And that is that so tyrannous a measure proves that the cinema is feared, and its power recognised. And one may rejoice on this account. For only the strong are
feared in a world of weaklings, only intellect shunned in a 
world of stupidity. The day will come—and it is nearer than 
we think—when, thanks to the cinema, the whole human race 
will be able to realise its forces. The screen then will be able 
to give us the satisfaction and joy to which we have a right, 
and which are the very raison d'être for its existence. In 
that day the censorship may well tremble before the cinema, 
as we now do before a good film that is mutilated or banned. 

Jean Lenauer.

A LETTER ON CENSORSHIP

Berlin. Mid-January.

Dear Mr. Macpherson,

You wrote to me over four weeks ago that the February 
issue of Close Up would be mainly a censorship protest 
number. I am not surprised that we are sometimes forced to 
make some stand against it. Such a time seems to have 
arrived again. In England, France and Germany also, the 
censors of late have acted in a way that seems ridiculous; at 
any rate conspicuous. In England, France and Germany 
also, there is a growth of demonstrations to bring to light the 
mistakes of practical censorship in particular, and in general 
the unworthiness of the very theory of censorship.
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Close Up must not be behind-hand there. You had asked me previously, dear Mr. Macpherson, to induce some German authorities to state their views on the question.

But I have always had a decided aversion to such earnestly intended investigations, having had too much opportunity to see how questions asked in this way are answered. The greater part of the persons sit down at the last possible moment to get rid of the problem with a few meaningless phrases. The minority on the other side think so much about it that their sentences become lifeless formulas. Actually they had to be asked orally, and briskly, asked so as to give an immediate answer.

There would be no harm in trying this once, was what I thought, and I made up my mind to make use of the opportunity offered by the Berlin Film Press reception, which took place on December the thirty-first. I hoped to meet there all those who would be most concerned with my enquiry. And I did meet them. Rather astonished by the sudden attack—for my earnest queries must have seemed like that—so out of keeping with the character of the feast! However, they answered. Somewhat alarmed, and hesitant in the beginning, then more interested, and evidently with conviction at the end. But the answers were by no means so to the point as either one of us might wish. You will be able to judge at once:

I sat down firstly at the table of Lupu Pick. You will certainly agree that Mr. Pick, being not only the official President of the "Dachorganisation der filmschaffenden Künstler Deutschlands", but also in himself one of the sharpest minds in questions of German film art, is eminently
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suited to give his viewpoint of the question. This is approximately what he told me. "I myself have had almost no disagreeable experiences with the censorship. Only once it happened that one of my older films—after having run already for two years—was forbidden by the German authorities on account of nominal religious offences. But this prohibition has since been abandoned. If I am lacking in such experiences it may be because I myself have always applied my own special censorship. One more severe, perhaps, than any official censorship could be. I also could not support the refusal of official censorship on principle without making some reservations. It seems to me that every State has the right to defend its elementary principles of existence. In what form this should take effect in practice is too involved a subject to be able to be discussed across the table..."

I met Carl Grune in the hall, who—if I remember rightly—said this:

"Once they wanted to forbid my film Eifersucht (Jealousy). I went myself to the censors and discussed the matter in front of them, explaining what the tendencies were meant to show. The gentlemen perceived and understood, and the prohibition was not carried through. But for this single event I have had no dispute with censorship, and have the general impression that everything can be shown, if it is only shown in the form of parallels. Genuine art, therefore, need be afraid only on rare occasions. In spite of this I perceive censorship as a disparaging slander of artists and their public. It has descended from a time we have outgrown. 1914-18 is behind us. It was then that we came of age."
The words of both these gentlemen sketched, in their reserve, the gist of the opinions I heard, and remained characteristic, though I asked many others. Not only directors, but authors, cameramen, architects, actors, actresses and journalists; the latter of which were always ready with curious stories, relating from this or that event, when photos or titles were forbidden. Because of trifles developing from trifles, censorship's authority was damaged through its prohibitions far more than the trifles could have injured the complex which it had supposed to be in danger.

These instances could not be used as arguments against censorship in general. As a conclusion of the results given by the answers it seems to be obvious that there are few relations to be derived from individual cases which affect a summing up. It transpired that the individual occurrence of *sincere artistic film productions*—I emphasise *sincere artistic film productions*—being sacrificed to censorship are scarcely to be found in the history of German cinematography.

What German censors have protested against until now has been more often double-meaning, not only of tendency and content, but especially of quality. I must repeat, indeed, that these circumstances refer only to Germany, as I am not sufficiently aware of corresponding circumstances in other Western countries.

In spite of this I think I am authorised to generalise what I have already stated as follows:

Censorship—a mediaeval thing. It is an anachronistic surveillance, a limitation to the creation of any spiritual art. It means not only by its facts and circumstances a clipping of
the wings that are given to the pioneers of a cultural development, but already, *a priori*, acts as an unconscious hindrance to their going ahead.

But!

Have we the right to speak truly and without reservations of "spiritual and artistic creations", to talk about "the wings of the pioneers of cultural development", when we allude to the film of to-day?

Do we not know very well that all these things refer to but a modest percentage of the products of film industry, whose ambitions are above all commercial ones.

One can well speak on occasions of the problems arising from censorship in the various branches of the commercial side of the cinema; of the ideal task of the cinema, and of the anti-ideal nature of the official perceptions.

Between the periods of such debates—at the Board of Directors, in the plans of the production chiefs, in the midst of the studio sets, in the cutting room and after the première—one incessantly hears the fact emphasised that the main object of every film is to check in at the pay desk.

The misgivings among official circles are therefore not to be denied; namely, that the motives of the commercial film producers with twenty-five years at most of professional history, cannot guarantee any such thing as a standard—would not, by any means, stay within those limits which must be considered as absolutely binding from the point of public interest.

To give an example. The German Revolution in 1918 did away with all censorship regulations instituted by the Kaiser.
Among these were naturally film restrictions. There followed a short period during which anything was permitted. A period of so-called "sex-enlightenment" films. These were films that put sex drastically in the foreground under the pretence of instruction. Of course, such years, immediately following the War, were an abnormal period. A period of complete reaction against the preceding era of militaristic drill and bureaucracy. A time of general licence. One could not expect any anachronistic morality from the film industry of the day. In spite of this it is true that many groups in Germany inexorably remember this as an argument against liberation of the film from censorship.

And among these people are some who are not far removed from the film world. They consider that censorship does not work against industry, but protects films from what the industry would make of them.

Resumé.

If films were unmingled, an art solely, then censorship should be categorically refused. But in circumstances as they are, an industrial censorship is to be excused.

In any event, it is time to say by whom and in what manner this censorship should be applied. It is, of course, barely possible to present a satisfactory fundamental plan in this space. It is perhaps sufficient to mention only the fact that in various countries examples have already been given of how censorship should not be applied.

If there has to be censorship, it must be free, as far as is possible, from bureaucracy. Film censorship can only be a censorship of professionals. Professionals in the sense of creative artists, active critics, so to speak, who, without being
censors of taste, at the same time are able to guarantee a modern freedom of thought.

It may be that my letter does not give you, dear Mr. Macpherson (for I am at the end of it), what you desired, but at least it does contain the firm opinion of

Yours very truly,

Andor Kraszna-Krausz.

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THE THINGS THEY DO

G. W. Pabst made a film about psychoanalysis. What, asked Wardour Street, is psychoanalysis? No definite answer could be given, but the general feeling was that it must be something terribly remote; and the very best men of Wardour Street ought to be called in to deal with it.

Thanks to the very best men of Wardour Street, the public is familiar with half of the story; with the half that tells of the husband who cut his wife’s neck with a razor when a woman was being murdered with a razor in the house next door. A coincidence which had a remarkable effect on the man. With the arrival of a cousin from India, of whom he had been jealous since childhood, he developed homicidal tendencies...

The man goes to a café. He is terribly agitated. When he leaves he forgets the keys of his house, but his vis-à-vis 62
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follows him and returns them to the man, who stutters frightened thanks.

"You must have some reason for not wanting to go home."

"How do you know?" the man demands.

"That," says the other, "is my profession."

The same night the man tries to kill his wife. He is horrified at himself, for he loves her. In his misery he remembers that there is one man who may be able to help him, the psychoanalyst of the coffee shop.

How the very best men of Wardour Street were shocked! A physician. . . . picking up his clients in a coffee shop . . . my dear sir, it is not dignified, it's not done! So they cut out the coffee shop sequence, and made the wife tell her husband about the psychoanalyst in a title.

They are not always in such dignified mood, sometimes they are quite frivolous; they built the New Gallery Cinema and forgot the projection box. As an afterthought a hole had to be bored in the roof and the projection box inserted at a vertiginous angle.

I had hoped that they were not so powerful in Berlin, but I found that they had cut out the abortionist sequence from Bed and Sofa. When I arrived in Berlin they were advertising a film called The Marquis d'Eon, when I left they were advertising The Spy of Madame Pompadour; the same film but clever business.

So Berlin, the most enlightened film city, is not free from their influence; they run Wardour Street; they overrun America.

Is this to be an article in nineteen hundred and twenty nine on the moguls of the moving picture industry? Haven't we
heard, and heard? Yes, but what have we done? The public laughs when it sees the front rows of soldiers in a scene from *Ben Hur* rise to cheer, while the painted back rows remain firmly seated in their painted chairs. The public writes to the paper when it sees a roaring fire burning in the grate and the French windows flung wide open, as they were in *The Physician*. Spontaneous laughter can be the best destructive criticism, and producers are taken to task when the letters are published in the movie magazines under the heading, *Little Things that Spoil Big Pictures!* But nobody laughs at them, nobody writes to the fan papers blaming them.

Are the public taken in by their pseudo seriousness? And do they take themselves seriously to-day; they arrange for arty angles in their pictures. *Rasputin's Love Affairs* is full of shots through arms and over shoulders, when the owners of the arms and shoulders have to keep so still or they would hide the face of the artist being photographed. In the same film there is a shot from the top of the studio looking down on a group of men round a table; a shot that immediately makes you conscious of a set, as the camera is so obviously outside it. They spoilt quite a good picture like *Feme* by writing the titles in irregular Gothic letters sprawling across the screen; the eye was distracted instead of being rested as it is by the formal title. A recent American "arty" film had three flash-backs after titles, which can never be anything but illustrations of the words. They thought that the boxing cabaret in *The Spy* was the height of originality. They were delighted because the newspapers in *Verdun* that the old peasant sells to the troops outside the citadel were "actual
papers which were on sale in Verdun during battle”. (Oh, what a lot of difference that touch of reality makes on the screen!). They adore vignettes!

Vignetting at the corner of a picture may be permitted if it is very, very faint; for the eye sees in an oval shape rather than oblong, but the heavy black frame that they think soarty is calamitous.

I hate them most when they are trying to be arty. A few may be deceived by their change of outlook, whereas it was the completely sexy and “ity” outlook; to-day they like to make films with Jannings, but they are still being actuated by the box office. They find that the superiority complex is an excellent thing to pander to, and they instruct Jannings to be twice as slow in crossing a room. Their outlook may have changed, but they are the same, only a little less sincere than in the days of bathing comedies.

About two years ago a film was being cast in which there was a lecture hall scene. The casting director filled the hall with the prettiest girls and handsomest men that he could find, not at all the sort of people who would attend a lecture on the evils of alcohol. If the picture were being cast to-day the hall would be filled with types and the director would shoot the scene from the top of the roof or between the lecturer’s legs.

The synopsis given away at the trade-show of Exiled was decorated with a most beautiful still; a long, straight road full of puddles with nothing to reflect except storm clouds, and two silver birches in the foreground swept into desolate pattern by the dreary wind. The synopsis told us that Mady Christians featured in the film, but it did not tell us
who directed the picture, or who was the cameraman. They had no interest in who had composed the lovely picture of the countryside, with its splendid impression of vastness. There is a much-quoted scene at the beginning of Exiled when the daughter, who had been deserted with her father in the palace, walks down the immense stairway into the servants' hall, more as a gesture to prove to herself that she is not afraid than to discover why the bells are unanswered. The hall, with its gigantic pillars and atmosphere of pomp, emphasizes, almost painfully, the loneliness of father and daughter. Why did it never occur to them that we should want to know the name of the man who built that set:

They are not really interested in art. If you want further proof go to "see and hear" some of their talkies.

Who are they? I mean the men who influence the "industry", the type of film made and sold. While they are in power it is an obligation to remind the public from time to time of the kind of men that they allow to rule, till they become so tired of being told about them that they express their indignation through boycotts and letters of indignation to the local exhibitor, and filling up the forms at the back of Close Up.

O. B.
LA CENSURE . . . RONGEUR DE FILMS

Il n’est point d’ouvrage si accompli qui ne fondit tout entier au milieu de la critique si son auteur voulait en croire tous les censeurs qui ôtent chacun l’endroit qui leur plaît le moins.

La Bruyère.

Censure! Le mot seul, déjà, nous est antipathique, au propre et au figuré n’est-il pas analogue à "sangsue"! Mais ne jouons pas sur les mots et voyons un peu quel est le rôle de la censure en Suisse, comment nos autorités comprennent ce rôle et ce qu’il en résulte pour nous, cinéphiles.

Les départements cantonaux de justice et police sont chargés d’appliquer un petit article de loi qui interdit en substance toutes publications, représentations ou manifestations susceptibles de troubler l’ordre public, de porter atteinte à la moralité et de suggérer des actes délictueux. Un tel programme répond certainement aux exigences de tout gouvernement sérieux et nous ne saurions le critiquer en quoi que ce soit.
Reste l’application. Chaque canton organise sa commission de censure comme il l’entend, mais celle-ci doit comprendre un ou plusieurs fonctionnaires; elle peut s’adjoindre quelques personnalités du monde artistique ou des membres du corps enseignant. Il est aisé de comprendre que lorsque ses décisions n’émanent que de représentants de l’État, la question de compétence se pose tout aussitôt, surtout dans le domaine du cinéma. La valeur artistique d’un film peut échapper facilement aux yeux d’un “rond de cuir” si important soit-il.

La censure, en Suisse comme ailleurs, nous le supposons, obéit tout naturellement aux idées du Pouvoir, aux influences religieuses du milieu. Chaque canton la comprend à sa façon, l’applique comme il lui sied. On éliminera d’un film, tour à tour, le bleu, le rouge ou le noir suivant ses préférences, ou l’on repoussera simplement la bande en entier avec tout son lot d’images. Nous manquons volontiers de génie, en Suisse, et cette constatation s’applique à tous les arts. L’on a bien, un peu partout, une dose honnête d’intelligence, beaucoup de sens pratique, mais la pensée n’ose dépasser une altitude moyenne au-delà de laquelle on ne rencontre plus d’approbation. Les idées sont de bonne qualité, les principes solides, et les préjugés de même. L’on se défie encore un peu de tout ce qui est étranger, par ci par là, et le cinéma apparaît comme une invention tellement libre qu’on ne saurait trop en surveiller l’influence. Il ne faut rien révolutionner chez nous, l’évolution des esprits doit se poursuivre lentement, analogue en cela à la marche de nos glaciers.
CLOSE UP

Il serait injuste cependant de ne pas faire quelques distinctions entre les cantons et de les placer tous sur un même niveau, à cet égard. Si le Valais, Fribourg, et quelques autres, ont encore une censure quasi moyennâgeuse, Zurich, Bâle, Berne, Vaud, Genève, en particulier, tiennent beaucoup mieux compte du progrès.

A Genève, cependant, où les passions politiques sont assez violentes et les manifestations faciles, la censure éprouve une aversion toute particulière pour les films soviétiques. Ils contiendraient, d’après elle, les germes les plus dangereux pour la société. Alors que La Mère de Pudowkin, Potemkin et d’autres films russes sont venus animer les écrans de plusieurs villes suisses, Genève n’en a point voulu entendre parler, même en séance privée. Ce sont là productions tendancieuses susceptibles de “brasser le sang” des pauvres spectateurs. Hélas! Ne venons-nous pas d’apprendre que Guillaume Tell a réveillé l’ardeur des autonomistes alsaciens. Qui aurait donc soupçonné de cette vilénie notre brave révolutionnaire? La censure théâtrale fera bien de veiller désormais à cette évocation glorieuse de notre histoire, il y va de l’ordre public.

Rendons à César, toutefois, ce qui lui appartient. La censure avait autorisé en son temps la présentation de Potemkin, qui fut annoncé par un cinéma de notre ville. Mais Genève compte un ardent adversaire du régime bolchéviste, membre influent d’une ligue dirigée contre les soviets, et le directeur du cinéma en question reçut l’aimable avertissement que, s’il donnait suite à son intention de projeter Potemkin son établissement subirait de sérieux dégâts. Soucieux de ses intérêts, et pour ne pas laisser saccager son mobilier,
notre directeur préféra renvoyer Potemkin! Là, certains éléments de la population genevoise, plus royalistes que le roi, montrèrent le chemin à la censure, qui, dès lors, s’y engagea résolument, ce pourquoi on ne saurait trop lui en vouloir s’il n’était question que de politique.

Close Up accordant une attention particulière aux efforts remarquables du cinéma russe d’après-guerre, paraît avoir, aux yeux d’un critique genevois “le culte du fruit défendu”. Il y a donc un fruit défendu en principe, qui est le film russe, et d’autres fruits auxquels chacun peut goûter, qui sont tous les autres films? Bizarre! Comme Voltaire l’avait déjà remarqué: “On ne se déchaîne contre le médiocre et le plat en aucun genre”. Et s’il était vrai que Close Up n’ait d’intérêt que pour les films défendus, nous aurions presque déjà la certitude de ne point perdre notre temps.

Terminons par une suggestion. Comme nous savons fort bien que nous ne pouvons supprimer encore la censure du moment que les citoyens admettent sa tutelle, peut-être pourrions-nous espérer qu’elle veuille bien porter son examen également sur la “qualité” des productions cinématographiques et, de temps à autre, songer à écarter de la circulation les innombrables niaiseries dont elle est encombrée. Si l’on admet que le public doive être protégé contre un empoisonnement éventuel, l’on peut trouver bon également qu’il ne soit pas “chloroformé” outre mesure.

Freddy Chevalley.
LANDSEER’S LIONS AND KATE GREENAWAY

The primary reason for the abolition of the censorship is that there is no justification for its existence.

It has served the vested interests as a cloak under which they could conceal their suppression of anything which endangered the safety and continuance of their domination.

It suppresses Potemkin and Mother, but encourages Tempest and The Red Flame. It prohibits history, but condones libellous parody. It bans scientific documentation like Cosmos and Mechanics of the Brain, and denies that it wishes to stultify the spread of knowledge. It emasculates the work of Pabst on the grounds of immorality, and passes pornography from Hollywood and Berlin. It tears gaps from Jeanne Ney and Crise, and gives a blessing to What Women Did For Me, Crazy Mazie, and professes to stand for culture.

It works on behalf of an ecclesiastical morality in a country where the vast majority of the population never go to church. It places its executive functions in the hands of people who are expressive of an effete and discredited era, and who present irrefutable evidence that their political, social and aesthetic philosophies are completely out of tune with both the majority of the people and the Twentieth Century.
CLOSE UP

It is illogical, prejudiced and hypocritical, and even though it worked from a mandate would not inspire confidence. Landseer’s Lions and Kate Greenaway controlling the art of an era of Picasso and Gertrude Stein. Samuel Smiles and Machiavelli governing Nietzsche and Lenin. Luckily, its life is limited.

HENRY DOBB.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

FILM CURIOSITIES—No. 2.

En Rade.
Produced by Alberto Cavalcant.
Photographed by Jimmy Rodgers.

What right have I to include this film in a series devoted to curiosities? Lines must be written first to explain. This film, with its nostalgia of a great port, with its longing for far-off lands, is in no way a highbrow picture; it is not a record of things happening to actors, but of thoughts occurring to people, but such simple people that any audience would understand. It could easily be exhibited in England, but Wardour Street has chosen to turn this film into a curiosity, and those who wish to see it must wait for a revival at some obscure Paris cinema, or persuade the film’s sponsors to run it through in a private projection room.
The scenario tells of a little servant (Catherine Hessling) who works in a cheap sailors' tavern. A preposterously muscular arm thrust through the service opening from the kitchen symbolises the tyranny of the cook. Catherine Hessling’s blue eyes hardly register and they add an elfin touch to her face. Her slouchy walk, that is generally so artificial, is just the kind of walk that such a servant might assume after seeing Greta Garbo on the pictures. Her fluttering mannerisms might easily be the result of nervousness and the Garbo complex.

A young sailor (George's Charlia) falls in love with this grotesque little creature. Unknown to his mother (Nathalie Lissenko) the boy collects money and clothes, and after several embarrassed meetings with the girl he proposes to her that they should go together somewhere far away, some foreign land. She is delighted beyond words, her buoyant walk is like that of Charlie Chaplin. She tosses a cake of soap from hand to hand as she cleans the floors.

Everything is arranged, but meanwhile the mother discovers the boy's hidden bag. The day before their ship sails the boy calls on the girl. He makes love to her. She acquiesces. It becomes more passionate. She is frightened. The lust in his eyes reminds her of certain glances of customers; Chinese, half-castes, Ethiopians, dock-side bullies. She pushes him from her. She cries. She never wants to see him again.

The boy returns to the mother, who tries not to show her pleased surprise; everything must be as before. Supper is ready, but the boy is lying on his bed crying out his heart...
CLOSE UP

Camera angles are chosen with skill, often the shots are very nearly freakish as those taken under the prow of a foreground vessel; yet the feeling of ships is so predominant throughout the picture that one cannot really object to this novel frame. The romance of the boy and girl is the best thing of its kind on the screen; the delicacy and charm is astounding.

Oswell Blakeston.

MIDNIGHT MATINEE.

We went to the midnight showing of Thou Shalt Not (Therèse Raquin) at the Shaftesbury Avenue Pavilion, because it was suggested to us that we should go. We are doubtful if the time of showing adds to the interest of the film; it is rather the coffee-stall that becomes exceptionally attractive when we turned out of a warm cinema at two o'clock in the morning.

Jacques Feyder's production is, however, a film that can be seen at any hour: it is such a triumphant demonstration that thought is far more cinematic than Fairbank acrobatic. Gina Manès, who is inspired, if ever that word may be permitted, looks at her wretched husband dislodging a troublesome piece of food from between his teeth with his finger nail. That, too, is thought rather than action, it is the sort of thing that she would visualize him doing even if his hands were innocently occupied.
CLOSE UP

The shadows draw in, the pool ripples outward where the body falls (but only in retrospection), and the woman and her lover learn hatred.

The man bears a scar in his neck, where the husband scratched, catlike and frantic. On his knees before the woman, and hysterically pulling off his collar, he calls out that he is branded with the mark of Cain. The woman fiercely bites.

When we are shown such truth the cinema is worth visiting: day or night.

O. B.

NOTE ON THE MAGIC CLOCK.

The purchaser has been generally warned, by a slip gummed to the cover, that Close Up contains NO GOSSIP, but I feel constrained to repeat a little anecdote which is both enlightening and true.

Scene: Rialto during an afternoon projection of The Magic Clock. Two elderly ladies arrive encumbered with parcels. A great deal of groping under seats.

First old lady: "Whatever is this?"
Second old lady: "Oh, you know, that sort of thing."
First old lady: "What sort of thing, dear?"
Second old lady (furiously occupied with slipping parcels): "You know that sort of thing."
First old lady (almost in tears): "But I don't, dear. What sort of thing?"
CLOSE UP

Second old lady: "That fairy tale sort of thing."

Long Pause.

First old lady (plaintively): "Looks like sort of waxworks to me!"

How tired I am of saying it, but The Magic Clock is not true cinema; there is no reason, however, why it should not belong to one of the new dynamic arts, as opposed to the old plastic arts, of which the cinema is the greatest.

There are graceful moments; an elf-like creature who lives under the water, and has flat feet and wicked eyes; a tailed goblin who paints the butterflies; toadstools which politely remove their super-bowler hats when the princess passes; and lovely flowers that beckon and bow. Comedy, too, is to be found in the first half; the brave knights, the languishing princess, the fearsome dragon, the strangely robed astrologers, all are very cunning properties.

Mr. Starewitch is to be congratulated, and perhaps he has indicated the development of dynamic sculpture as the cartoons have indicated the way of dynamic drawing.

O. B.

OPEN LETTER FROM U.S.S.R.

In the periodical Film-Kurier of the 10th November of the past year, in the periodical Montag-Morgen of the 12th November of the past year, and in one of the last numbers of Film-Technik, in the appreciation of the picture A Shanghai
CLOSE UP

Document, the name of a certain Mr. Lienhard is mentioned in such a way as to convey the impression that Mr. Lienhard constructed the said picture.

In this connection, I have to bring to your notice that I, Yakov Moiseivitch Bliokh, author and regisseur of the picture A Shanghai Document, protest against this method of appropriating the results of my labour, Mr. Lienhard’s connection with which is entirely unknown to me.

I beg that this letter may be reproduced in all newspapers and periodicals.

Y. M. Bliokh.

WHAT THE AMATEURS ARE DOING.

The Man Who Came.

Written and produced by the “Cinimpressionists,” a group of the Amateur Cinematographers’ Association of London in 1928.

This Film, representing a fragment of life, was produced on Pathe 9.5 film at a total cost of under £2. (A record for low cost?) The set which represents the interior of a sitting room is believed to be one of the first serious amateur attempts at building an interior set in an exterior location.

With a defined set of unconventional theories concerning cinematic art, and perhaps influenced somewhat by pages 65, 85 and 88 of Mr. Eric Elliott’s book, the Anatomy of Motion Picture Art, the Cinimpressionists commenced the
CLOSE UP

film, The Man Who Came, with a detailed scenario written by their producer.

The film lasts approximately fifteen minutes, and represents continuous time without a break or lapse, and is a modern representation of the eternal "Eternal Triangle" theme.

H. D., in her admirable article "Restraint" in the August, 1927, Close Up, stressed the point that simplicity in film art would lead to more than would exaggerated and unreal grandeur; consequently The Man Who Came contains only three characters and one scene, that of a simple sitting room, which seem quite in relation with the comparative shortness of the action, and the smallness of the actual film stock. The set was built to form two walls of this room, and the action takes place within one corner.

The story is simple. A man, John Greyam, and a woman, Vera Riler, are making love in the woman's sitting room—they hear footsteps down a passage and separate; a second man, Keith Riler, enters the room (his back only is seen) and his hand locks the door and pockets the key; they are entrapped. (This was the cinematic method of producing an air of solidity in a two walled set).

Keith approaches (his back still only is seen), stumbles slightly and gropes—he must be blind! Suspiciously his hands feel on the table for definite signs of another man, but John is able to remove his hat, and as John is about to remove his stick as well, Keith's hands come over his and ALMOST TOUCH THEM, causing them hastily to withdraw, and to leave the stick as condemning evidence.
CLOSE UP

The piece de resistance next occurs, when the blind man gropingly edges John to the corner, where John’s limitations of space are made doubly ghastly by means of a stationary wall behind and a moving hand immediately in front.

Here was exploited another theory of pictorialism, namely, that an important event lasting in reality ten seconds, can be shown on the screen for the same length of time as an irrelevant event lasting perhaps five minutes, the exaggerated tempo in the first instance being governed not by slow tempo in actual acting, but rather by an immense variation and repetition of short shots in quick tempo, which continue the short action by gradual means.

Although in this film, this very short action contains about eight cuts, a smooth and continuous action was nevertheless maintained by the careful welding of each shot into the next.

The film continues. The blind man lunges out—a sudden fight commences—Keith looks up—the room, from being blurred, becomes bright, the sudden shock has regained him his sight.

This film contained no subtitles for, since it represented a continuous period of time, they would have been redundant; however the school that considers that all subtitles must be translated pictorially does not appear entirely logical, for as Mr. Elliott rightly says, "The subtitle is visual—and is neither a purely prose form, nor a purely literary form."

Next, the man, now with regained sight, rushes on to the lover and pushes him down, gripping his throat so as to cause his eyes to close, and signify death.
Without a pause, and still in a frenzy, he rushes to his wife, whom he has never cast his eyes upon before, and bangs her to the ground across the dead man.

Mr. Macpherson, and Close Up readers, I can hear and can almost see you laughing at this melodramatic action as set on paper, but this was never meant for PAPER—it was meant and devised for a FILM and was treated accordingly.

The man roars with hysterical laughter as he sees the figures lying prone.

The shot of the figures was taken almost vertically from the top of a short ladder, and although certain onlookers considered that a freak shot was being attempted, others foresaw that the shot, if cut in at the precise moment that the man looks round at the bodies, would represent on the screen a slightly exaggerated picture of what the man was LOOKING AT; and, as a matter of fact, when this shot was actually projected, some said that it even portrayed what the man was THINKING of.

Gradual remorse, an unfruitful attempt to awaken his wife and his departure from the set in a Janningesque manner conclude the film.

A suggestion was afterwards made that the man, realising what he had done, should have simulated blindness again for the rest of his life, but an ending like that, it is felt, would have spoilt entirely the simplicity and balance of the little film, which though perhaps a fragment, does commence with an entry and conclude with an exit!

C. E. STENHOUSE.
On a Thursday night I was told that the only copy in Europe of a certain film was being shown at a cinema in the Tottenham Court Road. This proved to be Forbidden Paradise, recently revived by Mr. Ogilvie. But in the same programme, for the same three days, was Jeanne Ney. The prices at this house for this evening’s entertainment varied from fivepence to one and ten, tax included. The place was full, the screen small and loose. Jeanne Ney came on last, so that a good many of the audience, who were servants, etc., had to leave at half-past ten, before it was over. Our Dancing Daughters draws ten thousand people a day to the Empire.

R. H.

The Love of Zero.

Robert Florey’s film was shown for probably the first time in Europe when the Film Society included it in their programme on January 13th. Its interest is entirely to the eye, and would have been more sustained had there been no vestige of story to bother about. This story was not worth very much, a quaint, formalised concoction that got in the way of the images. Many of the images were very charming and amusing; some were definitely helpful. I liked what was behind the idea of a man’s face split into two different-sized parts, and the film itself was more effective, by which I mean less deliberately so, than the stills had led one to expect. The best thing was probably the cutting, for this showed that Mr. Florey had an idea of cinema, whereas mixes and super-
impositions, however ingenious, do not necessarily belong to the film at all. But it is a pity the film was not genuinely abstract. Telling a trite story by peculiar and experimental means is akin to bad architecture, when the outside gives no indication of the interiors. *The Love of Zero* cannot be regarded as very important, but it is a graceful film with a variety of ingenious effects one would like to see better used, and is encouraged to think one may.

R. H.

From the Manager of The Avenue Pavilion, London's Art Cinema.

If you should care to add my name to the list of people who have a censorship grievance, you may do so.

Naturally, the rules of censorship are a greater stumbling-block to me than the average cinema theatre, because, unfortunately, the stringent rules of British censorship restrict films of Continental origin which are undoubtedly of higher intellectual merit, and as I am the only theatre at present specialising in this class of film fare, I naturally get the biggest kicks.

You may also add that I, for one, am hopeful of the revising of censorship rules to a less unbiased plane, and I would like to see Russian, and films of other foreign origin, given impartial consideration, and I think the time has arrived when London public, at least, should be treated as educated, discerning people, and not like children.

Leslie Ogilvie.
Ostende, le 13 janvier, 1929.

Monsieur le Directeur,

En réponse à votre lettre du 22 décembre, nous nous associons bien volontiers à vos protestations contre les abus de la censure.

Il est inconcevable que des messieurs, sous prétexte de censure se permettent de tronquer des œuvres d’art telles que Moana ou Metropolis qui constituent un patrimoine mondial, et le public, s’il connaissait les coupures qui se pratiquent sous couleur de morale ou pour des raisons politiques, protesterait certainement.

Voici comment se pratique la censure en Belgique. Nous avons pensé que si vous ne les connaissiez déjà, ces renseignements pourront vous intéresser. Ils nous ont été communiqués par le critique cinégraphique Carl Vincent qui publiera incessament dans le Times des détails sur le même sujet.

Il n’y a pas de censure en Belgique.

Ceci est le principe, mais : (A) il existe une “ Commission de contrôle ” qui visionne les films que l’on veut montrer aux enfants de moins de 16 ans. Elle donne son visa ou le refuse, ou encore, demande pour le donner que certaines coupures soient pratiquées dans le film par le loueur.

Elle censure uniquement au point de vue moral.

La commission de contrôle est un organisme dépendant du Ministère de la Justice. Elle est présidée par un magistrat et comporte plusieurs chambres dont des chambres d’appel.
Dans chacune des chambres, il y a un représentant de l'industrie cinématographique.

(B) Les Bourgmestres, de par leur droit de police peuvent interdire la projection d'un film lorsqu'ils estiment que ce film pourrait entraîner des troubles graves et que déjà, il les a provoqués. Le bourgmestre étant homme politique...

Le gouvernement, lui, est entièrement désarmé. C'est ainsi que l'on a pu projeter *Dawn* malgré les protestations de la légation d'Allemagne auprès du Ministre des Affaires étrangères.

À Ostende, le bourgmestre, homme intelligent, nous a autorisé à présenter, en séance strictement privée, le film soviétique: *Le Cuirasse Potemkine* de S. M. Eisenstein, dans son intégrité. Le film a surtout été apprécié par notre public comme expression d'art nouvelle.

En ce qui concerne les coupures dans les films, elles sont très courantes dans les maisons de location et dans les cinémas. Les exploitants ignorent le respect dû aux œuvres d'art.

Vous voulez bien nous demander quelques renseignements sur notre club et notre activité. Notre but : créer un milieu sympathique au cinéma intelligent, habituer le public à apprécier les bons spectacles pour arriver à permettre aux directeurs de cinémas à présenter ces films sans perdre de l'argent; provoquer en Belgique la naissance d'une critique à la hauteur de sa tâche; amener un mouvement de réaction contre les superproductions.

Notre club donne chaque semaine une seule représentation privée; fondé en février 1928; il compte 650 membres. Nos ressources étant réduites, les maisons de location belges nous
CLOSE UP

John Galsworthy’s *Escape* is being translated into a talking picture by Paramount, under the supervision of Basil King, the English director, who has come to Hollywood for the especial purpose.

* * *

Talking and singing pictures in natural colors is a novelty now under weigh at M-G-M studios. The first of the series will be a musical revue by Gus Edwards, popular as a song writer and a vaudeville impresario. C. H.

HOLLYWOOD NOTES.

Aimee Semple MacPherson, the spectacular Los Angeles evangelist, is shortly to make her cinema debut. Paramount-Lasky are sponsoring the event. Incidentally, according to report, they are paying the Rev. MacPherson fifty thousand dollars for her appearance before the camera and microphone. The story for the phonofilm is built about the evangelist and her work; and as the difference between theatricalism and her particular brand of evangelism is chiefly one of terminology,
there is every reason to expect that she will worthily acquit herself as a screen actress and contribute to the world a film of genuine interest.

* * *

_The Woman Who Needed Killing_, a photophone picture, is to be Olga Baclanova’s first starring vehicle under the Paramount banner. Apparently her screen voice and accent, after a tryout in _The Wolf of Wall Street_, have fully satisfied her employers. She is to be congratulated on her good fortune. The phonofilm, with its exacting demands, has not dealt so graciously with other members of the Hollywood foreign colony. Rejected and dejected, they are either returning to their native shores or tarrying on the sidelines in the prayerful hope that the talkies may prove to be but a passing fad.

* * *

The discovery of the American Negro as an actor is one of Hollywood’s latest achievements, and pictures of darky life promise to be the next vogue in films. Fox, Universal, M-G-M, and Christie Brothers all have a number of such pictures under way or scheduled for early production. And in this connection Hollywood has made the no less interesting discovery that the real Negro when photographed does not measure up to the shade of blackness which Al Jolson and other Negro impersonators have established as standard for the African race. Accordingly, for the sake of realism, it is necessary in many instances to treat the faces of the Negro players with lampblack. Otherwise, failing to accord with the Al Jolson counterfeit, these darky players might not be
accepted by the public for what they are. At all events, Hollywood is determined there shall be no mistake about it.

* * *

Cecil de Mille, ever alive to the wisdom of keeping in touch with his public, is offering a thousand dollars for the best idea for a talking picture. On several previous occasions he has offered a like prize for picture ideas. *The Ten Commandments* was the result of one of these prize contests. Letters submitting suggestions in the present contest are limited under the rules to two hundred words. The contest, which closes on March 15th, is being conducted under the auspices of the Screen Book Magazin, 225, Varick Street, New York, which on its own account is offering supplemental prizes aggregating an additional thousand dollars.

* * *

"Why am I here?" replied William J. Locke to a Hollywood interviewer; "well, I have been asked to write a story for Miss Norma Talmadge, for whose magic art I have the profoundest admiration. Whether I shall be able to write one worthy of her is another matter. But I am fired with one insensate ambition. Listen, I pray you: In her last four pictures Miss Talmadge has been, in the language of our grandmothers, 'no better than she ought to be.' What I madly dream of doing is to reform the character of this delightful and fascinating lady. Will she be grateful; *Quien sabe?*"

* * *

The Universal Company, after marking time for several months, has launched a five-million-dollar talking-picture
program. Carl Laemmle, the veteran head of this long-established organization, has joined the other Hollywood producers in accepting the inevitability of the phonofilm; and the big studio at Universal City, to the north of Hollywood, is accordingly now undergoing the many necessary changes in equipment and personnel. Among the first of the talkies to be produced will be a spectacular historical picture, *Erik the Great*. It will be made in three language versions—English, French, and German.

Filmarte, Hollywood's latest little theatre devoted to the specialized showing of art films, has passed into history. This is the fourth failure of such a venture within as many years. It is not that Hollywood lacks appreciation; but art films connote Europe and the alien, and Hollywood is contentedly self-satisfied. Moreover, differing uniquely from other centres, it is extremely busy with the manufacturing and adoring of its own films.

* * *

Maurice Chevalier, recently imported from Paris by Jesse Lasky, will make his first American screen appearance in *Innocents of Paris*, an all-talking film directed by Richard Wallace.

* * *

The *Bridge of San Luis Rey*, now in production at the M-G-M studio, has an all-foreign cast. Lily Damita, formerly of the Casinode Paris, has the leading rôle of Camila. Uncle Pio is played by the giant Irishman, Ernest Torrence. The Mexican señorita, Raquel Torres, who made her film debut in *White Shadows in the South Seas*, is cast
CLOSE UP

as Pepita. The twin brothers of this Spanish American story of the 18th century are played by Don Alvarado and Duncan Rinaldo. The director of the picture is Charles Brabin, an Englishman.

* * *

Dorothy Arzner is directing Clara Bow in her first talking picture, The Wild Party. This, also, is Miss Arzner’s initial phonofilm venture.

* * *

As if talking pictures were not in themselves a sufficient novelty for the time being, the Fox Company are preparing to produce stereoscopic phonofilms. After many years of trial and the spending of millions in experimental devices, it is now authoritatively declared that the technicians of the Fox studio have perfected a screen stereoptican invention which is both practical and economical. A sample film of Niagara Falls, projected by this process, produces the illusion of the great cataract pouring from the screen. Accompanied by natural sound, the realistic effect is truly awe-inspiring.

A FILM IN LAPLAND.

British Screen Productions sent to Lapland Ben R. Hart and St. J. Clowes. Here, 200 miles within the Arctic Zone, amidst the snow and ice, they made a five-reel drama with the Laps as actors.

The average temperature they worked in was 20 to 30 below zero, so cold that if one spat on the ground it froze
immediately. The coldness affected the film and the camera to a great extent—the film being extremely brittle and breaking on the slightest excuse. Loading the camera was another difficulty, and "As they soon learn by experience", if one touched the metal negative box it took the skin off the hand in the same way as a burn, and Mr. Clowes' eye had a bad habit of sticking to the eye-piece of the camera when he "focussed-up".

Collecting the artistes was extremely difficult, as their religion forbids them to be filmed. They follow out the second commandment literally—"Thou shalt not raise up graven images". Only by conjuring tricks on the part of Mr. Hart and the use of Aspirin and pills by Mr. Clowes were they prevailed upon to risk eternal perdition for the sake of a few crowns.

For three months Messrs. Hart and Clowes lived in a mud hut as Laps; reindeer meat being their only food.

Loading film in such conditions could by no means be called ideal, especially as Mr. Clowes was usually within 3 feet of the open fire which is always burning in the centre of the hut. Fortunately, no L.C.C. inspectors were about at the time, or they might have thrown a blue fit.

Collecting their cast after they had won their confidence was another difficulty, and the artistes were collected from a radius of some hundreds of miles. It was an embarrassing moment when Johan Sari, the leading man, was introduced to Elizabeth Svani as her husband. In vain he pointed out that he already had one wife and he was breaking his religion by consenting to being filmed—it was unreasonable to expect him to break his religion still more by taking two wives.
CLOSE UP

Having smoothed that difficulty over, further embarrassment was caused when Anders and Enok were presented to Elizabeth Svani as her two bouncing boys.

Having got over these difficulties and more or less settled the family in their film hut, the serious business started—filming them. Directing them well-nigh drove Mr. Hart to despair. He had to do every action needed in the picture himself, and if by chance he should scratch his head or wipe an icicle from his nose, they would immediately copy him in that direction as well. Still, difficulties can be overcome, and such minor matters as these were, but whilst one can conquer the human element, nature stepped in and nearly made these young men give up in despair. The days were getting shorter and they heard with dismay that within another fortnight the land would be in total darkness for six months. They had now only three hours of light to work in. Could they finish in time? Their artistes were getting restless at being so long away from home, and their little boys skied off to their mother some 12 to 15 miles away. They were brought back. The next day—a snowstorm. The day after that—wind, which made it almost impossible to stand up. They were feeling hopeless. The difficulties seemed insurmountable, but they persuaded, bullied and cajoled their artistes and with great good luck the following days were comparatively fine and they turned their last foot of film on the last day it was practical to shoot. They shot the last sequence with one hour of daylight remaining to them.

(See photograph in this issue.)
Close Up is wondering if there will be a sort of Fritz Lang repetition of the Arcos raid in Territet, and whether our chaste lakeside streets will be filled with poison gas and bursting bombs. It seems, from the Daily Express of January 15th, that there is a "pro-Russia propagandist organization operating from Territet, in Switzerland, to remove the ban imposed by the Government and the British Board of Film Censors on about forty Russian propagandist films now in cold storage in this country".

It seems that this egregious band are sending round circulars demanding the release of these inflammatory films, together with a petition form that people and their friends are asked to sign. Not only, says the Express, do the foreign sponsors of this movement hope to obtain release of these films by means of this petition, but also "a large rebate on the Customs duties".

"It is further stated," the correspondent writes, "that, in the event of a change in the Government following the next General Election, the ban on Russian films may, in any case, be removed.

"Russian films, with insignificant exceptions, are violently propagandist. Many of them could not possibly be shown on moral grounds, and their artistic merit is a matter of opinion.

"One of the latest and most discussed Russian films is Storm Over Asia, now on view in Berlin and other Continental centres. (A slight correction, please. Berlin only as yet, Mr. Editor.) The promoters of the petition above mentioned describe it as 'superhuman'. 'Nothing greater,’ they say, 'has yet been achieved.'
CLOSE UP

"Competent Berlin critics, on the other hand, describe it as far-fetched, absurd and irritating, and without value as a contribution to cinema technique." (Where have we heard those words before?)

We, who live in Territet, are wondering who the be-whiskered traitors can be? So far we have not encountered them, but it is not altogether pleasing to realise that we will not be able to trudge our dark half-mile to the movies without frequent nervous glances round to see who is following us.

Certainly there must be something very wrong with these films if they have to lay them in cold storage. But the thing that surprises us is the optimism of the group. One can see that they must be trying to double-cross Close Up, and to make confusion by pretending that their petition is on the same basis as our own, so that the person who wants to see artistic films may carelessly sign the wrong form, and let himself in for demanding, among other indiscretions, films that could not possibly be shown on moral grounds!

We resent this organization very much. Ours is a quiet and a peaceful town. Why couldn't they go to Locarno or Geneva? All we ask is that readers will make sure they sign the authoritative form bearing the POOL name and address.

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Werkbund—Exhibition. Film and Foto. Stuttgart. 1929.

This exhibition, which is to take place in the spring of 1929, comprises two departments, one of photography, and one which will be devoted to giving special performances of films from different countries. It is said that it will be the
first exhibition of its kind of a completely international character. It will devote particular attention to abstract and experimental films, film-music, etc. All enquiries may be addressed to the office, Tagblatt-Turmhaus, 12, St. Stuttgart, Germany.

We understand that this exhibition will be of particular interest to all film students, and we suggest that those Close Up readers who are able to go abroad for a few days in the spring should make an effort to fit in their holiday with the date of the exhibition, which we will announce, if possible, in the next issue.

According to the Berlin Film Kurier, Pudovkin was invited to speak before the Film Liga of Amsterdam, upon modern developments in cinematography. The Film Liga wished to give free admittance to this lecture to all interested in the cinema. This was forbidden by the Dutch Government, who held it was only legal for members of the Film Liga to attend. Strong protests against this discourtesy were made, however, in the Dutch Parliament.

We wish to thank all those who have signed and sent in the forms of protest against the present censorship conditions. We are keeping the list open until March 1st, and hope that any readers who have not yet filled up the form will do so without delay. For we have to prove to the authorities that
it is not a few, but a great many, who desire the present system to be altered. Separate forms for signatures may be had upon application to the London office. We may add that the response to date has exceeded our expectations, proving conclusively that there is a large body of English people vitally interested in the cinema and eager to keep in touch with all foreign developments. If only these people could make their opinion felt it would not be long before England also produced films of value.

With much éblouissement and glory-glory-be, the Zurich Press announced the release of *Ten Days That Shook the World*. The censors have been sitting on this film for months, and at one time it almost seemed it would be banned. Hence the jubilation. Appended, however, without comment, in the various announcements, stood the phrase: *Seven hundred metres have been cut from the film*. Seven hundred metres is more than two reels, and more than thirty-five minutes’ worth of film. The critics will next complain that the continuity is a bit ragged, and will forget why. Thus is an honest public diddled.

** * * *

Recently, too, the editor of *Photoplay*, which is the kind of *Sunday Express* of the American Kino monthlies, sat up on his hind legs and levitated his gorge against the same film. It ought, said he, to be retitled *Ten Reels that Ruined the Eyesight*. And, says he, while it seems too bad to
dampen the enthusiasm of those who rate the Russian film directors higher than our local talent, may we remind the public of a few facts? He then goes on to say, among much more in the same threadbare vein, that Russian pictures are pure propaganda, that the Soviet Government is no more likely to give you an unbiased picture of the Revolution than is the Anti-Saloon League likely to give you the straight facts on Prohibition, that as proof thereof, Trotsky is eliminated from the film because he is out of favour with the present leaders, that you are seeing Russian history as the Russians want you to see it, not as it happened, that you are paying your fee for a commercial product, not for advertising.

In the same editorial he states that the Motion Picture Academy of Arts and Sciences is all hot and bothered about what it calls the "scurrilous, degrading and facetious articles published about personalities in fan magazines". Why did the Academy limit its attack to personalities?

* * *

* * *

Om Mani Padme Hum.

Ufa will shortly release their big educational and travelogue, produced by the famous Tibetan explorer, Dr. Wilhelm Filchner, during his last trip to the mysterious country of Tibet.

It was during this trip, as may be remembered, that Dr. Filchner disappeared last year, and was missing for some time. There were rumours that he had been murdered by natives, but fortunately this was not so, and the doctor returned to Germany unharmed, though only after terrible
CLOSE UP

sufferings and deprivations. In view of his experiences, the film should be of very great interest.

* * *

Lotte Reiniger's new films, based on the adventures of Doctor Doolittle, have been shown in Berlin with very great success. The decorative effect and the mood of these three films is a delightful harmony, full of constant surprises, not the least of which is the contrast in feeling and execution to *Prince Achmed*, her former experiment, with which most people are now familiar.

We would single out for their whimsical charm the various scenes of the curing of the sick apes, culminating in the quite lovely bridge of apes across the chasm; the domestic life in the lion cave and the curing of the sick lion cub.

If we miss the astral mysticism of the Unknown Lands in *Achmed*, we are recompensed by the richer, more kindly shapes of the Doolittle ménage. The fantasy has mirth and gaiety. It is less frail, less intricately spun than the fantasy of *Achmed*. There is nothing dour or frightening. Not even the small prison into which Dr. Doolittle and his family are cast.

The Doolittle films will please everybody. Their charm is quite effervescent.

We understand that Lotte Reiniger is now at work on a further series of adventures.

* * *

*Freie Fahrt* (*Free Trip*), a film directed by E. Metzner, stills from which appeared last month, in addition to the reproduction in this issue, is frankly a propagandistic film
made by and for the Social Democrat Party of Germany, for their own use and not for general showing. This is in many ways a pity, for the first part of the film is worthy to rank beside the really great pioneer work that Russia, and, here and there, Germany are bringing to the screen. Mr. Metzner had strong material for his first part, and wisely adopted the Russian method of developing it. The balance and sequence of the early scenes, up to the end of the retrospect of twenty years ago, were excellent. So excellent, that on this very account the sparsity of the material in the second part was brought out in far too great a contrast. It is, of course, hindered at every point, for, while it must reject the feudalistic system of the Right, it must at the same time be clear of any possible suggestion of Communism. Indeed, it is extraordinary how any director given such utterly unfilmable material could have made of it what he did. That this, with the exception of one short film on the Social Democrat Press, is the first film Metzner has made, does show finally that real vision and visual sense have nothing to do with experience.

The opening scenes deal with the story of a woman who has to look after her house, wash her child, get her husband’s breakfast, and then go on to her own heavy work in a bookbinder’s establishment, day after day, when already in the last stages of pregnancy. This story, set twenty years ago, when there were no facilities extended to workers of any Party, is made to set the contrast to the improvements that have since been effected. The result of the over-work and strain are that the woman dies in child-birth.

All this section, as stated above, was remarkable in its idea, and the compelling urge to realise that if you cannot mend
CLOSE UP

matters in a day, at least big strides have been made, and also for the terse, unredundant use of camera and scene. Realism, like the realism of the Russian films, is built up by small symbols; the lighting of a lamp, the dropping back on a bed, a fly caught in a drop of glue, a woman at a sewing machine, a girl gasping for air in the window of the book-binding room. Externals are built up into a cumulative current, that brings the crest of the story to the birth, and the subsidiary action to the boiling of the glue, and the slow bursting of its giant bubbles, made to match, and emphasise the idea of physical suffering. It is interweaving of very subtle currents and cross currents, made smooth and convincing both by psychology and by exact tempo. The acting of an eighteen year old girl as the wife, a girl without previous experience, is by no means the least remarkable part of this beginning. Her name has escaped us, but there should be no doubt that a big future awaits her. The resignation and power she succeeded in conveying had an evenness that an Asta Nielsen could not have bettered. Hers was acting, not mime. There is a great difference, and acting is as rare as mime is frequent.

The rest of the film was an heroic endeavour to do something that was not a printed manifesto. Laurels for this should go to the director, who did contrive moments of value, and who, we understand, had to fight for even these; but with nothing but sub-titles there was little one could do.

We await with eagerness the day when Mr. Metzner has a really cinematic subject to film. Germany, say rather the world, needs more like him. His is a true sense of modern cinema.

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It is rumoured, as we go to Press, that Jannings’ contract with Paramount will not be renewed, due to the fact that his voice is unsuitable for talking films on account of a pronounced German accent. It is stated also that Louise Brooks has left Paramount, but, naturally, not for the same reason.

ENGLISH RELEASES

A great number of big films are due for general release in February and March. Many of these are old and have already been written about in Close Up. There are also some newer ones, and a good many which are a “contribution to the screen” in that, without being first-rate, they do at least stimulate one, if to nothing more than criticism. But this is better than self-protective rejection. The only house that had Jeanne Ney in the first week of its general release was a small cinema off the Shaftesbury Avenue, which had it for three days.

Thou Shalt Not. This is Feyder’s Thérèse Raquin. It was on at the Avenue during January, and should be watched.


The Cameraman. Keaton’s newest revolt against standardisation was shown for an exclusive pre-release at the Empire the same week as the other was generally shown. M-G-M.
CLOSE UP

_The Patriot._ Paramount. Lubitsch, with Jannings, Lewis Stone and Madame Vidor. Watch Lubitsch's uses of space and his direction of the big man. Tragedy . . . and seen in London!

_The Man Who Laughs._ European. Paul Leni, with the old Germanic power of atmosphere. Veidt, and Mary Philbin's hands.

_Berlin._ Wardour. Ruttmann's film will be at the Avenue in February, to be followed by a revival of

_The Last Laugh,_ which Oswell Blakeston, in his book, calls an example of the perfect scenario.

_The King of Kings._ P.D.C. Cecil B. de Mille's Life of Christ, with H. B. Warner and others.

_The Crowd._ M-G-M. King Vidor's film is released in March, and should be seen, if only for its camera work.

_The Student Prince._ M-G-M. The same applies to this. Also because it is a Lubitsch, with Navarro and Norma Shearer.

_Sand._ New Era. A shot in the dark, but it has Sibiriskaia, of Menilmontant.


_The Divine Woman._ M-G-M. If you must see Garbo, see her under Seastrom.

_Stella Polaris._ Fox. Fine film of northern hunting.
CLOSE UP

At the Edge of the World. Gaumont. Grune’s film is disappointing, but there is Brigitte Helm.

Uncle Tom’s Cabin. European. This is a popular picture, but James B. Lowe has a fine negro head, and this revolutionary film is allowed because its subject is 60 years old. That of Potemkin is only 34.

There is a re-issue of Harold Lloyd, who is technically amusing, and of British films. Q Ships and Underground are the best.
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BY THE EDITOR.

Following Russian numbers, Censorship numbers, this, it would appear, has of itself become in the main a British number. At all events about half the contents are concerned with British production in one form or another, so while we are here, let us editorially perch on a high branch and inspect a little our bird’s-eye-view of the Blessed Isle, quietly, and then fly off again in quest of those morsels of wit and wisdom for which we are gradually growing notorious; feed, says the editor, spreading his wings, my fledglings. So we, like the darky who sang it, “have not long to stay here”.

Briefly consider this: Whether you like us or whether you don’t, we are an extraordinary nation. When you look at the size of England on the map and look back on her history you feel such prowess and achievement is the Impudence to the world’s Dignity. Quite steadily she confiscated and claimed, pillaged and pirated and possessed with the utmost valor so many of the world’s best lands, trades and commerce, that considered abstractly, let us say as a theorem perused
for the first time, and one you had never heard about before, you would in all probability say, "Well, if such a thing were possible, I would look to that country for the future of the world ".

Look at it not as theorem but fact and you see she is resting on her laurels, in fact, using them as a life-belt to paddle round in, and doing her best to lose what she has gained. Trades go one by one and nobody does anything at all about it. And there comes a time in all history when futures become pasts, with countries as with debutantes.

Looking through this Close Up we see that nobody has had very much to say for our films that is rewarding in any sense. In fact, you have to search through to Comment and Review, where you may and may not find that one R. H. (whom you may be able to place) is stung into a defence that is in part a rage at the deterioration of our cinematic betters. H. A. Potamkin, another migratory bird, and acknowledged one of America's prize chirpers, looks at things with true birds' eyes, that see in every direction. He is by no means sold on us. Then hear the gentle laughter that echoes through the Battle of Wardour Street, where you find the same pioneer will to subdue the geography of the world without any of the science, skill, initiative and forethought of the builders—of a Cook, a Clive, a Hawkins. Names like these are rapidly growing as mythical to our ears as the Hawthorne Heroes.

And all the time something very fine persists. I have said it before (though not loudly enough to prevent the rude boys from trying to rob the nest of the cuckoo's eggs that aren't there) that England has some very fine material indeed. None finer. Now, I ask you to consider the new Book of a Film,
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a more than gratefully received symbol from H. G. Wells which shows once and for all the kind of film England could, should, and will have to make before long if it hopes to take its courage in both hands and leap out of the swamp of amateurishness that would compare unfavorably with the sub-standard quickies of the most abysmal amateur.

There are fine minds in England, a youth ready and eager to be trained. Why not give—now here is my suggestion, and not one of you is going to give it a second thought, until I will probably have to come and start it myself, busy as I am—why not give to this youth of England a school of cinematography at least as official as the censorship, in which it was trained by the finest minds and pioneers of contemporary cinema? If we had any sense at all we would be in a fit state now to be able to produce The King Who Was A King. As we are, I would hate to see it undertaken by a British firm, which would ruin it utterly and irrevocably. Indeed, to date, none but an Eisenstein or a Pudovkin would be in a position to be able to produce it.

I myself can see no earthly reason why the trade which spends its money in maintaining a body that, as Henry Dobb says, *tears gaps from Jeanne Ney and Crise (The Crisis), and gives a blessing to What Women Did for Me, Crazie Mazie, and professes to stand for culture*, should not give the said body a month’s wages in lieu of notice, and give the money instead to a school. Not, no, not for a moment that I am suggesting the school should be, like the censorship, appointed and paid by the trade exclusively. O dear, no! Think what the teaching would be where the ideal is “first-class entertainment for all booking”! But I do think it
should be in part financed by the trade. Technicians who are actually technical are as necessary to trade as to art. And an electrician has to know the difference between an ohm and an amp, as must the cameraman between a 2 inch lens and a 3.5 objectif.

If the Government would not disinterestedly support the remainder, then it would have to be self-supporting. And that excludes at once the poor, which is useless, since the poor have probably the most to give. Scholarships then. What could be more reasonable? And—like the Russian State School—a careful combing out of unsuitable material at the end of a probationary period. To such a school would come as tutors (more often than not with cordons of police) the Eisensteins, Pudovkins, Stabavois and Pabsts; men who think and work, men who study Freud and Pavlof, who evolve theories, who study the psychology of the receptivity of the audience, who have a meaning when they give you a close-up, and another meaning when they don't, men who know what and why and how; builders, in a word. They would come from every country. The newest and profoundest theories would be contrasted, compared, analysed. At the end of the course, the pupil, thoroughly conversant with the whole of his tasks, able to explain to his electrician, or director or cameraman exactly what was necessary, would pass automatically into the studios, in which none but those so trained would be allowed under any circumstances.

Resources? Pudovkin, when he was in England, was emphatic in his praise of the studios. "The economy of space is a study in itself," he said.
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As things are, there are hundreds who are incompetent, base, bored and lascivious. They care no more for their work nor the results of it than they do for anybody but themselves and their immediate needs. They know nothing, would refuse to learn on principle if you tried to teach them, and would rather take another job than make any effort to justify themselves. They are slothful, tedious and illiterate, and in their hundreds they clog and waste the youth which cannot get past them. To-day there is no place for the young man and woman with ideas—let alone ideals. They are barred out simply. It is a fools’ and a braggarts’ paradise, and will flop, and nobody will miss it or mourn it.

I repeat again, there are men and women of intellect, power and conviction who could build the English cinema to a position of triumph to equal the Russians. Save them, and for God’s sake get rid of the licentious rabble that destroys them.

Kenneth Macpherson.
THE BATTLE OF WARDOUR STREET

We are of the stuff that films are made of. Yet we don’t get away with it. You need not see British pictures to realise their artistic mediocrity; a glance at the average still produced in our studios is one glance too many.

It’s a funny business. At the moment Wardour Street sees visions and its directors dream dreams. One day we shall succeed. One day we shall make a great film. But not just yet.

Wardour Street, flaunting the nosemarks of high finance, gets the blame. The poor critic, distracted between duty to his public and that violent patriotic complex which surges in the breast of every right-minded Briton, lets us down lightly and turns on the tap and the lukewarm adjectives.

We are, we learn with satisfaction, coming on. Our directors are getting better and better. Already, according to one critic, the best American pictures are being made at Elstree. And what’s good enough for Hollywood is good enough for Tooting Bec.

Hollywood is our goal. It must be entertainment or nothing. Ours is the Heaven-sent mission of supplying entertainment of the masses, for the masses, by the masses.
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"International" is the chief word in the temper-tried vocabulary of the Wardour Street producer. International. World markets.

That is the secret of British production. World markets. We have ceased to strain after the Quota gnat. It must now be one hundred per cent. or nothing. Let everything pass; let patriotism—bitter pill!—go by the board. Let us get our world markets.

Acting under the curious illusion that we can do in one year that which has taken America eight, we accordingly go all out for the round the world screening. We sell outright to the Dominions. Right, let us get into America. Long cables and sleepless nights, lunches snatched hastily at the Monico, private secretaries living on aspirin, and it is accomplished. We have sold to America!

But it is not good enough. We must now tie up the whole of Europe. Frenzied arguments with a translation bureau, heated words on the long-distance telephone, and an extra fraction has been secured on the Czecko-Slovakian market.

On, on, ye noblest renters! Must the genius of man stop at Constantinople? No, more cables and desperate hours juggling with gibberish. A British film has been sold to China.

It is round the world. El Dorado has been captured. Satisfaction—brief, and indulged in at the Savoy—is followed by chagrin. No rights have been sold to the Dutch East Indies!

The picture? Oh, the picture. Well, what of it? Give it to a man who made a good quickie in 1911. Get a third-rate novelist to write the story. Something with a kick and
a chorus, something with heartburn and a happy ending. Get the Blank girl to play in it. She's cheap, and a friend of the director's. The picture... Yes, it will have to be made some day.

Universal entertainment. What is it? Ask Wardour Street. Something built around a cabaret scene, something with a beauty chorus and just enough lingerie to earn an "A" Certificate. Or an epic of the British Navy with three close-ups of the Union Jack and Mother left at home crying her eyes out. That is the key; heartburn. Sentimental or sensual.

The fault with us, of course, is that many of the men who rule us just don't know what they want. The Street has its doubts and plods on, hoping for the best. We sell to America and then make the picture for five thousand pounds, we make a song of the film rights of Jew Süss and then forget all about it.

Wardour Street agrees we must be "international". Accordingly it solves our problems by importing played-out stars and third-rate directors. There are exceptions, of course. We determine to copy Hollywood and steal their cameramen, their technicians, their gagmen, their scenarists. We then decide to use them on a perfectly English story, and venture, viewing the future balance sheet through the rosy glasses of dinner at the Ritz, to risk a whole ten thousand on the picture. With Flossie Footlights in the title role—and she was a box-office draw in Sierra Leone twenty years ago—our profit on the world market already arranged by our Foreign Department is assured.
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Even that it not enough. In English films one has one's cake and eats it. Our pictures must be national. "British films must have national characteristics and international entertainment value." The phrase flits through a harassed brain. It was uttered by one of the Wardour Street oracles—there are about fifty of them—at a dinner recently.

Right, let us not forget the national note. We did talk sometime back about a Quota, didn't we? What is a national film? Property man, the Union Jack. Cameraman, take a train and shoot some local colour. Scenarist, hunt out the war songs and look for the catchy lines. International appeal? Well, they can alter it all in the cutting rooms on the other side.

Meanwhile, what of the night? A little stormy, perhaps. Shareholders do not always look as though they have been well fed. Certain banking accounts suggest anaemia. It may be that we spent rather too much on our last theatrical sequence. Could it have been that the film was bad?

It didn't book well on the Continent, certainly. America regurgitated it rather hastily. In England the trade Press let it down by calling it a "Good Booking for Smaller Halls". And even the smaller halls did not like it, judging by exhibitors' letters.

But, argues the Wardour Street oracle, it must have been a good film. Two cabaret sequences and some wonderful war stuff shot on the Riviera. And it stands to reason that if a company goes to the Riviera for exteriors they do so on account of its film potentialities and not because they want a holiday.
And yet, despite appearances, we have it in us. We are, I say, of the stuff that films are made of. If only we could make up our minds. What are we aiming at? Where are we? Is it to be art or the box-office? Is there, in the long run, any difference between the two? Is it to be Hollywood or Leningrad? Or just Elstree? King Vidor or Eisenstein? Or just G. B. Samuelson? If only we knew. We might be able to get somewhere then.

Yes, we have it in us. Hitchcock just missed great things in *The Ring*. Asquith was intensely interesting in *Underground*. Norman Walker gave us a thoughtful taste of the "purely national" in *Widdicombe Fair*. Dupont, I thought, came a cropper with *Piccadilly*, partly because he might have been filming Timbuctoo for all the relation his picture bore its title. But that, of course, is the "international" note carried to perfection. Perhaps he left it so that they can call it "Broadway" in America. Werner Brandes, at least, achieved something with the camera in the picture, and Dupont himself showed a flair for the pictorial.

One day, when we have forgotten the word "international" and its minor and conflicting echo "national"—made harmonious by that singular line of reasoning adopted in the Street of Films, we shall make a great picture.

Apart from our arguments we are too insular. We know nothing of the cinema about us, only that fraction Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer and Paramount show us. Pudovkin is a naughty boy who achieved news prominence through being mentioned in Parliament.

*Mother* is shown under the rose at the Film Society. *The End of St. Petersburg* receives the same treatment. Only
profligates, according to our righteous Press, would want to see Cosmos. Russian films in general, according to another writer, are generally hysterical. Potemkin is the name of a ship; Storm Over Asia has degenerated to a breeze in the Daily Express office.

Art, of course, is a word in the dictionary; an organ possessed by every Wardour Street oracle, a pumping machine vaguely connected with the paraphernalia of kidneys and the like. We are stiff-necked people and deserve to be censored. Accordingly, we know not the meaning of cinema. Hollywood’s elegant pornography and England’s imitation, we are allowed, our eyes can feast on Clara Bow, but Mechanics of the Brain is denied us.

Thank God for a sense of humour. Of course, continues the Soho oracle, we have no need to study the work of foreigners, really. We must develop along our own lines. In order to do so we import people from Hollywood and Germany and set them to film impossible stories by magazine writers who—judging by the finished product—never go inside a cinema.

Here and there, in the sea of doubt, tribulation and pain, we can see something to cheer us. Walter Summers almost made something of The Lost Patrol. Had he seen the best Continental product before he made it he might have got away with a picture. It was at least a change. Not a cabaret, no motherlove, only one mention of the duty of England’s sons when the freedom of the Emerald Isle is questioned. Victor Saville made a sound dramatic subject in Tesha, despite its Victorian symbolism where anticipatory motherlove was concerned.
Perhaps the nucleus has been formed already. Only two racing melodramas were made last year. If only Alfred Hitchcock could stage a comeback and forget he ever made *Champagne*, a film which, as champagne, suggested it had been left in the rain all night. Asquith is developing. Manning Haynes has his potentialities. Dr. Arthur Robison is over here making *The Informer* for British International. Harry Lachman may one day be given something better than a comedy with which to prove his undoubted talent.

Art direction has been whispered in Wardour Street. The words boomed in one day and have lingered on the Dictaphone records. It is not quite known, in certain quarters, what an art director is. At least one oracle maintains that he is a mixture of head carpenter and assistant cameraman. The forty-nine others hold different views. But Hugh Gee has emerged from the noise. Remember how he lifted *Tesha* off a flat screen? Edward Carrick is proving the value of the Craig’s blood. It is being slowly apprehended that an art director is a fiend who spends money, but who, given the proper nourishment, can help the picture to net the Almighty Shilling.

Scenarios are more often a hindrance than a help, naturally. Their value to the producer is that they enable him to check up the sequences the director has forgotten to shoot. But Wardour Street is now allowing more than five days for them to be written in. Yes, we are looking up.

Converted greenhouses, age-old brick buildings and the like still serve as studios in many cases. The value of the antiquated studio is that it gives the company an excellent excuse for having made a bad picture. What matter if the rest of the
Capitaine Fracasse, a film by Alberto Cavalcanti, after the story by Theophile Gautier. Production: Lutece Film. Above Pierre Blanchar as Capitaine Fracasse.
Capitaine Fracasse. A film by Alberto Cavalcanti for Lutece Film. Chiquite (Pola Illery) goes to the rescue of Isabelle (Lien Dyers).

Agostin (Daniel Mendaille) on the wheel. From Capitaine Fracasse. A Lutece film.
What The Censor Bans! *Cosmos* (*Nature and Love*), shown intact even to the children of Europe, cannot be shown though carefully edited to adults of Great Britain. Well, the chimpanzees are certainly tempting.
From the film made in Lapland by two young Englishmen, Ben R. Hart and St. J. Clowes, for British Screen Productions. Photographs and an account of the film were in the February issue.
Lapp types from the British Screen Production’s film made by Englishmen in Lapland. Since the Lapp believes that to be photographed is to sin, this is one of the very rare records (indeed the only one of its kind) yet made, and is, apart from everything else, a valuable piece of documentation.
Lulu (left) Louise Brooks, and Schigolch (Carl Goetz) in *Pandora's Box*, which was passed by the German censors after a stormy discussion of several hours duration.
Eisenstein with his heroine, Martha Lapkina, and her child on the last day of the filming of *The General Line*, after which Martha forsook stardom for the soil.
Two views from *The General Line*. Above "Black Blood," below, the tractor makes its appearance. *The General Line* is made to reveal the wonders worked with machinery to the many dark villages throughout Russia.
From *The General Line* by Eisenstein and Alexandroff.
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world argues the pros and cons of panchromatic? We can still carry on with one or the other all the same. Our patron Saint is the Vicar of Bray.

Stories are one of the difficulties. Even Wardour Street sees that. What is a film story? Is there such a thing? Should it be “national”? Or “international”? Must it have a name? Must it have sex appeal?

How to film; that is the question. We are undoubtedly in a position to make progress. But where? Is it to be Hollywood or Leningrad? Or Elstree? “National” or “International”?

If only Wardour Street could finish its mental battle and make up its mind.

And “talkies”? No, it is too much. At the mention of the word your Wardour Street production oracle folds his hands over his stomach like Bacchus and silently passes away.

Hugh Castle.

THE ENGLISH CINEMA

England sits atop her globe looking down upon her dominions.

England hoped to sit as neatly upon her quota and look down upon far-flung film dominions. But the eye of England is on the U.S.A. cinema, the cinema of the presumptuous
American offspring. There is little talk of cinema in England, but a great deal of talk of movie. That is, the questions of film conduct refer almost entirely to: how can we duplicate and beat the American success? And, of course, the answers amount to: by playing the American game. Look through the pages of the film journals and you will see from editor to fan that the same concern is uppermost: America.

I was in England in 1926 when the quota was hot on its birth. A typically English sentiment was expressed by a paper, The Patriot, in the following words: "We hope, but do not expect, that the agitation over British films will arouse English people to the danger in their midst of American propaganda through the agency of American films. England is being suffocated by American films; they lead in East and West and, thanks to our apathy, a promising English industry is being strangled before our eyes. The war, of course, was America's chance, and, with her genius for money-making quickened by the jealousy of English commercial supremacy, she grabbed it. England was fighting on every front throughout the world; she had subordinated everything to the task; her civil industrial life was in abeyance for nearly five years. America had a clear field. We are concerned now with only one branch of America's bid for world supremacy in trade, but there is no more progressive industry than the American film business. Money has been lavished upon its establishment, improvement and advertisement. The film magnates take their business seriously, and they plan ahead. No sooner does one film company produce a masterpiece (treating of American affairs one instinctively reaches out for superlatives) than every other company immediately
strains every muscle to achieve a super-masterpiece. In detail and in representation the American films have been brought to a high pitch of perfection. We do not grudge this tribute to America’s sole art.’’ The slur must be there with the praise (the crude, aristocratic gallantry of the Englishman): the movie is America’s sole art. But what is particularly England’s art to-day?

Various objections were raised at that time to the American film, but the fore-quoted writer advances his hilarious one. “The historical films have for their motive the belittling of the Monarchy as an institution.’’ Dear Patriot, to so libel my America, my Monarchy-idolizing America. The American movie to be accused of aiming to destroy the English throne! Perhaps the accusation is symbolic. Since the throne depends upon the commerce of the Empire, and the American movie threatens that commerce in numerous ways, the throne is threatened. But I attribute the accusation to petulance, the same petulance with which America has been charged. Indeed, the U.S.A. is in many ways, in many of her most unlovely ways, still the child of her mother.

Petulance, however, builds nothing so positive as either an industry or an art. And England in the cinema is following not the art or the industry of the movie, but all its commercial processes, with their involvements of nepotism, braggart expenditures, favoritism, exploitation of personalities (the star system), duplication of successes, etc. Well, Napoleon called England a shopkeeping nation. Indeed, the aristocracy has surprising shopkeepers’ traits—those traits usually attributed
to shopkeepers. A little while ago no gentleman (as gentleman is understood in England only) would go to the movie, it was vulgar. To-day he finances the vulgarities of the films, and goes to see them. And he laments the fact that the English film cannot be as briskly vulgar as the American, which calls in the pence. We shall touch upon the "vulgus" later.

Writing in The London Sunday Chronicle, 1926, its editor, Mr. J. W. Drawbell, epitomized the English attitude of mind which still prevails: "We are suffering from too much America! We hate Yankee bluff and bluster, but we stand for hours in queues to see American films that distort our own war efforts. . . We are fools if we delude ourselves that we have nothing to learn from these same people, at whom we rather look down our noses. We have too little of American enthusiasm and freshness; the dogged, determined will to work; the tireless driving energy and the daring, virile ideas that lie behind the success of her vast campaign." And does England think that mere wishing will give her these qualities? And does she think that by duplicating the evidences or results, the shadows of these results, of these qualities, she will do what America has done? The mistake is in her thinking at all about America. She must probe herself. If she fails to create the greatest cinema, and here I am shifting to my interest of the cinema that is art, she must find that failure in herself, in the Englishman, and she must be satisfied with what lesser thing she can offer.

Art is experience. I do not mean the workaday experience that is easily acquired, but the experience which is the systematic being. The Russian movie began at once with
experience, for the Russian is the most experiencing of men, and therefore you have a Russian film of such grand proportions. The American movie has been one of gay, muscular adventure, superficial if pleasant; to-day it is making weary, ineffective attempts to attain to experience, as in The Crowd and Lonesome. Experience can be attained to only if experience has been the source. The Americans are not notably an experiencing people; in this they are kin to the English.

The Englishman is afraid of experience. He is suspicious of emotion. I am not now referring to the English "vul-gus", but to the more knowing, the literati. The uniform reaction to Dreyer's Jeanne was almost funny in its commentary upon the English fear of tears, the pseudo-Nietzschean disparagement of pity. (The analogy to Nietzsche was suggested to me by an Englishman. There are still Nietzscheans among the English, I am told. Well, the English are a warrior nation.) Dostoevsky, the most cosmic of writers, embraced pity as the completest of human contacts: thereby is man-in-the-universe discovered. There is a direct relation between Dostoevsky and the Russian cinema.

There have been expressions in The Film Weekly, of London, of the English need for Russian films, and the need for English directors to learn from the Russians. There has been talk by a number of more open-minded Britons of the urgent necessity of importing talents to fashion films in England. If one is interested in a competent and competing cinema perhaps importation is acceptable, though its value is questionable, when one looks at the outcome of Stiller, of America, of the effect of Lubitsch's "touches" on the American film (a false charm). And as to learning from the
Russians or from any one, what is one to learn? A camera angle, such as America learned from Vaudeville, and, in its utilization, confused further an already confused milieu? Here is a lesson to learn from America, since England wants to learn from America: if you are going to use an approach of another people, be sure you have the receptivity to incorporate that approach into your established attitude. The lesson to learn from the Russian film is: find your source.

Mr. Anthony Asquith determined to do a film of the lowly. Good. The Germans had established such themes as their particular contribution to cinema subject-matter. Mr. Asquith opened up with underground train lights, very reminiscent, perhaps learned from the Germans or the French absolutists. Mr. Asquith may deny this, he has even expressed himself rather condescendingly, if kindly, upon German and Russian films. But what was the experience of an unprejudiced mature spectator to Underground? A hybrid film produced by a coincidence of absence of a precise cinema viewpoint and a remoteness from the lives of the protagonists of the narrative. Mr. Asquith is a case in point: he is young and, let us assume, he is willing to learn. He is given at once, in the American fashion, a "big" film to do, instead of being put on a small, personal "errand". If it is London he wishes to film, why not grant him some corner, Petticoat Lane, or Trafalgar Square? Let him sketch with his camera the Regent Quadrant. The film document is the legitimate exercise: it is a test and an education. Could Mr. Asquith do as capable, if unpretentious, a film as M. Georges Lacombe’s La Zone? This training is vital in two ways: in its demands upon the understanding of life and its
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requisitions upon a cinema viewpoint. Instead of such training, Mr. Adrien Brunel’s does hobbadahoy parodies of the newsreel, without revealing any cinema instinct or sense of pertinent commentary. One conceit alone remains with me: the use of musical notes to represent insects in flight. I am aware when I suggest the documentary film as apprenticeship that London authorities are still hostile to having their city exposed. Yet the Honorable Anthony Asquith filmed the underground. Moreover, one may construct a document about the contents of a room, although this may call for a penetration denied most people. The end to be willed is the attainment of a viewpoint. Of course, the documentary film transfixed by a genius like Flaherty can become something beyond a document. In this instance, however, I am not thinking of a completely converted material but of a training. I am thinking not of the work, although the work may prove most meritorious, but of the one to be educated. Is England serious enough in its cinema intentions to educate its worthy young men? Or does she think that the building of studio cities is more necessary?

In this matter of studios England is again aping America, without realizing that Hollywood is one of the chief obstacles hindering the advance of the American film. The day of the studios is over. Mr. Charles Lapworth, an Englishman who is production manager for the Société Générale des Films, producers of Jeanne d’Arc, urged his company against the studio. The European cinema has all Europe and northern Africa for its studio, and England has the globe. If the studio is needed, it can, as in the fashion of France, be rented for the time desired. To maintain studios is to have the pace
set by the overhead expenses, and not by the director, as is the policy of the Société Générale.

Joining the idea of document and the idea of the circulating "studio", I approach the suggestion which seems to me to offer a way to English cinema. I would certainly centre the film industry in London, to keep it near the active critical opinion yet to be fully articulated. (The English artist, literary and graphic, is, in typical English fashion, still indifferent to the movies—although from the start of the motion picture, the French artist was curious, even enthusiastic. It is true, Mrs. Virginia Woolf and Mr. Aldous Huxley have expressed themselves upon the need of the films, but their very general and repetitious judgments were evidence of a non-participation.) But the English countryside offers the documentary zone for the apprentice, the natural setting for film placement, and the peculiar English contribution to the cinema theme. This was hinted in Mr. Alfred Hitchcock's cinematization of Philpott's *The Farmer's Wife*. Perhaps after a long experience of this material and environment there will be developed from the source an experience which will be able to convert such a novel as Hardy's *The Mayor of Casterbridge* into a film. But in going to the source the English director must first understand that pictorialization is not conversion. In the film, *Widdicombe Fair*, a typical American narrative as major plot was threaded by a dull literal pictorialization of the old ballad, after which the film was named. This sort of illustration-song parallel belongs to the magic lantern era, which, in many ways, the film has not yet left behind. But to have taken the sense, the native
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sense, of the ballad and by re-rendering that sense in a struc-
ture suggested by the ballad-structure, to have attained what
may be called a ballad-film, would have been an achievement
and the establishment of an English idiom. I do not mean
parody, such as Cavalcanti so pleasantly attained in *La P’tite
Lilie*. I am again stressing conversion.

The English ballads and the English dances offer a source.
There are more suggestions for filming at the Children’s
Theatre, near Shaftesbury Avenue, than on the stage where
Tallullah Bankhead rants. The English music-hall is
another tremendous opportunity. How early the English
Cinema could have learned this, if it had listened to Mr.
Alexander Bakshy, who anticipated what I am saying many
a year ago? Why did the English cinema let this prophet
of the motion picture escape to America? Bakshy might
have given English films their first-needed impetus. But the
English cinema may still benefit by what Mr. Bakshy said
long ago: that cinema performance “is the most abstract
form of pantomime”, and should be left “to the dancers,
clowns and acrobats who do know something about the laws
of movement”. This is a recognition almost oracular in
view of what has transpired: the success of the dancer, the
clown and the acrobat. Englishmen are always indicating
the English origin of Chaplin, and Lane, and others, are
always hinting that America benefited by the war in taking
these artists into the films. But what is England doing in
regard to other good and qualified artists, Beatrice Lillie, for
instance? Instead of going to the musical hall to discover
both performers and forms, the English film-producer puffs
a Mr. Alexandre d’Arcy as “the new Valentino” or expends
tons of publicity on a Mr. Carl Brisson. Playing the American game, and getting where? The source of all art is in the "vulgus". Shakespeare is to be found in The Shepherd's Play and Gammer Gurton's Needle and Ralph Royster-Doyster. By the way, these are splendid film subject-matter. The art of the film is to be found in the distortions of the excellent English music-hall, or in the genre themes of the countryside and London, or in the old ballads and dances—these are the sources. Comparing English stars to American will only further obscure the logical players in the variety houses of England. Talking, like Mr. Asquith, that treatment and not plot counts will only, in its demi-truth, obscure the essential convertible and suggestive content which lies at the fingers of the English cinema. It is not plot, Mr. Asquith, it is content, subject-matter, the human theme, that must be talked of, and the treatment (or, as I prefer to call it, the cinematic viewpoint) in relation to this content is Conception. English films lack Conception. Your indifference, Mr. Asquith, to the plot, as you term it, allowed Underground to begin as a light superficial comedy (which, I think, you should have kept it), pass into the idyllic, the quasi-pathetic, the arrantly melodramatic, so that it was nothing as an experience and unreal as a revelation of the people it purported to represent. There was no indication of the insinuation of their Underground existence in their lives. Just to have had certain adventures occur in the Underground does not allow you to offer your film as a document of the lives of the Underground people. You did not experience these people, your experience of these people would have been the "plot"
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which you scorn. You are very old-fashioned in your progressiveness, Mr. Asquith.

I am sure that by now we do not need to be warned against the novelist or the novel in the films. We know that the unselective borrowing of novels for film-narratives has been baneful, and was brought in as a practice by the film commercialist. But we know also that, given the mind for it, anything is convertible into film. However, the selection must be based, among other things, in the case of England, on the English experience. What I have said before will explain my present point. If there is no one (and it seems there is no one) in the English cinema able to create a subject-matter of this experience, there are subject-matters waiting in many novels: those of Thomas Hardy, for instance. And will not someone go to Scotland and do The House with the Green Shutters? Or to Ireland and do The Playboy of the Western World? Or to the English mines and do Sons and Lovers? Or to Australia and do the novels of E. Grant Watson? The Russians have never bickered about original plots, but at once seized upon existent "experiences" published in novels: Polikouschka and Mother. I am afraid no one in England's cinema is up to the dimensions of even the least of the books I have mentioned. Perhaps it is wiser to depend upon the novels or plays of an Eden Philpotts, until the conviction of sufficient power impels the director to attempt grander themes. But the English must not expect the rest of the world to wax violently enthusiastic over her first films-at-source. The world will find them pleasing, because they will be peculiar to the folk enacting them. But I am not interested in their appeal or selling-power, I am interested
in placing the stress at the right place, away from a nostalgia for American success. What is the good of taking a director like T. Hayes Hunter, who in America was responsible for a film as worthy as Earthbound, if in England he is accredited with two banal films like The Triumph of the Scarlet Pimpernel and One of the Best? Or an actor like Monty Banks, hardly the brightest of the comedians, and permitting him to film such wretched stuff as Gin and It? Or a Mr. Harry Lachman and having him do Week-End Wives, which has all the details of American high (hat) comedy and none of the gaiety? Or worrying about the “it-less” English girl? What is the value of the numerous amateur cinematographic societies—working with normal and 16 m/m stock—if immediately they are concerned with camera tests, scenarios, thrillers, etc., and evidently are playing for the attention of the large producer? I believe I have indicated possible procedures for the serious English cinema. Certainly, even as far as monetary success is concerned, what I have suggested could hardly be less profitable than most English films produced under the suasion of the present state of mind.

Harry Alan Potamkin.
A CRY FROM CAMBRIDGE

Here we are, a University Town with six cinemas, and only eight per cent. of the films for the Lent Term (Mid January to Mid March) are worth seeing.

It is, we believe, the practice of the managers of theatrical touring companies to give close consideration to the taste of the towns which it is convenient for them to visit. Would that cinema managers and distributors of the films might confer together and grade towns according to their mentality. The cinema managers are content to exhibit the type of film which has been successful for many years, when a little thought would show them the type of film which could be successful were it only exhibited. Were it not for Undergraduate audiences the Cambridge cinemas might close down, and these audiences are credited with being intellectual. Why, then, is it that the men who eagerly go to the Festival Theatre, the most progressive theatre in England, to see the brilliant plays of Shaw, the Capek brothers, Gordon Bottomley, Eugene O’Neill, and a host of others, must see the films most of which are “tripe”?

There is the film, a bad film when one thinks of, say The Italian Straw Hat, but which one must enjoy as a gay scherzo. Any of Clara Bow’s pieces is an example. This is admirable
and naturally appreciated at Cambridge. But we are surfeited with the film which "does not quite come off". And yet again we get here the film which depends for its attraction on a nudity, lingering caresses, or a bedroom scene. Crowds go for the sake of shots possessing these attractions. But it is all so boring!

Then, rare concessions at rarer intervals, we have had The Student of Prague, Faust, The Circus, The Spy, and Dawn. And the cinemas showing these films have been packed to overflowing.

Thus Cambridge tastes the pleasures of an occasional good film; perhaps, for some days afterwards, the other films seem thin and poor. But it does not last, we are soon off again to see Gertrude Garbage in Silk Legs. This is not because we are really attracted by the film, but because there is no alternative style.

How utterly ridiculous it is that a University Town conversant with the most modern methods of theatrical production, accustomed to listening to eminent men, and accustomed to reading and discussing the newest and cleverest books, should submit to seeing these celluloid imbecilities. Fifty miles away, in London, good films are being shown and we will either never see them, or not see them for as much as a year to come.

Heaven knows we cannot hope to see the very advanced Russian and German films in Cambridge, but serious films which come next to them are our right as highly intelligent and highly critical audiences. We should see them as soon as they are generally released.

J-G.
CENSORSHIP AND CULTURE

The author of this essay, Mr. Vernon J. Clancey, recently edited, with Professor Julian Huxley, the Ufa film Cosmos (Natur und Liebe), which has now been passed by the censor.

We insular folk of England tend to think of our problems as relating to ourselves alone. Our ideas on censorship are generally based on its relations with our own particular conditions; but there is a much wider aspect of the question, its bearings on the development of culture. Particularly is this important in the case of films on account of their very wide appeal and their power of influencing the illiterate masses.

The whole basis of an advanced censorship is an appreciation of the social conditions and the ideology, together with the trend of culture of the community. The almost universal questions of indecency and pornography are minor items—moral codes attend to these. Admittedly, moral codes are artificial, based on custom and localised—as such they provide problems of national censorship, but these are unimportant problems.

The British Board of Film Censors, as representing the organisation of censorship in this country, usually manages to find a standard of decency acceptable to the majority. We
may be surprised at the amount of Vilma Banky's legs by which we are permitted to be disgusted in *The Awakening*, or cavil at some of his suggested cuts; but we appreciate the manner in which he navigates his Scylla and Charibdis—the renter and narrow-minded Victorianism. His is a difficult position, being appointed by the trade he must preserve his peace with their desire to get across scenes that sail as close to the wind as possible, but he must also attempt to please the puritan and maintain the trust of the licensing authorities.

It is, however, when he is faced with problems of culture that the impossibility of the present constitution is apparent. I do not want to rehash the late *Dawn* controversy except to quote it as an example of one of the major censorship problems. Similarly the recent banning of the scientific film *Cosmos*, since passed with further deletions, brings to the fore the question of the censorship of an instructional film. These, with the even more important banning of the Russian films—in particular *Potemkin*, *Mother* and *The End of St. Petersburg*, which were shown by the Film Society—have made urgent a discussion of the basis on which these decisions were made.

If we, and I think we must, accept the lay press, the serious press, not the sensation mongers, as an expression of the views of their readers, there is a very strong party urging the freedom of the screen—agitating its removal from the field of politics. In the case of *Dawn* the controversy hung around its possible effect on our peaceful relations with our late enemy. Naturally, this raised a storm of protest against sacrificing truth to international politics, thereby focussing attention on a "red-herring". Similarly we are informed that the
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Russian films were banned by reason of their revolutionary tendencies—that they were, in effect, Bolshevist propaganda, and as such are unsuitable for general exhibition in this country.

*It is impossible for a minority to regulate social evolution by such artificial means.*

The appeal of a film, or any art, to the masses is determined by the extent to which it formulates and expresses the undefined ideology of the majority. The appeal of Valentino lay not in his person, but in his expression of the ideals and the unsatisfied desires of spinsterdom. Mix, Jones, Gibson and the "Westerns" in general, appeal as an expression of the vital and spaciousness of the traditional West—an inherent in the majority.

If the theme of a "revolutionary" film is an expression of the present ideology of the workers of this country, then it will have popular appeal, and the banning of it because a minority think that it is a false ideology, is tantamount to autocracy and is not popular censorship. No use saying that the uneducated masses are misled by such portrayals, that they would have created in them foreign hates and new social conceptions. If the germs of the ideas are non-existent in the minds of the people, the films will not appeal, and if the germs are there no artificial guidance by a superior bureaucrat will prevent their expression.

I hold no brief for those who claim that the Russian films should be admitted here on the grounds of their artistic (meaning "arty") merits. True, they have many points of interest, but the cult of Futurism, the exotics, the pessimists, the skeptics, who flourish in the little theater movement
and yowl in their societies, deify the Russians, Pudovkin, Eisenstein and the rest, and forget that æsthetic interest is not sufficient claim for the general exhibition of a film.

The problem of censorship is the problem of establishing a cultural and social basis from which to work, based on present and progressive culture and sociology. If the tenets of evolution are the expression of present beliefs, even if unformed, of the mass, then show them evolution in their films. If Bolshevism finds a place in the ideology of the people, then no banning of cinematic expression will stay its progress. This is the foundation on which construction must rest. Leave questions of indecency, lust and immorality alone, they are taking care of themselves.

Vernon J. Clancey.

STORM OVER LONDON

After the deluge, me. Or, in other words, Pudovkin was in London. And London during that period lived up to its visitor and was far more Pudovkinish than he was. By Pudovkinish meaning the factory owner and his nails, the cigar (contrasting with the O so fagged end of the worker) and the judges in Mother, the woman growing hysterical behind the grapes in St. Petersburg and the fussy woman in
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Storm Over Asia. I mean, there was the lady behind me at the Film Society busily collecting her wraps and reticules and whatnots until she discovered that they were playing Send Him Victorious, when she had to sit down and wait till it was over before she could resume, by this gesture asserting individual rights at great individual discomfort; and there were the people who were so pleased at knowing what a Soviet was or that it was something, that they had to cheer, thus doing their best to prevent the films from Russia being allowed here ever. All this very Pudovkinish. And then; questions in the House after, and visas and the whole thing and finally seeing and trying to see and meeting Pudovkin himself, so that, as I said, after the deluge, me, and a rather bedraggled one.

What did he think of it all? Well, how could I ask? There is a destiny which rules out tongues, release them how we will. But he did tell me that he had seen The Singing Fool. I should have liked to have seen that. I like the idea of Bataileff and "sonnyboy", Kerensky and Al Jolson, as it were. But, of course, Pudovkin wasn't bothered about that. Saw through, to the noise. Did the same with The Awakening. If only more people would. We might get somewhere, instead of hanging around, waiting for him to. What else? He had asked Western Electric about distorting noise for him. Could they do that? They were engineers. They had never thought of it. They were a little surprised, a little, but deferentially, of course, troubled at the idea, which they had never thought of. After they were trying to get noise as natural, as lifelike, as all those things as possible. Mr. Pudovkin wanted them to give him noise that hadn't
been made, that hadn’t been heard, that didn’t exist. That had only been thought of, and imagined. How many things to do with the sound film, except its invention, have been imagined? How many imaginations are possessed by those who have to do with sound films as we know or refuse to know them? Haven’t most people just hurriedly exploited whatever method they got in on as fast as they could, while the rest sniff, scorn, turn away from it, being ever so modern and intellectual and, in fact, just the same as the people who first of all wouldn’t accept the cinema? And here is Pudovkin being imaginative about sound films. Seeing them in relation to the future, and not as bearing on his present work. Studying them, not rushing in to make his next one, but perhaps the one after. That’s all very well for an artist, but us business men, we’ve got to get in first, we’ve got our wives to keep (I forgot to ask Pudovkin if he had a wife). Well, the two most paying and popular films in Berlin at the moment are Pudovkin’s two latest, and you can keep that, brother, in your head for the whole of the rest of this article. Pudovkin’s films aren’t “art”, as you know it (The Last Moment), but works. And work satisfies an inner need. That is one of its purposes. And the other is to satisfy the outer ones, too. Get that. Pudovkin’s films make money. And he happens to study before he makes them, and now he is studying sound films. Then, what will happen? He foreshadowed some of it in his speech to the Film Society after, and he had already foreshadowed what one may call the Russian idea in the Statement with Eisenstein and Alexandroff in Close Up for last October. And I shall foreshadow some more (Oh, yes, taking it upon myself again. Really,
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this Herring person) in Sound Imagery. But here are two things he observed in that speech, reprinted from Cinema. "The expressionism of the film can reach unthought-of heights," and "but one must never show on the screen a man and reproduce his word exactly synchronised." This is an echo of "The first experiments with sound must be directed towards its pronounced non-coincidence with the visual images." Now this and this kind of thing that you get from him, talking English and German, are sparks. Catch them, see what they make. Sparks fly up the Eiffel Tower, fall, spell CITROEN. Catch the sparks and make them

SOUND IMAGERY.

Of course, this cannot be like my other articles on film imagery. We have had so few sound films in which any imagery has been used, or has occurred, and that has been accidental. I was glad of Mr. Hay Chowl's remarks on The Melody of Love. There was a hint in that film of something that might mean something about the sound. Something had been done with it that hadn't been done before, and it was a new way. But most people who saw it just pointed out that Mildred Harris was bad in it, as if she hadn't been bad in plenty of silent films, and alleged that it was a sound quickie with inserts from an old Laura la Plante film. I do not see her, unless she is directed by Leni, so I could not tell. But I did think there was a hint, a very shy and gawky one, of a kind of sound impressionism. And in Interference there was a use of the telephone which was obvious enough, but it had not been done before, and if it was done now, what might not be done quite soon? So an article on sound imagery

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must remain a series of sparks in the dark, with only suggestions in place of instances. And the suggestions were fanned by seeing Pudovkin and by a talk I had with Edmund Meisel. A great director, a brilliant composer. Both studying sound film problems. Neither accepting nor rejecting sound films, and not being clever; but taking the problem and studying it.

Now, I thought I was being quite clever in suggesting that I did not want to see and hear a person doing the same thing. It was enough to see one and hear the other, and in June, before I had seen a talkie, I instanced the trick of the telephone, image of one person, voice of the other. Say what you like, cling hard to the blacks and the whites, this positively helps them. It gets on. Flashing from one to other in a telephone conversation is the best of a bad job. So is, really, contrasting lunch hour with a monkey eating, in Berlin. Circumventing "a number of seemingly hopeless blind alleys". If noise can do quickly and easily what with only pictures you would take a lot of footage to get across, obviously sound is helping you get on with your images. The design, the rhythm is upset less often. I thought of this watching Simba, where Mr. Martin Johnson spoke while Mrs. M. J. traced on a map with the finger that was later to be so doughty in pulling triggers. But my sound was quite literal. The arrival of people not yet seen, the noise of traffic, the tunes that come into one's mind and remembered voices. But Pudovkin gets right down, not to the literal thing, but to the common thing between sight and sound, and the common thing they share is not the matching of what we see and hear. Pudovkin would combine the fury of an angry man with the roar of a lion. Think what that means.
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Think also of the oral underlining, very slightly, of the subtleties made possible. Apart from the already remarked on concentration on images. The etching in of sound, and that sound not literal sound, but imagery, too. Does not this mean something we want to have? And does it not mean something that, as Pudovkin said, the control of sound would be the director’s? He would control that, too. And now to Herr Meisel, who told me that the music to Berlin was composed at the same time as the film. Sound and film are contrapuntal. What Pudovkin says, again. The new tag is obviously going to be "contrapuntal". There was "superimposed". Most people found that they had really been meaning "mix", so they clawed at "cutting" when that was heard of, and were very smart with it, until they began to suspect others of meaning "editing" and then found that that was what they themselves had been meaning all the time. And what will happen to "Contrapuntal"? Centrifugal? Never mind. They make a nice noise, and we might include them in our own sound film. Meisel declares that the score of a film must be composed with the film. That was how Berlin was composed. It must be thought of with the film. Director and composer, like that. And by score, Meisel means sound, too. In Germany, he has made gramophone records of sounds of engines. Sound must be composed, says Meisel.

Read that. And now, praise the Lord, I want you all to stand up and say, "I believe that sound must be composed". Isn’t that grand? Isn’t that a wonderful sight? Sound can’t be ordered: you can’t go to your sound man and say, "This is Paris, we want half a dozen of the shrillest hooters".
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You can't order it in, as from Clarksons, so many Beau Brummel suits, so many Dresden Shepherdesses. You can't have hooters to match the houses and synchronise whistles to match the newsboy and go with every shot of an old man drinking soup. That won't do. Not a bit. You take trouble, if you are a director, about what is photographed. You take even more trouble, if you are a cameraman, about how it is photographed. There are plenty of streets. You choose one. Or from five or six you take bits and CREATE one. There are lots and lots of street noises. It is foolish to take them in a bunch and throw them alongside your chosen and selected street. And then your street may be in the slums of Paris, but it may feel all lilac. What use is a hooter here, unless to call back to reality, which is imagery of another kind? You must get a lilac sound.

Hospital nurses chattering don't want a faithful "And I said to him 'no kisses with aprons on'". They want bits of bright tin jangling together and things swinging on chains and windows going up and down. All very Sitwellian, like those candles. That lady who rushes into a room, destroying everything by her presence, so that you curl up and wrap into yourself, slide away and save what you can... she does not need the rustle of silks, nor even jackals braying. She wants fire-engine bells, don't you see. The subtlety, though that isn't, you can get. You can keep a face regarding politely someone, and have such remarks going on. Undercurrents, echoes, imagery. Looking at it one way, seeing it one way, hearing it another. Hearing it by association. The behindness of things can be reached. The visual part of the cinema
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will be freed from the dramatic and literary necessities which have held it back.

Wyndham Lewis has discovered that the world, as the result of modern (what a funny word) inventions, has become all one place, "instead of a romantic tribal patchwork of places". If only some would realise this when one spoke of Russian films, those, too, to whom half the point is, secretly, that they are Russian, instead of good. He continues to observe that thereupon a world art became necessary, that its organisation is difficult until there is a political world-unity (and here, with The King Who Was a King, Mr. Wells steps in where Arnold fears to tread), and that our transition period offers "hopeless obstacles to any expansion on a grand scale" in "especially in pictorial and plastic art". This is where Pudovkin and Meisel think about beginning to step in.

The whole trend of modern art is towards unifying. The visible world, once split up into human beings and sticks and stones, all express the one truth. The link between you and table . . . that is modern, for God's sake let's say our art. The essential undifference, save in degree, between knife and sky. René Magritte draws a key, a glass and a guitar and writes below "L'océan, l'oiseau, l'arbre", and that isn't just amusing. Chirico, in one of the most subconscious paintings London has seen, paints a room, an ordinary room, with a sea breaking across the floor and a tree growing, you can see that, in a corner, and it is all quite right. We understand it. It answers us. The Sitwells do it with the senses, using one to express the other, with their shrill flowers and woollen donkey's ears and all. You know, "Jane, Jane, tall as a crane, the morning light creaks down again". And
Pudovkin, take his angry man and roaring lion. You see him angry, so you know that. He is in fury. And fury itself is brought out, reached, by the lion, the most furious noise. Man and lion meet in fury. Fury in the abstract. We get it through man, lion. Fundamentals, if you like. That's the new cinema, or the full cinema. Two arms instead of one. On top of this trend, there is the cinema. Right from the start, before imagery was realised, it made no difference between woman and wall. It ALLOWED no difference. They were both image. As I said over Seastrom, lover and landscape both participate, belong, answer and express the same thing. We are aware of one in the other, this in this and this over this, till can we really be sure which we are seeing except that we are seeing what is there, and the parts don't matter, though they are exquisite? It is the same that inspires the Roman Catholic to see divinity in the bread, and the puritan, because he sees evil everywhere, to see it in a silk stocking. Therefore, why bother to hear Amiéé Macpherson in a talkie, when what we want to fit her is a good business talk from Mr. Selfridge? When sound is grasped, you will be able to use it so quietly, so lightly, so overwhelmingly. All the sounds there are at the service of your pictures. And even before he starts, Pudovkin is thinking of sounds that are not, yet. He will distort sound, and Meisel is going to compose sound straight. Take the oral impact of two objects and compose it in the same way as the visual impact is composed. He is going to make a new kind of music. He can manipulate the lamp which makes the sound waves light waves on the film. And others go on making hundred per cent. squawkies and don't care in the least that
the reproduction is still about as bad as an early gramophone. They want just to be literal, like the radio, and give us life or something odd like that. It does not matter how odd you are if you are literal. You make Al Jolson, how I love him, sing a song that makes the real audience at the Regal weep and dab, and you show the audience to whom he is supposed to have sung it to in the film rise up and cheer wildly and have a grand time, and the two audiences are quite at variance in their reactions to the same song, and the makers don’t mind because it is all literal. But if, at the same time, you are neither odd nor literal, if you are logical, let alone psychological, they are up in arms. And what is the noise for that on a sound film? Wild beasts, gladiators, weapons rattling? Far too literal. How about “exit only, old clothes only, exit only, old clothes only” superimposed on to cries of “been in this business since I don’t understand please mummy why, the Lord said unto Moses”. Wells, I put it to you. This is your next book. After explaining what a good one it is, you lay the scenes. *The Police of the World.* Paul alone in Hyde Park. Noises of champagne corks and money clinking.”

But Wells would superimpose Mrs. Meyrick on this, and he really means “mix”, and I really meant to talk about Pudovkin. He said this, he said that. What did he think of English films? Would he like to make a film of a Cup Tie? He said this, he said that. But he DID this and this to me. Isn’t that more exciting? Can’t you imagine for yourselves from this what a talk with him would be? What it would do to you. Do you really want to know whether he likes being directed by Ozep, what he thinks of Anna Sten, if he minds
his films being banned here, what lighting he uses, is Russia nice to live in? He spent a lot of time seeing old Chaplins he hadn't seen before, he saw a bit of *Q Ships*, but he really spent most of his time here being allowed here. It was very Pudovkinish. But think of sound imagery in his terms, and thank yourself that you are alive, if you are.

**Robert Herring.**

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**INTERVIEW WITH HERR MEISEL**

Owing to a fortunate meeting with Henry Dobb, of the *Sunday Worker*, and the perennial hospitality of Mr. Ogilvie, of the Avenue Pavilion, I had the pleasure to meet Herr Meisel at a midnight try-out of *Berlin* on January 28th, which the Avenue is reviving the following week.

It is well known that Herr Meisel is the composer of the musical setting in entirety of *Berlin, Ten Days* and *Potemkin*. It is, perhaps, less well known that in his earnestness that *Berlin* symphony shall be faithfully interpreted as he desires, Herr Meisel has specially come over to London. Mr. Ogilvie, in introducing Dobb and myself, spoke of the present being his fourth visit, the intention being that as the composer played, Mr. Grigg—the Pavilion organist—should study the
score at his elbow. A few words of greeting and we were trundling along on the early morning local train to Berlin. A few seconds after the aerodrome searchlight flashed in synchrony with the final chords on the piano, Herr Meisel was apologising for his digital delinquencies. But apart from the difficulty of doing justice to some passages of the score without an orchestra or an organ; Mr. Ogilvie, too, was equally apologetic for the shortcomings of his piano.

But being one of a group of three or four, alone in the centre of an otherwise empty hall, with Berlin on the screen and Herr Meisel sitting sentinel over its musical destiny, has to be experienced to be fully appreciated.

Benefiting a great deal from Mr. Dobb's fluid conversational manner of enquiry, we heard a host of interesting things from the little man, with an almost elfin humour, and as much enthusiasm, apparently, for the art of the films as for the art of his own sphere.

The subject of music and the films veered.

"What did Herr Meisel think of Potemkin?"

"They have a great future . . . synchronised music would always be part of the film. The music would be the same in the cinema that can afford a full orchestra as in the tiny provincial hall with only a piano."

When it was suggested that Berlin was the first essay in truly synchronised film he smiled appreciatively, but was silent.

"Did he limit his meaning of synchronised sound to 'effects' and 'orchestration'?"

"Well, no . . . the voice, too, will improve a film when used for contrapunct, as we say in music. Imagine the
moment in *Potemkin* when the command is given to Fire! The orchestration should fade out as the moment approaches and from the silence the voice would speak out the word, loud and staccato. The effect would be tremendous and dramatic. But it is most important that the scenarist, the composer, the director and the producer should decide in committee where exactly music, where effects, and where vocal contrapunct is to be synchronised in a given film, so that it is included in the script, *before work on the floor is begun*.

"The full-length talking picture has a doubtful future, but if it comes it will be serious for the theatre."

"What did Herr Meisel think of *Potemkin*?"

The disparity between his command of English and the immensity of his feeling about this film found expression in his shining eyes and wide-spread arms. He did manage sufficient voice to say: "Well, if you have not seen *Potemkin*, then you have not seen a film."

This naturally led to talk of Russian films.

"Did he think Russian films the greatest in the world?"

"Russian films," he said, "are very great films. They are so powerfully moving. The audiences are always half out of their seats, gripping the arms and backs of them with concentrated intensity of excitement. I am not Communist. And it is not the political. But Russian films are so full of the people. I have been to Russia and have talked with Pudowkin, Eisenstein and others. There they do things that are not possible anywhere else. If Pudowkin wants a thousand workpeople, he rings the telephone and in a short time a thousand workpeople are on the scene straight from
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their jobs. If Eisenstein should want some city scenes, a whole city is at his disposal at once.

"Everything is so interesting and alive in the films in Russia. Like the English, perhaps, they do not worry much about the importance of music in the films. But about the films they are very enthusiastic. The workers come from their building and their factory work of the daytime to take part in the films in their leisure hours of the evening. The result is all very wonderful."

"Is Herr Meisel scoring orchestral music for synchronising proper?"

There was mention of having recorded on discs for the German equivalent of our Gramophone company, and of having written a score for an UFA film, The Holy Mountain, released some time ago in England—silent, of course—under the title Wrath of the Gods. But there were so many others that, spoken with his German accent, they became jumbled and lost. One little film, with which he is assisting while in England, stands out, because in describing it his elfin humour seemed to be at its best.

He called the film a "Grotesque", and it is of the sea shantie "What shall we do with the Drunken Sailor". A sailor, drunk almost to incoherence, mumbles out the demand as to what shall be done with him. Other characters respond with more or less forceful action, while the birds and the trees, and each feature of the scenery in turn, even to the moon above, keeps up the refrain "What shall we do, etc."). The grotesque humour of this short subject seemed to delight Herr Meisel very much.
Among a number of other interesting things he could talk of, Herr Meisel had seen the camera cinema, Studio twenty-eight, employing the multiplanar screen, and was very much impressed by its artistic possibilities in achieving realism.

But we were encroaching far upon the small hours of Tuesday morning, and though loth to do so, were compelled to depart with handshakes (muttering inadequate thanks) from a charming little man, so full of subdued keenness and suggestion for the future harmonious marriage of music with the films that one felt that he at least was entitled to think that the exploration of the art possibilities of the films is only just beginning.

Hay Chowl.

AN ASPECT OF CINEMA CONSTRUCTION

Having contrived a certain interval of leisure from my life of six years in the Japanese film world, I am now visiting Europe and America, by way of getting into touch with those personages with whom I have long been familiar through the screen. This has been my desire for many years indeed.

Fortunately for me, I had an opportunity to meet Mr. K. Macpherson, the Editor of Close Up, in Berlin.
A FIRST CLASS FIGHTING MAN.—This is one of the Fuzzy Wuzzys of the Red Sea Hills of Africa, made famous by Rudyard Kipling. This young man and thousands of his tribesmen appear in Paramount’s adventure spectacle *The Four Feathers*, by Schoedsack and Cooper.
Merian C. Cooper, of the nomadic dramatic team of Cooper and Schoedsack, with two of the Red Sea Hills Fuzzy Wuzzys appearing in *The Four Feathers*, a Paramount film.

Cooper and Schoedsack spent over a year in Africa among these natives of the Anglo-Egyptian Sudan. A banjo effect is produced by the instrument shown here.

A scene from The Iron Mask. Ulrich Haupt as De Rochefort, Lon Poff as Father Joseph, Nigel de Brulier as Richelieu. This film is the first to have a voice accompaniment to explain the action and speak the titles, in the manner of a Greek Chorus.
Yoshiko-Kawada, a Japanese star in The Black-haired Demon, a film by J. Shige Sudzuky. See article in this issue.

Seiro Shiga, a famous character actor of Japan.
Demmey Suzuki, the "Ramon Novarro" of Japan in *Clay*, by J. Shige Sudzuki.

A Scene from *Clay*.
From Pudovkin’s film *Storm over Asia*. Bair, the descendant of Ghengis Khan (left) played by Inkischinoff. At right the giant Buddha in the Mongolian lamasery.
From *The Man with the Movie-Camera*, a film of actual events by Vertoff (director of *The Eleventh Year*), photographed by M. Kaufmann.

From *The Tempest*, a new Wufku film, the story of which is centred in a lighthouse.
Two wonderful designs by Heinrich Kleys for Rex Ingram’s picture *Three Passions*, in which a shipyard set is needed. They are made from engineer’s scale models to work in and match with scenes actually shot in the yards at Newcastle. Allied Artists.
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No wonder that those who walk on the same road—the path of the film world—are willing, whether they be Orientals or Westerners, to talk with each other without reserve. This chance interview has induced me to write an article, though with the fear that my pen should deface the valuable columns of this magazine.

Let our subject be An Aspect of Cinema Construction, to begin with, and let me narrate that the cinema should consist of its musical elements and structure. I do not know whether this title be suitable for the narration I am about to make, or if there be any more proper and special terminology. At any rate, I am not inclined to discuss any difficult problem, nor am I a great critic who can show off his gigantic technical terms. Of course, also, I am neither thinker nor metaphysician; but a matter-of-fact man who has worked for not a few years as director of film production. From this point of view, let me recount a little of my experience with the aforesaid subject.

It is probable that this kind of thing—the musical elements and structure of the film—need not be mentioned anew in the present magazine: it is, at least, one thing which a film supervisor must involuntarily experience and notice. It is certain, therefore, that he has one aspect or other of the film structure, however different his view or explanation of it may be.

When a film is produced, the director first considers the construction of it. As ten directors produce ten different kinds of films, so each of them has a different aspect or consideration of his film construction. If his film succeeds, all
ends well. But if it fails, to what cause does the director attribute the failure? Perhaps he may attribute it to the minor items—such as the story, actors and actresses, cameras, etc.—which are so vociferously discussed and argued by most critics. To speak the truth, it is the director who is all responsible for the failure or ill-success of a film. I am one of those who have groaned under the weight of similar responsibility, and I am aware that the failure is not owing to such minor causes, but lies in the film construction itself, which must be the more fundamental problem. And this film construction depends upon what I call "musical elements and structure of the film."

It is after my commencing the musical analysis of the cinema that I have been gradually enabled to explain the causes of cinema failures and criticize properly some other films but mine. Now when I direct a film production, I deem it necessary to consider the film construction first, and then examine whether it is musical or not, and lastly revise the story, if necessary. The reader must know that there is no professional "continuity writer" in Japan. How is it, then, that I manage to adjust the film construction to music by comparing both film and music? Some may refute me by saying that a film is a film, and music is music. But I believe that the film has much of musical structure, and too much quality, form, and combination to be compared with anything else. Both music and film must be the main sources of those pleasures which are conveyed to hearing and sight respectively. Let me say a few words as regards the analytical explanation of film and music, and compare them in brief.
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The cinema is one of those amusements which can be appreciated during a limited period of time. No spectators can see a film which expands for ever; but a film, if interwoven with story scenes, consists of six reels or more. Supposing each reel ends in fifteen minutes, the spectator must have time, at least more than an hour, to see the whole film.

How about music? It is, of course, an amusement that is restricted by time. And as the form of music is a solo, or a duet, or a trio, or a quartette, or jazz, or a symphony, so the film has similar forms. In the cinema there are not so many technical terms as in music, so we cannot express particulars by means of such characters. I consider a film actor to be a kind of musical instrument, and his character to be the sound of this music. According to my opinion, therefore, a beautiful star or a chief handsome rôle does not always rank as the first or second violin. Sometimes she or he may act as a plain bass: in some scenes, in fact, their performances may be displayed as shadows just as the first violin does not always play a melody in music. Where can we then see the source of the above comparison? It is determined by considering the art of the performances acted by the players in a small section of a scene.

With such a system of musical instruments the music is played; with such a system of players the film is produced. But, with what thema is the music played by means of these instruments? What tempo, harmony, accent has it? And what is meant by the above things in case of the film? And what is expressed there? This I must explain a little.
special kinds of subjects excepted, it is natural that a story necessitates a *thema*. The obscurity or discord of the *thema* makes the story unintelligible and the film uninteresting.

Of late the word *tempo* is often used when we speak of a film. Some think that *tempo* means *cutting* or *action speed*. They are wrong. I for one believe that it signifies the *speed of a story*, or that *elliptical method which must be shown in the cinema*. It would be a great mistake to call cutting or action *tempo*, whatever giddy speed it may have. For however we may quicken time in music, the *tempo* will remain unchanged.

Harmony plays the most important part in music and influences the audience most. The greater the number of musical instruments, and the more numerous the players, the more difficult the harmony becomes. The harmony in the cinema is a couple of lines which form a cross. The vertical line denotes the harmony of players' performances, whilst the other line means the scenic harmony based on the camera work. In music, too, there is a consonant harmony and a rhythmical harmony. And the harmony of actors' performances affects both *tempo* and *thema*. As a composer is nervously careful of a sound, so a film director should pay great attention to even the smallest portion of his film. The harmony of camera work is chiefly maintained by its composition. The pictures made by an unskilled cameraman or one who has little or no knowledge of painting are not worth seeing or *listening to*.

There are two kinds of accent. Likewise, we have two in music: the accent in a stave and the accent in a song. If a stave is supposed to be a scene in the film, I make the accent
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by the camera work which goes in parallel with the actors’ performances. Especially, the technique—the angle and photography—has power to show the accent. We must be careful whether the accent break the harmony and *tempo*. Many directors find that their films have often had the *themata* disjoined, and the harmony, and the *tempo* destroyed, broken, by the force of this accent. The accent of a film should be considered the climax of the story contained in the film. A continuum of accents is no more an accent; nor is a continuity of climaxes a climax.

I have analysed and compared the constructional ingredients of both film and music in a very rough manner. Now let me describe the state of construction.

Not being a metaphysician, I do not pretend to make any scholastic explanation. It may be said, however, that one thing man desires is a proper stimulus to the mental functions. This stimulus, whether strong or weak, must be controlled by temporal changes, which must be irregular, but not periodical. Moreover, when a man receives such a mental stimulus, he usually has a presentiment for the ensuing stimulus. This presentiment is, of course, one acquired by common sense, and differs in breadth and depth according to the environments and degrees of education of individuals. You must know that a youth who is fond of music—I don’t mean a lad of musical genius—can keep in tune, by whistling, with a musical performance which he hears for the first time. Or you will see the tip of a pretty finger tap the corner of the table to the tune of the music which the owner of this finger hears at a ball for the first time. These involuntary actions are caused by a presentiment.
The real jazz music must be a continued burst of presentiment, and not performed by a musical note. And a performer who reads music can never make a great musician. One who corresponds to presentiment can appeal. It is temporal changes that can appeal to the senses of sight and hearing.

A political speaker who speaks commonplace things at great length, will now thump the table, and now cry with gestures—the audience will thus be brought to excitation. When the speaker has descended from the platform, they may say, "That speech has been skilfully spoken," in spite of the fact that they have not understood it. The truth is that the temporal changes which the speaker gave them have succeeded. It is natural that the film—the film limited by time—must have some temporal changes. Changes of the story, of scenes, of actors' performances: the scale of these changes combined coincides in every point with the scale shown by music. This discovery has encouraged me very much. At first I analysed some of the films already produced, and studied how to show the state of construction by means of scales. But now I make scales first when I produce films, and by this means I reversely construct films. Thus I am trying to construct stories reversely. The rules, tempo, consonant, accent, which are described in a musical composition, are an embodiment of those mental actions which the great musicians of the past have felt involuntarily. Though it is now impossible to regard this law as the law of the film, which has just risen and which has too short a history to tell, yet I hope that time may come when this is realised.

I regret that I cannot in detail quote here the instances of my musical construction of films. But as a musical scale
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consists of the line connecting the treble and bass, of the wave arising from the tempo of this line, and of the thickness of the line which undergoes change from the accent; so my musical construction of the film is to make a scale by analysing the line connecting the climaxes of the film, the wave of the tempo, and the thickness of the accent.

It is easy to produce a film which is universally liked or like an acknowledged piece of music. We find that the audience are satisfied with the occasional changes which pass before them during the entire performance.

With the play-book before me, and looking at a chronometer, I make a continuity of the film, and mark musical technics on it, in the same manner a music conductor does. For a cinema director is a conductor.

The reader may suppose that my method of direction turns out a trite and commonplace one, but a music conductor must command the symphony and jazz at the same time. Besides, the reader is requested to be aware that two conductors who command the same musical note seldom possess one and the same art.

J. Shige Sudzuky.
AN APPRECIATION

I was sitting in a warm corner of an exclusive Berlin restaurant just before Christmas. Our guest was late. One hardly expected him at all and had begun, as was agreed, before his arrival. I had not visited the sets of Pandora, but had been alive to each development and as keenly concerned as the most screen-struck school-girl over the various doings and mots and quaint sallies of the star, Miss Louise Brooks, who had been chosen finally after almost half a year's delay, for the somewhat problematical Lulu. "What did Louise Brooks say to-day?" . . . "O, she didn't say much. She was too busy complaining that the hen was a grandfather." . . . "What hen?" . . . "Why, the lunch hen. She said it was a grandfather." . . . "Did they get her another hen?" . . . "Certainly not. They didn't understand what she was saying. And besides, she had eaten it." It was partly (not altogether) for this reason that our editor had an advantage over the rest of the company and learned much intimate matter about daily happenings that otherwise might have been reserved for more "professional" converse. Perhaps, too, for this reason, I felt that I had a personal right to Pandora, that it personally was partly of my making, that I,
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too, had been introduced to the Sanctum and was on very familiar terms with the Olympians.

Also the Christmas pudding. . . "What happened to the pudding?" . . . "Well, the dresser insisted that it was in a flat dish. I said a basin, and they brought a jelly mould. Louise Brooks said the Christmas pudding she had had in London was not flat, but round—basin shape. That she had liked it very much, and lived on it for a week when she was dancing at the Café de Paris. She told the dresser (who had dressed people in England) that she knew or ought to know the shape of a Christmas pudding.' . . . "What happened?" . . . "I drew one on the architect’s table. Pabst said 'That is what I want. Round. Is it not, Herr Macpherson, round?'"

All very solemn. Herr Pabst (one feels one should write it Maestro, or Cher-Maitre) solemn, concerned, utterly "wedded" to the least detail of his arrangements as to the last soul-shattering dénouement. The grain of mustard seed does not escape the eye of this almost mystically vigilant Austrian, neither does the spray of holly (and holly, Herr Macpherson?)—the immemorial symbol of some lost Druidic or Norse custom, still practised by the English-speaking races. The spray of holly became a symbol, invested with its mystery. "WE" may be said to have assisted in the making of Pandora.

Mr. Pabst arrived, very modest, utterly unassuming, almost "not there". But there he was, and we paid hardly any attention to his arrival, murmured something about "you told us not to wait", went on eating, tried to get the waiter. The
waiter arrived, people kept passing, coming, going . . . Heinrich Mann, Olga Tschechowa sweeping through in search of a table, Lee Parry . . . the nordic air from the opening door shot cold winter into our snug interior, that Berlin, magnetic-north winter that exhilarates, heals, inspires.

Mr. Pabst said nothing. It was better to go on eating. He wanted nothing, yes; some soup, waving the waiter aside, must get rid of him somehow. Mr. Pabst looked depressed. The rather wood-carved look of him, sitting with head hunched down, and shoulders hunched up, was somehow suggestive of depression. The soup arrived, he evidently did not want to talk. The soup was removed, he might have something, not much of anything. It arrived, some sort of “hen”, trusting it wasn’t a grandfather. The hen was removed, black coffee . . . Mr. Pabst uttered. “O, I am so unhappy.”

Unhappy? But why unhappy? Well, he was just unhappy. Did we mind if he didn’t talk. Of course, there was no use, anyhow. No use of anything in Germany. What had Germany done, what had anyone done? What could anyone do? Everyone was against everything . . . there was no use going on. He didn’t want to smoke. Never smoked. He pushed back his coffee cup. Had Miss Brooks broken an ankle? Had the set in the London fog exploded by some process of self-combustion? Had spontaneous combustion of another sort blown up the whole of Staaken? What, anyhow, had happened? The Master uttered again. “Now the French are doing things” . . . “Things? What things?”
The French, it appeared, had done a film called Jeanne D'Arc. Herr Pabst, it appeared, had just come from the early evening performance of Jeanne D'Arc, or Johanna von Orleans, at the Gloria Palast just round the corner. Well, was that it? That—it appeared to me—was "nothing to write home about". Mr. Pabst thought otherwise. We were doomed, it seemed, to hear nothing now of Pandora. The French had done a film, and that film was Jeanne D'Arc and no... he lifted a priestly and solemn hand, he would hear nothing, no, nothing whatever, against that film. That film was perfect, such technique, such originality, such grandeur, such "prickle" (does that mean sparkle or merely stickle?), such strength, such beauty, yes, beauty... "They have been able to make the experiment. TWO years... France is doing that now. And we are making (he quoted two current popular successes). Something no one had done in Germany, could never do, how could we expect to do it in a world of quickies? It was not so much the film that had depressed him as the fact that France was able to make the experiment, and Germany was going where it was. How could anyone "here in Germany" expect to do anything ever?

Now, I have written about Jeanne D'Arc a little spitefully and a little unharmoniously. Jeanne D'Arc (see, if you must, some Close Up or other, some twelve months back) set me out of key. It positively bullied me as no film has yet done. I was forced to pity, pity, pity. My affections and credulity were hammered. I was kicked. I was throttled. I was laid upon a torture rack. Quite solemnly I was burned at the stake and lifting eyes to heaven I had forgiven my malefactors.
Yes, the magnificent technique of Dreyer did that for me. But was I moved? Was I inspired or touched? Jeanne D'Arc, as represented by Dreyer, illustrated for me that famous Corinthians Thirteenth:—And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor and though I give my body to be burned (etc., etc., etc.), and have not love I am nothing.

I gave every sentiment of which I am capable to that marvellous demonstration of Falconetti. But one. I reserved far off, and unassailable, a sentiment that is never called forth and never inspired and never made to blossom by technical ability, by sheer perfection of medium, by originality and by intellectualism, no matter how dynamic . . . that sentiment is love simply. I did not love the Joan of Dreyer and the "French", as Mr. Pabst must call them. I love and always will love the most modest feminine creation of this Viennese cher-maitre.

But how tell him all that? Here he is sitting over coffee, and yes, he has condescended to have just that half glass of white Rhine, it looks so gold, so he turns the stem of the wine glass meditatively. He is convinced for the moment in himself that he is nothing, he can say nothing for himself, and certainly he will say nothing for Pandora. Louisa (as he calls her) Brooks, yes, she has a hidden side, a strange quality. For himself there is nothing to be said. If the film is any good at all it is obvious it is going to be because Louisa Brooks has a strange quality. . . "There is another side to her."

I must say that playing into his own hands, Mr. Pabst has all unwittingly given the clue to that for which one searches. No amount of compelling clap-trap "interview" journalese would draw just that fine phrase from him. We admit, and
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gladly, that the delightful elf-like spirit that remonstrated to a blandly puzzled Staaken waiter’s “was ist los?” with the all-American “Los? It’s not los, it’s awful. It’s a grand-father!” must have “another side to her”. But who (I may at this moment be permitted forensically to ask) would ever discover, could ever have discovered that “other side” but the perfectly preposterously modest director who sits facing us? “Louisa” Brooks has another side to her. So, obviously, has Greta Garbo, Nielsen, the beautiful, more than beautiful Brigitte Helm, the calm-eyed Herthe van Walter, and the demure, delicious little Edith Jehanne.

All the women of Herr Pabst’s creation, be it a simple super in a crowd scene or a waitress in a restaurant, have “another side” to them.

At this point I bravely permitted myself to make a remark. “Pandora will be beautiful. Mr. Macpherson says the highest, the highest things about it... its atmosphere, its subtlety. He says the scene, for instance, of the Salvation Army in the foggy slum street is (I paused for the Gargantuan parallel) is ‘sheer Pabst’.” I had found the right phrase, albeit the consultant on the court of last appeal for Christmas puddings had given it to me. “This new film of G. W. Pabst is going to be (this is its highest glory) sheer Pabst.”

I write going to be, but last night the much-delayed Pandora was having its jubilant premiere at the Gloria Palast in Berlin. It is a grief to us that we could not be there, but in ourselves we are assured that no premiere of Pandora could ever affect us more than our first film, our introduction, we might say, to the whole of the possibility of screen art—Joyless Street, seen here in Montreux some five years ago. Joyless
Street was my never-to-be-forgotten premiere to the whole art of the screen, and G. W. Pabst was and is my first recognised master of the art.

The place of the Russians is assured, this is no moment with which to deal with them. But G. W. Pabst, being a European, is, in a way, a more subtle figure or symbol. He is, as it were, the link between the old tradition, pure art ideas of the French, of the Viennese, of (in a word) Europe and the new American and Near East. He is, in that, in a more precarious psychological position. He holds, as it were, the clue, must hold his position almost as the keystone to the vast aesthetic structure we call now unquestionably the Art of the Film. The Germans hold the key really, are the intermediaries between Russian and the outside world that still believes Red to be a symbol of murder and destruction.

The new Russians, to digress, in their ideas of humanity, of equality, of the sheltering and housing of the poor and outcast, are, it is apparent, the only government not only in Europe, but in the world, who seem literally to have considered the teaching of that much misunderstood Jew of Nazareth at its face value. "Feed the poor," "Sell all that you have and give it to the poor," "The last shall be first," etc., etc. There has been, to my knowledge, no effort on the part of any government nor on the part of any organised body, "house" or "senate", to make the film a medium for promulgation of ideas other than intellectually sterile and of moron entertainment.

This is really as a purely aesthetic critical aside, has nothing to do with politics and "politicians", of which I know nothing and of whom I know not one. It stands regrettablly
to reason, however, if in some weird Utopia one should be called upon to judge a country by its æsthetic film output, one would have to acclaim the Soviet first, the German Republic second. The film, one might have said, has nothing to do with countries, education or civic reform, and certainly has nothing to do with æsthetics. But the day of that sort of talk is over. The film is recognised, and the people and the peoples of the world are being judged, openly condemned, condoned or contaminated by their film output. We know that. We don’t have to go further into it. It also seems unnecessary to add anything to the already vast bulk of technical and æsthetic appreciation of the work of G. W. Pabst. However, I cannot help adding to it... as one cannot help looking at and appraising flowers in a garden.

For what are the creations of G. W. Pabst but growing, vivid and living beauty? They move and glow before him like sun-flowers to the sun. I have taken an almost diabolic delight in following the career of each of his stars. For no star, once G. W. Pabst has adequately placed her, seems to me to belong to any other. I know nothing of Greta Garbo personally, and it would be out of place to suggest that the curious disintegration of her screen personality has anything to do with her personally.

Let us put Miss Garbo out of it entirely and say that Greta Garbo, under Pabst, was (I quote an earlier article) a Nordic ice-flower. Under preceding and succeeding directors she was either an over-grown hoyden or a buffet Guiness-please-miss. The performance of Greta Garbo in that subtle masterpiece, Anna Karenina (Love), was inexplicably vulgar and incredibly dull. It was only by the greatest effort of
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will that one could visualise in that lifeless and dough-like visage a trace of the glamour, the chiselled purity, the dazzling, almost unearthly beauty that one recognised so acutely in the very-young figure of the half-starved aristocratic official’s daughter in *Joyless Street*. Greta Garbo, in a little house dress, an apron and low slippers, sweeping the passage of the improvident home in *Joyless Street*, remained an aristocrat. Greta Garbo, as the wife of a Russian Court official and the mistress of a man of the world, diademed and in sweeping robes in the Palace of Karenin, was a house-maid at a carnival.

Perhaps the example of Greta Garbo is an exaggerated instance, and, I repeat, the young actress herself may have had little say in the hands of those who make her the devil in films where Gilbert is the flesh.

Take Brigitte Helm, who is always an artist. I have not seen all her films, but without question her performance of the blind girl in *Jeanne Ney* is one of her most striking—a feat that really lifted her above the realm of legitimate artists. She is almost an “illegitimate” magician. “Brigitte Helm did not look blind,” I heard repeated of her in Berlin, “she was blind.”

Isn't that it? G. W. Pabst is almost a magician, his people are “created, not made”? There is, indeed, “another side” to every one of his women, whether it be the impoverished little daughter of post-war Vienna or one of the extras in an orgy scene, each and every one is shown as a “being”, a creature of consummate life and power and vitality. G. W. Pabst brings out the vital and vivid forces
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in women as the sun in flowers. Brigitte Helm lifts a head like a proud Madonna lily. Her eyes in *Jeanne Ney* are the wide staring eyes of the blind, but in her blindness she is alive, aware, acute, clairvoyantly attuned to every sound, every movement, every shade of light and every shift of sun and shadow. Brigitte Helm did not look blind, she was blind. I was enthralled, to find in talking to Mr. Pabst on my first meeting with him last summer, that I had myself gleaned the essence of her acting. I said "I don't feel that Brigitte Helm is acting. I feel that she is in a trance. That she has the power to throw herself into a trance and to move and speak and live a life quite outside her own personal experience." I thought my remark might meet with his disapproval or in some way seem over-drawn to him. But not at all. He was delighted. "Ah," he said, "you see. You have it. Do you know in that scene when she walks with Jeanne Ney in the streets of Paris, she was almost killed." . . . "Almost killed?" . . . "The actor driving the taxi was not a driver really, and had had to learn. He was not very sure of his steering. Brigitte Helm walked right in front of him. I had to run before the camera to save her. Do you know why? She was blind. She simply did not see it." The force of vision of this acute director and the strength of spirit of Brigitte Helm had actually so transformed her. This miracle of acting had been achieved. She did not look blind, she was blind.

So, in a lesser degree, but in no less vivid manner, each and every creation of G. W. Pabst does not "look" good or bad, happy or unhappy, wise or foolish, she "is" for the time being what she typifies. G. W. Pabst, their creator,
cannot realise how a thing "created, not made", must forever take precedence to the most technically perfected image. I know that the image of the Maid of Orleans in the Dreyer conception is technically flawless. But to me (and not a few others) the Jeanne D'Arc is (I repeat it) made, the Image is carved and constructed.

Imagine Brigitte Helm in this role and directed by Pabst... we scarcely dare imagine such a thing. It were out of place to speak seriously of mediums and mediumistic trances... but there are times when art so far transcends itself that we are forced into another set of symbols. The Jeanne D'Arc of Dreyer is art carried to its highest—wood-carving, if you will, bronze or even mediaeval silver, but it remains art as carvings on a cathedral. The life-like Image of a saint set at dusk in a cathedral causes us to cry "magnificent", the opening of the violets in our garden touches us but causes no astonishment. We take it so for granted.

I have not taken part in the conversation that has been going on. I have not even been listening. (You will remember we are seated in a warm corner of a Berlin restaurant just before Christmas.) There is some little stir and probably we must be going. I must say just one thing. "Mr. Pabst, I must ask you one thing—" He turned courteously from weightier matter—"about, if you don't mind, Joyless Street."

I had seen a still of a dead body, a very beautiful still of the figure of the mundane lady who, you will recall, is killed in the "house" she went to with her lover. "I wanted to know about that body of Madame... I was wondering about it." Mr. Pabst did not wait for me to explain fully, he
burst into a torrent of wailing and apology. "O, a dead body ... a dead body ... there is no such thing as a dead body on the screen ... ." One remembered an anecdote he had told, quietly and with no acumen, no hint of bitterness, of some half-dozen or more of his companions in their internment camp who, technically imprisoned and detained, had, after four hideous mutilated years of waiting, deliberately killed themselves after the armistice. "The Valley of the Shadow of Death" has touched each one of us, perhaps none so poignantly as this vivid, sensitive Austrian artist, who, ignorant that war had even been declared, was seized with his companions on a returning New York passenger ship and, vibrating with his love of life and love of love and beauty, was buried dead-alive in that particular crowded barracks. Mr. Pabst touched lightly enough on incidents of his companions who died there naturally (if such a word can ironically be used in this connection) during the period of war activity. He became hilarious and gay at the mention of the young French officers who (in the now credited stage and screen manner) made friends for the sake of whiling away tedium of forced inactivity and isolation. He makes more than a movie set of the young Americans who assisted the prisoners with the perilous underground tunnel from their dug-out, so that certain of their number could periodically "escape" for an hour or two, to get warm and have a chat and, one hopes, some little snack of those then so justly famous tinned pork and beans in the friendly enemy quarters. All a game ... a somewhat grim and ironical performance (so he seems to intimate), but none to blame, not certainly that debonnaire French officer and that cluster of superficially
humane Americans . . . only his eyes went very strange and his face set when he spoke of his companions who saw fit to do away with themselves after the armistice.

We must leave that, we must leave dead bodies of heroes achieving no name on tablets set at the base of statues nor on gold-wreathed slabs set ornate and respectable above bank-presidents' mahogany roll-top desks. Our concern is not with politics or politicians, nor the housing of the poor nor the educating of the ignorant. Our concern is with screen art simply . . . and with a particular still that did not match up with the cinema scene itself.

"I saw Joyless Street a second time. It was only last year. Then I did make a point of looking for the dead body and did see it. The first time I was so enchanted with light filtering through those shutters in that half-darkened room, I was so interested in the mass effect you got with the men's thick shoulders and blocked in shapes . . . is it possible that in the earlier version the shots showing the dead woman on the floor were for some reason deleted?"

"Ah," interrupted Mr. Pabst delightedly, "I did not mean you to see the body of the murdered woman on the floor."

H. D.
CLOSE UP

NATURE AND LOVE

The eternal struggle for survival: for food, for procreation . . . "with words to that effect" the picture opens. It sounds rather like the history of this poor picture itself, which has been reduced to a skeleton of a mere six thousand feet in a desperate effort to please the censor. But our censor has studied his book on anatomical structure and sees sex-appeal even in the skeleton; there is no tricking that worthy gentleman out of his prey. Here is a clean picture that, in any sane state, would be shown in schools as straightforward sex education, and the censor giggles and chuckles in the darkness of the projection room and says that it is not "nice" for the great general public of grown-up men and women. Where is that petition form?

Beginning sequence is elementary: two stars clash together and a world is formed. Barren world, but vapors cool to water, and in the water—life! Cells with movement in them; striking contrast being drawn between the circulation of traffic in a great city. Amoebae, glittering gold of reflected light. Pleasant to think that glittering gold is the seed of life. Groups of cells are formed, multiply, split up,
reform. Perfect microscopic photography reveals more developed animalcule, showing how two bodies join together for the greater strength of the organism.

It was a mistake to color the first trace of backbone in the protoplasmic creatures, an intrusion of the film editor on the consciousness of the spectator who, by this time, is lost in the contemplation of himself aeons of years ago: nevertheless it is a certain continuity device to jump successive stages to the fish.

Sea becomes too crowded: land is sought by cold-blooded things like snakes, who have formed their backbones by burrowing in sand. There are excellent shots of young snakes bursting from their shells: but the supremacy of cold blood is challenged by the mammals who care for their young. A chance for popular appeal, for several hundred feet all manner of beasts with their young are capitalized. Quite simply we may say that we doted on the new-born foal; while those who declare that pigs are hateful, and consider them ridiculous antediluvian survivals, must surely confess that piglets have ingratiating ways.

Hurrah! Evolution has justified its travail. Grave-faced and grotesque monkeys hop across the screen; orang-outangs, with large solemn eyes, pick leaves to protect themselves from the scorching sun. The delight we got from the antics of these marvellous creatures cannot be squeezed into print; one scene showing two baby chimpanzees joining hands with mother, and one insignificant human, slowly learning to walk upright, were such a joy that we vainly groped for half-crowns which might be pressed into a projectionist's palm as bribe for re-running the reel.
CLOSE UP

What ghastly bathos—man! These sequences must have been placed in the wrong order. The filmish business of a cave-dweller fighting a bear, wife and child watching in agonized close-ups (Michael Strogoff?), makes one sceptical about the whole human race. That meditative monkey!

Producers of this film are men of science, they should never have attempted reconstructions of early days. It comes as a shock to us, no doubt as an immense relief to the Sunday Express, to find that the cave-dwellers wore coy skirts. Scenes of later domestic life, in houses built on poles above the water, are equally untrue.

Evolution brings the wing of a bird, the finely sensitive hand of a 'cellist.

The next part of the film shows evolution of the earth's creatures paralleled in the human embryo: from the moment when the sperm fertilizes the ovum to the severing of the cord of life by the obstetrician.

"Meet?" said our companion, "yourself."
"Possibly?" we whispered, "he is a film director, or a journalist, or a cameraman, or..."

It is on account of this section of the film, told as it is in dignified yet fascinating manner, that we heartily recommend the picture to schools. Here, however, the censor must have shut his eyes and looked shocked, for the rest of the film curiously resembles Evolution, an educational picture released some years ago.

After this section the producers sensationally introduce freaks: a man with webbed feet, a woman with scaled skin, an atavistic throw-back with hairy face. Why look so upset, dear reader, you pay to see them all in the circus? Although
there is a horrible moment when one of the unfortunates is shown walking in a garden, his face completely covered by a black veil hanging from the rim of his hat; a sickening sensation when his hand goes up to remove his hat ...  

Incidents not dwelt on unduly. The sex motive is rapidly surveyed throughout the whole scale of nature; from the humble snail to the superb reindeer. Salmon leap waterfalls to reach their breeding ground (in the words of the popular song: "Could Lloyd George do it?"). bull-frogs take to song, and gorgeous peacocks spread their tails. Personally, I find the evolution of a purely useless and decorative thing as a peacock's tail as difficult as the giraffe's neck is easy.

Shots are inserted to show how some species have gone back. In the dark caves of Dalmatia there are colorless lizards which have lost their eyes.

Symbolism ends the film: modern civilization and people from every corner of the world, some of the negro heads being especially fine.

Our schools need this film so much that we feel the necessity to repeat. To realize the tortures the adolescent mind can suffer one has only to read The Rampant Age, or Les Faux-Monnayeurs. A picture like this would give balanced vision; it would indicate that sex is not just a dark corner occupation invented by nasty-minded individuals, but a tremendous impulse throughout all nature.

O. B.
CLOSE UP

WHAT OF THE FUTURE

"They cannot last. I give them a few years."

Time, 1909. Subject, the movies. The oracle, D. W. Griffith.

An engaging example of the treachery of prophecy. And when a major prophet of the cinema can thus be rebuked by events, what, it may be asked, does it avail a minor member of the craft to thrust himself forward and ask attention while he delivers himself of a vision?

It would avail little, save for the fact that he is not a pessimist. This alone, aside from what he may utter, should prove an acceptable divertissement. An optimistic or encouraging outlook among those engaged in the solemn business of discussing the movies is as rare as it is hazardous.

Jeremiahs are plentiful. A prophet of gloom is assured always of respect and applause. He who foresees brightness, success, advancement, goodness, betterment, is seldom interesting. Biliousness is a far more dramatic source of inspiration than eutepsia. If you would have an attentive and sympathetic audience you must speak sombrely and with grave shakings of the head. Previews of failure and disaster are much more to the general taste. That such picturings rarely prove real is no matter. Better luck next time.
At the risk, therefore, of being snubbed, the present seer ventures to predict a rosy future for the cinema. He beholds a new era, with golden opportunities for money making, plus similar opportunities for the expression of genius and the development of dramatic art.

Before the advent of the talking picture, about a year ago, one might sincerely have said that the cinema had no future. That is to say, it had seemingly reached the limit of its possibilities. It was capable of no further advancement. Variations—yes; but merely peculiarities of treatment; elaborations; eccentricities; jazz prostitutions—all of the various oddities which mark other forms of expression that have reached the end of their normal growth.

But here come the talkies. Unforeseen, unprophesied, unprepared for. A new and unexpected avenue of development. A new lease of vitality for the movies, and offering to all prophets a hint of the futility of predicating the future on the present.

We are not here concerned with what we may think of the talkies as an institution in themselves. Whether we like them or not is of no more moment than whether we like motor cars or short skirts. They are here, and here to stay until something else shall take their place. If we resent them—so much the worse for us, because there is nothing we can do about it.

True to the teachings of human experience, this innovation is concurrently bringing with it other innovations. It is stimulating invention. Quickening ideas, and welcoming them. Encouraging adventure into collateral fields. The entire movie world is on the qui vive for novelty and change. The transitional state in which it finds itself is making it
CLOSE UP

alertly susceptible to suggestion; eagerly ready to adopt new methods, new features; to experiment with any promising divergency. To those with ought to offer of originality in the realm of the cinema this is the acceptable time. A like opportunity may not again present itself in a score of years.

What is to be the outcome? What of the future? Let us consult the oracle Griffith. He is feeling better now than he did twenty years ago. Moreover, his pessimism at that time could not have reflected his inner convictions. Otherwise, he would scarcely have continued to stake his fortune on the then struggling and despised movies. Here is what he now says; and he is pre-eminently entitled to a hearing as the Moses of filmdom:

So far all our silent pictures have been written on sand. The medium is far from being equal to the medium of words, written or spoken. I welcome talking pictures because, with the aid of music and words, we shall see pictures in the near future that can be classed with the great plays, poems, paintings, music and other art forms. Most of our present pictures are good for only a few years, and then, through their faulty medium, they become obsolete; while the plays of Shakespeare are as beautiful now as the day they were written.

When the motion picture creates something to compare with the plays of Euripides, that have lived two thousand years, or the works of Homer, or Keats’s “Ode to a Grecian Urn”, or the music of Handel, Bach and Wagner, then it will become established as an art form. Dialogue in pictures, I am sure, will accomplish this end.
CLOSE UP

With the possible exception of Joseph Schenck, Griffith's outlook is now shared by all of the Hollywood producers. The initial period of doubt has been remarkably short-lived. This change of attitude has been wrought, not alone by the rapid development and improvements of the phonofilm, but also and more particularly by the ever brightening promise of its possibilities.

But our look into the future is not bounded by the promise of the talking picture alone. The incidental newnesses and developments that are accompanying the present transition have also their vistas of promise.

Dialogue and music will be but a part of the cinema of to-morrow. Their effectiveness will be enhanced by color and by a three-dimensioned screen. The actors will have the semblance of living beings. The present flat presentments in colorless shades will be replaced by reflected actualities.

The screen will be transformed into a window, through which we shall look in stereoscopic perspective upon a living, audible world. The roar of cataract, the babble of brook, the twitter of birds, the thunder and thrash of storm—all will contribute their part to the illusion of aliveness and to the heightening of dramatic and artistic effect.

Pictures in natural color and with accompanying sound will be printed on paper rolls, instead of the present-day expensive and inflammable film. Screening will be by means of reflection in place of direct projection. Homes will be equipped with reflectoscopes, as they are now equipped with phonographs and radios, and moving-picture rolls will be as cheaply bought or rented as are books or gramophone records.
CLOSE UP

Men of the greatest genius will become producers and directors. Max Reinhardt's recent advent into the field of talking pictures is an index of this. The pictures of tomorrow, with their extended scope for expression, will become individualistic. "Style" will constitute as salient an element of cinema creation as it does now of art and literature. With but two or three exceptions, creators of pictures to-day reveal no individuality. The limitations of the silent drama, combined with the type of men who compose the majority of our directors, offer scant opportunity for distinctiveness or originality.

Shallow talents and small minds will find themselves unequal to the requirements and the opportunities of the coming cinema era. The day of mediocrity and bluff in the leadership of photodramaturgy is already doomed. After the blush of its novelty is gone, the phonofilm will be obliged to develop its fullest possibilities, in order to hold the public. And this can and will be accomplished only by men and women of genuine ability, education, and genius.

The silent drama will continue to exist. It offers a medium for expression within the limits of those incapable of more exacting technique or more costly production. Moreover, there will always be those to whom the flat, silent, colorless picture will appeal as an art form or as a source of entertainment.

But the world at large will follow the new cinema development. It will offer immeasurably greater variety and a fuller satisfaction. Our modern world is a world of realism; and no art form yet invented has so closely approximated the realistic as will that of the cinema of the near future.
All in all, the outlook is alluringly bright. At any rate, such is the vision of the present seer. He lays no claim to inspiration. Nor to any revelation other than an intimate knowledge of the evolution of the movies and an illuminating experience running back to the days when those who are now loudest in their clamor for a continuance of the status quo would not deign to look at a movie nor so much as recognize the silent drama as worthy of attention.

Clifford Howard.

THE NOVELIST WHO WAS A SCENARIST

Your first hope on opening The King Who Was A King, "The Book of a Film", by H. G. Wells (Benn, 7s. 6d. net), is that all these italics are not sub-titles. By this time you have found the Introductory Chapter, which calls itself The Film, the Art Form of the Future, and have warmed up quite nicely reading that "We knew how to convey much that we had to say by a woven fabric of printed words or by scene and actor, fine 'lines' and preface assisting, and it was with extraordinary reluctance, if at all, that we could be won to admit that on the screen a greater depth of intimation, a more subtle and delicate fabric of suggestion, a completer beauty
and power, might be possible than any our tried and trusted equipment could achieve.”

The King Who Was A King, we learn, is the expansion of an earlier scenario written for one Mr. Godal who sold a title, or at any rate advertised a title as a film ready for booking, and then came to Mr. Wells to write it for him. The scenario was entitled The Peace of the World, and, as Mr. Wells himself remarks, here in the best conventional tradition it appears revised and expanded bearing another name. “I am told,” says he, “there is ample financial backing now for any production I can invent, and when I ask if I may make my scenario as difficult and expensive as I like, I am told to go ahead. So here I go ahead.”

Yes, the italics are indeed sub-titles. But whirrrrr, is not that a projector grinding? Now whose is that prelude, and why do we see it not as it should be but as it probably would be? Henrik Galeen? Why don’t we see it as Wagner would take it, and why do we see it as Gunther Krampf would try to? Assuredly, or wouldn’t it?—it would look like a tableau at a World Fair. The woman would have a raffia skirt and hibiscus in her hair. Unless, of course, Mr. Wells himself stepped in and took the reins, when we hope she wouldn’t.

But, my word! the next bit is gorgeous! I do like the quill pen dipped in ink and the lines A draws on the map with it in bright red. Click, click, there’s good cutting—good (for it’s the coming word) montage in this. Not unlike The Spy, the terse mechanism, and crisp gesture. Not unlike what we’ve been praising for so long, the Russian touch. Perhaps you are helped to see it that way because none but
Mr. Wells and the Russians have dealt with material that matters.

Now, Mr. Wells, this is a great thing, and it’s about time to show Britain the way it ought to go. You have done that. In many ways you have saved Britain’s face, for it is too grim to go on allowing the world to believe that *Confetti* and *Sailors Don’t Care* are the ideals of British cinematography. Now, about all these sub-titles. Here, if ever, is the place for sound. Sound in its logical progression from the basic principle illustrated by Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandroff in a previous *Close Up*. I would not have words passing across the images, I would use voices instead and sounds instead, and not even bother to show the face of the man speaking unless it happened simply to be there. In fact, as in the Sound Imagery suggested by Robert Herring in this issue.

K. M.

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**THE CINEMA IN PARIS**

*L’Argent*, directed by Marcel L’Herbier, *Le Capitaine Fracasse*, directed by Albert Cavalcanti, and *Le Tournoi*, directed by Jean Renoir, have been shown recently in Paris.
CLOSE UP

Of these three films, whose directors are all interesting from different points of view, L'Argent, by Marcel L'Herbier, is the most important.

But we must first make a reservation. For the film, as it is shown at present, was cut by the renters against the will of the director and without his knowledge. Therefore criticism is difficult, because the gaps which are noticeable here and there are doubtless due to the clumsy cuts that have been made.

But even as it stands, L'Herbier's film is very beautiful and full of cinematic qualities, and it would have been almost a perfect film had it not been for one thing. The scenario loses much of value through a disconcerting error; instead of treating the subject from the point of view of the struggle for money itself, L’Herbier shows us only the struggle of Saccard the banker against Gundermann, the banker. This is the weakest point and the reason that the film is disappointing in spite of its great qualities.

It is time that the importance of the scenario were realised, for producers have not yet accepted the fact, and until they do we shall never have films that completely satisfy. With the best intention in the world we cannot interest ourselves in the possible tragic fate of a banker when we are ready to be interested in real tragedy—that is, the merciless battle concerning the golden calf between all bankers and their employees. But here all subsidiary figures are just marionettes, and it is for this reason the film fails in complete appeal.

It is a fundamental fault; otherwise the subject is treated with care and only a slight over-intellectuality of L'Herbier damps our pleasure a little. An intellectuality which is
expressed by the sets, which, though very beautiful, do not seem quite to fit into the frame of the film, and an intellectuality which is apparent sometimes in the rather forced acting of Brigitte Helm.

As the cutting is not the work of L’Herbier, it would not be just to criticise it.

The acting of Marie Glory is really good and full of reality. This young actress has much sensitiveness, an attractive face, and radiates a pleasant sincerity. Alcover, Saccard the banker, is only half successful, for his acting is full of theatrical gestures and he has yet much to learn. Alfred Abel knows his work thoroughly and the sureness of his gestures, though full of routine, are very reposing.

Some noises were added from the Bourse, and I consider these sound effects add much to the emotional quality of the work.

*Le Capitaine Fracasse* and *Le Tournoi* are both historical films, and it is incomprehensible to me why more people do not protest against spectacles which seem to me personally to have nothing to do with the cinema.

Therefore, in spite of the skill and the photographic resources at the disposition of these two directors, it is not to be wondered at that their efforts were in vain. But I must add that for me historical film has no reason for existence.

In the first place the film imposes images with such force and precision that it upsets all pre-conceived ideas on this or that epoch, and again, we ourselves may not know what has been the signification of such and such a gesture, therefore all such attempts, no matter how intelligent they are, cannot justify their means.
CLOSE UP

There is perhaps only the Russian system of making historical films to explain the events of the revolution, and there, by re-working historical facts to the conclusions of to-day, they succeed in holding our interest.

These elements are lacking in the French films and though Pierre Blanchar is a good actor, he cannot equal a Douglas Fairbanks, and his creation is not so good as those of his former romantic roles.

The same criticism applies as well to the principal actor in *Le Tournoi*, by Jean Renoir, Aldo Naldi, the celebrated fencer, although his skill with the épée gives him the supremacy over Blanchar in *Le Capitaine Fracasse*.

It must be understood that these criticisms are not addressed to the two directors, but rather to those renters who, in spite of previous example, insist on repeating such spectacular pieces. They do not, indeed, hesitate to spend millions on them, while refusing a far more modest sum to directors who propose infinitely more cinematic scenarios.

It is possible that the films may be successful with the general public. This proves nothing, for the taste of the public is constantly spoilt by the paid press, which never protests against the horrible stupidities constantly distributed by commercial films.

It is, indeed, a tragedy that the efforts and the cinematic sense of a Cavalcanti are spoilt by their blind obstinacy, when such directors could give deep satisfaction to all those of us who have not lost faith in the cinema.

The *contingentement* has shown already in its short existence the profound error of the system. For example,
already more "fiches de contingentement" have been delivered than the number of films admitted to be introduced into France. Naturally, they will now modify the application of the law, but it will still remain as tiresome as before. All it will give, as it has given till now, will be a prize to mediocrity.

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Marcel L’Herbier is preparing the realisation of *Nuits de Princes*, from Joseph Kessel’s novel, for Albatross Sequana. Probably Jacques Catelain and Gina Manes will be included among the artistes.

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René Clair is preparing for Sofar a detective film of the type very popular in Paris at the moment. Again they have fallen into the same fault as in other cases. Because some American detective films were made, they imagine they have found the solution to all problems in imitating these films constantly, instead of choosing a subject that would interest from the point of view of its humanity. Of course, Sternberg’s *Underworld* was an excellent film, but there is no reason to repeat it constantly.

Jean Lenauer.
CHINE—MACHINES—ELECTRICITE

Ciné-Club de Genève annonçait pour samedi 12 Janvier la projection de :

La marche des machines
et La nuit électrique d'Eugène Deslaw
La Rose de Pu-Chui

trois films aimablement prêtés par le Studio 28 à Paris, et tout à fait inconnus encore, ici. Films de luxe, les deux premiers, parce que films d'amateur, rareté le troisième puisqu'il fut réalisé par une firme de Shanghai.

Se serait-on avisé, jadis, de trouver belle cette insensible mais vivante création de l'homme, la Machine. Elle était l'antipode de la poésie, l'incarnation d'un réalisme brutal et inesthétique et le poète fuyait l'usine où il croyait ne pouvoir trouver jamais aucune inspiration. En s'approchant du mécanicien, quelques-uns ont fait une merveilleuse découverte et l'art a trouvé un aliment nouveau. La machine est dans le film une animatrice peu ordinaire. Un train en marche ne réalise-t-il pas la vision la plus forte que l'on puisse obtenir.

Souvenons-nous, à cet égard, de certains passages du film "La Roue".
Deslaw nous a donné un petit poème visuel sur la marche des machines. Les images en sont heureusement choisies, pour la plupart, et l'on ne se lasse guère d'en suivre la succession variée. Travail méticuleux de la scie, opiniâtre va et vient du cylindre, rotation de gigantesques tambours, les sujets alternent rapidement, voici encore les bras infatigables du pétrin mécanique, anxieux de recontrer une résistance qui leur est refusée, puis la frêle silhouette d'une grue enlevant son fardeau. Il ne manque peut-être, à l'inventaire, que quelques spécimens de machines susceptibles de faire naître une sensation plus impressionnante encore de puissance, mais des films tels que celui-ci gagnent à être brefs.

Moins intéressante peut-être est la Nuit électrique, où la fantaisie de l'auteur met à rude épreuve nos facultés d'adaptation visuelle. Les multiples illuminations qui apparaissent sur l'écran sont d'inégale valeur, reviennent parfois plus souvent qu'à leur tour. Certaines lampes de carrousels s'obstinent à défiler devant nos yeux sans que nous leur en sachions gré, à vrai dire. Un peu trop d'insistance donc, ici et là, à mon avis, et pas assez d'imagination dans le choix des sujets. C'est du cinéma pur, il est vrai, mais incomplet, approximatif, et Deslaw n'a rendu qu'un hommage partiel à la lumière électrique en se bornant à l'enregistrement d'enseignes et de feux d'artifice. N'y aurait-il pas de belles pages à ajouter à cet album, une gare, un port, de nuit, un dépôt de tramways, peuvent fournir de bons tableaux.

Les deux films de Deslaw nous autorisent cependant, en dépit de leurs imperfections, à espérer beaucoup du talent de ce coming man.
La rose de Pu-Chui est le premier film intégralement chinois projeté à Genève. Evoquant une légende indigène, il ne manque ni de poésie, ni de sentiment. Le thème en est fort simple : une jeune fille distinguée, naturellement, et un étudiant, se rencontrent. C'est le coup de foudre... le texte l'indique au reste, mais la scène suffirait à nous en informer, les deux acteurs chinois qui l'interprètent sont admirables de naturel et, ma foi, aussi attachants que Greta Garbo et John Gilbert. Un danger menace la jeune fille et ce danger est personnifié par un redoutable bandit qui décide de s'emparer d'elle. Voici le bandit en question, au milieu de sa troupe aux accoutrements bizarres. Quoique fort grimaçant, le personnage ne laisse pas de nous égayer par sa nervosité excessive. Il part à l'assaut du monastère qui abrite l'objet de ses désirs et ses guerriers s'ébranlent à sa suite, d'un pas de course original qui nous donne à penser qu'ils sont bien aisés de se dégourdir les jambes mais pas impatients du tout d'arriver. Un portail vénérable défend l'accès du monastère. Mais tout serait perdu néanmoins sans une ruse de l'étudiant qui envoie un serviteur zélé quérir du secours. Seul contre tous les ennemis, ce brave homme réussit à se frayer un passage grâce aux savants moulinets qu'il exécute avec sa canne. Le secours arrive sous forme de guerriers blancs et une bataille épique se livre aussitôt. Beaucoup de gestes, peu ou pas de morts. Les bandits s'enfuyent. Tout est bien qui finit bien.

Ce film présente un réel intérêt. La technique de la prise de vues est primitive, sans doute, mais le jeu des acteurs, leurs expressions, ne manquent pas de sincérité. La note comique est soutenue presque constamment par d'ingénieuses
trouvailles. Pour juger toutefois du degré de perfection atteint par les cinéastes chinois, il faut attendre d'autres productions, les voir à l'œuvre en particulier dans la réalisation d'un film moins spécial que la Rose de Pu-Chui qui présente une atmosphère de légende, tout comme le fragment précédemment projeté du film russe Zvenihora.

Freddy Chevalley.

AFTER MY PREMIERES

There is a rule that all directors should achieve some such thing as an article before the first showing of their films. It brings to mind the custom of pronouncing one's name very loudly and intelligibly when one is introduced to people whose good opinion is desired. A little literary exercise ordinarily finishes the work of the cinematographer. For one does not expect to change the cutting after the first showing, it would be a catastrophe, a disaster.

I well remember the bewilderment of an old director when he learnt that I recut my film two weeks after the first showing at the Studio 28. That it is possible to observe the reactions of the public and to take these into account, even to conform one's work to them, this he found impossible to understand. But I observe the reactions of the public and I try to conform
CLOSE UP

to them. The time is past when opinions depended upon the judgment of the armchair, where painters formed criticisms according to the situation of a key to the picture. Permanent contact with the public and with objective and serious criticism is absolutely indispensable to the young.

I consider my films as trial films. La Marche des Machines is only a means of optically "direct action", of action upon the spectator's eyes without any literary logic. In La Marche des Machines there is neither a literary beginning nor an end, scenes last only long enough in order that the spectator cannot confuse them with reality. The rhythm of images reduces to nothingness that part of them which is documentary and instructive. They are not to be understood. They are to be felt merely.

Les Nuits Electriques is an effort towards the replacing of pure cutting and pure rhythm with a subject of the "avant-garde". (Forgive my use of this pretentious and annoying expression.) Publicity of publicity signs, luminous projection of lights, their general and torrential invasion of a city, tempted me. And the woman, eternally turning, the sudden apparition of love... It is a veritable evasion, a moment of freedom, a piercing of the sad and slow rhythm in which we are constrained to live. A protest against the literary presentation of nights, those nights, you know, when nothing moves, those nights where there was nothing but candles, petrol, an annoyingly old moon, used to death by all these symbolist versifiers.

There are neither literary people nor sub-titles in my films. The modern spectator is accustomed already to do without sub-titles, but he is still used to adapting himself according
to the literary logic of human movement. The success of *La Marche des Machines* proves that the spectator can assimilate the sensations and desire of the creator of a film simply by the interpretation of the rhythm.

*Les Nuits Electriques* has proved to me that plastic perfection, photography of "sets", of *details*, is not in accordance with rhythmic films. Less fussing over sets, give premier importance to movement—here is the essential principle.

The foundation a rhythmic passage—a "gag"—will be the base of the work I expect to undertake in the film *La Marche des Sports* and *Rues, Boulevards, Avenues*.

Financial ruin for my plans was predicted on every hand. But, together with the silencing of the critics, these gloomy prophesies were not fulfilled. My films, which did not cost more than 9,000 francs, are showing in all the intellectual cinemas of Europe. America has bought them, and this has permitted me to go on with my work. It is true it has sometimes been difficult to continue my experiments. But that is the common destiny of the young. I do not spend other peoples' money on my films. I have no overseer. I am free. I create what I want. Romanticism, perhaps. But this romanticism—really rather rare—is comforting and gives one reason to hope.

EUGEN DESLAW.
CLOSE UP

COMMENT AND REVIEW

Film Curiosities—No. 3.

ASTA NIELSEN IN HAMLET.

One does not think "Poor films", but "Poor Shakespeare". Claudius moved his jaws in such vehement self-mutterings that I am sure he would be a success in one of those presentations of Shakespeare in modern dress: everyone would take him for a "go-getting" American having difficulty with his chewing gum. Ophelia's plumpness may be historically accurate, no doubt the period epithet would be a "comely wench". Polonious must have got mixed up in the cast of the picture by mistake; I am sure that the company on the adjacent stage were playing Alladin with a Shakespearean old man for hero. Scenes were acted as if they were set on a conjurer's platform, all the properties were laid out before the curtain went up; be it a sword or two mugs of ale they were always waiting conveniently on a neighbouring table. Yet one cannot blame the films any more than one can blame the mirror which reflects the tell-tale crow's-feet.

The certitude comes that it cannot be the film's fault when Asta Nielsen, so self-assured, sweeps through a banqueting hall, voluminous black cloak billowing from her shoulders.
The only sex interest of this picture is supplied by Hamlet falling in love with Horatio. Nay, be not alarmed, for Hamlet is a woman and none other than Asta Nielsen; but she must ape the man for her mother, in a time of national crisis, gave out to the people that an heir has been born to the throne. William forgot to think of that! Therefore Hamlet walks the battlements in a tight-fitting, high-necked black costume.

Asta Nielsen’s face and the black costume, a white passion flower on a black stalk.

No one suspects her masquerade, from the court physician to the plump Ophelia; no one marvels at her smooth complexion, or is distressed because she goes to sleep with her clothes on. I believe that she must have enjoyed an extraordinary amount of privacy for the period.

In its day this film is said to have made a sensation; it deserves its position as film history. Care and expense were taken, although it was surely unorthodox to set the famous scene with the strolling players in the gardens of Elsinore in broad day-light.

Oswell Blakeston.

Film Curiosities—No. 4.

The Devil’s Church.

Nobody seems to know who made this picture or who plays in it; but nobody will contest its antiquity or its curiousness.
CLOSE UP

Wardour Street whispered that there was a nude in it, and left it at that! By the kindness of Mr. Ogilvie I was allowed to descend into a cellar and watch this film flicker out its odd story.

The devil goes on a busman’s holiday. A farmer and his wife live together fairly happily, but the wife longs for a child. There is rather a remarkable shot in which she sees herself as a Madonna with Child receiving homage from the village folk. In uneventful village life the arrival of a baby brings the mother, for a few days, into a weak limelight: grapes from the vicarage, a trinket from husband, calls from neighbours. Just as a chorus-girl might dream of a first night’s triumph in a sensational play, so this peasant dreams of a child.

The village church burns down: the devil enters the village. He tempts the woman till she begs him to give her the child. Having an eye for the picturesque, the devil drags her into a wood where dryads play.

“During which”, as the gentleman said in one of Mr. Cochran’s revues, the local officials gather together to fix the position of the new church. There are three villages, and the only solution seems to be to build the church at an equal distance from all three; on this spot is the hero’s farm.

To celebrate his conquest the devil burns down the husband’s house. The latter attempts to put out the flames with handfuls of water, but his wife returns and executes an abandoned dance before the footlights of the blazing house. Disgusted, her husband (not without opposition) gives his farm to the building committee. However, the committee refuse to supply the money for the church unless they are
CLOSE UP

allowed to appropriate some land for personal use. The cleric has scruples. Meditating on the despicable characteristics of mankind he absentmindedly kisses the farmer's wife; a gesture which draws the devil to his elbow.

He, the devil, will build the church, and it shall belong to the vicar unless he denies his faith before the altar: then all within the church's walls shall be damned.

"A miracle, a miracle," cry the villagers, "a new church has sprung up from the ground."

"The devil has built it," answers the clergyman, "let us go and cleanse it."

Singing hymns, the entire village march on the church; a procession which provides the strongest scenes in the picture. Meanwhile the devil is busy in his splendid new church hiding nude women behind curtains.

The vicar very nearly gets the best of it, when the farmer's wife denounces him as her seducer. The devil informs them that they had all better come along to the other place... Somebody wakes up!

Photography is incroyable, there is no subtlety in the telling. Two beer mugs overlap on a table, handles balance an abstract design, a tiny thing which we notice for ourselves. To-day a smooth gesture, an inclined head would point it out.

As the devil says in one of his titles: "Well, well, well."

Oswell Blakeston.
CLOSE UP

A Crisis Over.

The English version of Pabst’s Abwege, under the title of Crisis, was extraordinary faithful. Most of the scenes introducing the drug seller have been cut out, but when we think of the horrid things that have happened to other Continental pictures we can only express our gratitude to the Alpha Film Company.

Yet in a way we felt that we were seeing a different picture to the one we saw in Berlin, as the copy shown at the London Hippodrome was not tinted. It made us realize how important this question is, and how necessary it is for a director to arrange his own tints.

O. B.

TWO BOOKS

The British Journal Photographic Almanac for 1929 is a book of 800 pages, with 64 pictorial photographs in gravure, and it costs two shillings. Most of the photographs look as if they had been taken after a careful study of an elementary text-book of composition; there is so much striving after pyramidal, diagonal, elliptical or tunnel compositions. But the text is really splendid documentation of chemical formulas, apparatus, recent innovations, et cetera. Neither can one complain about the copious advertisements which make the production of this volume possible; for it is rather thrilling to be invited to call in at a shop in the Jerusalemer-
strasse of Berlin to see an "Invisible Camera" (as used by detectives of the best traditions).

Another achievement is *Photograms of the Year*, at five shillings. Mr. F. J. Mortimer has found some lovely things: an interesting still-life that shows the stiff collar in a new aspect, some sulkily irradiant coils of leaden wire, fragile brittleness of light from phials and retorts, and the modish elegance of Cecil Beaton.

The publishers of these two volumes (Henry Greenwood and Iliffe and Sons) are to be congratulated.

Oswell Blakeston.

**Hollywood Notes.**

Max Reinhardt, who recently arrived in Hollywood from his home in Austria, has settled down to work on his personally directed picture, *The Miracle Girl*. Lillian Gish plays the stellar rôle. The photodrama was written especially for her by Hugo von Hofmansthal, the Austrian poet-playwright. The film colony is promised some interesting and arresting innovations in picture making, with Reinhardt in command and enjoying *carte blanche* to carry out his personal ideas. Credit for this notable undertaking goes to Joseph Schenck, head of United Artists. Reinhardt had heretofore consistently declined the many offers from Hollywood seeking to induce him to come here and apply his genius to the celluloid drama.
CLOSE UP

George Arliss is to return to the screen. He will begin work in April on the first of three talking pictures. While in Los Angeles recently, playing in The Merchant of Venice, he was an interested visitor at several of the larger Hollywood studios, studying the mechanism of the phonofilm and acquainting himself with this recent cinema innovation. Its possibilities strongly appealed to him. "The works of the great master, Shakespeare, may soon be uniquely used in the talking pictures," he declared. "We have only had the advent of the real talking picture up to the present, but when this device or art is fully developed the true greatness of Shakespeare may be embraced in this development."

* * *

The Western picture, after a vogue of nearly twenty years, is fading out. None of the larger studios include any of this type in their current schedules. Tom Mix, hero of some two hundred Wild West dramas, is completing his last film. Dramas of the underworld and mystery stories are the present vogue. Of the latter type, Paramount-Lasky has just completed The Canary Murder Case, and has now under way The Greene Murder Case. Paul Leni's The Last Warning, a Universal production, has been drawing large crowds wherever shown. The Trial of Mary Dugan is in production at the M-G-M studio. Incidentally, Mme. Adrienne d'Ambricourt, a one-time member of the Sarah Bernhardt and the Comedie-Française companies, will have a leading part in this film. Sir Philip Gibbs' dramatic story of mystery and spiritualism, Darkened Rooms, is scheduled for early production at the Paramount studio. The picture will be directed
CLOSE UP

by Lothar Mendes and will include Evelyn Brent and William Powell in the cast.

Another trend in cinema style is to be noted in the exotic genre picture, in which the cast is composed of the actual type portrayed. M-G-M is producing an all-Mexican film and an all-Chinese film, each of them in color and with sound. Several Negro pictures have already been released and others are on the way.

* * *

First National, now under the Warner Brothers's banner, is preparing to spend eighteen million dollars in talking pictures during the coming year. Universal's budget calls for an outlay of sixteen millions. The recently reorganized FBO, which includes a merger with the Radio Corporation of America and a change of name to RKO, will probably invest twenty millions in phonofilms during the next twelve months. Warner Brothers's schedule calls for thirty talking pictures, at an average cost of half a million. And these are but typical examples of Hollywood's present enthusiasm over the recently arrived audible film. Such vast expenditures on the part of the hard-headed, commercially-minded producers, who have their entire fortunes at stake, will give the Doubting Thomases something to ponder over.

* * *

Douglas Fairbanks's The Man in the Iron Mask, his latest picture, will present a novelty in sound effects. Instead of having the characters speak their lines from the screen, a single voice will be heard describing the action and the motivations of the actors, after the manner of the old Greek chorus. This experiment will be watched with interest. It
CLOSE UP

may serve to solve the present problem of showing talking pictures in foreign countries. The speech of the invisible chorus could readily be rendered in any language.

* * *

"Crystalizing" film by immersing it in a chemical solution which gives it a "grain" or wood-cut effect, is a recently invented process which is being used for the first time in the filming of The Bridge of San Luis Rey. John Nickolaus, of the M-G-M laboratories, is the inventor of it.

* * *

Frank Borzage, as the director, and Janet Gaynor and Charles Farrel as the leading actors—the combination responsible for the success of Seventh Heaven and Street Angel—will again join forces in the production of a picture at the Fox Studio. The story is an adaptation of Tristam Tupper’s Three Episodes in the Life of Timothy Osborn. The film title has not yet been selected.

* * *

Since the advent of the "talkies" many of the foreign players, especially among the women, have succeeded with significant rapidity in discarding their marked foreign accent. During the reign of the silent drama such an accent was a badge of distinction. Indeed, a number of enterprising native Americans assumed it and cultivated it, as a means of gaining an entrée to the films. As it is now a liability rather than an asset, this affectation has gone into the discard along with many other now obsolescent accompaniments of the movies.

* * *

An opaque film is one of the latest cinema inventions. The picture is photographed on one side, and the sound on the
other. Projection on the screen is effected by means of reflected light. No commercial use has yet been made of it, but it is typical of the many inventions that have come into being since the advent of the talking pictures—inventions in the fields of optics and acoustics—and tending to demonstrate that the initial difficulties besetting the talking films will eventually be met.

* * *

Jacques Feyder, the noted French director, is a recent addition to the Hollywood colony. He is under contract with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Upon his arrival he graciously declared that he expects to learn much of cinema technique and artistry while here. He does not think that the talking picture will replace the silent drama, but will serve as an additional popular form of entertainment. A conservative opinion which many share with him.

* * *

If the same story were filmed in two versions—as a silent picture and as a talking picture—which would the public prefer? Carl Laemmle, president of Universal, is investing two million dollars in order to obtain the answer to this question. He is preparing two complete, separate productions of Broadway; one in the old regulation style, as silent drama, with printed titles, and the other according to the latest mode, with every movement of the lips audible. Both versions are scheduled to be finished in April, at which time they will be run simultaneously in two theatres in New York.

Mr. Laemmle has requested Mr. Hays, head of the Motion Picture Producers’s and Distributors’s Association, to appoint a committee of representative critics to pass judgment on the
comparative merits of the two pictures. Their findings, in conjunction with the verdict of the public as recorded by the box office, will go far toward settling the present wide-spread discussion as to whether the talkies are to be or not to be.

* * *

Norma Talmadge is preparing to make her debut in an all-talking picture. The vehicle chosen for this venture is Channing Pollock’s stage success of 1919-21, The Sign on the Door. Miss Talmadge, who began her cinema career in 1911, at the age of fourteen, has had no stage experience. Her appearance on the screen, therefore, in a speaking part will be awaited with much interest.

C. H.

The Four Feathers.

The Four Feathers (see stills in this issue) will have complete sound effects and musical synchronization, but no dialogue. This is the decision made by Adolph Zukor and Jesse L. Lasky after seeing the picture in rough-cut form. Dialogue would slow down the action.

The directors of The Four Feathers are Merian C. Cooper and Ernest B. Schoedsack, writers, photographers, soldiers of fortune, adventurers, makers of Grass and Chang. They spent more than a year in the wilds of Africa filming sequences for The Four Feathers, and exposed over 60,000 feet of film.

The cast of The Four Feathers includes Richard Arlen, Fay Wray, Clive Brook, William Powell, Theodor von Eltz, Noah Beery, George Fawcett, Philippe de Lacy and others.
Although *Cosmos* has been passed by the censors, we are informed from Berlin and by those who have seen the foreign version, that practically all the sequences relating to sex have been deleted. As the primary intention of this film is a scientific documentation of the principle and function of sex throughout the whole of Nature, its value compared with that of the original version can perhaps be estimated. *Jeanne Ney* was slightly under 9,000 feet abroad. In the Kinematograph Year Book for 1929 it is listed as 5,835 feet. *Do not be put off with small victories.*

Intellectual liberty in England demands a complete reconstruction of the principles of censorship. We are now manacled by something that is obsolete, divorced from reality, at cross-purposes with artistic, scientific and cultural progress, and devoid of any consideration of the wishes of the public, or the advantage of morality.

If the only aspects of sex life sanctioned on the screen are those which lead directly to the necessity for such films as *Dangers of Ignorance*, and the only aspects of sex life tabooed are the scientific, educative, biological and medical, we are confronted with something that is openly opposed to the advancement of health and security, and a direct advocate of the antithesis of its supposed function. It is a quibble, an impertinence, and, in its determination to conceal thoughtful facts, a menace to the young. It is a carillon of cracked bells as a hymn of praise to aphrodisiac, and its profession to stand for culture and the preservation of immature audiences from harm is analogous to sending a child into the fever ward of an hospital, forbidding immunisation and announcing that you would sooner see a child dead than exposed to contamination.
CLOSE UP

Our censorship is the most illiterate in Europe. Lupu Pick remarked that every State has the right to defend its elementary principles of existence. The only way to defend ours is to reform the system of censorship—which, as a paradox is quaint and as a truth irrefutable.

Sign our petition form enclosed in this issue, the purpose of which is to help bring about the much-needed reconstitution.

The petition closes on March 15th. As soon after this date as possible it will be presented for consideration to the House of Commons.

Meanwhile, a report issued in early February by the London County Council reveals the fact that to all intents and purposes the very function of censorship is nullified by one clause which states clearly that no films printed on non-flam stock come under the jurisdiction of the London County Council, and that these films may be shown in licensed or unlicensed premises without let or hindrance from the Council on condition that the entertainment is entirely free from any element, such as music, subject to license in the ordinary way.

In other words, there is no law to prevent any film rejected by the Council or the Censor from being shown publicly throughout England provided it is printed on non-flam stock and shown without accompaniment.

What an opportunity! It's not agin' the law, and it may be splitting a fine hair, but drastic gestures are essential in a country where you may buy a newly baked meat patty after 8 p.m. and go to prison if you try to buy a stale one!
Most excellent of papers is *The Cinema*. The tone of our voice is wholehearted, because, if you look carefully, you will see in our eye the expression with which one child regards the other’s bag of candy.

This time, like last time, it is another borrowed plume, and, to go on mixing metaphors, how thorough (if you come to look at it) is *The Cinema’s* survey of the All Mans’ Land of the film. It is like an industrious rodent burrowing under the somewhat Grimm’s Forest Oak of cinematic development, dwelling in the roots, and often bringing to light the subterranean pests that try to devour them. A recent issue disinterred this wriggling centipede:—

The Reverend Tyler Lane, a man of God who ministers to the spiritual needs of the good people of Sheffield, and would like to minister to those of the bad ones, has been stretching himself oratorically on the matter of music on Sundays. He does not approve of the musical entertainment provided in Sheffield cinemas on the Sabbath, and has appealed to the Council to stop them.

He sees the mark of the cloven hoof on the sidewalks of Sheffield, and brimstone and sulphur emanating from the Sabbath saxophone. “I fear,” says he, “that some of the people behind the Sunday concerts do not regard the Christian Sunday in the same light as religious people.” Well, it isn’t in the Scriptures, Tyler, but you’ve said a mouthful.

It wants a case made out yet for the regulation of the people’s rest and recreation by the pious and the psalmists. It may seem strange to those who go into the gutter and complain about the dirt, but it is permissible for tired working folk to seek, on the only day they have to their ease, some
CLOSE UP

relaxation and forgetfulness from the toil of earning a living. It is possible, too, that in the cinema, listening to the music or even looking at the films, they are as near to God, as clean and as morally well as any neighbour armed with a hymnbook in a local Bethel.

As to the objection of the Reverend Lane to Sunday labour. His kidney are ever ready to flutter a flag of freedom when it synchronises with their celestial propaganda. But do they carry the same eagerness for reform on to Monday and Tuesday? And do they scorn the morning paper printed on Sunday night? Do they live in darkness rather than use the gas made at the works on Sunday? Do they leave the Sunday morning milk untouched on the family porch? Well, you know what the lady in Pygmalion said.

They don't do any of these things because they interrupt their immediate comfort. But when it interrupts the comfort of the common people, they try to blackmail them into acquiescence with the sword of fire and the roar of heavenly thunder.

As a matter of fact, my intimate and comprehensive knowledge with the Holy Word does not call to mind any permission for teachers to work on Sundays. Indeed, the only relevant text forbids even the cattle—or, as another commandment mentions more specifically, the ox and the ass. But perhaps after all the category does not include Wesleyan divine.

The Prophet of Doom said one good say when he let slip: "In certain respects the church is twenty years behind the people." He will receive further evidence of this when the

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matter comes for debate before the City Council on February 6th.

A few days later came this final jet of insect-killer:—

My little exposition of the machinations of that Prophet of Doom, the Rev. Tyler Lane, of Sheffield, has moved a correspondent to reminiscence, which is unhappy for the saintly one. The writer is C. Hatton, of Kingswinford, a well-known figure in Yorkshire journalistic circles.

He writes:—

"I was in Sheffield a few years ago, and attended a religious service conducted by this gentleman at the Albert Hall Cinema. As far as I can remember, there was a solo violinist and also a vocalist performing, and I have never before or since attended a service which so closely resembled a sacred concert.

"Presumably the artists were paid, and out of the collection. So the Rev. Lane did not scorn to bill these attractions in order to swell his offertory."

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BY THE EDITOR

It is evident we need, after all, to have a firm conviction about the cinema. Even if that conviction has no words to explain itself. This month I had planned to say a little about reason, meaning partly by that balance. And it had been an intention—not to pick a quarrel, but to pick a friendly if critical bone with those whose beliefs can take no count of any intermediate shade between black and white. People with ideals (the first necessity) sum-totalling their statement of belief by believing merely. Which so far sounds good, but isn’t.

I believe white. Good. And I do not believe simply, but proclaim that all who do not believe white, white, white (as the blood of the lamb) are black (as the bottomless pit). Not good.

I want to call your attention to the great number of disciples who pass as competent critics, whereas a disciple is not a critic but a believer.
White is white. If so why is it and what makes it so?—which is our response and their anathema. Make no question of it, white is white, and should it so happen that some among us do not care for white, then out upon us for renegades, we are black as they make them. Yes, even blacker!

Which—all of it—is badinage or crossed blades, but helps nobody except to let off steam.

In making credos and crusades the important necessity for analysis is overlooked, and when again, if you are temerarious enough, you question why, the answer is never mind why. So then, again white is white, and if cinema as I see it is white, then all the rest is black, you, they, and the pertinent detractor.

Venture does it greatly matter if white is white or navy blue or even bottle green, but tell us why you believe in it, and your protagonist is in a corner baring his teeth. His positiveness is anxiety to escape confessing ‘I don’t know what is good and I don’t know what is bad, but I do know what I like.’ Which would be more helpful, but a statement apt to be smiled at, and a conceit brought low.

You have met him. I have met him. Saying ‘How bad. Not cinema at all!’ Ask him ‘And why not cinema?’ and instead of ‘I haven’t the faintest idea,’ he gives you ‘Really, if you can’t see that how useless to explain!’ Bringing you exasperatedly to ‘What does it matter what it is if it’s enjoyable?’—not as the best you can do at your own belief, but to do (a little more politely) for ‘Talk sense.’

The graph line of an argument on cinema would never curve. Never. Instead it would jag like prongs. Now you
begin to see what I mean. Who is taking care of the curves and who but a few (among ourselves as well) are charting and recording them? The prong points we all know, the blackest of the black and the whitest of the white, but how few have much experimented in being lucid over the pearl greys and the dove and the slate and the iron and the fog and the moonstone and olive greys?

This was the subject I was going to take to task. Agnosticism, I was going to say, is likely to give you more satisfaction in the long run than faith in the short one. Detachment would yield more fruit than the forcing house of devotion. Yes, Close Up is full—as one young lady nicely explained—of quarrelsome, chip-on-the-shoulder articles.

Could she have meant Close Up says White is White, taking nobody any further? Pat us on the back, for no. Evidently what perturbed the young lady was a disposition to fit White to the rest of the spectrum in its legitimate relation. What jarred on her friendly nature was nothing more or less than reason.

Yes, reason. A fatal crag few care to tackle. A real hunger marcher, and not one whit more popular! Believe if you must. But do not reason about it. Thus “things” will be far more palatable. You must see for yourself that it is more dramatic to believe simply. For a belief you can die and win admiration, but reason nine times out of ten must smile at such heightened conduct, turning it by its sour alchemy to misconduct only. See for yourself why it is unpopular. See how many beaux gestes are withered under its scorching light! Evident that all must realise how consistently it remains menace, remembering how most of its boldest
champions have been both painfully and painlessly extracted from our midst.

Alas for its own security and peace, reason remains necessity, and if it shows up things no less than people, it is because things, no less than people, are in a state of being able to be shown up.

Yet, as I have already remarked, it is clear that we need to have a firm conviction about the cinema. Even at this juncture (if you can bear to think of an observation as a juncture) consider that if you allow reason to wriggle in under the tentflap, it has its catcall ready, and wrangles that you cannot have a firm conviction about something constantly changing.

Until, at last, in an advanced mood of aggravation you resolve that reason reaches a point where it demands of itself compromise between pure reason and equally pure prejudice. And some such point is right here now in front of us. Examine it.

Had we been believers and believers only, we would have upheld an editorial right to print what pleased us. And what we wanted to print was a comment on Piccadilly. What we wanted to say about Piccadilly was that Piccadilly is Gilded Grey and Whing-Whang-Whong. We were assured that such an attempt at scintillating satire would give offence to Messrs. Dupont and Bennett (let alone Mesdames Wong and Gray), all of whom under no circumstances would we willingly offend. So reason was allowed to vote that this was indeed true.

Regretfully enough, let it be admitted, for what others thought was merely rude seemed to us, for all its obviousness, analysis and summary in one—let alone the approving
snigger it was hoped to call into being. Had we been sufficiently sure of ourselves argument would have fallen upon deaf ears.

Let it be stated that we hope devoutly that in quoting the instance neither Messrs. Dupont and Bennett not Mesdames Wong and Gray will be offended nor take it in ill part. There will be many hundreds of admirers for their film, and for my criticism doubtless none. At all events I think we may call it what at school was termed quits and in later life, fifty-fifty. As the villain said, we shall see.

The second instance where belief would have been more effective than reason, occurred when, having come dispirited from the tired and spunkless Volga-Volga, with its confederate Choir of the Ural Cossacks, we groused that the level of the average film was falling lower and lower, and that the bigger films became, so in proportion the worse they became. ‘Oh, no,’ our companion argued, ‘think of the American films and the French. They are getting much better.’ Therese Raquin, The Italian Straw Hat, Joan of Arc were instanced, as well as The Crowd and The Wedding March. Reason, stepping in, remembered too The Wind, Stella Polaris, l’Argent, and said ‘you are right.’ And remembered, thinking it over, Madame Recamier, Mon Coeur au Ralenti, The Last Command, ad infinitum. . . . .

Reasoning out, there were two points of view. To be reasonable about which would mean either a monologue to which none would listen, or an essay of some thousand words, which would be dull. All this instead of a helpful formula. Instead of ‘Films get Worse and Worse.’

Kenneth Macpherson.

THE COMPOUND CINEMA: FURTHER NOTES

I had been thinking long that the traditional Japanese theatre of Kabuki and Noh could serve as a basis for sound filming, when two incidents confirmed my belief. One was the projection of a Japanese rice-paper cutout film at the Tribune Libre in Paris and the other an article in "Monde" by Eisenstein on the Kabuki theatre. Says the Russian director: "If European painting owes the origins of impressionism to the Japanese, if modern sculpture stems from the Negro plastic, the phonetic cinema will be no less indebted to the Japanese..." For Eisenstein not alone the Japanese theatre, but the entire conceptional world of the Japanese, the alphabet and the lyric Tanka, are indicative of the sound-image mind of the Japanese; in other words, graphic sound—the key to the sonorous film. But the ultimate principle to be deduced from this establishment, Eisenstein has with singular
accuracy and conciseness articulated: "... it is necessary to reduce to the same denominator the conceptions visual and phonetic." I leave the development of this tenet to whomever will exploit it. Even a casual reference to the Noh play, with its separation of the speaker from the enactor, the masks, the voices paralleling the gestures but issuing from behind masks, the musicians in the rear like a commentary, will indicate the relation between the Japanese theatre and the stylized sound-film.

The rice-paper film certainly offers the opportunity for sound accompaniment, perhaps with mechanical music or shrill instruments. Similarly the silhouette film and the animated cartoon can be combined to loveliest effects. Universal in America, I understand, is sonorizing its animated cartoons, and the 'Orace films of England are being synchronized too. But from the reports of the latter venture, it seems that the producers are giving the creatures literal human voices. This would perhaps be interesting archaeology, if the films were lycanthropic. But since the entire structure of the animated cartoon is a flat one, and its origin is always manifest, it is a stupid confusion to vocalize the cartoons to give them human semblance. A film of personified creatures enacted by human performers is one thing, the animated cartoon another.

The patterns of the Japanese rice-papers are used in the Jap films both for the characters and the background. The entire film is a rice-paper universe. The movements are rice-paper renditions of the Japanese sword-play and Japanese dance. The rice-paper patterns suggest the possibility of a combination of colour, cartoon and sound. The colours
in this instance would not need to be fluid. In fact, fluidity would defeat the harmony, since the cartoon is best when it keeps within its limitations or its origin. I know that several people have been thinking of producing such films, with well-known literary works as the narratives. Any fanciful mind can discover ready-at-hand opportunities waiting to be converted into these compound animated cartoons.

Or the Starewitch puppets, do they not offer sound an opportunity? The artist himself has neither the present inclination to sonorize his films nor does he think his method allows of it. Starewitch frame each gesture, each grimace, each movement, each moment—photographs it; frames the next gesture, etc.—photographs it; and so on. The fluidity is not achieved by the puppets, they are planted and do not perform; the cutting or mounting accomplishes the moving picture. (Incidentally, does not this hint at a form of stylization available for human actors too?) Therefore Starewitch believes he cannot film sound because of the static nature of his method. But why not? It is my belief that the very separateness, the very staticness of the method permits for a film of stylized and rhythmically intervalled instrumental sounds, noises and utterances.

It is in the detail of "interval" that one approach may be found to the sonorous film. André Levinson, a critic not always to be quoted, has said that "Jeanne d'Arc" was the film which offered the trial for sound or speech accompaniment. Charles Lapworth believes that Dreyer's technique is suitable for sound. Dreyer himself, I understand, is interested in the sonorous film. The emphatic employment of the actor, the timing of the lips and the time-intervals
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between the cine-portraits of the characters, suggest the opportunity for parallel utterance (even staccato speech) and contrapuntal sound.

May not sound bring in the poet? At present we hear about us in Paris talk of the cinegraphic poem. It has been applied to Kirsanoff’s work, to Man Ray’s and to others. In the case of Kirsanoff’s Brumes d’Automne the term “poème” is an exaggeration applied to a sentimental succession of images, notsingularly new in the history of the cinema. I reserve my hope for the future. I don’t want the poet-commentator who may be used, upon Miss Iris Barry’s advice, to write the film-captions, but the poet-creator. Not the poor maker of fragmentary images, nor even a Man Ray visualizing the figures of speech of Robert Desnos. But the epic-poet, the dramatic poet; yes, can you not hear Shakespeare in the future sonorous film? The blank verse film! Dreyer’s Jeanne d’Arc may ultimately lead to Marlowe’s Edward II or Shakespeare’s Richard. Am I fantastic? The principle of conversion will elucidate even the madman’s vision.

To another compounding. I expressed in my notes on The Compound Cinema (Close-Up, January 1929) the fanciful possibility of a film moving from the side-wall to the fore-screen to the side-wall. Almost simultaneously came the announcement that Film Arts Gould was building a “four-square” camera-plan kinema. One screen to receive the moving picture, the other to establish the “atmosphere” of the picture. I swore that this was a bombast, a perversion of the multiple screen conception of Alexander Bakshy, and a more highfalutin use of the fantastic, vulgarly ambitious
"atmospheric" theatre like the Roman garden Regal in London. I hear moreover that the theatre built of Gould-Kiesler is hardly successful. A modest and attractive application of the camera-kinema is the Studio Diamant, where levelled rays issue from the projection booth to meet the levelled frame of the screen. Yet for so small a theatre it is an error: because the screen is reduced, injuring its utilization as a receptive instrument and because the levelled or stair-like structure of the ceiling, close to the eyes of the spectator, distract the eyes from the screen or troubles the eyes with its sharp, progressive lines. The silver-toned Studio 28 is much the most satisfactory of the small houses. One can overstate architecture to the detriment of the film, or to the diversion of the limited funds from more immediate expenditures.

In relation to the compound cinema, the specialized kinema must remember that it is to be prepared for the experimental synchronized film as well as for the silent picture. There are not enough serious film-enthusiasts to patronize two kinds of kinemas, the visual and the optophonic. Mr. Kiesler's differentiation between the two is an academicism. Why can the visual kino not be an optophonic also? The specialized kino must, when it builds a pertinent hall, permit of the magnified screen and the multiple screen. This means increasing the height of the usual small house, and a modification of the early sagacious principle enunciated by Bakshy: that the blank square on the front wall of the picture-house determines the architecture of the ideal kino. This principle was developed into a set of principles by Seymour Stern in the National Board of Review Magazine, and I later commented upon them with immediate references
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in The Billboard. But they must be seriously altered to allow the new inventions their places. The magnascope makes the frame about the screen unavoidable, for it is the opening and shutting movements of the frame which makes the screen effective as an instrument in this application. Moreover, stereoscopic filming is not far away. The new kinema must be prepared for it, for films of three dimensions and for films which will burst into and climb upon the audience.

It must be remembered that whatever the future of these devices, the principle of the film remains dependent upon the inclusive concept of rhythm. The Gould kino in New York has sensationalized the idea or enveloping atmosphere. Many people in the movie-world think in terms of atmosphere. A London progressive exhibitor, after laughing at the atmospheric Regal as Jewish, told me that when he was showing "an Oriental film of deep meaning," he’d like to have incense subtly wafted to enhance the mood. And Robert Armstrong, the American actor, is happy to promise a "smellie" to follow the "talkie." All for realism and helping the poor image-film. How will one stylize odors, of hay, perfume, dung, cadaver, hair pomade, cold cream, George Bancroft's sweat? And perhaps eventually we will taste with the fortunate or unfortunate actor Clara Bow's tears and lipstick. I know that Belasco is said to have played a reminiscent perfume upon Frances Starr to call forth an emotion. But why betray the spectator further? There are now tears and wistful grimaces (indexed and catalogued), music, lights, misty photography (Fox Films). Spare us, O Potentates!
In my previous article on The Compound Cinema, I made mention of a relationship between the color-organ and the color-film. the key was fluid colors. Writing in the February The Arts, C. Adolphe Glassgold says: “Both the cinema and Lumina (color-organ) become aesthetic realities when, like music, they create perceptible rhythms which may be not only of two-dimensional shapes upon a flat surface but of illusory tactual forms moving in deep space. The motion picture and the Clavilux picture are subject alike to the dicta or static composition in the brief moment which is the flicker of an eye-lid; but the dynamic pattern in space, the inevitable movement and development of form, enlarge one’s conception of composition and make the structural organization of a painting pale by comparison. Movement, action, dynamism are the very life of these two mediums of aesthetic expression. Here the similarity ceases, for in the difference between the structure of the motion picture machine and the Clavilux lies a vast difference in accomplishment. The cinema is forever bound to the object; Lumina is foot-loose and free, with its elements as abstract as music. . . The cinema functions through the intermediary of solid realities. . . The cinema also is striving to attain color and . . . may eventually succeed in its efforts. At that time the Clavilux and the motion picture machine will approach identity with always the fundamental distinction in the use of objects.”

Mr. Glassgold is speaking, apparently, of the only movie he knows, the concrete-movie, which includes the so-called abstract as well as narrative film. I can quote in reply from an article of mine in The Film Weekly of London: “He (Francis Bruguiere, the American photographer living in
The Ghost That Never Returns, Alexander Room's new film for Sovkino. The actress is O. Jisneva.

A striking shot from The Arsenal, Dovjenko's film for Wufku.
From *The Tempest* (not John Barrymore's *kitsch* of the same name)—a Wufku film directed by P. Dolyna. Samytchkovsky, who was also in *Two Days*, is in the cast.
From *Uberfall (Accident)*, a short film by Erno Metzner, whose film *Free Trip* has already been remarked in *Close Up*.
From *Uberfall (Accident)*, by Erno Metzner. See note in Comment and Review.
"Lulu." Louise Brooks in Pabst’s film, *Pandora’s Box*.

*Pandora’s Box.* A sinister impression of Gustav Diesel as Jack the Ripper. See review by A. Kraszna-Krausz in this issue.
From *Pandora's Box*. Lulu and Jack, played by Louise Brooks and Gustav Diesel.
From *Pandora's Box*, by G. W. Pabst. Alwa Schon (Franz Lederer) in London.
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London) understands that if a photograph is to have aesthetic virtue, it must make most use of its graphic medium, light. He understands that the object which is to be transformed by light must yield to the operations of light... This inter-relationship... means finally design.’” This would seem to abet Mr. Glassgold’s contention, but in reality it signifies that there is another cinema not yet touched, the cinema of designed, abstracted light, utilizing not the play of light upon objects but the diffusion of light re-organized in the film. Glassgold concludes that when color-cinema is fully realized the film may be the agent for making the color-organ patterns permanent. Does this not suggest also a way to achieve fluid, mutating colors in the motion picture? It is not amiss to add that several American kinemas have installed color-organs. Perhaps pending the ideal color-movie, one may experiment with a coordination of movie and color-organ. Much may be discovered.

H. A. POTAMKIN.

Mr. Potamkin has drawn our attention to a typographical error in our previous issue. The following extract from his letter will best amend:

“In my article on The English Cinema you ran ‘systematic’ for ‘systemic’—last line. P. 20. Kindly make a note in the next number. I mean ‘systemic’. The dictionary will explain.”
I have erred, and I wish to confess. Not to a priest, for it’s no priest’s business. What then? I imagine I have erred like many others, and my confession may ease their remorse, and bring about conversion likewise.

When, a few months ago, people began to battle over the talking film, I was frankly hostile, and tried to combat it to the limit of my power.

The reasons for this are simple and quickly understood. I loved the silent film, and I foresaw a horrible deformation, a mere degradation, with the added words returning to the worst theatre. Naturally this I did not desire.

Analogy: The woman you love comes out one day wearing a new dress. Simply, at first, you are deceived, seeing a changed aspect of the adored and known image. It is only after a while that you perceive the new dress is becoming, and you love her in it as before. I will not insist on the fact that one can love the cinema as a woman, and even more deeply.

Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Alexandroff, said recently in a manifesto: The new technical discovery (the sound film) is
not a chance factor in the history of the film, but a natural outlet for the advance guard of cinematographic culture, by which they may escape from a number of seemingly hopeless blind alleys.

Yes, the cinema, the good cinema, is in a blind alley. And it is particularly moving that it is the Russian cinéastes who realise it; those who are still furthest off from it.

It is the perfection to which the cinema almost attains which presents the danger of stagnation, the tremendous danger of marking time.

I do not suggest this for the pleasure of being paradoxial, but solely through careful discernment. The perfection of an art is its death. A work of art alone is not enough, it becomes valuable only according to the promises it makes, by the possibilities of ultimate development. In this method of reasoning, the Napoléon of Abel Gance would be preferable to the Joan of Arc of Dreyer. The new and tentative methods of Napoléon, employed more reasonably, would perhaps be able to cause the creation of new things. But what remains to be done after and according to Joan of Arc?

There is still another thing. The present cinema is a cinema of actors. (As the directors tell themselves: an actor is only good through his director). But American and Russian actors have arrived equally at a perfection of their art which, to my thinking, is not to be surpassed. See Underworld (Les Nuits de Chicago) and do not deny it (Especially don’t judge by the Paris version, where the film has been horribly mutilated through the imbecility of censorship.) We enjoy the actors’ play more even for what it suggests than for what it shows.
And here, you will follow me.

The sound film will create a new form of acting. For, aided by words, the gestures will be more subdued, more strictly limited within absolute necessity.

I know that the first attempts will be for the most part misfires, but that is unimportant. The research which the new method of expression will necessitate, will bring just that renewal for which we are always greedy, and of which each art has constant need.

Don’t you believe, for instance, that the gramophone has given birth to a new music, that the gramophone has given the essential creative impulse to contemporary musicians?

At first the faults will be grave, I am convinced. One has but to read the interview which Pirandello accorded to a German interviewer, in which he said that the sound film, which he now wants to use, should express cinegraphically only such parts of sound which cannot be rendered in words. It is clearly the opposite which he should have said.

I am confident all the same. There are, you know, the Americans. And they, don’t let’s doubt it, though displeasing the retarded and obstinate detractors of American films—have the sense of the cinema. I would say nearly: they are born with the cinema, and know the cinema as the greatest artistic activity. Recently I saw *Broadway* by Messrs. Dunning and G. Abbot, playing at the Théâtre de la Madeleine. So, if they make plays for the theatre thus strongly “cinema”,—become theatre plays by hazard,—one need not fear. With such innate comprehension of cinema
CLOSE UP

and so strong an obsession of cinema, their mistakes cannot last for long.

It is perhaps going to be necessary to forget all that has yet been learnt. The hardy routiniers (directors, actors, scenarists and technicians) will be sufficiently confounded thereby. That is all the same to us. Those who cannot bring themselves to understand the cinéma parlant will disappear; we will not find ourselves any the worse off. We feel a renewal sufficient to yield magnificent and unquestionable joys. And all the crabbed and the peevish won’t be able to stop us from attaining them. Nobody, not even a new Paul Souday will have the right to condemn the sound film for which we are waiting. Because they will not understand it any more than they have understood that which we have already, we will not be influenced by them.

The sound film will be as international as the silent one. It is again the three directors already cited who say . . . . . . there will be an even greater possibility than before of circulating throughout the world those ideas capable of expression through the film, and the universal hiring of films will still be practicable.

And you will see: they are right.

After that, I have perhaps the right to tell you that I have not yet seen a talking film.

JEAN LENAUER.
WHY "TALKIES" ARE UNSOUND

No doubt it is unfair to pre-judge in any set terms so vast a change to the moving picture as that suggested by the present talkie vogue. Talkies are in their infancy and their maturity cometh in questionable shape. Lovers of the silent film nevertheless feel outraged by all this babble. They feel strongly that an injustice has been done to them which may be perpetuated.

For the art of the film, like that of writing or song, begins with a conviction about something. Those who are convinced that the picture of synchronised speech is to be the film of the future are as likely to be wrong as those who hold the contrary view. The important thing is to be convinced, to root the thing deeply in heart and mind while it is fresh. Time will destroy or consolidate the contemporary view.

Of the soundness of the short subject talkie I do not think any doubt can be entertained. But the film business is not built up on its short subjects. They are the hors d'œuvres, the sweetmeats, to the main dish. We have seen some very brilliant talkies on these lines, notably the remarkable speech by Mr. Bernard Shaw. And because of their novelty and the magnetism of the human voice such items will always have a place in our film programmes.
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But that is very different from giving sanction to a general outburst of speech from our screens. On this point the battle rages. To have a running vocal commentary from the characters in a full-length film will utterly destroy its real eloquence, which lies in its silence. The moment a film actor speaks he is placing a limitation on his own medium, which is movement. If he is able to express himself in words, will he not diminish by so much verbal force all that he might accomplish by mime and gesture?

Similarly, all that the camera is able to record in action is lessened by the necessity for recording the voice, and we see this not only in the less interesting angles of photography, but in the slowing-up of the action. These are elementary considerations. Here are some more.

If we are going to cut across the main visual appeal of the film by an appeal to the ear also, we run the risk of killing a good effect with a doubtful one. Was it not Mr. Arnold Bennett who said that nobody could help laughing if a cat walked across the stage in the middle of the "knocking" scene in Macbeth? That would be a fatal division of interest and it is such a division we are contemplating when we fling words, however noble, however witty, into the middle of a moving picture.

If one's view were merely based on present technical deficiencies it could have very little justification, for the speaking film is a miraculous scientific achievement which is in the way of becoming mechanically perfect. Nor can one rightly oppose the talkie on the ground that silence in the cinema is golden and speech a nuisance. That is a matter of taste.
The real anti-talkie argument is that speech attacks the film's peculiar and individual function, which is to imitate life in flowing forms of light and shade to a rhythmic pattern. That may sound a piece of abstract nonsense, but it is not so when we see Chaplin or Emil Jannings or any other great pantomimic artist.

Put speech into films, and you will get speech plus film, but you will not get a film.

Ernest Betts.

G. W. Pabst's "Lulu"

G. W. Pabst started for the Alps immediately after his premiere to make a new film. This was a pity, for I should have liked to have had a talk with him and tell him personally what I am now going to write. Probably he would have replied. Perhaps he will still reply. In spite of the difficulty of everything said in writing.

Especially as I do not mean to give a "criticism". Not, at any rate, a criticism in the usual sense of the word, a thing which one enjoys or by which one is annoyed, but which one is hardly induced to consider.

Pabst's last work has put such criticisms in a serious dilemma. The tiny virtues and errors were lacking, about which convenient æstheticisms can be woven. The critics were faced with a dilemma. There remained only the extremes; to be enthusiastic or to blame, according to one's temperament.
CLOSE UP

My opinion will lack, perhaps, these similar vibrations, for they are alike, notwithstanding their opposite direction. Instead, it will be more in the nature of a reflection. And ask of you that you shall continue to think about it.

* * *

G. W. Pabst opened his film career with the clear promise of Joyless Street.

Secrets of the Soul definitely gained us for him, for he opened and vanquished a border-sphere, the psychological, which appeared to contain matter of the deepest interest to him.

He has made Don't Play With Love, Jeanne Ney and Crisis. All of which were themes, whose actors became remarkable through synthetic descriptions of character, thereby imposing increasingly difficult tasks upon their creator.

Pabst has now reached The Box of Pandora.

* * *

This was the title he gave to his Variations on Wedekind's Theme: Lulu. Lulu—as you will know—is the heroine of both Wedekind's tragedies, Erdgeist and Pandora—one being the sequel to the other.

Wedekind's Lulu is the final essence of the idea: woman. Meaning the woman who has been abundantly charged with sex-consciousness. Insatiable impulses urge her life and challenge fate. Man's power is eternally contributed, to go with this driving impulse. Too soon everybody is run over, hurled aside, exhausted. Without being able to stop her or without her being conscious of what she has brought about. Despite which one cannot call her indifferent. She loves the
man to whom she gives herself and bristles up against being sold without making a choice. But her love is limited by her senses, and if these are tired of somebody, she emerges unscathed even from his cruelest death. She is further hardened by the regular repetition of such events. Sexuality alone in her remains vital and, beside that, only what is connected with it. Everything else seems lifeless, worthless, exchangeable, to be gambled away, lost, virtually not to be regretted—only a trifle. She is akin to children, who although realising life in many things yet destroy them, without pity. The child’s curiosity and a woman’s avidity are somehow connected, which sounds like an explanation for Wedekind’s having given children’s eyes to Lulu until the last moment.

These eyes of a child have captured G. W. Pabst. Lulu’s child’s eyes became the most important thing for him. Therefore he brought Louise Brooks from Hollywood.

Louise Brooks turned out to be a beautiful girl with a very lovely figure, whose slight behaviour, however, could hardly explain the gloomy turn of the events. Her passive decorativeness made us scarcely conscious of any magnetic impulse, that attached all those men and burnt them, as flies are burnt in the lamp’s flame. In vain one looked for the legendary urging and gaining in her, that men desire and fear with a woman.

What had happened? Had Pabst had so false a notion of Lulu? Has his patience relaxed while looking for her. Were his hands tied by commercial interests?

I do not think that any of these possibilities need be considered.
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I think, if he had placed this Louise Brooks upon a stage and made her speak Wedekind’s words, she would not have made less impression upon you than a dozen other actresses.

But in this instance we are not speaking of a stage, nor of words. But of a film.

That is it.

Lulu is inconceivable without the words that Wedekind makes her speak. These eternally passion-laden, eruptive, undiscriminating, hard, unsentimental and unaffected words stand out clearly against her figure, making its dark outline. It is only by the words that this picture becomes the prototype of a woman: Lulu, just as the white-smoothness of her flesh is accomplished by the red-burning of her senses.

The film is unable to reproduce the discrepancy between Lulu’s outward appearance and her utterance: impression and expression. Not by means of words, as they are lacking here. By actions, merely in so far as they are constructed and overloading the development of the events with details in the end.

The film must give up Lulu’s words. It should resign Lulu as a whole.

* * *

Hitherto the most remarkable and successful heroes of the silver screen, Fairbanks, Chaplin, Potemkin—have had one quality in common: they were not complicated. Or perhaps one should prefer to say: two-dimensional.

Every satisfying transposition of a literary figure into a film depends upon the possibility of simplifying its character without changing it.

But nobody asks a film to reproduce men and circumstances at any rate, even if its means are unfit for this task. We
cannot ask of sculpture to make music. If it yet achieves it, that is a very interesting exception.

No art has the gift to conceive life’s reality. Its task is not to reflect life, but it can give truth by emphasizing some section of it which is within reach of its special means.

It is a mistake if one type of art takes up a section that was chosen by another one. As it can only conceive a part of this section and will fill up the other part with its own means chosen ad libitum. Perhaps with air. The truth is patched somehow.

For the hundredth time: one should not make films of literature.

Especially not of Wedekind.

And especially not by G. W. Pabst.

* * *

The most significant quality of the work of G. W. Pabst in film direction is his love for the single scene. He will always have rehearsed it over and over until he reaches the final effect, having found and added numerous shades in the meantime. His pictures, therefore, are filled up to the last edge of time. With carefully chosen details, with many points, incessantly with movement. Another man would have already put in pauses, stops or interruptions to be admired meantime and to give a momentary rest. Pabst does not appreciate artificial breaks nor breathing spaces. He wants a concentrated atmosphere continually, and full movement, this “baroque” of the scenes. In this way they get more and more space and importance, till they have ceased being single parts of acts, but become, instead, acts themselves.
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Pabst's play is built up of seven of these essential scenes:

I. Exposition. Lulu and her friends.

II. Contra-Exposition. Dr. Schön's world and house.

III. Development of the conflict. Lulu's debut on the stage and Dr. Schön's defeat.

IV. End of the conflict. Dr. Schön marries Lulu and is shot by her.

V. Intermezzo. Judicial conference against Lulu and her escape with Alwa Schön.

VI. Peripety. The Gambling Den. Lulu is extorted and sacrifices men.

VII. Catastrophe. Lulu, as a prostitute, is killed by the lust-murderer, Jack.

These sections are not developed one from the other according to their tension, not getting stronger dynamically. On the contrary, they start again each time with their own dramatic elements and show the tempo shortened only, within their own narrow frame.

The most effective part is the third; the bubbling course of the revue at work and of the delicate psychical duel between Lulu and Dr. Schön. The contrasting grotesque figure of an inspector connects, so to speak, in the foreground, struggle of words, power and senses between man and woman—in which the male part succumbs laughing, forgiving, not confessing to himself his defeat—pictures of the magic side-scene, in spite of their many-sidedness in so uniform a composition, that one forgets the existence of single pictures, and it becomes an unforced example for the art of montage.

* * *

There remains one word about the pictorial.
Here it appears diligent, tasteful, and beautiful. That’s to say: satiated with diligence, taste and beauty. Really: too diligent, too tasteful, too beautiful. In this instance. That has its reason. For this time the psychological was to be the focus of interest. Or, at any rate, the man. Clearly: the man. As clear as can be. Unveiled, unchanged, unembellished. Simple. Directly transparent. Nowhere should decoration and photography work more reservedly than here. Rather not work at all. They should dilute, be absent, vanish. That is how I imagine it: everything should be grey. Grey in grey. The walls, the light. To some extent lack dimensions. Substantial and colourful, but only man—as the carrier of action. Of so complicated an action.

A. Kraszna-Krausz.

WOULD YOU BELIEVE IT?

We live in a strange world, and they do strange things. At the conclusion of St. Petersburg at the Film Society the orchestra played “God Save the King”. Indignant members of Parliament asked indignant questions in the House because a section of the audience cheered the Bolshevik workman in St. Petersburg who called for “All Power to the
CLOSE UP

Soviets'. A prominent film critic denounces all Russian films as "hysterical". The British Board of Film Censors bans a film that deals with the evolution of man and passes scores of others that portray his degeneration. And now a popular weekly film paper complains that it has been barred from the Trade Shows of a British producing company because it criticised one of its productions.

What sense is there in any of these things? Why should the revolutionary "March of the Workers" tune be followed by the National Anthem when it is completely out of place? Why should Members of Parliament object to people displaying their emotions if they want to? Why should a film critic abuse Russian films because he does not like the Soviet Government? Why should the Censors endeavour to suppress a biological theory which is accepted by all sane people? And why does a film company object to adverse criticisms of its productions?

Every cinema enthusiast wants British films that will challenge comparison with the best from America and the rest of Europe. All of us curse the inefficiency, the dullness and the lack of vision that has so far characterised the British film industry, but when, here and there, a producer has given us something which gets out of the rut we want to tell the world about it.

We who believe that British films are capable of doing something big are, however, not going to lavish praise on anything and everything which British studios turn out. We have had to put up with enough already. The agonies we have endured, sitting through scores of cheap, hopeless,
British films in the anticipation that somewhere, sometime we shall find something that is worth writing home about!

There is a British film going the rounds of the cinemas just now. It is called *Wild-Cat Hetty*, and it is one of the world’s worst. Its story is as old and as hackneyed as the hills. There is not an original idea from the first reel to the last. The lighting and photography is dull; the direction despairing. Mabel Poulton, a capable actress, is utterly wasted. And, presumably, we are expected, in the interests of British films, to ignore all its faults and delude the public by giving it our approval.

The film-going public has been deluded too much. That is the trouble. (The British industry is not alone to blame in this.) Second-rate programme productions are boosted as "Supers". Inferior films that bore you to tears are announced as "epics". The result is that the public is getting suspicious, and rightly so.

But some people never learn anything. Instead of realising their mistakes they repeat them, and advertise their childishness to the world by keeping critical critics away from their Trade Shows.

Would you believe it?

A. W.
THE FUTURE OF THE BRITISH CINEMA

Mine is an after-dinner Muse. Its inspiration is Benedictine. In consequence, I claim to be uniquely favoured in the contemplation of British films. Only the gourmand can smell Wardour Street and retain optimism. The rest just see it and die.

Last month's Close Up was a stimulating affair, anyway. I retreated with it to one of Soho's few restaurants where it is possible to dine without rubbing shoulders with film travellers, film renters, film exploiteers, film publicists, film critics, film exhibitors, film producers, film actors, and the other gentlemen who make the British cinema what it is. Having read my own article first, with that natural egotism inherent in every creative artist, even if he is only a hack writer, I rose, by arithmetic progression, to the many excellent tilts at the English armoury contained in the remarks of Messrs. Macpherson and Potamkin.

After which I felt better. Wardour Street, geographically at my elbow, was mentally below the horizon. No longer was I in an atmosphere of misapplied superlatives and bad
criticism. Supers were dead; the box-office had crumpled into the dust. In their place I saw intelligent films and appreciative audiences.

And what of the English cinema? Is it the thriving industry so many of our enthusiastic journalists make out, or is it the jaded and illegitimate offspring of Hollywood? And what of its future?

The day before this was written I went to one of the biggest studios in the country. I approached the film director, who gave me the big hand and studied smile affected by the species when they see an animal which may be able to put their name in print.

“When you are writing your scenario,” I asked him, “do you consider the rhythmic value of your scenes, as you would consider the movements in a symphony if you were a musician?”

The smile vanished for a second, to be replaced by an even broader one. Millions now living will never die, I thought. And yet there is said to be one born every minute.

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“No. Write for it.”

“Oh.” The remainder of his remarks were rich in metaphor, allegory and simile.

So much for the English cinema as it is now.

Yet it will develop. It must develop. It is inconceivable that the impertinent little islands which produce James Joyce and Charles Chaplin, to give but two examples of artists supreme at their own medium, cannot do better than the third-rate nonentities who commandeer so much of our studio space.
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What we want is a motive. An ideal towards which to work. There is no English cinema tradition behind us. Our films are purposeless, made as cheaply as possible in the hope of making money. Even the uncritical English audiences are getting tired of the home product, and, Heaven knows, the average London audience has to be spoon-fed with piffle for its entertainment.

Stars, stars, stars! We are saturated with Hollywood poison. We develop our "cinema" by dabbling in the exploitation of servant girls in the hope that they will one day be as popular at the box-office as the Gishes were once supposed to be. This box-office bogey has burrowed into our souls. Our films have been throttled by it.

Films, in the real sense of the word, are unknown in the English studio. Has there ever been an artistically satisfying British film? No. Because we must serve the box-office.

And yet, as I said last month, we have it in us. One day we shall make a picture. But when? Analyse the greatness of the outstanding films. You will find they are made for a purpose. Art is not a self-contained entity. Film directors must be students, men who have learnt to express their individuality and their philosophy in terms of movement and rhythm. You remember the profundity of Mademoiselle from Armentieres, the searching psychology of Sailors Don't Care? The cinematic vision of Maria Marten, the deep compositions in The Further Adventures of the Flag Lieutenant?

That is the stuff we make. And our Press call Piccadilly a masterpiece, while the Burgomaster of Stilemonde, according to another inspired writer, is a sincere and
thoughtful example of cinematography. Cut yourself a piece of cake.

Russia has succeeded as a nation of film-makers because of its will to succeed, and, what is more, a reason behind its determination. Your Russian film director is not interested in a refreshingly novel variation of the familiar Free Love and Freedom theme. Our directors are. Poudovkin’s *End of St. Petersburg* was the expression of experience and opinion. Even your Wardour Street magnate would not disagree with me when I say that his revolutionary theme was more impassioned than T. Hayes Hunter’s treatment of the *Triumph of the Scarlet Pimpernel*.

Have we no experiences in England? Is there no inspiration for our film makers? Or do they hang them up with their coats before going on the floor each morning? The War is a great theme. It has never yet been cinematically treated. I apologise. I forgot *Mumsie*.

In any case, no one but a superb idiot would suggest that we find our inspiration in the War theme, great as it is. If I see another British epic dealing with the subject from the *Dawn* and *Poppies in Flanders* angle I shall scream.

Yet we need that inspiration. One day some bright youth, wriggling his way into a studio past a battalion of commissionaires, crowd part players, assistant assistant cameramen and the like will revolutionise our pictures by suggesting a story which does not need either the National Anthem or the latest waltz in its musical accompaniment.

It is the international note which is the trouble, and the future of the British cinema is bound up with it. While our production industry is populated by men whose only thought
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is the profit they are getting from the Fiji Islands rights it will always be an industry. When we forget America’s commercial success we may step in and do something. Hollywood owes its position at the head of the commercial film world to the fact that during a world crisis in which she was not at the time involved she had sufficient foresight to pave the way for future developments. The economic position resulting from the World War gave her the money. Her own initiative had made her ready for the start she had given her.

England will, in my opinion, never catch her up. Yet we persist in trying, ruining ourselves as we do so. It is mere conceited foolishness to imagine that we have only to wave a magic wand to see our product beating the American throughout the world.

There is too much talk of the world in Wardour Street. Your British film magnate is a wise man with a handy knowledge of geography. He even makes two copies of his picture; one for the home market, and the other being amusingly called “Continental”. He carries on, ordering the production of films, hoping against hope that he will one day get something to justify his brain-fag and his expenditure.

The future of British films? It is a difficult subject, straining like a dog at a leash, a subject demanding a readier flow of explosive adjectives than convention and the righteous propriety of a linotype operator sanction. Take a magic eraser and wipe away that narrow road which winds up from Shaftesbury Avenue, and do it at a time when the film oracles are not lunching at the Savoy, and British films might have a rosy future.
In any case, the question resolves itself into two side issues. The British cinema. Which? Wardour Street’s? Or ours? The future of the Wardour Street cinema is not of interest here. Let it be thrashed out in the City, where the optimistic millions come from. Let the star system be developed, the quickie directors encouraged to go a little quicker, the Foreign Department to step on the gas and the agents abroad. Let us give them their world markets. They are welcome, poor dears.

But the real cinema, the understanding cinema? Its first green shoots have yet to break through the heavy soil. I once thought it would blossom at Welwyn, where British Instructional have their being. But, if it has burst out, the frost nipped it badly in the bud.

Bruce Woolfe, the head of that company, has certainly tried hard. He has given young men chances and has found that where two or three are gathered together in his name it pays to grant their request. Yet there is something lacking in what we have seen of their work. His young men suffer from family troubles. It must be a terrible thing to be the scion of a noble house. At Welwyn they have substituted for the brain bankruptcy of Wardour Street that intolerable and non-creative intellectual snobbery, the more vicious because it is unconscious, that characterises that section of life which finds its way largely into the pictorial papers. If its men were drawn from the people they are supposed to represent on the screen, the Bruce Woolfe experiment might be more successful.

Welwyn is, however, a move towards the right road. Personally, I think the salvation of the British film will
come—unknowingly, of course—from Wardour Street. Within the past two years the nation has developed an intense interest in films. It has foolishly given its money to them. Now it regrets its action. Three companies at the present are toppling on the brink of bankruptcy. Two of them, at least, will crash.

When the fall comes, as it is bound to, when the public realise the worthlessness of so many of the schemes they have fallen for, their interest in pictures will be diverted to the amateur production and the semi-professional effort.

There are in our studios, at the rate perhaps of two or three to each, young men and women with keen brains and active minds, eager to learn, act, and create. They are waiting their chance. When it comes they will clasp it hard. In the place of the human litter which drifts through our production units will be the creative workers of to-morrow, eager to express themselves on the screen, eager to learn by the expressions of better and more efficient exponents.

It sounds Utopian. But it will come. Wardour Street's left wing, that financially unsound wing, will crumple. A little of the money now burning the public pocket will be diverted to clearer, if less lucrative, channels. There must in England be someone with sufficient courage to take the Bruce Woolfe theory to its logical conclusion.

Material? Unlimited. Resources? Ditto. Money? The amount spent on Piccadilly alone would make five films each ten times as good. Inspiration? The workers of the future will find it, will work towards it as a purpose, not away from it in order to facilitate the drawing of their pay-roll.
Again I stress it. We must forget this international box-office joke. Let us tuck it away with those library close-ups of the Union Jack and the three thousand retakes of our last cabaret sequence. By the way, they are actually putting a leg parade in the film version of *To What Red Hell!*

When we have forgotten America, and when the public has learnt its lesson from the Street’s expensive failures, the British School of Cinematography will develop. It won’t be to-morrow or the next day. Dancing girls will continue wearing three beads—two of them perspiration—for a time. But it will come.

Meanwhile they say the talkie situation is getting acute. It’s a life.

Hugh Castle.

THE STUTTGART EXHIBITION

We suggest that all readers of *Close Up* who are able, arrange to take their summer holiday visiting the Film Und Foto exhibition to be held at Stuttgart in late May. This promises to be very interesting, for, according to reports sent in to date, they will show there probably for the first time outside Russia, *The Man with the Moving Picture Camera,*
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by Dziga Vertoff, which has had much success in Moscow and elsewhere, being constructed from bits of the life of everyday and therefore, a chronicle of present day Russian life. It is also possible that they will show as well, The General Line by Einsenstein, fragments from the work of Pudovkin and Schub, and new Russian documentary films.

Among other films, besides work from France, Germany and many other countries, the experimental work of the Dutch film director, Joris Ivens, will be shown.

Those who have not previously visited Germany need have no fear of experiencing difficulty in getting to Stuttgart. Most Germans speak a little English and the officials are helpful to strangers. It is expected that special arrangements will be made for those tourists who wish to visit the exhibition.

Enquiries can be made of Film Und Foto Austellung, Tagblatt Turmhaus, Stuttgart, Germany.

Stuttgart itself is an interesting town in Wurtemburg and it is a convenient place from which to make trips either along the Rhine, into Bavaria, or into Switzerland. A German mark is roughly the equivalent of an English shilling and prices are very much the same as a rule in Germany as in England. As many visitors are expected, early reservation of accommodation is urged when possible.
IN THE DARK

Cocteau murmered recently, at the end of one of his slender little volumes: "Adieu, lecteur. Je me couche. Je suis ravagé par la poésie comme certaine docteurs par l'emploi des rayons X."

Ernest Betts, in Close Up, told why he had not been to a cinema for six weeks. On every hand the same cry: it is a fulltime job to be a cinema enthusiast and student—one cannot keep up!

Who can remember now an insignificant little film called Capital Punishment which was released in England some months ago: yet the director, Wilhelm Thiele, has since made what is regarded to be an excellent picture. It seems unlikely that there were not things worthy of criticism in the earlier work, things that would be of use. Surely there should be somebody courageous enough to practice the gentle art of cinematic orthopaedy? Even if the criticisms can only be written on a postcard (are we not encouraged by the popular press?) somebody should take the trouble to search through the clutter of smaller general releases; somebody who has faith, and hope and is seldom charitable.

Having made our excuses let us look back. So many ideas come in the darkness of the theatre, and are forgotten
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afterwards, one seems to become doubly sensitive then: but in this case it is probably a good thing as there would not be a fifth of the space to spare.

I.—Thiele in *Capital Punishment* has a real sympathy for his background of an ocean liner, he uses his wind machines to blow hair of the artistes, in close-ups; into strands of decoration. Producers of pretentious pictures might take notice, and their attention should be forcibly drawn to the fact that the love "interest" is sustained by a matron and a middle-aged man. It is unfortunate, but not necessary, that they should overact. The woman is supposed to be an intelligent character; however, because Wilhelm wants an insert giving his box-office thesis that "a man in love will commit any crime for the woman that he has chosen", he makes Lil Dagover read a putrid book from which he can cut in close-ups. Whenever there is a flash back the scene is shot with the camera on a rostrum; as if Memory were lifting off the roof to peer in.

So much for number one!

II.—*Kean*, revived at the Avenue Pavilion, offers us further thoughts on the flash-back. Ivan Mosjoukine reconstructs in his mind an episode described by his faithful snivelling dresser, Nicholas Koline, and the flash-backs that are cross-cut with his own sorrowing features show persons whom he has never met. Obviously only Nathalie Lissenko, his lady love, should be in sharp focus: other faces should be blurred beyond recognition, mere puppets of his mind. The really nice thing about this picture is its predacious
showing-up of stage technique. Ivan ridicules the sweeping gestures of Kean; his own play being frequently stilted yet length of shot does not allow the spectator to realize that Ivan himself is anything but assured. Not till the camera records a static stage recitation does one become conscious of the tricks which are attributed to Shakespearean tradition. It is pleasant too, to notice how uninteresting the stage looks until it is treated to camera angles.

How well the hornpipe scene has survived, quickly cut and fresh! As history this film is important because it is claimed to be one of the first to put the 'mix' to psychological use, and to employ (that exasperation) the soft-focus close-up.

III.—A Swedish picture, Sin, develops from darkness. Photography is uncannily natural, one cannot see the faces of the actors, only the shimmer of a tinsel, evening sea. This is modern in the best sense of the new school of photography, a contrast to Kean. How right that a picture should unfurl from darkness; it makes all that is later discovered by light dramatic: quite apart from its contents. Should any reader feel that this film is worth seeing he would be well advised to leave after the first two reels.

IV.—Eric Elliott reviewed the means of “shifting” camera scenes, by succession, transformation, or displacement, in his Anatomy of Motion Picture Art; it is not often that one can add to their number. In the Metro-Golwyn-Mayer film Man, Woman and Sin constant use is made of a mix consisting of a fadeout and an iris in. With brightly lit futurist sets this effect has a certain “chic”, like a neat fashion plaque from
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**Vogue.** It is satisfying to find that an incident at the beginning of the film is entirely irrelevant to the action, a childish incident which leaves an impression of knowing all the ins-and-outs of the character because it is superfluous.

V. — A French film *Baccarat* was pleased with itself because it employed a crooked tripod for a dream sequence: it imagined itself a serious contributor to film art. Far more parturient was the system of dressing hotel thieves (female) in skin fitting black tights, so that when they prowled through the corridors the passerby spotted at once what they were up to. A splendid idea and most convenient!

VI. — An American shocker *Diamond Handcuffs* showed a use for the ‘cut-off’ (sliding shutter). The film is divided into three parts, each part opens with a sliding shutter instead of a fade in: a curtain being drawn aside on a fresh act. The hard edges made the divisions very definite in the mind. Because this “punctuation mark” was misused in the past it is not safe for every director to assume that it can never be employed by heightening an effect in an unobtrusive manner. Directors might learn here, also, the popularity of stories about “things”. Things can pass into our lives, and with them bring true movie excitement, there is the possibility: whereas as the more timid cannot crash gates into the salons provided over by the scrupulously gowned, starred personalities.

VII. — *The Cameraman*. All the gags were worked in *Hot News*, but then America existed before Christopher Columbus made his startling discovery.
VIII.—*The Wild Man*. Shadows of ships cast on back-cloths. Snow, I think salt, spread thinly on canvas, which leaves no trace of footprints... 

IX.—*Fortress of Virtue*, directed by Righelli, has a cast including Maria Jacobini, Nathalie Lissenko. Man Ray's *Etoile de Mer* was shot through mica masks in order to give (I suppose?) the starfish's outlook on life. Righelli's picture gives an equally remote aspect: restrained, conventional pre-war small Russian garrison-town society. May I add that the ladies are gowned in nineteen twenty nine dresses, but the picture has above-the-average attraction. 

X.—*On Trial*—a talkie! Cocteau’s *Les Maries de la Tour Eiffel*, a play in mime explained by "Phonoun" and "Phono Deux", was a far better idea than the talkies. Critics of our Sunday papers who "blurb" columns about the novelty of the talkies might care to learn that the above play was presented at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in nineteen twenty one! I enjoyed the gentleman, in an introductory short, who munched his shirtfront and sprinkled pepper and salt on large bouquets of flowers, but I would rather see him on the music-halls.

The point to remember is that some films are touring films, just as there are touring plays: one does not criticize them at length, one goes to find talent or discover bright patches. 

Oswell Blakeston.
A NEW CINEMA, MAGIC AND THE AVANT GARDE

We cannot approach to a new cinema unless we understand what is at the bottom of cinema; I try to think that must be a platitude, but I look round and I am forced to believe it isn’t, forced by what I see going on and by the bright plans for going on in a just as old and only slightly different way. So let it stand.

By “new” I do not mean something wild and exotic and altogether inapplicable, but a cinema that is the result of our realising what cinema is, or even of our trying to realise it (that would be something). Such a cinema will be far enough away from all that we have now, all that we put up with, to merit the term New Cinema. There hasn’t been much cinema yet, although men have been so busy making films for so long, and there never will be unless the magic of it is realised, just as much as how to use a camera (which isn’t) and all the other facts. Magic is a fact itself, one of the hardest. Anything that is real is magical; magic is the name for the thing that is larger than the thing itself, and this larger thing is what makes it real. Another platitude.
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I am not going to be called cranky and queer and generally unreliable because I mention magic as part of the rock bottom of cinema. It's not a question of inexpert blah and experimental enthusiasm. Aren't films just too wonderful and look what you can do in them: I do not think it is very useful of M. Auriol to suggest "Let us conserve the world that exists on the screen as a heaven to which one might perhaps attain—as late as possible, however so as not to risk losing it". Shots do not matter very much and gay reasoning about states of consciousness, my own as much as anyone else's, is to be distrusted, by myself as much as anyone else. That is all right, as far as it goes, but can't we really, good heavens, get any further? I think of Pyrene motorists burbling in the lower Basque villages about mountains while their radiator cools down. Interval-chat. All right, perhaps, harmless, why not, still we know all about that. Get on.

But we can't get on unless we keep a firm hold on magic. As that is our foundation, it comes to keeping our feet on the ground. It is surprising how many prefer a tight-rope. The more matter-of-fact you are, the more poetic can you really be. The best gramophones are made by technicians. The third platitude is that the magic of the movies belongs to our age entirely. Part of a larger magic which finds expression in all sorts of other ways in our daily life. Entirely a modern magic, which has been used a long time, but has not till lately been consciously felt and known for what it is. No one needs proof that there is a spell to the cinema, for why else did they go in the old days into halls that just managed to bear up their load of stucco outside because they were almost solid blocks of darkness and disinfectant inside? Why else did
King Vidor is working on the first all-negro film yet made. The title will be Hallelujah. It is hoped to make the next issue of "Close Up" an "All-Negro" number. Much exclusive and valuable information.
Brigitte Helm in the new Erich Pommer film for Ufa, entitled *The Wonderful Deception of Nina Petrovna*.

From Dziga Vertov's film, *The Man With The Movie-Camera*. 
Photographs by Bruguere, maker of the ill-fated *The Way*. See note in Comment and Review.
From *The General Line*; Eisenstein’s new film, soon to be shown in Berlin.
From *Prison* (Zuchthaus), a new Derussa (Gosvoyenkino) film, directed by J. Raismann.
From *Prison (Zuchthaus)*, a Derussa (Gosuoyenkino) film, which deals with prison life in Siberia, from a story by S. Ermolinsky.
To Siberia. *Prison (Zuchthaus)* a Derussa (Gosvoyenkino) film.

*Storm Over Asia.* Pudovkin’s masterpiece. In the Lamaserie.
we sit in draughts watching stories performed in gales and photographed apparently in rain flicker dizzily and uncertainly before our eyes? It was because something was being satisfied that had not been satisfied before, either because it had not been done or because it had not been done well. It was not due to the novelty, it could not have been, because that wore off and no adequately startling improvements took its place. The films flickered less, the photography grew better and the one projector broke down less regularly. But the actual entertainment offered was very little better and even now, if you discount the trappings of plush, velvet and mighty organ, the same kind of solemn inanity and "sex-charged commonness" is eagerly swallowed ten times for every once that something really worth while is gingerly nibbled at. You cannot claim novelty, you can no longer claim cheapness and you cannot wholeheartedly instance the pictures themselves. Magic remains.

This is what makes sometimes quite intelligent people delight, secretly, in stories that they know to be rotten, untrue and the work of pathologicals. And now that they no longer need delight secretly, excuses are offered for this under the name of criticism, but the thing remains the same. It isn't the stories that they accept. Get that. It isn't the stories, not the people in them (though occasionally they think so) but its the way they move among rugs and rooms and now and again, not nearly often enough, do real things in real places. Anything that is real, in however small a degree, is magical, in an equivalent degree, and behind even the worst photoplays there is the reality of light and of movement, and so there is a little magic everywhere where you
see a cinema. These people respond to the spell. They are not drugged by light, as is so often said. That’s wrong. Only half-way. They are stimulated by it and able automatically to discount incident and player without noticing it, and accept instead without knowing it the drama of movement and pattern. Images, if you like, in which it doesn’t matter essentially whether it’s a woman or a chair there. It’s the space they occupy, the light they make manifest by being there. That’s what is got. It’s abstract.

I mean, fourth platitude, experimental films aren’t very experimental. They give us just what we give ourselves, nine times out of ten, from any factory-made film. We don’t know it, perhaps, because there is so much in the way of our realising it; the well-known dallying with the stage, the talk about good acting, the publicity, the personal contact and the kind of thing which calls The Mastersingers, Love’s Awakening and describes it as a “Bachelor’s bid for a beautiful bride”. That is why the magic must be admitted and understood as any other machine is understood, and worked, and then we shall know where we are, which will be a good thing. It would give us a cinema so different from the dolled-up strumpet (with the usual good heart) that passes under that name, that it would in effect be a New Cinema.

The drama of movement, the fact that light is of all things what we need most and respond to most; they meet in the cinema. But the drama of movement detached, as it has to be nine times out of ten, is as nothing to what it might be if it was set going by some decent drama. I don’t mean a studio story. Don’t care about he loves and she loves so why can’t they love. Mean the drama of all around us and
CLOSE UP

what we fit into. Activity. Ordinary business. The most excitingly real dramatic thing I have seen in a movie lately was a few feet in a news-gazette which showed the policemen putting a stop to that bother in a Welsh colliery when the men attacked four blacklegs who were all that answered to the demand for two thousand men to work the mine. There was no “Are you ready, Miss Glee? One of your eyelids wants a touch, I think”. There was instead the cinema getting right down to behindness of it; the lamp with one touch rubbing away the verdigris and showing the natural jewel. Not a Burma gem.

Of course you can never get over going to the movies and though that is a different kind of magic, you might look at what happens, to see what it means. Incidentally since this is a variation on a theme of forgotten platitudes, that is the only way to achieve meaning, looking at what does happen, not sighing and making heavens for what doesn’t.

There is the screen, and you know the projector is at the back of you. Overhead is the beam of light which links the two. Look up. See it spread out. It is wider and thinner. Its fingers twitch, they spread in blessing or they convulse in terror. They tap you lightly or they drag you in. Magic fingers writing on the wall, and able to become at will (a qualified statement of course, for at whose will?) a sword or an acetylene drill, a plume or waterfall. But most of all they are an Aaron’s rod flowering on the wall opposite, black glass and crystal flowers (just the kind of remark that does not help). Only now and again the rod becomes a snake, and whose films are those we know. One strand of the beam
CLOSE UP

widens, a whiter finger detaches itself, goes off over the screen, while the others wait, continue, keep the thing going, confident that it will return. The finger is a cowboy's hat. It went off when he took his hat off and flung it on a table. Or it may be Menjou's shirt front. The smaller ones are hands in gesture and a handkerchief. Now feet are running up steps, the strands move faster, the feet are in a room, only a few strands now busy with them, while the others are demanded by the whole person, to whom the feet belong. You see how it is. Those people who saunter so haughtily, who fight for their ends with such abandon, who hail taxis and dismiss servants with one imperious gesture, they are all slaves of that lamp in the projector. They are not really real, really. And if you have met them in the flesh, in studios, you know they are not real there either. They need the lamp to bring them to life and their life is one of movement and light which is not determined by them.

You need not be a chamber to be haunted, nor need you own the Roxy to let loose the spirit of cinema on yourself. You can hire or buy or get on the easy system, a projector. You then have, on the occasions on which it works, people walking on your own opposite wall. By moving your fingers before the beam, you interrupt them; by walking before it, your body absorbs them. You hold them, you can let them go. When the projector stops, they stop. Their life is suspended, and can be begun again at any point. They are always potentially there, ready to be let out, all kinds of people doing the most fascinating things, saying how do you do and putting on a garden hat and rescuing each other and sweeping floors and kissing when they feel like it and the
maker of the film lets them . . . and as of course, popular taste, as reflected in the box office, demands. They are at your command, all the actions of life. At the moment they can only live again on the opposite wall, but that is not inevitable. If this magic is realised, it works hand in hand with the hard facts of how to get them by your camera, what to do, how to, what films are. What cinema is.

Supposing you know it. You have studied it. You are earnest and honest, though heaven forbid you should think you are and know it. But you have something to make and if you can't make it, you will be pent-up and miserable and of course a public danger. What are you? What is your work? Avant-garde? No. You have made a bit towards the new, the real Cinema, but your's is not what avant-garde is, now. That's the pity. They stand out against commercialism, but the New Cinema won't come from them. I watch the avant-garde and I can't see where its avant-ness lies. Cinema's more than tricks and the raising of natures-mortes to Lazarus life. More than the expression of an egg whisk and two toast racks, even if the racks and the whisk aren't really that or those. You can find the superficiais of avant-gardisme in any commercially-sound Hollywood production. In the opening of The Last Warning and in the middle of Manhattan Cocktail. You find all there is to it and the something more (which is magic) in Mother and Secrets of Nature, (Russian and British) and that something more is the thing that's cinema. I don't see what the avant-garde is in front of. If you are busy marching forward, an die Brücke, you are not so conscious of those others you are
better than that the word "avant" implies. You are simply aware of the enormous distance you are from your goal. Let's experiment, let's not rust in a rut, but let's not sidestep out of development.

Even of its kind it doesn't seem to me to have done what its name implies. There ought to be a film of the life of a slot machine; that is something. What we get is the life of a twopenny-tube ticket, which is precisely the same as a passage of selected prose I read at school about the adventures of an ingot. There ought to be a mass-film of typists. The nearest we get isn't even avant, but naive Crowd. There ought to be a film of a modern population living in a city unsuited to them and trying to make it a modern city. There ought to be this final thing I am suggesting. First, all the Woolworth curios should be thrown out and anyone who thinks he is en avant must measure himself by this, because the avant people of the cinema are the technicians, just as the real modernity of architecture is due to engineers and not to architects. Cinema among other things is architecture in time.

Now. We know sound waves can be caught on wax. The human voice recorded. Up till now, it has only been possible to reproduce it. That is very thrilling of course, that the noise made by a person some time ago can be let out again later, it is doing things with time. But it remains reproduction. You can't get voice pure, but reproduced voice. But suppose there is a machine which really lets the living voice itself out into the room. That is not so odd. Voice originally comes from one kind of mechanism, it can be caught by another (for recording is in advance of
CLOSE UP

reproduction), then suppose it can be let out again just as purely as from its first source. That it not so very wild. But it is avant enough, and it gets somewhere. Up till now gramophones have only given us the likeness of a voice. Soon they will give us the actual thing. That means a voice is held over from time. Telescopes and other machines bridge space; it is not impossible to bridge time. We have films of things with people moving in incidents already past. Light waves those are, it could be done with sound waves, for sound can be transformed into light. Now, we have been able to detach and keep a person's voice. That is, the vibrations he makes when he does certain things with his mouth, tongue, breath, etc. Could not the avant people, the real ones, do the same with the visual image? Can we not see people as we shall soon hear them? At present there is the screen and gramophone. But the gramophone will soon cease to insist itself any more than the person's presence detracts from the voice. If the voice can leave this machine, as I know it can, and be itself, why sould not the visual image leave the screen, why should we not do without screens? They are giving stereoscopy to the images, giving them depth and solidity. They will be able to be brought into the room, as the voice is. It is after all, absurd to be tied down to a screen. There was a time when one was tied down to a canvas on which only static things could be represented. Before that, man could keep nothing of himself. Little by little that has been changed.

First what he did can survive, now what he is. First the work of his hands, work of brain, the effects of his hands and brain. But all still and mute. Then his voice could be kept,
and his image could be kept. Moving. Now they will have to be detached, and instead of him contenting himself with making dolls and statues and music he could only hear as it was being played, he will have these images in which sound and sight meet, detached so to speak from their owners. Man making man, of a kind. Isn’t this more logical than men of steel? These won’t be let loose. They’ll be created just as tunes and films are created and composed. A man’s voice only records what he or the song demands. It is not all for him, and he is not all of it. It is the bit taken up and used. And the people in films are used; what side of them is brought out varies with different directors. Each brings out the aspect he wants. The people don’t have much to do with it. Their image is what is wanted, and it is detached in the form and relation to other images that are wanted. These move on the screen. So far they have no solidity, but they will have. They used to have no voice, but they have. So far, it is reproduced voice, but soon it will be voice. There is logically, and of course that is not the only way so there is “but there is logically”, no reason why he should not ultimately create himself in motion and speech, moving in the patterns of his creation, just as he made the best he could when he made dolls like himself, etc. and only doing that. Things queerer, if one had been in at the beginning, have happened, and in any case this is the kind of track the avants ought to be on, instead of triple-exposing their washing to the moon.

It would be thrilling to draw the rest of one’s life out as the grandson of one’s great-grandson’s son, to see what is
CLOSE UP

happening, but that is not yet possible. We can at least make things interesting for them and let them get on instead of having to disentangle, by ceasing to be so silly about the cinema. We really might discover what it is, and that would be quite a good piece of work. It would do so much more good than being so damned serious, to consider just one or two perfectly plain facts, and think on them. It really is time we had a bit more cinema. A bit less quackery, a bit more appreciation of magic which is not cameratricks in black and white.

ROBERT HERRING.

SOMMAIRE RESUMÉ

du numéro de Sévrier cousacré à la censure

La Grande-Bretagne a sa propre loi de prohibition qui est la censure, et son application, comme celle de tous les décrets liberticides en général, entraîne des conséquences souvent désastreuses. Ce n’est pas en signalant le fruit défendu que l’on peut arriver à sauvegarder la moralité publique Certes, il est malaisé de contrôler l’influence de certains objets sur la foule et d’éloigner d’elle les sujets de curiosité malsaine. Mais pour réprimer les instincts de l’homme anti-social on a recours, parfois, à des mesures fort vexatoires.
Si la censure a pu prendre racine, c’est uniquement à cause de l’attitude, dans les salles de spectacle, des groupements d’adultes qui ne savaient pas réagir logiquement.

La Commission anglaise de censure des films, Président T. P. O’Connor, a été fondée en 1912-1913 par les industriels du cinéma. Ses membres sont nommés et rétribués par l’industrie. En dépit de l’autorité croissante que cette commission a cherché à acquérir depuis lors, ses jugements sont considérés sans appel. L’exclusion est prononcée même contre tous ceux qui ne se rallient pas à ses décisions. La farce est plutôt amère si l’on considère par exemple que trois des meilleurs films projetés avec plus ou moins de facilité dans le monde entier : *La Rue sans Joie, Potemkin, La Tragédie de la Rue* ont été formellement interdits par la censure britannique, sous prétexte qu’aucune projection ne devait avoir lieu, qui soit susceptible de démoraliser le public, d’atténuer la notion de vice et du crime ou de choquer la susceptibilité de certains éléments de la population.

Si l’on a pu conserver, en Angleterre, la notion de ce qui est sacré, l’on n’est pas parvenu du même coup à la rendre attachante.

Lorsque nous souhaitons que l’on projette de bons films, de temps à autre, ce n’est certes pas la même chose que demander à voir tous les films russes et rien que ceux-là, et si nous disons que les films anglais ne valent rien, nous ne pensons pas pour cela que leur médiocrité est due au fait qu’ils ne sont pas tournés en Russie. Russes, Anglais, Thibétains ... peu importe, ces noms ne sont que des étiquettes.
CLOSE UP

L'on peut observer un peu partout chez nous cet esprit spécial que j'appelle la mentalité anglaise. Remarquons, par exemple ces braves gens corpulents qui quittent la salle à manger des hôtels à 14 1/2 heures afin de pouvoir se réserver une place au Thé de l'après-midi, qui ne sera servi qu'à 16 1/2 h. Suivez à Oxford Street, ces fluettes et déjà grisonnantes personnes qui, un sac en papier à la main, perdent des heures à cheminer pour payer un chapeau 3 sous meilleur marché ici que là, et ces personnes sont si lasses qu'elles s'amuseront bien drôlement au cinéma où elles passent la demi-heure qu'elles ont encore à perdre avant de regagner leur logis. Leurs maris, naturellement, déjeûnent en hâte dans les grill-rooms et finissent par être si harassés aussi que, réellement, une distraction leur sera nécessaire. Et partout où vous irez, vous verrez la même chose. Puritania mène la danse austère d'une main, et prépare les cocktails ou le thé, de l'autre.

Vous ne vous imaginez pas le vacarme que l'on fit ici quand on s'aperçut que dans le film Secrets de l'Est l'on avait osé montrer un nombril féminin!

Mais il y a autre chose que la pudibonderie, et c'est la politique. Ainsi nous pouvons voir à loisir un film sur la révolution russe, tourné en Amérique, et où une jeune épousée est percée à coups de bayonnettes pendant la nuit de noces, mais "DIX JOURS" est interdit.

Qu'y a-t-il, entr'altres, de plus dangereux à montrer aux mineurs et à la classe pauvre que "Nos filles qui dansent".

La censure, bien non officielle, obéit au gouvernement qui a réprouvé Dawn et Potemkin. Si l'on voulait, évidemment, l'on pourrait passer outre à ce respect strict des autorités, mais
Ton préfère ne pas indisposer qui que ce soit, et se tenir bien sage comme de braves petits enfants.

Pourquoi ne tourne-t-on pas de bons films en Angleterre? Il s’y passe pourtant une foule d’événements que l’on pourrait utiliser: Inondations, naufrages, catastrophes minières, grues qui tombent sur les gens, conduites de gaz qui explosent et projettent en l’air les passants, voilà du réel, si je ne fais erreur. Je ne connais qu’un seul film anglais qui ait quelque caractère, et c’est Drifters de John Grierson, parce que le héros y est assez téméraire pour sortir sans pardessus!

Il faut encore ajouter que lorsque Close Up était édité en France, l’on n’osait presque pas le faire figurer dans les étalages de librairies, car tout ce qui sort des presses étrangères doit être nécessairement pornographique. C’est pourquoi donc, en raison de tout ce qui précède, on ne peut produire aucun art sérieux, moderne et expérimental en Angleterre. Ne nous étonnons pas, après cela, que nous devenions la risée des autres nations et des intelligences parmi nous. Dieu sauve la cinéma!

Films sonores.

Nous qui soutenons mordicus la supériorité du film silencieux n’avons, hélas, pas de raisons d’être réconfortés, car nous avons été quelque peu secoués ces temps derniers.

Le Chanteur de Jazz oh “Ma... a... a... mie” nous fit voir que la citadelle était non seulement solide, mais que le siège n’en durerait guère.

Quelques-uns allèrent voir La Terreur et les “silencieux” regagnèrent peut-être un peu de terrain à cette occasion.

Puis vint Al Johnson Le Fou Chantant et ce film, sans atteindre à ses meilleurs moments plus haut qu’un niveau
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musical moyen, emballe le 99 per cent. du public. C'est Al Johnson, naturellement, qui est à lui seul la raison de cet engouement, bien qu'il soit le plus puissant et le plus dangereux propagateur de ce sentiment-mélasse qui adhère si fortement à quelques natures.

*Martha Lapkina, star soviétique.*

Le visage de Martha Lapkina regarde toujours la terre, ce qui n'est l'indice d'une nature renfrognée, mais plutôt une habitude contractée au travail des champs, où elle n'a cessé de gagner sa vie depuis l'âge de 9 ans. Elle s'occupait du bétail, souffrait parfois de gêne, elle travaillait. Après la révolution, elle fut employée à la ferme soviétique de Konstantinovka, qu'elle n'aurait peut-être jamais quittée sans le caprice du hasard.

Marthe était bien trop occupée et ignorante pour avoir jamais pensé au cinéma.


Désespéré, Eisenstein résolut, en dépit de ses principes, de faire appel à une actrice de profession. Mais les actrices se montraient indignées quand il leur demandait : "Savez-vous traire les vaches, labourer, conduire un tracteur? Elles répondraient fièrement : Non!"

Et finalement on découvrit Martha Lapkina, qui n'avait aucune envie de quitter son foyer et de partir avec des
étrangers. Elle céda néanmoins, pour améliorer sa situation financière, prit son petit avec elle et partit.

Dès les premières prises de vues on s’aperçut qu’elle répondait entièrement à ce qu’on attendait d’elle et s’adaptait parfaitement aux exigences du film.

Eisenstein tient comme essentielle l’observation du caractère et des attitudes naturelles d’un sujet, il étudie avant tout les gestes que l’acteur fait instinctivement. Martha Lapkina était non seulement photogénique, mais elle saisissait à merveille les idées du metteur en scène, prêtait attention à la prise de vues même quand elle n’y figurait pas.

Elle est retournée actuellement au village et les studios ne la reverront probablement plus.

*La censure en France.*

La liberté dans tous les domaines, en France ! Hélas non, rien n’est plus faux, et la censure repoussée victorieusement sur le terrain littéraire et théâtral, et par tous les arts en général, rebondit avec un fanatisme bien déplacé sur le cinéma.

Rien n’est plus craint, ici, que le film russe, qui représente aux yeux des censeurs Français, l’incarnation de tous les vices imaginables, et l’on a décidé tout simplement d’interdire toutes les bandes soviétiques, sous prétexte de contingentement, puisque les Russes n’importent pas la production française.

Il est temps que nous supprimions la tutelle de cette institution et nous ne voyons pas pourquoi le cinéma n’aurait pas la liberté d’exprimer toutes les idées, au même degré que tous les autres moyens artistiques.
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On prétend que l'enfance doit être protégée contre l'influence du mauvais film. Mais c'est là précisément qu'est la source de malentendu. Les yeux des censeurs ne sont pas les nôtres, et nous considérons que les films où joue Huguette Duflos, Angelo même, les productions Perret, sont des mauvais films, en vérité, car ils dénaturent la réalité et sont susceptibles d'impressionner défavorablement la jeunesse. Mais de tels films ne sont pas censurés, ils ne sont pas subversifs!

Nous sommes responsables nous-mêmes de cet état de choses, par faiblesses, manque de bonne volonté, nous n'osons protester. Les meilleurs écrivains, dont la voix aurait quelque influence, se taissent, la question n'intéresse pas leur budget. *Censure en Allemagne.*

Lupu Pick déclare n'avoir pas eu d'expériences désagréables avec l'office de censure, étant donné qu'il institue lui-même une censure personnelle sur les films de sa production, censure qui, dit-il, est plus sévère que le contrôle officiel. Il lui paraît que tout Etat a le droit de défendre les principes élémentaires de son existence.

Carl Grune, dont le film *Jalousie* avait été interdit, réussit à convaincre les autorités de la rectitudes de ses intentions et le film fut autorisé. Il a l'impression que les films artistiques ont peu à craindre de la censure, en Allemagne, mais concède cependant le droit de protestation aux cinéphiles en rappelant que la censure, née de la guerre, ne peut prétendre durer encore.

La censure n'en reste pas moins une institution du moyen-âge dont le rôle est de limiter fort maladroitement l'essor de la
La censure ne doit pas être bureaucratique, mais artistique et les jugements prononcés par des hommes de goût.

G. W. Pabst a fait un film sur la psychanalyse, dont le public anglais fut appelé à ne voir que la moitié, celle relatant le cas d’un homme coupant le cou de sa femme avec un rasoir parce qu’un autre individu avait fait de même, dans un appartement voisin.

Un psychanaliste rencontre notre homme dans un café et s’entretient avec lui ... mais c’est là le sujet de la seconde moitié du film, celle qui fut interdite en Angleterre, pour la bonne raison qu’un médecin ne recrute pas, raisonnablement, ses clients dans les auberges!

A Berlin l’on a coupé avec désinvolture certains passages de Trois Dans un Sous-Sol. J’y ai remarqué d’autre part que l’on faisait repasser un film en en modifiant le titre.

Quels sont les auteurs malfaisants de toutes ces vilénies : Ne cherchez pas, ce ne sont que les business-men pour qui le film n’est qu’une marchandise à placer.

La raison primordiale qui limite en faveur de la suppression de la censure est que cette autorité ne se justifie pas.

Elle condamne l’Histoire : Potemkin, la Mère, et encourage les parodies Tempête, La flamme rouge. Elle veut exercer un contrôle basé sur la moralité ecclésiastique dans une contrée où la majorité des citoyens ne vont pas à l’église. Elle utilise dans ses services des hommes d’une mentalité périmée, dont les vues politiques, sociales et esthétiques sont en complet désaccord avec celles du public et du vingtième siècle.

Nous avons vu Therese Raquin au Pavillon de Shaftesbury Avenue. Ce film de Jacques Feyder établit indiscutablement
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la supériorité cinéographique des réalisations "pensées" sur les acrobaties Fairbankestes.

Contrairement aux informations des journaux Film Kurier Montag Morgen et Film Technik, le réalisateur de Un document de Shanghai n'est pas Mr. Lienhard, mais bien Mr. Y. M. Bliokh.

Du Directeur du cinéma "Avenue Pavilion" Londres:
J'espère vivement que la censure subira une sérieuse modification dans le sens d'une meilleure adaptation aux exigences actuelles du public, d'une impartialité plus complète et j'estime qu'il est grand temps que le public de Londres ne soit plus considéré comme un gamin incapable de discerner et de choisir.

Fox, Universal, et Christie Brothers ont "découvert" le Négre d'Amérique, et nous aurons l'occasion de nous en saturer prochainement la vue.

MM. Ben R. Hart et St. J. Clowes sont allés tourner un film chez les Lapons. Les difficultés qu'ils rencontrent sont terribles. Travaillant par 20 à 30 degrés sous zéro, ils éprouvèrent de cruels mécomptes : la température excessivement froide nuit à la conservation des films et au fonctionnement du camera. De plus, ils n'eurent bientôt que 3 heures par jour où la lumière était suffisante pour tourner. La dernière scène fut obtenue au moment où ils ne disposaient plus que d'une heure pour travailler.

Exposition Film et Photo Stuttgart, 1929.
Cette exposition aura lieu au printemps de l'an 1929. Une attention toute spéciale y sera accordée aux films abstraits et d'expérience. Pour tous renseignements, s'adresser : Tagblatt-Turmhaus 12, St. Stuttgart, Allemagne.
On annonçait à grand fracas que la projection de *Dix Jours qui Ébranlerent le Monde* était enfin autorisée. Mais il n’y avait que 700 mètres de coupés dans le film, c’est à dire plus de 35 minutes de projection. Les critiques trouveront certainement que la continuité de la bande offre quelques défauts !

**BOOK REVIEWS**

**FIVE MINUTES WITH FRANCIS BRUGUIERE**

Mr. Francis Bruguière has little patience with artists who, hoping to get publicity, photograph with one overhead light a few incongruous objects spread out on a piece of paper; for he believes that true photography is capable of something which cannot be found in painting.

First of all he draws his studies, then he cuts the designs from paper and lights them with spot-lights, eliminating superfluous rays. It is no easy thing to take a photograph which really belongs to the medium. I was lucky enough to see a series of new studies, which Mr. Bruguière may afterwards exhibit in London; most of them are abstract. A few, intended as illustrations of a new novel, have titles such as *Reincarnation*, they are all extremely lovely, and would come as a revelation to English art critics.

“Imagine”, said Mr. Bruguière, “this in motion.”
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He is anxious to make an abstract film, but he would need a slow-motion camera, and that is so very expensive. Most extract films, in his opinion, are spoilt by bad technique, by jerkiness, by using an ordinary camera where a slow-motion is called for.

There was, of course, the famous The Way; never finished because the actor died before its completion. Mr. Bruguière was heartbroken, he felt that he had been achieving something, although the film was being made for practically nothing. He could not afford sets, so he used shapes of light and parts of the artistes' bodies as background. In a scene in a sepulchre he had moving fringes of cheese muslin (double exposed and out of focus), which gave the impression of a vast space. These fringes moved in different directions, their speed increased as the motions of the actors became unimportant, and they served as stationary vignettes when the actors had strong reactions to portray. As a rule Mr. Bruguière vignettes only with light.

The scenario of The Way concerned various physic states. A man, born naked into the world, entered a café; where he became amused with the various garments worn by the men, removing them from their owners' frames, and trying them on in peacock happiness. In the café he met a woman, and his reactions were recorded. Afterwards he joined a circus, pictured himself dead, had a phase in which he lusted for power and set himself on a mock throne as a mock emperor; finally he fell victim of a religious complex.

The stills from this picture are glorious fragments.

New York, Mr. Bruguière informed me, was cold to his experiments. He produced a document of New York, for an
educational series, and they thought he must be mad because he had introduced so much that had never before been attempted. In fact the star film critics denounced him as a Russian!

O.B.

PARISIAN ODDMENTS

If there is any occupation more fascinating than ransacking the film vaults of a great city I should like to know of it. Paris is a special hunting ground, beloved of all connoisseurs of out-of-the-way films. In Paris one can find countless examples of the impressions and expressions of Germaine Dulac. To some of them she gives curious names, probably in an attempt to explain them to herself. England has heard a good deal about Mademoiselle Dulac, principally because she is a woman director and because one of her films was hissed off at the Ursuline Studio; but so far her work has not been screened in this country.

In her L'Invitation au Voyage a man tilts his head, and in the shot of what he sees the floor is tilting. I offer this as a criticism of Mademoiselle Dulac; her style might be described as Paul Fejos in French. La Folie des Vaillants is another of Mademoiselle Dulac's responsibilities, full of the same pseudo-cleverness which seems to postulate inaccuracy. She is so concerned about her tilting floors that she fails to find any types, for a film about Russia, other than the obvious studio extra! She is content to let her exteriors resemble
CLOSE UP

gypsy scenes in operettas produced by choral societies of tiny villages, providing she can superimpose a violin.

I considered La Galerie des Monstres a very special find, because I know of few people who have seen this feature. There are some white interiors by Cavalcanti, and students of the avantgarde will pick out Man Ray shots of Kiki Ray (Mrs. Man Ray). For the fan there are angles of curiosity; the angle of Spain in snow, and the first screen appearance of Lois Moran, who was discovered by the director. Considering the period there is vision in the direction, far more so than in the only other picture produced by Jacque Catelain, Le Marchand de Plaisirs. Catelain acts the principal part himself: his play is sensitive, and has the quality of being constantly alive. One feels a reaching after abstract thought, rather than thought in the character expressed objectively.

Oswell Blakeston.

With the Censorship petition closed, we take this opportunity to express our thanks and appreciation of the warm response it has been accorded from every side. We are more than satisfied with the results, and have every hope that “something will come of it.” There will, at least, no longer be any foothold for those who make much talk of “what the public wants.” The lists are still being worked on, and will shortly be submitted in their several quarters. All results and information will be given in our pages.

We are advised from Stuttgart that pending final arrangements visitors to the exhibition may buy a booklet in English
and obtain accommodation for two nights, with breakfast, dinner and supper inclusive attendance in a good Hotel, room with running water, trip in motorbus round the town, and reductions when visiting Museums and Exhibition at the cost of thirty three marks, or roughly thirty three shillings. Further particulars will be given in May issue.

*Experiment* is a Cambridge production which groups the poetically inclined under a green and red cover of the *avant-garde*.

We are very glad to see that Cambridge has the right attitude to the guardians of movie-fan’s morals; we feel confident of the rightness because an article on this subject in the second issue gracefully acknowledges its debt to *Close-Up*. It is a matter for rejoicing when we find that *Close-Up* is being read and appreciated by such intelligent young men. We will turn the pages of future numbers of *Experiment* with interest, and we hope that we shall discover further articles on the "most potent form of art".

O.B.

**Uberfall (Accident)**

Elsewhere in this issue we have printed photographs from a new film by Erno Metzner, whose *Free Trip* will be recalled by readers of former issues of *Close Up*.

Herr Metzner made this film actually at the same time he was making his other film, using the same studio, equipment and artists, thus saving considerably on costs. *Uberfall* is
a short film of 460 metres, and its cost was roughly £100. It is the story simply of a man who wins some marks in a gambling saloon, is attacked by a footpad, taken to hospital unconscious, and in the end comes to. The greater part of the film is occupied with his dream while in a state of anaesthesia.

It was this part of the film that we were enabled to see while in Berlin, the remainder at that time, not having yet been finished. It is as vivid and extraordinary a piece of work as has yet in this way been done. We say broadly "in this way" to embrace abstraction, impressionism, and straight narrative—a somewhat formidable combination.

It is extraordinary, for while it is composed entirely of fantasy, it is obviously a dream fantasy, and one influenced by some remote consciousness of the actual events going on around. That is to say, that while its dimension is strictly Freudian, and made up of nightmare images, this being the real (as opposed to the ghostly); the impression is given that "real-life" (the hospital, the surgeon, nurses, etc.) are the remote, or ghostly dimension. To describe how this impression is conveyed would perhaps be impossible, since no indication is given in the actual images except of the troubled sub-conscious of the drugged patient. The rising of a finger, to receive balanced on its tip a mark piece which sways vertiginously to it, only to vanish at the moment of contact is sufficiently in the foreground of all psycho-analytical text-books to need no definition here. Its constant recurrence throughout the dream, like a task or exercise constantly interrupted is a punctuation that removes any ambiguity.
Dr. Hanns Sachs, the eminent Viennese psycho-analyst was present at the same showing, and expressed his great satisfaction at both the scientific and artistic value of the fragment. It is extremely well photographed. It is extremely beautiful. It moves with both fascination and grace. It is an important film, because it is the sort of film that much might be written about, having much to give. The flow of images is sonorous, tightens the mind to receive the exact impression of anaesthetic—the constant turning over and over, and repeating of something that becomes horror by its repetition alone. This is valuable, and has something to say, and (to repeat) something to give. There is every reason to hope that Uberfall will be seen in all the specialised kinos.

K.M.

HOLLYWOOD NOTES

One of Hollywood’s latest European recruits is the dancer, Kithnou. She will appear in an important rôle in Lon Chaney’s forthcoming M-G-M picture, Where East is East. While this is her first Hollywood experience, she is not by any means a stranger to the films. Those acquainted with European productions will especially recall her work in the Italian picture, La Puissance du Prasari, and the two French pictures by Gaumont, Parisette and L’Opheline, as well as the British film bearing her own name for its title, Kithnou.
CLOSE UP

The Swanson-Stroheim picture partnership has been dissolved. It has caused no surprise. The Von Stroheim temperament and extravagance continue to run true to form. The only element of surprise in the matter is the fact that any producer can to-day be found who is optimistic enough to invest in this erratic and tempestuous genius. The task of completing Miss Swanson’s picture, Queen Kelly, which has been in production since last summer, has been assigned to director Edmund Goulding.

* * *

In the various announcements from United Artists’ studio regarding Miss Talmadge’s plans for future pictures, no mention is made of any original story for her by William J. Locke. Mr. Locke, it will be recalled, was imported by Mr. Schenck to write a scenario for Norma. Rumor now has it that, after a sojourn here of several months, Mr. Locke has discovered that a Hollywood studio is no fit place for a gentleman of literary finesse. He might have learned this in advance from any one of a score of celebrities who have made the trek to Hollywood from the world of letters, only to discover that they are not in it with Johnny Freshman or Estelle Snooks when it comes to writing scenarios.

* * *

Will Hays, the czar of Hollywood, has issued a warning to the producers that they must not forget the importance of the picture in the effort to give it sound and dialog. He also has urged caution in the character of language used in vocal films. Censorship boards in various States are taking it upon themselves to pass judgments on dialog, as well as on the picture itself. The Supreme Court of Pennsylvania has
recently ruled that the censorship board of that State is within its legal right in so doing. In fighting the censorship octopus Mr. Hays believes that one of the picture industry's most effective weapons lies in its own careful editing of pictures in advance, thereby disarming the official censor and starving out the professional puritanic reformer, whose nagging aim has been to secure a national censorship law through the Congress of the United States.

* * *

The talking picture has imposed a new responsibility on the "script girl". Not only must she continue to see to it that when Horatio Jones walks out of a room in his shirt sleeves he must also be in his shirt sleeves when the exterior scene is taken showing him emerging from the door, but she must now also guard against any change of voice on the part of Horatio. Immediately linked scenes of this sort as they appear on the screen are often taken weeks apart, and it sometimes happens that an actor's voice, due to a cold or too many cigarettes, is not of the same pitch or clarity when the subsequent continuity scene is to be taken. Voice matching, as well as scene matching, has consequently become an important part of present-hour picture making.

* * *

Lionel Barrymore is directing the photophone version of Madame X for M-G-M. Ruth Chatterton, who made her film debut with the current Paramount picture, Sins of the Fathers, plays the title rôle. Able to accomplish what the limitations of the stage have never permitted in the presentation of this famous play, the film will follow the outcast Madame X in her wanderings among the out-of-the-way places of the world.
CLOSE UP

There will accordingly be scenes laid in Paris, Buenos Aires, Hong Kong, Tokyo, Papeete, Sydney, and who knows where all, with the result that this film will probably present a greater diversity of locales and nationalities than any that has yet been produced.

* * *

Hollywood has called a halt on the free distribution of screen stars’ autographed photographs. Hereafter the fans will have to pay for them. It will not be much—from ten cents to twenty-five cents, according to size—but it will serve to diminish the demand and to eliminate an annual expense of a quarter of a million dollars. Part of the secretarial staff of every popular actress is a clerk whose sole and engrossing job is to respond to requests for photographs—and, entre nous, autograph them.

* * *

Forty microphones, placed at various points about the set, and electrically linked in what engineers term the most complicated wire installation ever made in the brief history of talking pictures, were used during the filming of Paramount’s Innocents of Paris. This is the picture in which Maurice Chevalier is making his initial appearance in America. The particular set in which these many microphones were required is a reproduction of the entire Flea Market district of Paris, with its cobbled streets, dark alleys, dingy shops and unsightly junk heaps.

* * *

S. S. Van Dyke and his company of players now in Africa, filming Trader Horn against the story’s original background,
are keeping in direct communication with their Hollywood studio by means of a low-wave portable radio transmitter.

* * *

The Universal Company plans to specialize in talking pictures in other than the English language. Not inappropriately, the first one to be undertaken is a Yiddish play, *The Green Millionaire*. The author and stage producer of the drama, Abraham Schomer, will direct the picture. The dialog throughout will be in Yiddish.

* * *

The University of Southern California has inaugurated a series of lectures on the motion picture as a part of its curriculum. Among the twenty scheduled lecturers are Douglas Fairbank, Ernst Lubitsch, William de Mille, Clara Beranger, and Milton Sills. The subjects to be presented include Photoplay Appreciation, Scientific Foundations, Growth and Development, The Silent Photoplay, The Phonophotoplay, Principles of Criticism, Social Utility of the Photoplay, The Actor's Art, and others of like significance.

C. H.

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**Waterloo**

The tenth year anniversary film of the Emelka. Hard work for the big drum. We were not impressed. (vide *Wedding March*).
CLOSE UP

We were pleased to receive recently a letter from Mr. Walter Kron, who edited the excellent, and unfortunately short-lived Film Meteor. Some of his comments on current productions in America were of such great interest that we felt impelled to print them here.

Last night, says he, I previewed Jannings’ The Betrayal. Beforehand I will tell you that it is fourth-rate. The work of Milestone, whom I rate highly, was uninspired, and the story a commonplace triangle affair set in the Alps of Switzerland. Lubitsch has finished his picture in a similar locale, with the over-theatrical John Barrymore as star. The acting pretentions of our stars, their vain and fatuous strutting, holds good pictures from being born mightily in Hollywood. Lubitsch has made the best American film in many a year with his The Patriot.

Watch Von Sternberg, the man who has more revolutionary ideas of film direction than any other in America now. Griffith is merely an exalted charlatan.

Young directors like Cannon and Klein have been landed by our Moses, Mr. Beaton, whose views on pictures are generally lopsided.

Sincerity is a strange word in Hollywood, we have many frauds and pretenders among us. Griffith’s Battle of the Sexes, Drums of Love and The Lady of the Pavements have proven that Griffith’s art, or what little he possessed, has been prostituted for all time.

If there were any unusual directorial minds delving, searching and striving for richness in dramatic expression in the film city, I would have found him. The village is stagnant and must look to Europe as tutor.
A little theatre properly managed, showing foreign films of worth would go well in Hollywood. The attempt of the Filmarte Theatre failed through ignorance.

Vidor's film with an all-negro cast, will be shown soon and should be successful. Of its art values I cannot say. Although Vidor is an intelligent, sensitive craftsman.

The average director here knows little of life. Like clams they cling to the solid rock of tradition, fearful of venturing into the alleys of the soul. To prod them from this attitude takes the dynamite of sarcasm. When one finally cuts loose, he runs rampant with scattered ideas of the experimental type.

Good direction must come from strong, self-reliant men of real vision and intellect. But bad directors make an easy, prosperous living.

_Melodie der Welt_, a Tobis sound-film directed by Walter Ruttmann with Kowal-Samborski, has just been shown in Berlin. It was made with the help of the Hamburg Amerika on the world cruise of their liner, the Resolute. While the German critics agree as to its interest, some feel that the sound apparatus is not sufficiently perfected to make experiment possible. It is said for instance, that the Russians who are opposed to the talkie as the mere copy of theatre, are very interested in the use of sound in films to heighten the effect from an artistic point of view. But they are said to be waiting for other countries to perfect first the technical apparatus. In any event Ruttmann's previous work would suggest that the attempt at the noise and adventure of voyage
CLOSE UP

should be more interesting than most of the talkies we have heard to date.

Many enquiries reach us as to release dates of films in Germany or how people find out what films are showing in Berlin. The German system is quite different from the English. A film is given a week or a fortnight's run at one of the dozen big kinos in Berlin. It is then immediately released to the smaller cinemas. So that several may be showing the same film at the same time, but in different districts. It is infinitely to be preferred to the English method. It is however sometimes difficult to find out what is showing in Berlin as the small cinemas naturally only advertise in their own districts. Therefore the best way to find out if some Russian or German film is showing, is to ask the renter of the film to advise at which cinema the film is being shown. Addresses of the renters can be found in the telephone book.

AN AMATEUR FILM SOCIETY

A long felt want in the British Film Industry has, we hope, at last been made good by the formation of the Jewish Amateur Film Society, whose declared objects are to foster and encourage the art of film production in all its many departments, and to improve the technical, artistic and literary standard in the film industry to-day.
CLOSE UP

That there is room for such improvement will be admitted by the intelligent observer who has sat through a film exhibition in which the projection was bad, acting indifferent and sub-titling often illiterate, to say the least of it.

If the results attained by this Society equal but one-tenth of the coördinated energy and enthusiasm evinced by its pioneers then we may surely look for an appreciable raising of the standard of film production in this country.

FINIS!

All is in vain. The oracle has spoken, and we are undone. Hark to the wise man:—
"I have always regarded the film industry as the greatest menace that has ever arisen to literature, art, and civilisation."

Thus spake Mr. Justice MacKinnon in the Kings Bench the other day.

Close Up, close down! Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Pabst, pull down your studios and go into the cabaret business! MacPherson, Dobb, Herring, Potamkin, throw away that pen and spend the rest of your days reading "Home Chat" and "The Feathered World"! Freund, Wagner, Blakeston, pawn your cameras, and do something useful!

For the oracle has spoken, and he is a great man.

Let us meditate in prayer, brothers, and then, like the Arabs, fold our tents and steal silently away.

A.W.
BOOK REVIEWS

Mein Vorfuhrungsraum (My Projection Room) is the first book in a series to be edited by Mr. Kraszna-Krausz, in an extremely practical format, of small volumes to treat of the different questions of interest to the technicians of the cinema. It is published by Wilhelm Knapp (Halle. Saale. Germany) who considers that this form of small separate booklet each dealing with one problem, is preferable to large technical volumes where special chapters are often separated from each other and inconvenient to consult.

This certainly seems to be an excellent idea and My Projection Room by Reinhold Dahlgreen gives us many useful facts. Instead of falling into the error of treating technical questions in a language incomprehensible to the non-initiate, the author uses a simple and clear language to explain each matter so that amateurs without much technical knowledge can find much of profit in this little book.

For amateurs and directors of cinema clubs there is a number of small rules and suggestions that should be of service, so that although this book is primarily designed for professionals, the instruction is profitable to all. For example, the rule that projection ought to be made in such a way that the projection cabin should be at the same height
as the screen, that is, that the optical axis should follow a horizontal course.

The construction of the cabin is studied, together with its distance from the screen and the most practical method of installation.

Some of the figures are unnecessary for foreigners, as the police regulations with regard to security differ in every country.

Among other things it is suggested that the best way to wind the copy is to do it in a horizontal position, instead of, as is commonly done, the vertical.

This unpretentious little volume is so useful that it is to be hoped that the rest of the series they announce, will soon appear.


Pierre MacOrlan’s chapter on *Le Fantastique* contains nothing new. Perhaps this writer has specialised in fantastic things so long that he is too exhausted to deal with it again in any interesting fashion.

André Beucler’s *Le Comique et l’Humeur*, on the contrary, is witty and interesting. Naturally he speaks of Charlie Chaplin in it, with a pleasing devotion.

*L’Emotion Humaine* by Charles Dullin explains very intelligently the difference between theatre and cinema and in spite of his being a director of a theatre, he admits to a preference for cinema. The cinema as he says, needs a soul behind the mere face and one is astonished that a man who has understood cinematography so well, should have been often somewhat poor as a film actor.
CLOSE UP

Le Valeur Psychologique de l’Image by Dr. R. Allendy ends the first volume. Extremely stylised, this chapter should have been enlarged for it is no longer a secret I think, that the cinema is really applied psycho-analysis. He takes the Gribiche of Feyder for an example, and studies with much depth the relationship between psychology and the film.

In the second volume, M. Pierre-Quint is not very generous toward the cinema, probably because he regards it with literary prejudices. He says for example, “the writer can analyse not only the exterior world, but also that of the conscience, and he can penetrate directly to the soul of man.” After such a sentence one wonders if M. Pierre-Quint goes often enough to the cinema, for it would be impossible otherwise to repeat such banal phrases.

He suggests elsewhere “that the actors are forced into film work because they are better paid and because the work costs them no intellectual fatigue (has M. Pierre-Quint ever once acted before the camera?) nor intelligent effort. They do not love the cinema.” It is the plural here that is at fault for he, M. Pierre-Quint himself, does not love it and has not yet understood nor felt what marvellous things it may contain.

Madame Germaine Dulac, the director, of whom it was once said that the merits of a director were especially revealed by the fact that “she writes so well of the cinema” speaks of her cinematographic ideal in Esthetiques et Entraves which would link films to a visual music. This idea is rather limited however, especially when she suggests that “pure cinema should look for emotion in the art of movement of line and form.” Certainly a few small films of Richter,
Henri Chomette and others are extremely interesting but to see in them the end of cinematographic emotion is a fundamental error. What would she make of Russian, Swedish and last but not least at all, many American films?

In *Formation de la Sensibilité*, M. Lionel Landry, explains the extreme importance of a good scenario, justly insisting that a capable director will increase his resources in having a particularly dramatic subject for his theme.

There is little to be said about *Le Temps de l’Image est Venu* by Abel Gance. The defence of the cinema is certainly sincere but our pleasure is modified by the unnecessary pretentiousness of the language in which the “maitre” expresses his convictions.

There is nothing exceptional either in *La Poesie du Cinema* by André Maurios, except that any well known writer’s criticism of the cinema is valuable to set against that of those who negate it. But have really need of such testimony? Is it not enough for us that we know ourselves, what the cinema can be for us?

*La Musique des Images* by E. Vuillermoz is also very disappointing. This very intelligent critic confines himself to the very restricted formulas of the cinema “pur”. But he condemns himself as arbiter of these unlimited phrases when he writes “Only certain artists are capable of understanding the mysterious emotions of a play of lights and volume which shifts and turns in a slow whirl as if intoxicated by the magic philtre of light itself.” Cinema therefore for a little circle, for the intellectuals. No. Cinema is not that. We ask of it much more and it is we, ourselves, I am sure, who are right.
On the other hand I was delighted with André Lang's *Theatre et Cinema*. André Lang is of the theatre and a dramatic author, but his extraordinary comprehension of the power of the film is more than delightful. For here at last is a man who is not sparing of his praise of this mode of expression and who does not weigh his joy or his gratitude.

After having treated of the contemporary theatre, he speaks of the cinema with affection and of the extraordinary revelation owes to it. "We are living," he says, "in a state of complete romantiscism, and the public, unknown to the intellectuals has taken its ration of dream and irreality where it could find them, that is, in the cinema."

One is glad to hear such words, especially when they come from a man of a certain age and of another generation. We greatly admire his courage.

One would like to quote it all. But we will confine ourselves to quoting the most enthusiastic passages. "Those who love the cinema by instinct, those who have confidence in it, who foresee its future, can distinguish what lies beneath its cover of vulgarity, can understand its language and discover its mysterious, infinite poetry." We need such men in the French cinema, for if one has faith in such a degree, surely one is capable of creation. "With the cinema," he ends his excellent study, "a new poetry is born, a poetry immediately perceptible that can disturb the simple as well as the delicate." But this man who has understood the power of the cinema to its very foundation, is naturally not employed. They will not let him work. They give work only to the makers of mediocre illustrations.
Cinema et Litterature by André Berge is an intelligent study that could serve as pendent to the chapter by M. Pierre-Quint, where he defies the cinema to express as much as literature can give us. Berge shows us particularly the equivalent of the interior monologue, as it is employed by James Joyce in literature, and says justly that this can be achieved equally well in cinema.

Cinematographie et Espace is a somewhat pretentious conference by Marcel L'Herbier, which is lost in phrases and somewhat marred by the intellectuality which irritates many in his films. It is curious to observe that directors, when they write, are seldom successful and one wonders why they do write. It would be preferable not to and I think too that they should be proud of being unable to express themselves except in the cinema.

It was probably on a bad day that Leon Moussinac wrote Cinéma Expression Sociale. For there is nothing particularly original about the chapter nor does he reveal to us any new ideas.

I fear I shall never like André Levinson. He is an intelligent and an erudite man. He has great knowledge. But he gives this to us in the dry manner of a professor teaching some doctrine. Even at school I was always rebellious to doctrines and it is therefore easily understood that I am now not likely to care for them.

Introduction a la Magie Blanche et Noire by Albert Valentin finishes the fourth volume of this series that is to be continued. Here at last is someone who has perfectly understood the magic of the cinema and tells us of it in an agreeable manner. M. Valentin knows how to love and to
CLOSE UP

put his enthusiasm into right phraseology. When he says: "For us, the cinema is the last comer in the arts given to mankind. It has a right to our absolute affection and its youth alone stands in lieu of virtue," one wants to express one’s thanks to him and to be his friend. For (and this makes it very simple), the world for us is divided into two parts; those who love the cinema as they should and M. Valentin has a place among these, and those who either do not love it at all or not as we love it, and these people are not of interest to us at all.

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The principles of the school are given fairly well in the Principal's book, The Problem Child (Herbert Jenkins, Ltd.)

P

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\text{France} & \quad \text{Frs: 35} \\
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BY THE EDITOR

It is a good thing, to my mind, that the C. E. A. has waged war on the Entertainments Tax. And equally good that the talkies (which word ceases to have its first gay crudity, and remains just crude, but is better than most of the suggested remedies)—have crumbled the foundations of the Quota and Kontingent, justifying themselves surely in this if in nothing else. The abysmal blindness of such ramshackle protectors of industry has long been genuine comic-relief to a pretty lugubrius farce which by arbitration could insist on home-spun goods, no matter how damaged, but not on the audiences to support them.

Though Quota and Kontingent were fashioned to aid national interests, speeding the glorious chariot of fatherland, the locomotive power was the herd of the Gadarene swine, the speeding was downhill, and the chariot a growler. Quota and Kontingent were the temporarily opulent bread-winners of quickies so rank they could not but poison each other and perish in the brew.
Behind such measures the only principle was the indemnity of thoroughly bad films, the only unmuddled fact was the confession in all but words that home-made films were unfit for competition in the world markets, the only protection was to the incompetent, and the only effect the hindrance of the public in their choice.

Quota and Kontingent were ready-to-wear, bespoke tailoring for silent films. Talkies have another range of measurements altogether, and will need new coverings. That this may be as bad if not worse remains a likelihood, but equally the likelihood remains that people will be more wary in future with their protections, and make them provisional to development and contingency. There is, in any event, little chance that anything much more constructive or destructive in the end than Quota or Kontingent will be devised.

As for Entertainments Tax, which Winston Churchill was supposed to be going to do something about, and didn’t, the C. E. A. suggests that now the public should! “Arrange,” it says, “that cinema screens be used at the General Election to assist the return of Candidates who will vote for the abolition of the Entertainments Tax.”

A system that makes you pay for being happy and does practically nothing to help you if you’re not, is neither clever nor necessary, and votes that can help to change it will not be empty. The injustice of paying a ransom for pleasure is less insufferable than its implication, and there need be no pretence at condoning the grovelling way in which coins are taken from those who very often must choose between staying at home or cancelling out the tax prices by walking to work or eating less food. Such sheerly unconstructive policy is on a par only
CLOSE UP

with that of remembering valiant dead with monuments whose greatest use could be for beggars to rest on, instead of founding schools and homes for those who survive. You could say that one endowed maternity home would cost no more than a main-square site with its granite or bronze defacement, and would certainly save a number of lives.—Equally you could say that there is no reason for these governmental petty-pilferings of the meanest kind. Nobody can do more than to go on pointing out facts. The changes come when the public makes up its mind.

Most of the trouble, and many of the complications, arising in connection with films have been due to restrictions. Most of the trouble anywhere, for that matter! In films especially. A constantly changing medium where a restriction that may to-day restrict simply, may choke, to-morrow.

Now take the question of, if you please, pubs.

Pubs, let me explain, for the benefit of Continental readers, don’t mean what you mean. In England a pub is an inn, a hostel, a place where you go to buy a glass of beer. It’s supposed to be so shameful they usually have red blinds and frosted glass, and the saloon bar is slightly more refined than the public one, where people spit more.

Of late there has been talk about films in pubs. In fact, films in pubs have been rather bees in bonnets, and Sheffield at any rate, considers them a serious matter. Again the C. E. A. met to discuss the problem, but this time without resolution except one of postponement.

Unlike the gentleman who felt the very subject was beneath the dignity of the members to discuss, I think films in pubs might be rather gay. In any event very little notice would be
taken of them, and very little harm done. Only those who visit English pubs could know their infinite capacity for dreariness, a capacity, indeed, which might easily have been based on the convention of driving a man to drink. Now a little entertainment thrown in with your drink might just as easily cause you to refrain from ordering a second, or at any rate, a third, to shake off the gloom. A film going on would be less suggestive than the average cabaret, which is a pause, as everyone knows, in the evening’s dancing designed to give you time to finish your bottle and order another. Unlike the pub, the cabaret has the added persuasion of definitely trying to prick the limp (shall we say ardour) of the paying sex. True, pubs would probably not show travelogue or educational films either, we can guess fairly safely what they would try to reproduce, but they could certainly do no worse, and might do very much better than the simpering unclad, whose reasons for nudity have nothing to do with Nackdkultur.

There was not much fuss when the May Fair Hotel showed films, and for the life of me I can’t see what is so very different in the May Fair, or the Ritz or the Berkley and any Crown and Anchor or Goat in Boots, except that, in the former, if you drink too much you have only to stagger to bed, whereas in the latter you are removed by the management to the pavement.

Indeed, the May Fair Hotel was instanced at the Sheffield meeting of the C. E. A., but they let the useful analogy go, on the grounds that the performances were only occasional, and had been organised to make London more popular for visitors. It would have seemed that the Sheffield publicans had had the same idea in mind, but perhaps this was recognised,
**CLOSE UP**

and may have been in part the reason for considering it a serious question.

Meanwhile it has been announced that Britain is making its reply to *Berlin*. The paper in which I read of it to best advantage said quite without self-consciousness that it is to be our answer to Germany’s propagandistic film advertising the Capital. If that’s where we start from, the finished film may do for the American Express Company as a minor advertisement at best, and at worst may warn off intending visitors for years to come. But there were long and tedious petitions before filming in the London streets was permitted, and it may be natural that those giving the permission may lend London purely for publicity purposes, forgetting that *Berlin* was the Symphony of a City, and not the catchpenny of a rival tourist resort.

*Berlin*, if anything ever was, is a statement that need not be repeated, certainly not imitated. There may be a thousand million abstract subjects to film in London able to take their own rhythm and interpretation—a rhythm and interpretation, incidentally, as different from that of Berlin as any two cities could possess. To imitate Ruttman would be flattery, but not successful either as flattery or as imitation. For all I know, London’s special rhythms are perhaps being captured into some great masterpiece, but you know what the papers are! No matter what it is they’ll say it’s a back-answer!

*Kenneth Macpherson.*
THE NEW LANGUAGE OF CINEMATOGRAPHY

Soviet cinematography has now arrived at the most curious stage of its development.

More than this.

I believe that only now can we begin to hazard a guess concerning the ways by which will be formed a genuine Soviet cinematography, i.e. a cinematography which not only in respect of its class attributes will be opposed to bourgeois cinematography, but which will also be categorically excellent in respect of its own methods. Not long since I expressed the view that cinematography began its career with the utilisation of popular literature (of the detective—story genre), through the system of highly sophisticated theatrical art (the system of the “star” and “vedette”), German pictorial films (from impressionism to Doctor Caligari), of films without any definite aim, etc.—and is now returning to that condition, which I named, to distinguish it from the first, the second literary period.

But if, in the first literary period, cinematography had recourse to the fabulous subjects and the dramatic and epic experience of literature, i.e. borrowed from literature the
elements of construction as a whole; the second literary period, on the contrary, makes use of literature along a different line—along the line of its experience in the technology of the materials with which literature is concerned.

Here cinematography is for the first time availing itself of the experience of literature for the purpose of working out its own language, its own speech, its own vocabulary, its own imagery. The period is ending when the most brilliant productions—from a dramaturgical point of view—were pronounced, from the point of view of genuine cinematography, in a childish lisp. As an example we might instance Chaplin’s *A Woman of Paris*, perhaps the most remarkable cinematographic production of the past epoch of cinematography.*

The new period of cinema attacks the question from within—along the line of the methodology of purely cinematographic expressiveness.

It is not surprising that at first the construction should be somewhat halting. The truth is that the new cinema

---

*This remarkable picture, which has very striking merits, is quite incorrectly judged by us as regards the nature of its significance. According to my point of view, its significance is in no sense practical, but of a purely stimulative character. The *Woman of Paris* is for us significant in a purely abstract sense, as a stage of accomplishment possible of attainment in any domain whatsoever. In this respect its significance for the cinema is of exactly the same order as the Doric temple, a well-executed somersault or the Brooklyn bridge.

In our country it was received as a phenomenon of practical advantage to us; in fact, as an object for imitation and even plagiarism. Examples of such an attitude are among the sad pages of our cinema history: elements of reaction and retrogression along the line of the general development of the ideology of the forms of the Soviet cinema.
language which is being formed is only beginning to grope its way towards a perception of that for which it is suitable and intended. The attempts to say what is unsuitable and ill-adapted lead to confusion. The sphere of work of the new cinematographic possibilities seems to be the direct screening of class-useful conceptions, methods, tactics and practical watchwords, not having recourse for this purpose to the aid of the suspicious baggage of the dramatic and psychological past. The social aim of cinematography is being essentially transposed. The cinematography of the first period was, in the first place, confronted with the task of straining to the utmost the aggressive emotions in a definite direction, with a direct (and, as far as possible, deafening) temperamental volley in such direction, whereas the task of cinematography at the present day is very much more complicated: its task is the deep and slow drilling of new conceptions or a transformation of generally accepted notions into the consciousness of the audience. Whereas in the first case we were striving for a quick emotional discharge, the new cinema must include deep reflective processes, the result of which will find expression neither immediately nor directly.

Such a task was, of course, beyond the scope of the old halting cinematography. The new cinematography, by which conceptions are conveyed, is still at its initial stage of formal construction.

And, just as examination, from the new point of view, of the first guide to the period of infancy of cinematography—literature—did immeasurably much to strengthen the actual formal ideology of the new cinema, so examination (also from
the new point of view) of the technical alphabet of its possibilities, doubly popular in its youthful period, should give a great multitude of data for the new formal methods.

The technical cinema trick yesterday—was a playing to the gallery (trick in the true sense) or an employment of the overloaded baroque style of the letters of eloquent stage-managers (the picture postcard effects of repeated exhibition, or purely stylistic mannerism, for instance—meaningless Dissolves in and out). To-day it has a new significance. “The technical possibility”, foolishly called a “trick”, is undoubtedly just as important a factor in the construction of the new cinematography as is the new conception of staging from which it is sprung.

S. Eisenstein.
The film, the contents of which have been described correctly in the enclosed letter, is a criminal film; its content and action move in the world of crime, and the representation of crime in this film is its own purpose. The events represent outrages, shown with impressive lucidity to the spectators, so that they might induce persons who incline to the commitment of crime to the execution thereof. The culmination of brutalities is reached in the scene where the hidden aggressor strikes the man already lying on the ground, on his head with a truncheon.

The whole thing is apt to produce a lowering and dulling effect on the spectator's feelings through the accumulation of brutalities and raw-edged facts; for one cannot make out any ethic compensation (such as the criminal meeting, perhaps, some just punishment). The idea that consciously illegal spending of false money should lead to ill-luck is neither logically compelling, nor is it expressed in such a way that the spectator could take it as a practical moral application. Even, however, if this were so, one could not make out a case which would nullify the negative effect, if the final triumph of crime is considered. The film, which does not reveal an equal artistic equivalent to induce a milder interpretation, could not be released because of its brutal and demoralizing effect.
Berlin, den 7. April 1922.

An Deutscher Film-Comp., Berlin.

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sich von der Hand zu seinen. Den Gipfelpunkt der Arbeit erreicht die
Darstellung darin, daß der nachträgliche Verbrecher, der am Ende dieses.

Das Ganze ist geeignet, durch die Wirkung der Brutalität und ge-

A film by Erno Metzner, warmly recommended by Close Up.
CLOSE UP

THE DIRECTOR OF THE FILM, UBERFALL, TAKES THE LIBERTY OF REPLYING AS FOLLOWS TO THE CENSOR'S LETTER:

Uberfall is a short film, corresponding to the short story form in literature. It represents a new method and must therefore be measured with new scales.

It seems incomprehensible that such a film could be interpreted by the censors as a criminal film.

It represents an event, without commentary, merely as a fact, and as dry as a report. The contents consist of the description of the hero's increasing state of fear, which must touch the spectators more than the "raw-edged facts" reproached to us, but which do not exist at all.

In the scene that is played in the room, the hero is neither strangled nor gagged, the towel serves merely to bind him; and the blow in the street is only hinted at. If one wished to portray crimes, it would be easy to find matters more apt for this purpose, or even to heighten this one. It is impossible to understand the reproach of "accumulation of brutalities", if you think for instance of the American film, The Godless Girl, the contents of which deserve such a reproach in incomparably greater degree than Uberfall.

All the scenes of this film aim merely at inducing the feeling of fear, the consequence of which is the psychologically irreproachable dream of fear that has been thought out as the film's culmination.

It is the purpose of this letter, to protest explicitly against the false interpretation that the aim of the film was the representation of brutality. One should examine how far the
film's capacity of suggesting FEAR has induced the censors to a false interpretation of this effect, having attributed this impression to "brutality". Such a psychological turn of events is quite conceivable.

The length of the whole film is 460 metres. All the dramatic construction is different from the construction of a big picture. Everything must be hinted at briefly. Long exposition or moral treatment is impossible. In such a frame the hint that justice is on the way, (shown in the hospital scene) must be sufficient. A broader working out of the purpose of "practical moral application" is not possible within this form, and should it be forced, would distort it. But its necessity is required only by people who apply to it the same scale used to measure full length films.

Also the artistic value of the film (hidden for the censors) should have been estimated by another measurement than that of the sentimental average production. This film is after all nearer to real life, if it is less beautiful.

It should again be emphasized that the film has been totally mistaken, misunderstood and misinterpreted. It is an absolutely serious work, that intends to create a new path for the German art of the film and that requires a measurement with a new set of scales.

Erno Metzner.
From *The Flood*, a Wufku film, directed by Kavaleridze, photographed by O. Kalouzny with his assistant S. Skriabine.
From *The Flood*, a new Wufku film directed by Kavaleridze.
Prof. Kulik, with his cameraman N. A. Strukof and assistant during the filming of the Sovkino film *In the Taiga* (Siberian marshy forests) *For a Meteorite.* In this region a meteorite struck the ground, and the expedition was made to discover it.

Trees smashed by the meteorite for hundreds of miles around. The swamps are infested with mosquitoes, and it was often necessary to film standing to the waist in water. See note in Comment and Review.
New Babylon, the new Sovkino film, directed by Konsintzoff and Trauberg, and mentioned among films available for England through the British Instructional agreement with Sovkino. Artist: 

Lace, a film of Komsomol life made by the young and promising director, S. Yutkevich.
New Babylon, a film of the Paris Commune and the barricades. Directors: Konsintzoff and Trauberg of the Feks group of the Sovkino. See Comment and Review.
From the Sovkino culture-film, *Afghanistan (The Heart of Asia)*, directed by Erofeev. The walls of the city Gazni.

From *Afghanistan*. Amanulla Khan with his brother.
From *Pamir*, the film of a joint expedition organised by the Leningrad Academy of Sciences and the German Notgemeinschaft.

Climbing a glacier discovered during the expedition.

From *Pamir*. These photographs were obtained by the Meschrabpom director, V. Schneiderof and the cameraman Tolcha.
From *The Ghost That Never Returns*, Alexander Room's film, on which he is still working.
EDITOR’S COMMENT

I was never more astonished in my life than when I heard that Herr Metzner’s very lovely film had been censored for any reason whatsoever. When his letter arrived and I learned it had been censored on the grounds of brutality and the likelihood of inducing crime, I could only feel that it was not safe to breathe lest it should be some cardinal sin.

I emphatically join my protest to that of Herr Metzner. I say again that Uberfall is a beautiful, harmless film that could debauch no one, nor brutalise nor shock. Its artistic value would, in any event, raise it above petty consideration of its effect upon moral pathologists. For the potential criminal it would be too intellectual and would mean nothing. There is nothing more likely to rouse one’s impatience than the stupidity of such a clause, which science and psychology have endlessly proved to be false through and through.

If the intricate surgery performed in detail in Storm Over Asia is less “brutal” or more “artistic” than the footpad’s blow (half seen) it would take a long time to make me see how or why.

I hope most sincerely that this, one of the most valuable of the modern trends in cinema, will be shown as widely as possible throughout the world, and show up once and for all the futile and illiterate regression of thought and action that constitutes censorship in every country where it is applied.

Kenneth Macpherson.
MODERN WITCH-TRIALS

A further article from the pen of Dr. Hanns Sachs, eminent Viennese psychoanalyst, dealing with the question of censorship. His thousand words of scientific examination are more than enough to puncture the pondorous bladder and deflate it of its copious hot-air!

A few months ago I read about a trial against a book describing a form of human love not acknowledged hitherto either by acts of parliament or by popular story writers: the love relations between two women. A modern witch-trial is bound to have its modern ways: the attorney for the prosecution admitted that the book in question was a serious work of art, far from frivolity or lasciviousness, but—and in this culminated everything that was said in favour of the prosecution—we must think of those who are in danger of falling, those who waver between virtue and vice and may, by the impression of such a book wrought on their weak minds, be tempted away from normality and flung into everlasting perdition. Judge and jury and the court of appeal applauded this sane argument and dammed the book unhesitatingly—which, I sincerely hope, has done something to enlarge its circulation. Anyhow, the thesis of the danger of the unprotected ones who may get lured into vice—a moral
or political one—by a book or a picture is the main stronghold of the formidable fortress: censorship. It's worth while to try out how this will apply to film censorship.

Exposed to danger are, as far as the film is concerned, mainly the children and half adults of the urban proletariat—in rural conditions the film is no factor and the young ones of the middle classes are safeguarded by their families. Now, I don't think that any person who has a glimmering of a notion about the conditions of family life among the proletariat—as depending on the housing problems—will assert that an average proletarian child can ever see in a film anything showing sexuality in such a gross and coarse way as it is shown to it daily—or nightly—at home and near home. True, the American film "demi-mondaines" of the movies are far more attractive and tempting than the real ones whom the child sees, so to speak, "in the flesh"—but then these real ones are far less chaste and virtuous. It will take a long way of amelioration of the conditions of the working classes till the film may be considered in the light of a danger to the morality of their offspring.

Let us take another point of view. Those who had reached an age of discretion 25 years ago will remember the strong and protracted outburst of public feeling in England against government methods in Russia about the time of the Russo-Japanese war and shortly afterwards—at the epoch of pogroms and "black hundreds". Had at this time a film art existed and had there been an English director with the gift of expressing his views in a vigorous and virile fashion, had this director taken the revolt of the Black Sea fleet as a subject
and treated it according to the universal feeling of his countrymen—the result of his endeavours would have been a film exactly on the lines of Potemkin; there is no doubt whatever that it would have aroused the frantic acclamations of every true and staunch English audience, that it would have been considered as appealing to the best traditions and the soundest instincts of the British nation—hate of oppression and corruption, sympathy with the weak and so on. But to-day Potemkin is banned, Englishmen must be protected from falling into the bottomless pit of Bolshevism. The contrast becomes still more glaring in Germany where Potemkin has been shown innumerable times to enthusiastic audiences; the persons protesting vehemently against this enthusiasm as "unpatriotic" are absolutely identical with those who only twelve years ago would have considered it as downright defeatism to depict a Russian army or navy officer as anything else but a brutal and inhuman monster, hated to death by his inferiors.

A third case: A short time ago in Berlin was shown an American film which I don’t hesitate to call the worst of its class. The Man who Laughs. A work without any artistic ambition, appealing only to the densest—especially sadistic—emotions. In this film is shown a woman in her bath and at the subsequent toilet as being observed through the key-hole by two men. True, the naked body is never shown entirely, only various and sundry appetizing bits of it, some directly, some indirectly as silhouettes or mirror-reflection. The tendency of this scene which has nothing whatever to do with the plot is plainly to give the audience cheap erotic sensations
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—absolutely the same as in any pornographic picture. And yet it seems that this scene passed censorship even in chaste U.S.A. from whence it comes—whereas many pictures of "Ways to Strength and Beauty" which certainly were not intended to stir sexual reaction and could hardly do so, had to be cut out because the beautiful athletic bodies were "stark naked." How about the "danger problem" here?

I trust I have made it clear that this "danger" business is sheer bunk being just a thin disguise of something else, to which disguise cling many well intentioned persons who ought to know better. The tendency of censorship as shown above is simply to deny the existence of certain facts which are not in accordance with the code of life which censorship tries to uphold as the only existing one. In print, especially in scientific discussion they may be admitted, in the movies, which appeal to the emotional side of an indefinite number of people they are to be treated as if they didn't exist. This "as if" is the centre of the problem; the true meaning of censorship is nothing more or less than the maintaining of a fiction —the queer idea that things are not what they are as long as you don't say so.

The psychoanalyst knows a mechanism which works exactly the same way in the individual mind and plays a great part in early development. The child, as long as its personality is still weak and undeveloped, has not the weapons of experience and judgment to defend itself against untoward emotions and to solve the many and grave conflicts in its mind. In face of these indissoluble difficulties it resorts to a more primitive way of reaction: it "represses" those facts,—
emotions, recollections, phantasies, whatever they are,—which are contradictory to its newly acquired standard of personality, e.i. it tries to make out—and succeeds by and by—that these facts don’t exist—never existed. Of course every individual pays a high price for this falsification, becoming unable to face certain realities of life and to deal with them adequately. Censorship is only the social repetition of this individual process of regression, of the most primitive and infantile way reacting to a conflict. The child, as it grows up, learns to use better methods, to see problems and grapple with them successfully.

How long has a nation to resort to these infantile methods which are outgrown by every reasonable member of it?

HANN SACHS.

TWELVE RULES FOR THE AMATEUR

Or

How to Make Money, Though Honest

Circumstances, (over which I, my dear Hicks, have no control) prevent the Englishman from feeling often enough that he is abroad. But as this accounts for the fabulous
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popularity of Paris, and as Paris is the place which has the reputation of using short films, it is as well that the earnest amateur should have a few rules or, if you like, recipes, since this is the one town which, from the fact of its existence downwards, he will find inexplicable.

1. He is, of course, though an amateur, not an artist. No. He is *bon ouvrier*. All he wants is to do his job. Of course, it is a new kind of job, and he is a new kind of workman, but still he’s no artist.

2. Which being so, the question of a market is the first point. There are three kinds of films being shown in Paris this spring by the leading houses, and they are American, French and small abstracts, *essais*, symphonies, whatever you like to call them. It is important that you should realise that the American films are not to be found on the boulevards for the pleasure of tourists, but at the *salles specialistes*. Otherwise you will go quite wrong, and be not at all a *bon ouvrier*. On the boulevards you will find such things as *La Rue Sans Joie* and at the (vulgar, large but, what a relief, efficient) Paramount, *Les Nouveaux Messieurs*. But the real triumphs of the modern cinema are at the Ursulines *Lonesome*, the Vieux Colombier *The Crowd*, the Studio 28 *The Last Warning*. It will not occur to you to make an American film, and you cannot afford to buy up the whole of the modern furnishing floor at the Printemps, so a French film is out of question. Though wonders can, I am told, be done with radiator paint and a few yards of American cloth. Still, it is safer to concentrate on our old friend, the abstract.
3. You travel, therefore, on the Métro with an Ica, if you can borrow one, with an Eyemo. This is essential. You travel with nothing else. Just a camera. Brain or wit would ruin it. Just an Ica, then nothing will interfere with the purity of your images, and that will be *tres mecanique* and at the same time very sympathetic towards the masses who will be enregistered. If possible they should be caught at dawn.

4. Then you lie on your back beneath the Eiffel Tower. It is made of steel, and it is a steel age. You can also stand on your head, because panning is passé and if the film "breathes", so much the better, it will show how poor you are. You cannot afford a real camera. You are just a *bon ouvrier*, very poor and young. You have to be young to stand on your head. If you cannot afford the Eiffel Tower, Meccano can be used, but it is harder to lie under this.

5. The next thing is to stand on a refuge. Take the traffic coming towards you. You may choose a time, and the sun may be out, just when there is a traffic block, but never mind. Take the block. It will show you know *Berlin*. It will also give you an opportunity to go on your knees and get a shot of large and looming wheels, which in turn will lead to a sub-title about the menace of machines, and their *jeu sans cesse*.

6. Next, you want water. It also has *jeu sans cesse*, but how different a jeu. Where, after all, does the traffic lead us, and regard this water, how slow it is, yet how surely it runs to sea. Yes, in a few years you will be able to quote
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Swinburne, who was a poet, and you may even call your film *Safe To Sea*, which it won't be, but that would be a little too advanced as yet.

7. From this you go to a town waking. Or sleeping. It can also refuse to wake and it may linger over going to bed. But show that you have seen *Berlin*.

8. Remember that the day is over when you could collect a few glass fish, a pleated paper lampshade and an egg, and whirl them round. The Americans no longer use trick photography, and besides, *you* can't afford to. And don't know how to.

9. The day for screaming faces à la Russe is also past. Repose and vacuity is to be aimed at. It is also a little dangerous to take things from the *Jeanne D'Arc* angle, as Feyder did whenever a door opened in *Les Nouveaux Messieurs*. It is still done, but things move quickly, and you would be out of date when your film came on.

10. Significant shape is also not what it was. You choose an inkpot not for its shape, nor the light effects, but because it is used. Therefore, it is as well if it is dirty, and better if it is chipped. You see, it is not significant shape, but fragments of life you want. That is why you must have free access to dustbins. Fragments of lives, expressing Life. Yes. You might put your camera in a window, and set it going, but no one has done that yet. Or cover half the lens so that Paris was seen as a blind beggar sees it.

11. You can, on the other hand, still use percussion instruments but use them as the beat of the human heart,
all the best houses show hearts this season. Trap drums are a little démodé, but a gong is as good, and also is very human. A hooter is still permissible. These and an easily comprehended design of two left diagonal, one right diagonal are to be employed, and the main theme should still be the pointlessness of town existence.

12. Where you can let yourself go is on the matter of tinting. If you took too much of one subject, because you happened to have it and were not sure what else you'd get, you can tint some of it magenta, and slip it in. Everyone will know what you mean. Also, this is a very smart blending of avant-garde and the avant-guerre, and that is much to be desired. You can even go as far as making your film look as much like the pictures of Cromer front in a railway carriage as possible. Indeed, if you are bon ouvrier enough, just as cooks use up scraps to evolve a delicious dish, you need use no film at all. You can just use dupes, and bits of old ones, a little negative and cuttings from films of your friends.

What you won't do if you are keeping your eye on the Paris market as it is at present, is to dare to make a film which is fantastic. Though your essai is not earnest at all, it must not be in the least witty. Everything must be flippant, and that debars experiment or fantasy. It is fantastic, but it isn't experimental, to get up at uncomfortable hours in order to photograph a pillar box or the octroi at dawn, and it isn't really witty. It is witty when Hans Richter has three people run round a lamppost in the middle of the screen and vanish, but that is done only once, and only by a Richter.
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You are not that. You are young and poor. So, if you follow these rules carefully, you are sure to have a film which has every chance of being shown, if little purpose in being made. Above all, don’t try any tricks, leave that to your outlook, and counteract that with nostalgic subtitles.

Robert Herring.

PHASES OF CINEMA UNITY

Anthony Asquith has recently written upon cinema unity with estimable pertinence. He is especially interesting in his observations upon camera devices. He says: “Roughly speaking, there seem to be three occasions where an unusual camera position is justified. First of all, where the point of view of one of the characters is represented. By imposing on the audience his physical point of view of the person, the director is putting it in touch with his mental state as well... Secondly, it would be legitimate to use an unusual angle to intensify a dramatic moment even if the ‘shot’ represents no one’s point of view... Lastly, the director may legitimately choose an unusual camera position to compose a good picture.” It is in reference to this last rule that Mr. Asquith states the inclusive law: “But such occasions, unwarranted apparently by logic or drama, are more difficult
to justify. A plea of aesthetic logic does not affect the resolutely common-sense critic of Cézanne’s precarious apples. _And such ‘shots’ are only right in a film the whole texture of which is pictorial...”_ The italics are mine.

This inclusiveness of viewpoint qualifies not only the last of Mr. Asquith’s legitimate camera angles, but refers directly back to the first two as well. _The entire film must be preconceived in anticipation of each detail!_ A curve or an angle, a close-up or face-out, must not be recognized as an isolated detail, but as an inevitable part of an inevitable pattern. The whole discipline the detail, the detail disciplines the whole. There is a more demanding logic than the logic of the psychology of a character at any moment or the logic of the dramatic moment. There is the rythmic structure of the unit determining the moment. No such thing as a “shot” exists in the aesthetic sense of the cinema, whatever one may call the immediate taking of a scene. Films are rythms that commence and proceed, in which—ideally—every moment, every point, refers back to all that has proceeded and forward to all that follows. A stress or a deformation, an image or an absence of image, has validity only if it is justified by the pattern up to point, and if it leads again to the pattern from that point. In brief, one may not establish a camera angle unless the entire film contains the mind for _that_ camera angle. When Dupont’s _Variety_ came to America, it hurtled all the Hollywood shopmen into angles. Critics like Gilbert Seldes greatly lamented the ignorant uses of the camera-viewpoint. But the confusion was only another instance of the typical confusion of mankind, of whose foibles Hollywood is so
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hilarious an epitome. Yet from the point of view of Mr. Asquith’s rules, many of those angles were justified. Only, the literal American film had no mentality for those non-literal angles, and the justifications of a moment’s pscychology, drama and pictorial pattern could not surmount the terrific gainsaying of the integral film. Recently, however, there have appeared several instances of a more pertinent incorporation of the angle in the American film, always in association with another and inclusive treatment. In Clarence Brown’s Flesh and the Devil, the angle is used in a decidedly non-American structure of setting and lighting, the first American instance, and only American instance I know of, where the environment envelops the characters: a pattern Swedish-German. The angles are never extreme and work into the patterned lines as part of the pattern. They are not planned in the method of Variety, where they determine the pattern, and all else submits to them. In Irving Cumming’s film, Dressed to Kill, the angle is of the short-range view, a trifle under the characters, in front of them. It suits the entire muscular impact of the film, which qualifies it as an American device, since the American film is one of muscular impact. The angle is justified always less by its point of origin in the camera than by the image at the other terminal.

It is good to note that Mr. Asquith sees that the unit is paramount, even though his own film Underground, is replete with momentary reproaches not called for by the totality—in fact, Underground is hardly a film of a sustained unity. One director has always been aware that his form does not admit
of the sophisticated devices of the French avant-garde or German virtuosos. F. W. Murnau has declared verbally that his cinema, which is the film’s first realized form, is that of the reduced theme conveyed by simple movements. In *The Last Laugh* the character of the old doorkeeper and his fate determine the treatment of the environment. He is the demanding vertex towards which everything converges, the other persons, the rains, the swinging doors. *The Last Laugh* is the earliest fulfilment of intensive unity in the first form of the silent cinema. A more heroic extension of the same treatment is one that I believe will indicate the direction of two separate cinemas, silent and sonorous. I refer to Dreyer’s *Jeanne d’Arc*. It is so emphatic an instance of the complete realization of the Germanic intensity (in the “gros plan”), reinforced by Russian uses of it, that many observers have failed to see it as the first traditional statement of cinema that has now been so firmly established as to be a source for the future. Dreyer’s film is a unity throughout (save possibly in the captions); the bold image has been so completely realized as to ask for a background which will further set it in relief.

The law of unity, as I have expressed it in my second paragraph, clarifies the uses of the composite devices: the sectioned screen, the surimpression or multiple exposure, the triptych, etc. It is not enough to use such devices for effect, that is rather a smart intention than an aesthetic one. The smart intention of the double-exposure is apprehensible in Leni’s *The Last Warning*, where the narrative is preceded by a composition of “the lights of Broadway,” over which
the legs and the thighs of a chorus descend diagonally. In itself this stunt is not bad, because Leni is a clever if question-able artisan, but does not belong to this film. A mystery film demands that the locale or the mystery shall be the sole universe for that enterprise. A recognition of this concept made Epstein's film of The House of Usher, despite the callow and fragmentary objections to it, about the only successful film of universe-torment.

American movies, because they are built usually on a single line, do not allow of the composite structure, where the composite image should be intended as a gathering of the separate currents, expressed by separate sequences, into a cumulative pictorial or visual-motor arrangement. For this is needed a film built compositely, and it is such a film which ultimately asks for Gance's triptych and Bakshy's "screen-within-a-screen." The composite film waits to be fulfilled. It was first hinted in the grand and grandiose pictures of Griffith and Thomas Ince. It promises to be realized in Russia.

The reference to the background in Jeanne d'Arc suggests the place of the setting in the environment. With this, my reference to The Last Laugh and Flesh and the Devil indicate several relationships of setting to characters. These must be determined by the nature of the subject-matter and the nature of the treatment which the subject-matter has determined. In Jeanne d'Arc the setting brings forward the characters, while all the personalities and movements refer constantly to the Maid. In The Last Laugh the environment converges upon the man, who is determined by the
environment. In *Flesh and the Devil* the environment envelops the persons. This latter natural immanence derives from the Swedish film. The Germans have made use of this enveloping environment in sombre and misty photography: *Joyless Street* and *The Tragedy of the Street*. In the latter, the entire treatment, as well as narrative, is rather the carbon copy of a formula lacking the informing principle or conception, than a complete work of singular justification. The effect is rancid.

In 1918 Mr. Victor Freeburg published his book on "The Art of Photoplay Making." In it he classifies the settings thus: "a neutral setting, one which neither hinders nor helps the action . . . informative," where the setting conveys "some element of the story which is not conveyed in any other way. The setting may be sympathetic, or harmonizing with the general mood or impression of the action. The setting may be participating; that is, it may enter integrally into the action of the story. And the setting may be formative; that is, it may actually exercise some power in moulding the characters or play." Despite a certain schoolmaster's tone, this subdivision is of import. I think the error lies in the inclusion of the first two kinds, neutral and informative. There can not be neutral setting. If a setting is not a part of a film, if it does not act, it is not needed. Can one not conceive of a film without a setting? There have been instances of scenes without environments, where the screen itself is the background. But this is not neutrality, it emboldens the image. I can give a significant example of this: in *Secrets of a Soul*, when Werner Krauss narrates
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to the psychoanalyst his memory of the murder, the group of persons is recalled without the presence of place or objects. Freeburg's *informative* setting is in reality the extraneous decor. The other groupings have some general identity with my three instances, except that Freeburg is talking always about narration or exposition, whereas I am stressing always the unit-structure.

The Germans were the first to attempt to design the decor according to general mood and tempo. Instances are: *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari, Torgus, Raskolnikow*. Despite the frequency of the failures of these attempts, due to heavy-handedness, palpable fantasy and over-concentration upon the decor, the principle these films articulated is a definite one and still waits to be fulfilled. *Torgus*, perhaps the most tedious and banal of these films, possesses two features of interest. Scrawls on the successive sets are intended to impart to the entire film a uniformity of tones and textures. The scene-openings and closings or fade-outs are designed, timed and alternated in the enclosing patterns (pod-shaped, elliptical, rectangular) moving toward or away from the center, horizontal to horizontal or diagonally. In Germaine Dulac's film of domestic pathos, *Mme. Beudet*, strands of the images—horizontal, vertical, diagonal—alternate with the full screen in an easy, dovetailing flow, which justifies their use. Contrast with this the multiple images, partial screen, figure in spotlight, silhouette—all strong *effects* in themselves—in Geza von Bolvary's Clap-trap, *The Captive of Ling-Tchang* to understand the principle of suitability which has, in its execution, a thousand ramifications, all
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summed up in the phrase, the scruples of the author's intention.

The principle of unity elucidates the much-disputed matter of the caption. Eric Elliott in "Anatomy of Motion Picture Art" advances the very interesting defense that the caption is visual. But the fact that it is read makes it pre-eminently verbal. The objection to the caption is not an absolute one, but an ideal one. The Aristotelian law of unity was not the absolute that academicians would have us believe, but a disciplinary ideal. D. W. Griffith reminds us that the first films were captionless, but that the title was decided upon to save metrage. That, however, is a mercantile economy, not an aesthetic. Be sparing indeed, but not through makeshift. To afford visual caesuras and optic rest, which Elliott sees as purposes for the caption, there is a definite visual, non-verbal means hardly touched as yet, the bare screen itself, either black or white. There is the still photograph, suggested by the ciné-portraits of Man Ray, the stills in the Camille of Fred Niblo, and the comic use of it in René Clair's Two Timid Souls. But the unit-sense and unit-form, must determine what is to be the device used, and whether captions are needed or not. It will be found that most often better and more suitable means are available. Some films absolutely repudiate verbal legends. Menilmontant by Dmitri Kirsanoff is such a film, yet when it was released for general, commercial exhibition, titles with a moral intent were interpolated, reducing the film from a simple, sympathetic, human narration to an insolent, sentimental, ulterior preachment.
A film like Germaine Dulac’s *The Sea-Shell and the Clergyman*, the only visual-motor film of a mental obsession, not the narration of a “case” like Pabst’s Freudian film, would be killed by the insertion of captions, for there is no question of explaining the images, nor of referring them directly or precisely to the life of the obsessed minister. It does not concern us whether the images are exact from a psychoanalytic point of view, they are justified by their aesthetic, cinematic structure. The film does not ask for the oneirocritic, but for the ciné-critic. Recently I saw a film of 20 years ago featuring Mistinguet. A foreword said that the captions were deleted because they did not seem necessary to the telling. Indeed they were not, but 20 years ago captions were included, and I, two decades later, can suspect where they were inserted and what they said. I can suspect this because of my memory of the cinema—some ulterior intention was always thought necessary by the producers—and because the film contained an early and perpetuated contradiction of cinema unity: the realistic lip-mimicry in a film of concentrated time and emotions.

The most casual reference to the law of cinema unity will indicate the confusion in the present practices of the sonorous film. Is it not obvious, from this vantage-point, that the producer knows or cares little about the categorical separate-ness of silent and sonorous film, when a motion picture is made as *both*? The whole matter of the creation of already created forms (novel and drama) into a cinema is a matter of changing one unity into another unity. From this conversion of unities as a principle may be studied the
relative successes of the treatment of Zola in the films: *Nana*, by Jean Renoir, *Thérèse Raquin* by Jacques Feyder, *Money* by Marcel l’Herbier, *Fruitfulness* by Baroncelli, *Labor* by Pouctal. By it we are immediately informed that the enthusiasm for Brenon’s *Sorrell and Son* is entirely sentimental. It distinguishes between the verbal cinema of a Lubitsch and the speculative cinema of an Epstein. The entire matter of social and philosophic inference in the movie may be ultimately explained by a development in reasoning from the principle of unity. The inference is determined entirely by the relationship of the parts within the unity and the constant reference of each part to that unity. Was that not present in the rigorous, unrelenting back and forth references in *Jeanne d’Arc*? Was it not absent from *Nana*, where Renoir accomplished an emphatic articulation of a principle of acting in the masklike ratio between the major characters, but beyond that immediate interplay was ineffectual? Was it not also absent from *Thérèse Raquin*, where Feyder concentrated on the characters within the walls, giving us a splendid film of a domestic tragedy, but not one of universal reference? This demands a deduction: the emprise of a unity is determined by the particularization of a theme.

By theme I mean the subject-matter. The particularization of a theme is the immediate story of the motion picture. The theme of Vidor’s *The Crowd* was enormous: ineffectual man, doomed by prophecy, caught within the indifference or hostility of the mass. But the vast scope of such a theme is immediately reduced to a trite duplication of the irony-and-
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pity, human interest feuilleton. Not human experience, but human interest. Therefore the theme is not the determinant of the construction, but the particularization. Unlike Jeanne d'Arc, the particularization is not up to the theme. It is the theme that would have justified the opening of the film with the colossal structures of New York (an introduction by now a banality). The particularization, in its pinched meagreness, does not meet with environment, nor can Vidor, being a chronologist rather than a synthetist, make a constant of the relationship between the environment and the individual. All through The Crowd one feels the whipping of the particularization to rise to theme. Or is it that any particularization, however mean and meagre, there is some trace of the theme, which man, looking for a generality, detects? If so, the director, King Vidor, is so much more incompetent for not having urged that trace of the theme to its fullness. This would have demanded the elimination of the "touches," the purposeful pre-established irony (verbal mostly). In short, it would have demanded the total elimination of the original scenarist, John V. A. Weaver.

When the daughter is killed, the father signs to a newsboy not to cry his wares. The newsboy signs to go to hell. That is realism. The father winds through the crowds trying to stem them, that they might not disturb his dead child. He wants all the world silent in grief. The crowd moves on oblivious of him. That certainly is symbolic. But—a policeman tells him to go back. The symbol is broken. Was his winding through the crowds real? In the light of the entire film, we are to assume it was real. But in itself it
was surely not real. At least its sense was symbolic. Later in the film, there is the expressionistic symbol of the numbers twisting in his head. These two details, the symbolic counter-crowd walk and the numbers, suggest a level upon which Vidor might have attained to the theme, had he been aware. In this awareness is the secret to intelligence in the fashioning of the film. But the emprise of the particular unity of The Crowd did not permit of such non-literal details, which exist beyond its boundaries.

H. A. Potamkin.

SNAP

Here is somebody writing to me from America to say that he got a kick out of a "talkie". A friend, with whom this gentleman was to have spent the evening, fell ill at the last moment, and as he failed to persuade any other lady friend that she was not a last-minute substitute he drifted into a theatre which was showing the latest "vehicle" of his favourite actress. It appears that he was not really very anxious to see this picture; first, because it had been badly reviewed; second, because it was a "talkie"; and as the evening wore on telephone calls and entrances by noisy and wobbly stage doors cast my correspondent into the depths of
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despair. At this point he breaks off his narrative and fires at me a string of questions of the guess-what-could-have-happened category. The reader will be spared the suspense, my correspondent declares that the actress picked up the receiver for the hundredth time and gave his number. Quite naturally he regards the ensuing love dialogue to have had a special significance, and he seems to be very excited about it, for he indulges in several pages of rhetoric ("What freak of chance had made the playwright hit on my number, or can I call it chance, etc.").

So some good can come out of the "talkies"! This does not, however, compensate for the fact that Wardour Street now considers the "talkie" to be the only good. Wardour Street regards the "talkie" as the ideal and aim of the British film, which has just caught up to what is known as the "Hollywood-production-standard". I mean Week-end Wives, the Elstree production of Harry Lachman, is as beautifully photographed, gowned and set as the average Paramount picture, and as silly. The husband and wife who decide to change partners for a week-end, and both hit on the same seaside hotel, must have made many friends—among scenarists, poor devils who have to earn their keep. Estelle Brody plays the principal part in Week-end Wives. The Brody went all round the world in Mademoiselle From Armentieres, and I hope she did not read her reviews, some of which were even reproduced in the Sunday Express.

"Oh yes," an English film magnate said to me, "I guess we've got the snap into our pictures at last."

As an example of the "snap" the gentleman mentioned Ideal's Cine-Magazine, which he declared has a wonderful
way of brightening educational, interest, and topical shots. *Ideal's* wonderful way is to couple tea-things with teethings, growing pains (shot of a baby kicking lustily) with growing panes (quiet landscape of conservatories), wails of the same baby cross-cut with topical shots of Wales. To enliven matters captions announce:—

*Somewhere a Vice is Calling* (shot of baby).

*The End of a Perfect Bay* (shot of Welsh harbour).

References are made to "Noah's Lark", "Gurgle, gargle, and giggle", and when shots are thrown on the screen of crates of tea being shipped they are announced as "the crate adventure".

All these, and many more, in one short; I was dazed at first, afterwards I made notes. I wish now that I had noticed who was the editor of this bright little effort; I think it was a certain Mr. John Buchanan, or possibly a certain Mr. Andrew Buchanan. I do not often feel spiteful, but I am willing to join any league that is formed against Mr. Buchanan.

There were no laughs, and no protests; strangely English audiences need Noel Coward before they produce one boo... I remember noticing a little corner shop in a not too prepossessing neighbourhood of London; a florist's shop with bold lettering over the one window: "The sunshine brings flowers, and the flowers bring sunshine." Admirable saying in itself, but the florist had placed three wreaths in the window; three large wreaths, nothing else! What an encouragement to the thousands of workers who passed the window, and how cheered they would be for the day's work! There is even a climax to the story, for the flowers were of wax!... As an example of what the British will endure...
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without a murmur it cannot be compared to the meekness with which British audiences are suffering Wardour Street "snap".

Indignation, my own, has been fought with remarks, from representatives of British "snap", to the effect that it is better to be too facetious than to lose all sense of humour. I have no brief for the pretentious film; I saw in Berlin Martin Luther, the kind of film which acquires a reputation in England because no one has seen it. (Critics love to mention films which nobody else has seen, they afford such an accommodating criterion by which to judge; laziness which is harmful when these films are included in lists of productions which are supposed to justify the cinema's claim to 'be an art medium.) There is no "snap" in Martin Luther; the story is told with flat lighting, in artificial background, and Eugen Klopfer, who plays the title rôle, shows in close-up the line between his forehead and his false tonsured wig; there are shots of Luther flogging himself, and Tetzel selling indulgences to sinners. The big scene in the picture comes when Luther, huddled with beggars, watches from the bottom of a flight of steps the pomp of a passing Pope; white surpliced acolytes, monks with embroidered banners, deacons and sub-deacons swinging thuribles of incense, the Pope's bodyguard with shining breastplate and armour, bishops with jewel-encrusted mitres, cardinals in rich fabrics—they file past the camera for about half a reel. Inevitably one receives the pantomime-forty-thieves impression, that they are walking round the back of the scene to resume their dreary trudge. One shot of about four hundred feet! Oh! the dullness, and compare with the
simple return of the peasants in the country wagons that conveys all the atmosphere of a gaiety in *The Peasant Women of Riazanj*. Naturally, a film that took itself so seriously aroused a storm of controversy from people who take themselves seriously; Catholic bishops in Berlin expressed their expectation that no Catholic would see the film. . .

But why should one be defending this when one is attacking *The End of a Perfect Bay*?

Oswell Blakeston.

A PRIVATE SHOWING OF *COSMOS*

Some of us had seen *Natur und Liebe*, both in the German and English versions, others had not. This film will be remembered as the one that was banned under the title *Cosmos*, a few weeks ago in England, and then released in a mutilated form. Finally it was decided (to end various discussions,) to see if we could give a private showing of it on a home projector.

We wrote to the renters at Basel who replied we could rent the film for one showing with closed doors at the rate of four pounds, insurance and freight also to be at our cost. And horrible penalties threatened if we did not return the film within twenty-four hours of its receipt. They referred us at my request to an insurance company and promised the film in a week’s time.
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The insurance company then sent us a marvellous form which we were requested to fill. We were to state among other things, if we wished to insure the meat in the larder and the cattle in the fields. It was all stamped over with the words "Private Film Showing" and the policy was void if we did not keep a pitcher of water and a blanket beside the projector. I filled up the form and sent the seven and sixpence demanded for insurance but just as the letter was posted the film arrived, five days before it was due. Problem one:—Ought one to wire the insurance company or risk that all was not in order? We decided to risk it.

Problem two:—The film when unpacked turned out to be in two thousand feet reels and we had only a Pathé projector. Considering that it was rented by the amateur film society department, it seemed inconsiderate as even the professional projectors, such as are used commonly in small towns, will not take more than the thousand feet reels.

Problem three:—Should we pay more money and request the local cinema to run it through for us or should we cut the large rolls in the middle? We decided that to ask the local cinema to run it through would be a breach of contract and a denial of adventure. We cut the rolls in the middle at convenient sub-titles, borrowed extra bobbins from the local photographer and hoped the lamp would not give out before the finish. We then collected all the cinema enthusiasts we knew and one child for the good of its education. We also found a blanket and a pitcher of water according to instructions.

I had not myself previously seen the film. It made me more convinced than ever that present censorship conditions
are utterly false. Anything more "moral", more documentary and more educational in the classic sense, could not be conceived. A great deal of the film was very beautiful, particularly the shots of fish, the whole of the beginning, and the lovely studies of the great apes, the gorilla (possibly my friend of the Berlin Zoo), the chimpanzees and orang outans. I liked also the shots of the snakes breaking out of their eggs and the deer in the forest.

We all agreed that the incident of cave men fighting a tame bear at the end, was absurd.

The chief incident "cut" from the London version appears to be a scene of a large cat stalking another along the house tops. We are all accustomed to this mood among cats, so it seems a little strange that it should be considered immoral.

The defect of the picture is that man's origin is nowhere dealt with and that therefore the point of the picture is omitted. There will be found, elsewhere in this issue, mention of a film recently made in Russia, that shows the mechanism of normal birth. It is precisely this account that is missing from either the German or the English version of Natur und Liebe. I know it is the unwritten rule that the difficulties of child-birth are never to be mentioned before unmarried women because of their possible effect upon the birth-rate. But is this any way to deal with the problem? If the money spent on building one cruiser or the training of one army division were to be devoted to research into the problem of painless child-birth probably many of the difficulties would be solved by this time. After all, a soldier is not expected to go into action without knowing that a state of war exists and that possible enemies are in front of
CLOSE UP

him. And hiding the facts will never help towards a solution of the problem.

Otherwise Cosmos is an excellent document and should be seen, particularly by children. It is a splendid film for school use. Our projector gave little trouble but the effect of the picture was somewhat blurred owing to the incandescent lamp which does not seem to give as satisfactory a result in projection as an arc. Nothing happily blew up. We returned the film the following morning.

The hire of Cosmos cost us four pounds, insurance seven and six, freight charges to and from Basel, about five shillings each way. So the entire costs came to just under five pounds. As we were only an audience of seven, this was rather expensive. But most film societies would consist of twenty people at least in which case it would have worked out at five shillings a head, or little more than a seat in the ordinary cinema. I give the costs in full as they may interest film societies in England. It must of course be remembered that the fee for showing the film was probably rather high, on account of its still running in commercial cinemas throughout Switzerland, where it is very popular.

W. Bryher.
THE FRENCH REVOLUTION

Some day perhaps we shall be able to see a convincing film of the French Revolution. A story about which we shall feel we are being given an understanding of the causes and motives which led a whole people to such drastic measures to change its social structure and form of government. A screen conception of a titanic historical event during which we shall not have continually to say to our neighbour...“Well...its only a film”.

It is impossible to believe that a whole nation, whether a whole nation of war mongers, or revolutionaries, can or could—since cannibalism was discredited as an economic expedient—be roused to see virtue or satisfaction in blood-lust for its own sake. So when that long overdue film arrives we may be given an insight into the real political and moral aspirations of a nation of, for the greater part, peasant peoples by no means traditionally warlike. We may be given to understand the nature of the tyrannies and repressions which led them to conclude that these aspirations were attainable only at the price of blood.

Then maybe we shall see the battles fought, not in the drawing rooms of the aristocracy, but at the barricades. We
should, or at least we ought, see strategems and problems of power related to and moulded by respective aspirations, argued in the committees of the belligerents and attempted with the people. This should weave the unity. In and about them like shuttles the individuals and the crowds should move. Accepting this, . . . rejecting that, . . . so will the twists and turns of events and the changing of power from hand to hand be understood as the groping will of a desperate populace.

According to Bulwer Lytton, the philosophy of Rienzi—a revolutionary leader of another day and generation—was that “Love was the Business of the Idle and the Idleness of the Busy”. Credulity, therefore, staggers at the suggestion that four-hundred years later leaders could be so idle as to be primarily occupied with love. Or even that the idle moments of busy men could have such an all pervading influence as to become the prime motives in the serious business of making a revolution. It is impossible to be convinced by films such as those extant which show this tremendous historical event as the outcome of petty sexual strife.

We have had Orphans of the Storm, a Hollywood revolution bubbling over with melodrama and sentiment. Scaramouche, opening with the promise of some historical perspective eagerly grasped at, was soon proving to the world—so far as it was proving anything at all—that the French revolution was the great opportunity in history to show what fine love and devotion for the people some of the aristocracy could feel, . . . how really bestial the peasant and the proletarian could be . . . and what unparalleled opportunities were
afforded for daring and romantic rescues of the virtuous, albeit discredited, daughters of the doomed aristocracy.

More recently we have had a burlesque. I mean we must call *The Triumph of the Scarlet Pimpernel* a burlesque. After all, Matheson Lang took such liberties with the revolution that no amount of studio or poetic licence can explain otherwise. And then the Robespierre of Nelson Keys! I could never make up my mind whether Billy Merson's pirate skipper of the Yaka-hoola Hickee-doola or George Robey wouldn't have been funnier. So strange that the "icy calculating materialist" Robespierre should in 1928 develop childish outbursts of petty rage.

Of course we think it was intended to be a serious production. But we also know from his film *One of the Best* what a terrible handicap it is under which Mr. Hayes Hunter labours. When he strives and would be most serious, ill fate contrives to make him most crudely comic.

Buchowetski's *Danton* film, re-issued at the Avenue Pavilion in December, 1928, is perhaps the least offending of this specie of film. It is, one may hazard, the single attempt to appreciate at all the cinematic possibilities of that terrific event. But it is by no means convincing as revolution.

Here, we know, the revolution is only background. But as the revolution was so much part of the Danton that the world had heard about and wanted to know more of, it is hard to understand why it needs to be so mis-handled to make Danton interesting. Why are we not given some hint at least of the political cleavages that divided the revolutionary leaders? Should we understand the Danton more or hate
*Finis Terrae*, Jean Epstein's new film, playing at l'Oeil, the new Paris *salle spécialisée*. His comrades regard the man whose wounded thumb has resulted in blood-poisoning.
Pori, a new Ufa travelogue, made in East Africa. Above, the farmer and his rifle carrier hurry away from the approaching fire.
From a new and very popular educational *Queer Animal Friendships.*

Conchita Montenegro, discovered by Jacques de Baroncelli, in *La Femme et le Pantin*, after Pierre Louys. It is she alone who gives value to the film. Her quality which is both ardent and sensuous, has captivated everybody who has seen her.
From *Nuits de Princes*, Marcel L’Herbier’s new film for Séquana-Films, starring Gina Manes (above) and Jaque Catelain.
Nuits de Princes. Above: Jaque Catelain as Vassia. Below: Marcel L'Herbier (with raised hand) directing a "travelling." It is said that this film allows Marcel L'Herbier the fullest scope for his own ideas and methods.
From *Überfall* (Accident), Erno Metzner's remarkable fantasy, of which particulars were given last month. These photographs, together with those on the opposite page, are all from the dream sequence.
Uberfall. A beautiful flow of images without break or jerk, catching the essence of Freudian nightmare. We recommend this film unreservedly.
La Mala mort de Canart (The Duck's Sad Death) a short film by S. Silka, which has been shown with great success at the Tribune Libre du Cinéma. It is founded on an old ballad.
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the Robespierre less? Or should we see those sexual disputes, those all destroying female complications as, not the motivators of strife, but pieces used in the game of "cheat my enemy"?

It is amazing to note too, how persistently convention clings to even intelligent producers. The convention, for example, that the struggle for the Paris commune, the fight for bread consisted in dense throngs of ragged, unwashed human derelicts, pouring, one-eyed and leering, through the Paris streets. As having nothing more constructive to do than surge from quarter to quarter, eyes staring wide, arms insanely waving, merely to be turned to fresh streets and boulevards new by anyone bold enough to mount a plinth and bid them so to maintain their revolutionary fire.

And there is Jannings . . . that discoverer of cinematic restraint . . . a brusque but delightfully human Danton at moments, but at others throwing extravagant, incongruous melodramatic gestures. It is an interesting example of the Jannings not yet convinced that, in cinema, gesture is no less dramatic because it is natural.

But Werner Krauss, here, is already mature. Which reminds me . . . why is it that Jannings has always come first?, Thanks to the Avenue Pavilion we have been able to see again Jannings and Krauss several times opposite each other in the pre-Vaudeville days. Always, while Jannings is still overacting, Krauss is mature. It's strange how unfair we have been to Krauss.

When this French revolution film does come we shall no doubt be amazed at the weaknesses of mighty men. We
shall be incredible almost of the stupidity of their blunders. But our feelings will be positive.

With power in their hands, we shall not expect to see revolutionaries offering kindliness and soft treatment to their erstwhile oppressors, but equally we shall expect to be preserved from petty shin kicking and the infantile sadisms so beloved of the conventions.

Though the crowds may not be managed for cinematic purposes better than Buchowetski has managed his, we are entitled to the expectation that their movements will have coherence and meaning. That they will be convincing in the counterpoint they give to the objectives of the leaders.

After all, is it asking too much . . . is it beyond the scope of cinema to weave a visual pattern from the loom of Carlyle’s classic? To see out of “Hunger and nakedness, and nightmare oppression lying heavy on twenty-five million hearts” . . . spring . . . “An Insurrectionary France. . . ., made up of forces manifold, heterogeneous, compatible and incompatible . . . split into Parties; each of which seeking to make itself good” giving rise to “contradiction and exasperation” where “Parties on Parties find that they cannot work together, cannot exist together”? If it is not asking too much it is for some intelligent producer with an historical slant, to realise that a worth while film of the French revolution has yet to be made.

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Editor’s Note.—Two further examples shown abroad, Revolution Marriage, a German film, and Madame Recamier,
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a French one, would be covered equally by the criticisms made above. Whereas Recamier is merely silly, Revolution Marriage has elements of reason. It is Reign-of-Terror-ish, but it does abstain from hiccoughing mobs in hula-hula wigs and bonnets phrygiens. As usual, the Revolution is a sort of carnival organised by an enterprising Lido hotel manager for young lady tourists, with a gondola for two as the sly ulterior aim. The fact, however, that the director, Carl Sandberg, showed that even a revolutionary sometimes combs his air and walks upright, is sufficiently uncommon to be distinguished. It happens, not unexpectedly, that a recent Russian film, mentioned among those at the disposition of British Instructional, named The New Babylon, seems to have filled the gap. It was directed by Trauberg and Konsintzoff, and has been hailed as a valuable document both historically and artistically. There are stills in This issue, and a note in Comment and Review.

SIGNS OF THE TIMES

"The public hasn’t seen anything yet."

In this terse bit of hyberbole, Jesse Lasky sums up the result of the first year of talking pictures, and at the same time gives expression to Hollywood’s now assured faith in the vocal cinema.
Only a few months ago, despite a brave whistling, Hollywood was not by any means confident. The situation not only looked dark, but actually was dark. The only genuine smiles were those that beamed from the countenances of the Warner brothers. Their *Jazz Singer*, in the parlance of the street, was "cleaning up." Whether this as a freak novelty was to prove a mere nine days wonder or was to inaugurate a new era in cinema history, was beyond knowing. It was anybody's guess. To the Messrs. Warner, riding atop a wave of financial salvation, it was a matter of blithe indifference. *Après nous le déluge.*

Those who at the time ventured to guess that the talkies would become established and mark a momentous development, did so at the risk of their reputation. Now, however, events have justified them and sustained their belief. Harken further to what Mr. Lasky has to say—and as head of one of the largest, oldest and most conservative producing organizations he reflects the opinion and the attitude of the entire industry:

"Talking pictures are even bigger than we thought at first. They are as certain to stay as the legitimate theatre. Moreover, the early productions are as nothing in comparison with what we shall see in the future. The perfecting of mechanical devices has opened up a rich mother lode of screen entertainment which has never before been tapped.

"This can be proved in the cases of Maurice Chevalier, Moran and Mack (the Negro impersonators), and a new picture, *Close Harmony*. Chevalier would have been a success in silent pictures, but in the talking pictures he has a
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medium through which I predict he will be an outstanding screen personality in six months. Moran and Mack are funny for their dialogue, which could never adequately have been presented on the screen by mere printed titles. Now the full value of their comedy entertainment can be recorded and enjoyed the world over. Close Harmony is an example of the type of story which would have been crippled as a silent picture, if indeed it would ever have been chosen for the screen, since its plot is motivated largely by music and dialogue.

"The public now knows that sound can be synchronized with pictures and that it offers a new form of entertainment. The public ‘shops’ for entertainment just as it does for concrete commodities. In past months it has been ‘buying’ the novelty of talking pictures, regardless of merit. Already there are indications of a reaction to this. From now on they will shop more carefully, for the novelty is wearing off. Those who voice a prejudice against talking pictures are misstating their case. When they say ‘We don’t like talking pictures,’ they really mean ‘We don’t like the particular talking pictures we have seen.’

"That talking pictures have been successful is proved by the fact that now, less than a year since commercially successful films of this kind were first shown to the public, we are producing them on a scale undreamed of when the first sound-stage microphone made its appearance in the studios.

"Talking, singing, musical productions which bring the talent and melodies of Broadway to theatres in every little
hamlet throughout the country; the personalities of popular film stars brought out to an even more appealing degree through the sound of their voices; pictures synchronized with theme music played by the world's leading symphony orchestras—all of these things have been accomplished in the short space of a few months.

"And no one can foresee the accomplishments yet to come. Science moves forward nowadays with breath-taking speed; the novelty of to-day is a luxury and then a necessity to-morrow."

Interesting and important as these commentaries are, coming as they do from a recognized spokesman of the picture industry, their most striking significance lies in the fact that the talking picture, within a year of its birth, has so rapidly developed as already to have sufficient background and history to permit of any serious commentary upon it at all.

More guesses concerning it, as well as mere bias dictated by nothing more substantial than a temperamental attitude toward change or novelty, are fast giving way to the verities of experience and accomplishment. Predictions as to its destiny may now be made from the vantage points of solid facts. Relatively brief as is the history of the phonofilm it already has perspective. As much by way of development has been crowded into the first twelve months of its existence as marked the slow, uncertain progress of the cinema itself in its first twelve years.

Whatever may be the existing attitude toward the talking picture in other parts of the world, certain it is that Hollywood
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has settled down to a mater-of-fact acceptance of it. All discussion of the photodrama to-day is in terms of audibility. Silent films, to be sure, are still being produced, and every vocal drama is translated into a mute version. But this is not because of any further uncertainty as to the status of the phonofilms, but simply because not all of the twenty thousand picture theatres of the country have yet been equipped for the showing of talking pictures, and because the polyglot foreign problems has not yet been solved.

Even Hollywood’s first cautious attitude, that the talking picture would prove but a side issue, an occasional specialty, and offered no threat to the silent film nor the stage, is giving way to an assurance that it is destined to replace all other forms of dramatic presentation, or at least usurp their traditional position. On this score no less a representative of Hollywood than Douglas Fairbanks recently declared, “I agree with a certain well known man who believes that the stage is waning and that within the next few years sound pictures will be the king of the entertainment world.”

Nor is this the attitude alone of the movie producers. Stage-folks themselves, alive to the signs of the times, are likewise foreseeing the eventuality to which Fairbanks alludes. At the present moment New York dramatic producers find themselves confronted with the serious predicament resulting from the wholesale exodus of actors to Hollywood. Many plays scheduled for production are being held up because of this unprecedented and significant situation. The stage is being transferred to the screen. Broadway is moving to Hollywood.
That this is not necessarily a cause for uneasiness or regret is exemplified in the outlook entertained by one of the leaders of the operatic stage, Mary Garden. "In a few years," she says, "grand opera will cast off the shackles of tradition and become grand opera on the singing screen. Seriously, I expect to see the talking screen—the singing screen—do to grand opera what the radio has done to concerts. Think of the joy of singing a wonderful rôle and knowing that hundreds of thousands, millions, of people will be able to hear you; people in far-off little towns, where grand opera as it is now never comes."

And Miss Garden goes even farther. She sees in the screen a certain magic, a power of exaltation, a means of enhancing effects and personality unattainable by the stage. "There is a certain singer—a famous tenor—who bores me terribly when I hear him on the stage. He has a beautiful voice, but he leaves me cold. The other day, however, I heard him on the screen. Marvelous! There was something there, in his personality, in his voice, I had never caught before—something that swept away all barriers. I was up on my feet with the rest of the audience, applauding and cheering, too."

Only the born skeptic continues to be guided in his talking-picture outlook by the first vitaphone productions, or even some of the more improved present-day audible films. That they lack much of finish and artistry, as well as mechanical perfection, goes without saying. It is not these productions themselves, but the promise contained in them, that signifies. And it is this that inspires Hollywood's encouragement and
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vision and animates its determination to devote itself henceforth wholeheartedly and unreservedly to the development of this latest form of dramatic expression.

The very fact that there is still so much to be done, is itself a call to energy and ambition and the exercise of the highest skill and talent and inventive genius. And when a picture like *In Old Arizona* or *Hearts in Dixie* or *The Doctor’s Secret* comes to the screen, faith is strengthened and refreshed, and doubts and perplexities are reduced to a paler hue.

It is only natural that the pioneer pictures in this new field should emphasize the novelty of sound, with the result that the story and the acting often fall far below the already established standards of cinema production. The rectifying of this fault is only a matter of time. The first movies fell into a like trap. The novelty of motion took precedence over every other element of the picture. No film was considered worth while unless it abounded in scenes of galloping horses, of rushing locomotives, of automobiles racing to beat a railroad train, of crowds chasing madly after a dog or an escaped convict. Restraint and naturalness and dramatic niceties came only as a later development. It required, indeed, several years for many of the early-trained movie actors to overcome their habits of jerky, marionette motions, which were originally considered essential to effective movie acting.

And so, too, the blatant, brass-band musical accompaniments of the present sound pictures, the close-up shrieks of
women, the overabundance of cabaret, dance-hall, theatre-revue, and jazz-orchestra scenes, and the unnecessarily loud tones of the actors will in time be eliminated or tempered. And so, also, will the present technical imperfections.

It behoves us, therefore, as Mr. Lasky suggests, not to be too hasty in our judgment of to-day's talking pictures. If we do not like them, let us at any rate first make sure that our dislike is inspired by something more substantial than the mere exuberance and crudity resulting from a desire to over-emphasize an element of mechanical novelty. There is in itself nothing novel in the human voice nor in music nor in the sounds of nature and every-day life. And when these shall be presented naturally and fittingly on the screen, as undoubtedly they soon will be, only the most dyspeptic grouch can legitimately grumble about it.

Clifford Howard.

BED AND SOFA AT THE FILM SOCIETY

She: "What a disgusting picture!"
He: "Yes, darling. If I had known it would be like this I would not have brought you here."
The above fragment of conversation was overheard at the London Film Society on April 7th, when *Bed and Sofa* was screened.

What can you do with people like that? They live in a world that is not of this world; they move about with their eyes shut, refusing to see, or if they do see they refuse to understand. Certain things are not “nice”. Therefore, although they happen and will continue to happen until the cause is removed, we will either ignore them, or if they are thrust upon us, we will say “how nasty”, and “how disgusting”, and then thank God that we are not like that. So let’s go and see Clara Bow and Alice White.

And yet *Bed and sofa* is a great human document with more truth in it than any dozen of the sex-drenched, sex-debauched films which constitute the great bulk of movie entertainment in Britain to-day. Nicolai the husband, Luidmila the wife, and Vladimir the friend are perfectly natural, normal people, wrestling with perfectly natural, normal problems.

Moscow has a housing shortage. So has London, Berlin and Paris, and every other town and city, large and small. In Moscow overcrowding breeds certain social evils; the same social evils breed in London, Berlin and Paris.

Overcrowding cramps the human being in his struggle for independence, freedom and health. Alexander Room, who is a psychologist realises the problem and sets to work to expose it and tackle it. He knows that in doing so he has the support of the Soviet Government. In England, where there is a shortage of nearly a million houses, film directors do not do things like that . . . . .
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Bed and Sofa shews us what happens when two people are herded together in one room, and then it shows us what happens when two is increased to three. Room presents his case; we know what is going to happen, and we expect it to happen, but we are vitally interested in the manner in which the director portrays pictorially the mental state and the psychological reactions of these three.

Everything is heading for a crisis, a break-down, but Luidmila takes a decision, the only decision possible, and leaves it all, sets out to start a new life.

Woman is the equal of man, says Room. Woman must be free, independent; the old moral traditions of masculine superiority are wrong. Overcrowding must be abolished, says Room. A new life, a free life, based on complete social equality.

How nasty! How disgusting!

* * *

The Film Society copy was cut, of course, but it was a notable event. One day it will be shown all over England, but in the meantime how Russia and Germany must laugh at this country of ours which shudders at Bed and Sofa, and goes wild over The Red Dancer of Moscow and Sailors Don't Care, and Noah's Ark!

A.W.
NOTE ON BED AND SOFA

Bed and Sofa, the star event of the Film Society afternoon of April 8th, was somewhat of a disappointment. Beforehand, one knew better than to expect a repetition of Mother or End of St. Petersburg, but it was a poor print to begin with. Next, the society's officers had been practicing for distinction and honours (sic) in censoring. The main import of the theme (the sole reason for the film being made at all) had been excised entirely. Their reasons? One cannot do better than quote their program. "The present film in its implicit significance is associated . . . . with a matter that has been the motive of many Russian films, the discouragement of abortion. The particular motive is one to which English convention forbids public reference and it was accordingly removed before submission to the Board. The story by means of which the general motive is expressed was, however, itself entirely disapproved! Please note . . . . discouragement of abortion . . . and that it comes from Russia . . . and yet it was removed before submission to the Board. By whom? But no matter. Of greater importance is that one can adversely criticise the film itself if necessary, even if it is a Russian film. Room may disapprove of abortion and
be encouraged to use film stock to express his disapproval whether or not the circumstances make abortion necessary or even the lesser of two evils, but the method of achieving his object is, for psychological reasons, to be deprecated. The wife of the story is scared away from the abortion clinic and her resolve by screams from the operating theatre. In making an appeal to the impulse of fear, Room not only descended to the propaganda level of *The Dangers of Ignorance* but to slyness and deception too.

H.C.

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**LA SITUATION DU CINÉMA FRANÇAIS**

On me condamnera peut-être à la lecture des lignes ci-après, on trouvera probablement impertinent qu’un étranger comme moi se permette de juger le cinéma français avec si peu d’indulgence, mais je ne veux pas continuer à le taire : L’art muet se meurt en France, et, à mon avis, il ne ressuscitera jamais.

Le cinéma français souffre d’abord d’une incompétence totale de la part de ses dirigeants, et tous les contingentements du monde n’y changeront rien. Savez-vous comment on fait un film, ici ? Supposons qu’on ait trouvé un livre, une pièce de théâtre, ou même un scénario, qu’on ait choisi un metteur
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en scène. Pensez-vous que l’on puisse commencer dès lors à travailler ? Pas du tout. Le film doit être vendu d’abord, avant même qu’un tour de manivelle soit donné. Intéressant, n’est-ce pas ! Et parce qu’un particulier qui, il y a trois ans, vendait encore des autos, a maintenant l’idée de se faire distributeur de films en Europe centrale, le scénario doit lui être soumis, doit être modifié selon ses vues, qui, évidemment n’ont rien de cinégraphique. Le scénario sera métamorphosé à tel point que son auteur ne le reconnaîtra plus, et, ce qui est pire, il n’y restera plus aucune possibilité d’expression propre à l’art muet. Mais il y aura, par contre, une grande mise en scène, des boîtes de nuit, etc, etc. Je n’exagère en rien, croyez-le, et pourrais vous citer le cas d’un metteur en scène français très connu à qui cela est arrivé récemment, et qui, sous d’autres conditions de travail pourrait réaliser certainement de belles choses.

Le matériel technique des studios français est, en dépit de tous les communiqués, inférieur à celui des studios américains, russes, allemands, et même, je le crois, anglais. La foi ne saurait suffire à tout, et l’on ne fera jamais un très bon film avec des moyens techniques insuffisants. Et puis, l’esprit français essentiellement hostile à tout travail collectif, se confine dans de petites recherches qui sont intéressantes, je le veux bien, mais qui ne constituent pas un aboutissement important. Seul le travail collectif peut créer dans le cinéma des œuvres grandes et fortes, car on ne connaît guère, à ce jour, de personnalités assez puissantes et suffisamment douées qui soient capables d’inventer un scénario valable, de le découper d’une manière intelligente, de faire vivre les acteurs d’une façon humaine, de composer le film, d’y créer.
l’atmosphère par une maîtrise technique personnelle, et de monter ce film d’après un rythme justifié. Et pourtant tout ce travail est effectué presque toujours par une seule personne, en France. Aucun metteur en scène n’accepterait la collaboration de l’un de ses collègues susceptible, pourtant, de lui rendre des services fort utiles. Ces Messieurs sont bien trop sûrs d’eux-mêmes.

Je ne m’étendrais pas sur le chapitre des acteurs, car, s’il est exact que la plupart des interprètes français sont détestables, il me semble pourtant que c’est là aussi affaire de direction. Avec des metteurs en scène capables, les acteurs s’amélioreraient certainement, mais encore faut-il découvrir les metteurs en scène en question.

On l’a dit maintes fois déjà, mais on ne le répétera jamais assez : Le cinéma appartient aux jeunes, il est fait pour les jeunes. Regardez donc la plupart des metteurs en scène français. Il en est très peu qui soient nés avec le cinéma et pour lesquels l’art muet est la seule expression artistique dont ils seraient capables. Peintres, anciens écrivains, oui ..., mais pourquoi ne sont-ils pas restés à leur pinceau, à leur plume, nous en pâtirions moins, pourquoi veulent-ils à tout prix faire du cinéma ? Il n’est nullement nécessaire que tout le monde fasse du cinéma.

Cette comédie durerait indéfiniment si l’on ne commençait à s’apercevoir, dans le public, que tout ne marche pas sur des roulettes dans le cinéma français. Personne, cependant, ne veut en tirer les conclusions utiles. On a cru que le mal provenait d’une pénurie de scénarios. Mais essayez donc, naïf cinéphile, d’en construire un, simple, émouvant, humain. Mettez-le entre les mains d’un directeur de production, il
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vous dira : "Oui, c'est très bien, mais, vous savez, cela ne fera qu'un film à 800,000 francs et nous avons besoin d'un film qui coûtera 2 millions ". Charmant ! On a besoin d'un film qui coûterait 2 millions. C'est ça, le cinéma ?!


Il y a pire encore. Supposons même qu'un jour les dirigeants aient compris tout cela, qu'ils laissent vraiment travailler les jeunes enthousiastes. Je ne crois pas que le cinéma français en sera sauvé pour autant, car le malentendu est plus grave. Les Français, comme d'ailleurs tous les Latins, me semblent incapables de faire du cinéma. Ils sont trop attachés au mot, à la valeur de la parole, pour pouvoir saisir complètement la force des images. Je pense qu'il est nécessaire d'appartenir à une race peu loquace (et le film parlant ne changera rien à mes idées sur cet objet) pour créer cinématographiquement. C'est à dire que les images doivent être le seul moyen du metteur en scène. Mais le Français s'exprime beaucoup trop bien verbalement. N'a-t-on jamais pensé que, peut-être, il est certains peuples qui ne sont pas aptes à s'exprimer cinégraphiquement ? J'ai la ferme conviction que les Français sont de ceux-là.
Une littérature aussi ancienne et abondante que celle de la France empêchera à tout jamais cette nation d’en perdre les notions. La France, et cela va être son rôle dans le domaine cinégraphique, peut très bien servir de laboratoire. L’abondance des petits films, des films d’avant-garde, et des salles spécialisées (il y en a actuellement sept à Paris) le prouve. Mais qu’on se rende compte enfin qu’il n’y a pas de raisons de continuer ce jeu inutile qu’est la production de grands films puisque, décidément, il n’y a rien à faire dans ce genre-là.

Il y a encore une chose. Les Français se gaussent de la psychanalyse. C’est leur droit. Mais n’a-t-on pas encore compris la portée immense de la psychanalyse dans le cinéma ? N’a-t-on pas encore aperçu que certaines gestes, certaines interprétations qui nous émeuvent, relèvent nettement de la psychanalyse ? Ce n’est d’ailleurs nullement étonnant. Je me souviens avoir entendu jadis à une conférence sur la psychanalyse, un médecin français conclure en ces termes : “Les refoulements . . . peut-être que cela existe à l’étranger, nous autres, en France, ne refoulons pas”. Si ridicule que cette affirmation puisse paraître, il faut quand même reconnaître que ce brave homme n’avait pas complètement tort. La sexualité français se manifeste sous d’autres formes que celle des pays qui ont montré une large compréhension pour la psychanalyse. Il y a un peu de vérité dans cette assertion : “Nous ne refoulons pas, en France”. Oui. Car on n’attend pas assez longtemps pour avoir des raisons de refouler.

D’ailleurs, sur un autre point des questions sexuelles : on a découvert le “sex-appeal”, lancé en Amérique avec la publicité habituelle. Et on l’a interprété ici à tort et à travers.
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Compréhensible, certes, dans un pays qui n’a pas cette conception de liberté presque totale pour la solution des problèmes sexuels. On a présenté dernièrement “OUR DANCING DAUGHTERS” et l’on pouvait lire dans la presse: ... cette étude de moeurs de la jeunesse américaine n’est pas flatteuse pour elle et nous pouvons nous étonner d’une confession publique dont les auteurs ne devaient point ignorer la diffusion universelle”. Un autre journal imprimait “C’est une publicité, pour le moins singulière, qu’on fait aux moins de trente ans, en Amérique”. Et les explosions de gaîté à la présentation de TROIS DANS UN SOUS-SOL, d’Alexandre Room! Il faut le dire tout crûment, en France, les problèmes sexuels ne sont admis que sous la forme de vaudevilles, de pièces pour théâtres de boulevards. On rigole, c’est l’essentiel. Mais il y a des jeunes, peut-être, Messieurs, qui sont profondément touchés et très intéressés par ces questions.

Le public français n’aime pas le cinéma. Des statistiques nous apprennent que le 7 pour cent seulement de la population française se rend dans les salles obscures. Alors pourquoi ne pas en tirer les conséquences nécessaires? Pourquoi continuer à faire des films? Comprendra-t-on enfin qu’un film doit être une profession de foi, qu’il faut avoir quelque chose à exprimer pour justifier la confection d’une bande cinégraphique, et surtout qu’il faut que le cinéma soit le seul moyen d’expression dont l’auteur sache se servir, qu’il soit même incapable de rendre les mêmes pensées en littérature, peinture, musique, etc.

Le cinéma ne peut pas se limiter à être uniquement une satisfaction d’amour-propre national. Abandonnez les grands
films qui ne réussissent jamais, qui laissent indifférent le public, et tournez ces petits films d’avant-garde qui apportent des éléments utiles au cinéma, et qui dénotent certainement de grandes capacités expérimentales. Les jeunes eux-mêmes ne pourront pas faire les œuvres qu’on attend d’eux, car ils sont déjà pourris dans cette atmosphère néfaste. Les quelques essais qui ont été faits dans cette direction sont assez décevants pour qu’on ne poursuive pas éternellement les mêmes erreurs. Les spectacles d’avant-garde de ces dernières semaines confirment encore une fois ce que je viens de dire. Aux URSULINES, un film de René Guy-Grand : CONTRASTES. Techniquement assez propre, ce film pèche encore par une forme littéraire insupportable. L’auteur veut nous montrer la folie du rythme actuel, mais il juge nécessaire de mettre des sous-titres poétiques. Il fait jouer un acteur d’une manière symbolique et se plait d’autre part, à introduire un texte littéraire fort inutile. Regrettale, en vérité, car ici et là cette bande comporte certains passages révélant un montage assez bien compris.

Une nouvelle salle : l’OEIL DE PARIS nous a montré le dernier film de Jean Epstein : FINIS TERRAE. C’est ce qu’on appelle de nos jours un documentaire romancé. Probablement le meilleur film de Jean Epstein, qui malgré de grandes qualités, n’aura pas grand succès. (Ceci n’est d’ailleurs pas une critique absolue). C’est la relation cinématographique d’un accident authentique que les pêcheurs de goemon ont raconté à l’auteur et qu’ils ont interprété eux-mêmes. Aux confins de la Bretagne, sur une petite île, quatre hommes. L’un d’eux s’est blessé au doigt, ce qui détermine un empoisonnement de sang. Nous voyons le
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courageux sauvetage effectué par les camarades du malade et par un vieux médecin. La vie simple et fruste de ces pêcheurs, les habitudes de la population dans ce coin perdu, constituent le thème réellement intéressant du film, qui se classe au nombre des meilleurs documentaires. La photographie est très belle, bien que j'eusse préféré qu'on ne teintât pas certains passages en vert pour obtenir des effets de nuit car je crois savoir qu'il existe d'autres procédés photographiques pour atteindre au même but, et de même que l'on ne s'aperçoive pas si nettement que la brume est truquée, car le soleil y brille trop par instants.

Un montage volontairement lent sera probablement l'écueil de cette bande. Le public sera vite fatigué, malgré le travail intelligent du metteur en scène. Les acteurs non-professionnels ont été dirigés avec beaucoup d'adresse. Ces visages rudes de Bretons nous reposent agréablement de l'insupportable aspect conventionnel des physionomies de la plupart des acteurs français. On nous fait savoir, au commencement du film, qu'il a été tourné sur les lieux mêmes et d'après les données authentiques d'un accident. Néanmoins, sa construction m'a laissé l'impression d'un manque de sincérité, C'est à dire que Jean Epstein a tourné ce film quelque peu en snob.

Et maintenant, pour terminer cet article pessimiste, une nouvelle bien agréable. La censure s'est enfin rendu compte du rôle ridicule qu'elle joue, surtout vis à vis des films russes. Elle a autorisé la projection en France de STORM OVER ASIA, LE VILLAGE DU PECHE, LA VOLGA EN FEU. La Pax-Film qui édite ces films en France a déjà présenté à la Presse avec un grand succès le film de Pudowkin et le
VILLAGE DU PECHE. Je ne veux rien ajouter à la critique de Mr. Macpherson, dans CLOSE UP, mais tiens cependant à exprimer toute la stupéfaction que me cause l'interdiction de tels films dans différents pays, sous le prétexte que ce sont là bandes révolutionnaires qui pourraient influencer de'Savantageusement le public. Je ne vois vraiment pas comment ni pourquoi. Et je dirai même que j'ai vu ces derniers temps plusieurs films ne provenant pas de Russie, qui sont, à mon avis, certainement plus révolutionnaires et dangereux pour la mentalité de ceux que la censure est censée protéger, que les bandes soviétiques.

JEAN LENAUER.

LE CINÉMA FRANÇAIS, MORIBUND?

Un article de Mr. Jean Lenauer, inséré dans le présent numéro de Close Up, me semble appeler quelques réflexions complémentaires. Son auteur diagnostique la mort par asphyxie du cinéma français, qui, dit-il, ne ressuscitera jamais. S'il est bon, parfois, de révéler au malade les causes de son état, il n'en est pas moins téméraire de préjuger sur des symptômes passagers et de conclure à une chute irrémédiable. L'analepsie peut fort bien suivre aux périodes de complet épuisement ; il est des ressources cachées au sein de tout individu, de toute collectivité, qui ne se font jour, précisément, que lorsque tout semble perdu.
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Le cinéma français est viable, quoi qu’en pense Mr. Lenauer, et les tares dont il est affligé, si alarmantes soient-elles, ne nous empêchent pas d’espérer quand même. Je ne puis émettre aucune opinion au sujet des studios français, n’en ayant, jusqu’ici, visité aucun. Que l’outillage en soit moins perfectionné qu’ailleurs, c’est possible, probable même; ces lacunes, cependant, se comblent aisément.

Le capital du cinéma français est, dit Mr. Lenauer, aux mains de gens incompétents, jadis fabricants ou vendeurs d’automobiles, qui ne considèrent que la valeur marchande du film. Très franchement, en est-il autrement en Amérique, en Allemagne, et ailleurs. S.A.—A.G.—Ltd. ou X. & Co. sont synonymes. On ne considère pas plus en France qu’à Hollywood, ce me semble, les dividendes probables. A Berlin pas moins qu’à Paris la superproduction n’est dédaignée. Le chiffre de 2 millions de francs français n’a rein d’excès, comparé à celui des bandes tournées par ailleurs. L’ingérence souvent regrettable des financiers dans certains départements purement artistiques des exploitations qu’ils soutiennent et dont ils escomptent tirer de copieux tantièmes, ne se constate pas plus exclusivement dans le domaine de l’art muet, et en France pas plus qu’ailleurs. Mr. Clifford Howard signalait, dans un numéro précédent de Close Up que les jeunes écrivains du cinéma éprouvaient d’insurmontables difficultés à Hollywood. Si on leur refuse, à Paris, également, toute l’attention qu’ils méritent, le fait n’a donc rein de surprenant.

Mr. Lenauer se demande si certains peuples ne sont pas peut-être incapables d’exprimer cinégraphiquement, et range les Français au nombre de ceux-ci—Il est indéniable que le mot est dieu chez nos voisins; c’est par là d’ailleurs qu’ils excellent, comme en littérature, au reste. Le Français est soucieux
de la forme, il aspire aux expressions verbales les plus élégantes et n'a pas son pareil pour discours, c'est vrai. La littérature française remonte d'un passé très éloigné; issue des conceptions d'intellectuels, elle a formé à son tour la mentalité de la classe française moyenne qui est devenue la proie du livre et des conventions, c'est vrai également. Mais quoi, l'homme n'est-il point susceptible de se libérer de pareilles entraves et de manifester ouvertement ses sentiments, devant un appareil de prise de vue, tout an moins. Le mal que signale Mr. Lenauer n'est, encore ici, point spécifiquement français, il est universel. Y a-t-il réellement une si grande différence entre l'acteur de cinéma français et anglais, par exemple, ou même allemand. Les "professionnels" ne sont-ils pas tous au nord comme au sud, incapables, en général, de se renouveler, de faire craquer le cadre de leur jeu routinier? Ce qui fait le succès des films russes, en tant qu'interprétation, n'est-ce pas son caractère primitif, si intensément naturel? N'y a-t-il donc pas d'acteurs "possibles" en France également, en dehors des éternelles vedettes? Il ne manque pas de types originaux, des Pyrénées au Jura ou de Marseille à Calais. Là encore, je le répète, ce n'est pas uniquement en France que le remède est nécessaire, mais partout.

Les metteurs en scène français sont des badernes, paraît-il, qui n'ont fait, pour la plupart, que quitter la scène pour le studio où ils apportent une abondante provision d'expérience du théâtre qui ne fait que nuire au cinéma, son frère, il est vrai, mais de lait seulement. Mr. Lenauer me semble avoir raison sur ce point, mais n'oublions pas, toutefois, qu'il existe une jeune école française à laquelle ce blâme n'est pas applicable. C'est précisément à L'Herbier, Clair, Tedesco,
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Epstein, Renoir et Feyder, pour ne citer que ceux-là, que je veux faire allusion. Un effectif assez mince, pour le moment, mais qui peut fort bien s’augmenter d’ici quelques années. Il n’y a pas que des promesses dans les réalisations de ces “jeunes”, mais aussi des films, c’est à dire des œuvres complètes qui sont de réels hommages rendus à l’art muet, et qui prouvent à qui n’en serait pas averti que la pensée française peut créer autre chose que des produits industriels. Quelques-uns ont compris, senti le langage des images, les nécessités de l’écran, pourquoi donc crierions-nous “Sauve qui peut, tous les canots à la mer!”? C’est au contraire en restant dans le bâtiment, touché, il est vrai, mais pas si gravement que ne le pense Mr. Lenauer, en réparant les brèches, en faisant appel aux jeunes énergies que l’on s’en trouvera le mieux.

Les expériences de laboratoire... spécialités françaises, et pourquoi donc? L’Equipage, Thérèse Raquin, Le Petite Marchande d’Aullumettes, Fièvre, sont plus que cela, m’est avis. L’art cinégraphique est avant tout expression de la vérité, vérité ethique surtout. Les Français ont peut-être un peu de peine à se défaire des préjugés; ils sont plus conservateurs, certes, que les Américains, mais lorsqu’ils voudront bien retourner à la source naturelle de toute émotion artistique, je ne doute pas que le film ne devienne pour eux l’occasion de mettre au jour d’insoupçonnées richesses.

F. Chevalley.
BOOK REVIEWS


It is astonishing that such a book has not yet been translated into many languages, for I do not remember having read a book on the cinema that contained so much useful knowledge. I think the greatness of an artist may be measured by the simplicity, the sincerity and lack of pretentiousness with which he expresses himself. And this book of Pudovkin's, in which he explains the cinema, is enchanting to read. No metaphysical considerations, in which most directors delight when they write, perhaps because they fear that in writing simply and comprehensibly for everyone their bluff and total absence of constructive idea will be noted.

The leitmotiv of Pudovkin’s work is the montage. Without montage, no film can be good. It is the pivot of all creative cinematographic work. In order to underline the real direction of his indications, Pudovkin always sets out to prove his statements by striking examples. And one can really ask why, they dare continue making bad films with a book that teaches in such an irrefutable manner, why and how such and such a thing ought to be put into a cinematographic work.

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The collective work upon which Pudovkin insists seems to me to be the only solution, and it is, I think, at the same time the reason why so many European films are bad. Here, the directors are probably too proud to accept the real collaboration of other men and they consider it lacking in dignity as artists, to work in common.

There is no doubt about it. Pudovkin is right and I hope that the different directors of European productions can soon read this book, which will shake them perhaps from their lethargy, and their negligence towards the best people in cinematographic creation. This miserable routine that sees only in a film a merchandise for sale at the highest possible rates, under no matter what condition, is surely one of the most serious factors in preventing the arrival of good productions.

And I wish equally that directors and aspiring directors, that all who wish to do anything with the cinema, could read this book. For it is an excellent lesson in modesty which may be very profitable to them. It is alright to possess genius, but one must also work hard and ceaselessly before being able to produce a real achievement, a work of real value.

The intelligent detail with which this book is written is so instructive that the impression remains that one ought to be able to make good films, having read it, for it is not possible that people are sufficiently unintelligent to derive no benefit from it.

In an interesting supplement, Mr. S. Timoschenko speaks even more particularly about montage, in classifying it, and gives an almost perfect list of the different methods. With
regard to sub-titles M. Timoschenko is of opinion that they should be tinted an exciting color in certain films full of violent action. This seems to me to be wrong, for whatever happens the sub-title ought not, in my opinion, to take such importance for it distracts from the picture. The sub-title, I think, ought to be as little noticeable and simple as possible. But this is merely criticism of a detail.

The end of the book is composed of extracts of cuttings from *Dernier des Hommes, The Spy* and *The Katzensteg.*

I imagine that one day there will be an ideal cinema school. That day I can point out to the manager of the school a wonderful professor who will win the praise of all pupils—V. Pudovkin. But upon reflection I prefer that he continues to give us those splendid lessons, that are his films.

It will be necessary some time to study the influence of the cinema on literature. I have just finished two books by well known authors: *Ciné Ville* by Ramon Gomez de la Serna and *On Tourne* by Luigi Pirandello, both published by Simon Kra, Paris, 6 rue Blanche.

Ramon Gomez de la Serna describes in *Ciné Ville,* a town that resembles Hollywood, as it may be in a few year’s time, with fixed characters, whose feelings have almost disappeared and who are only marionettes in front of the camera. An interesting book, though one’s pleasure in it is spoilt a little by the author’s too artificial care for words and by a desire that is rather too much in evidence, to speak ill of a thing of which he only sees the mechanical exterior. Thus he speaks of “these onion-due tears are a terrible argument against the cinema: for they proclaim its falsity, deny it in secret; they express all the intense hypocrisy of its troubles and
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evasions." To which it is easy to reply that plenty of artists do not need onions, in order to cry, that a capable director can provoke in the actor the desired emotion without other outside methods and that finally, in art one has often to resort to pretence to obtain truth and that this does not of itself take the human value from any work.

*On Tourne* by Pirandello is a novel which is set in a cinematographic milieu, written, the author pretends, from the diary of a camera-man who cannot console himself for his too "mechanical" work. Which means simply, that Pirandello resents our machine age, which is his right, but which is nevertheless, unnecessary. However, in spite of an abundance of tiresome philosophy, Pirandello's book does give something of the highly tensioned and emotional atmosphere that from time to time can be noticed in studios.

I wish that some young writer would do a novel on the cinema with all the love which it would be necessary to bring to it. For it would be such a change from these complaints that we hear from writers of a preceding generation, that by a quite natural incomprehension of it, can see only the bad side of the cinema. I want enthusiasm for the cinema. For only by enthusiasm can it be saved from mediocrity.

Jean Lenauer.
"KURBLE"


"TURN." This encouraging imperative is the title of a manual, that has recently been edited in Germany. It has originated from a series of articles, published in the German paper Film für alle. Now they have been collected and revised for a new manual of filming for amateurs. Nowadays, when cinematography has almost reached the popularity of photography, we gladly receive another remarkable guide, whose aim is to make the amateur familiar with all the rules of cinematography in such a way, that filming becomes a source of pleasure instead of difficulty and depressing impediment.

The authors of those articles are Curt Emmermann, Guido Seeber and Dr. Conrad Wolter, well known as first-class experts. In this work they show a new quality: they prove themselves teachers, and marvellous teachers. They start from the very beginning of the moving picture, and firstly give us a psychological explanation of it. Besides they have recognised that in such complicated spheres as represented
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by cinematography of to-day, it often is an exceedingly good didactic method to have the pupil run through all the phases of development which the invention has taken in the course of its history. And so we find joining the psychological meditations a very interesting historical introduction, in the course of which we get to know the “elements” of photography, and moving photography, and the essential technical terms. After the first chapters of theoretical introduction (in which we get to know just the necessary amount of theory, no superfluous load), we learn all about the practical application, about the camera, development, printing and projection.

The sphere of action of this manual is extremely large: it pre-supposes almost no knowledge (it gives, for instance, an explanation for comprehension of focussing) and leads so far into the technics of “filmsport”, that he, who has thoroughly studied and assimilated this book, could hardly be called an ordinary amateur (the last chapters dealing with the different technics of tinting, of trick—and drawingfilms, and of microcinematography).

In delightful contrast to most of the authors of technical manuals the editors of this new book are familiar with the psychology of the average reader; they know exactly that one passes over difficult passages, and so repeat them in an extremely benevolent way. Another help are the resumées at the end of the harder chapters.

And in another respect this book is different from average manuals: concerning the form, the style. It is written in a very interesting, lively and humorous way. We feel all the love which these experts have for their work, and get so
encouraged that we should like instantly to take a camera and "turn". But in spite of the conversational manner, the style is not incorrect at all; with the aid of clear drawings we get precise instruction about the apparatus and the material of our work. A great advantage is the quotation of different kinds of cameratypes, and the advice which cameras and which raw stock one should use in special cases. The manual is completed by a list of mistakes generally made by amateurs, and the corresponding advice, how to avoid them; then by exposition-tables, and an illustrated list of European amateur cameras.

Resumée: a book, that will give many people thorough knowledge of the technics of the film, a book, in which many will find excellent advice. It is hoped, that it should be made accessible also for those, who do not know German.

Trude Weiss.

**COMMENT AND REVIEW**

**Film Curiosities.—No. 6.**

**The Late Matthew Pascal.**

Directed by: Marcel L'Herbier.  
Setting by: Alberto Cavalcanti.

I did not see this picture when it was presented by the Film Society, but the version I saw privately in Paris I imagine to be much longer. It lasted over three hours!
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Wardour Street did not consider the presence of Ivan Mosjoukine and Lois Moran in the cast a guarantee of a commercial proposition. In the crude, but colourful, language of Wardour Street it was another "popular booking for Saint Dunstans".

Marcel L’Herbier made a good job of Pirandello in pictures, if not in a picture. The synthesis of life, the striving after things that are not wanted when they are obtained; these dissatisfactions and longings are expressed by the shifting scenes. Matthew’s home town, where he keeps the house he wants but also the relations who go with it, where he wins the wife he loves but has to bicker with her mother; Monte Carlo, where the gambling tables lavish money which fails to bring happiness yet never brings him misfortune (Hollywood moralists, kindly note); Rome, where the comfort of the hotel is attached to the solicitous care of the lackeys for the guest’s hat which is really a snub because the owner has not divested himself of this item of apparel at the correct moment; and, journeying round Europe’s show places, the spectator as well as Matthew is never quite satisfied with what he gets.

Alberto Cavalcanti is at his best in a library when vertical piles of books are the walls of the set. There are many camera movements dictated by the art-director; the camera panning to preserve composition.

I have no particular desire to view this picture again, but I am certain that those who have not yet seen it would be well content to see it once.

Oswell Blakeston.

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MORE THAN DEADHEADS.

An Exhibitor’s Grouse.

We do not often come up against the exhibitor’s little problems; trade-papers organize attacks against dead-heads, stray intelligent critics sympathize with exhibitors who profess to be unable to import arty films that they would like to show, but only after a recent conversation with a “prominent exhibitor” (what exalted circles we do move in, to be sure!) did we realize that this maligned class has a considerable number of genuine grievances. We think that every viewpoint has its interest, that every case should be given a hearing, so we will set down on paper for all the world to read (what an enormous circulation we enjoy!) the inconsiderate attitude of the Wardour Street Renters in the hope that the gentleman will amend their ways.

It appears that when a renter wants to give a trade-show he will hire a legitimate theatre, as he is under the impression that all big pictures are put on at one or two West-end revue places. This is not the time to tell of the harm which the renter does himself by the indifferent projection at these halls, it is the occasion of the exhibitor’s grouse that he is deprived of the money that would accrue were the picture’s sponsors to hire a real cinema. They would be giving to the exhibitor money that he would more willing give back to them, they would be certain of average conditions of performance, they would be giving work to the exhibitor’s musicians, they would be keeping on the right side of the men they have to pacify afterwards by tactful drinks.
CLOSE UP

Oh! there are far worse things; for the renter who has a super not only removes it from the "output", for which the exhibitor has contracted, but produces it in the West-end himself at a theatre hired by himself. Bang go all the middle-man's profits!

O.B.

A NOTE ON COLOUR

Some months ago Carl Freud allowed me to see some experiments in the colour films. At the time I was placed under a bond of secrecy, but certain impressions remain unaltered.

I saw a distinct use for colour, combined with the mix for the ciné-poem. Among the odd shots, which had been strung together for purposes of demonstration, there was a series of mixes which included bright-stained poppies in the wind and (our old friend or enemy) the field of corn now turned into a sea of gold. The colour mixes allowed one to form an idea of the next scene long before it would have been possible with a black and white print. Not, however, a definite idea but a kind of sub-conscious realization; I mean one could not say afterwards that there had been a firm conviction that the next shot would present a tree but there would have been a shock if the next shot had not been a tree.

There was the same quality that is thought of in literature as "webby".

O.B.
A NOTE ON THE "EFFECTS MUSIC" OF EDMUND MEISEL

One of the things which talkies have done to us is to make us take an increased interest in all methods of sound-reproduction, radio and disc as well as film. The composition of sound itself, without transference into what are conservatively called "musical terms" is also a matter we have to learn about, so the six records that have been made by Herr Meisel in Germany are of importance to us whose approach to music is, perhaps, mainly via the road of visual rhythm.

I don't think the existence of these records is generally known in England, but they are quite easy to get and the postage and customs duties are well under ten shillings for the six of them. They are done on POLYDOR, green label, in twelve inch side. Their catalogue number is B69500-B69511, and the Order numbers are 19848-19853.

The sound recorded includes Street Noises, The Start and Arrival of a Train, A Train running till the Emergency Brake is Pulled, Noises of a Railway Station, Machine Noises; A Bombardment (two sides) and a record called Music of the Heavenly Hosts. It was Herr Meisel's idea, as he told me in London, to go direct to sound and orchestrate it; it is this principle that makes these records of cinematic interest. We can see, if we have any imagination, what may be done in the way of sound scores. Not all of these records are of the actual noises, however—there is a study in Rhythm which to my crass ear sounds instrumental, though the principles of
the rhythm are mechanic. This particular record offers a very interesting study in that most important of matters from which it takes its name. The Bombardment also seemed to me instrumental, though I am prepared to believe it was not. Of the others, the most easily appreciated is the Machine Noises, where the rhythm is very beautiful, and the Start and Arrival of a Train grows on one. But they are all exceptionally exciting, and show how noise itself can be taken up and composed and given form. There is after all no need to write a solemn and special score, as with The Melody of the World, when the noises themselves are there, waiting to be moulded and mounted, as life is also waiting to be moulded into visual images. I know of only four other records like them in England; the Ypres bombardment on H.M.V. who also recorded traffic noises outside Big Ben, and on Columbia the New Year's Eve service outside St. Paul's, and the record made of traffic noises in Leicester Square. It might be possible to include as a fifth the singing of one of our national songs by Clara Butt in the open air with a crowd of some thousands, but that is not exactly what I mean. But in none of these records has the noise had anything done to it in the way of composition; it has just been recorded and is rather confused, and the Columbia traffic one is also lessened in value by there being a certain Commander Daniel who announces that now we are about to hear a bus, and now a newsboy, ce que c'est ridicule. So Herr Meisel's records remain alone, and are well worth obtaining for their own sake and for what can be learnt from them.

R.H.
CLOSE UP

THE EYE OF PARIS

“Intricate, mouldering, subtle, immense, intimate, generous Paris: fruit of the autumn of all the Mediterranean Summer... The Luminous Eye, not of France alone, but of all the western world—Paris.” What is this? THE REDISCOVERY OF AMERICA. Still, there is a new salle which has just been opened, and it is called L’Oeil de Paris, and is therefore no longer on the left bank, but is in the Rue de l’Etoile, off the Avenue Wagram.

Less like the old specialist cinemas than the Studio Diamant, it combines the slightly commercial aspect of this latter with the catering to the élite of the former. It is less expensive than the Diamant, but less comfortable than those excellent steel stalls; nevertheless, it is far less painful to sit in (for the cause of art) than the Ursulines of the Ciné Latin, and at any rate in the loges there are ash trays. The screen, which is silver, is as usual minute; the decoration is of the style at present popular in Paris, one expects Argentina to come on at any minute; the programme girls wear sports costumes, and great stress is laid on the bar au premier. It only remains to add that over the door is half a face with one eye, which is a red lamp; this had to be removed on the first night, to darken the salle.

The programme is advertised as intelligent, and the one chosen to open with, fulfilled this claim. Florey’s Life and Death of a Hollywood Extra proved a better film than The Love of Zero, being witty, alert, and rhythmical, and having a gay script. An Arabesque of Germaine Dulac was interesting, and the inevitable avant-guerre was this time an old Pearl White serial. The main film was Epstein’s Finis
CLOSE UP

Terraey, extremely beautiful to look at and though one felt it possible others would find it too long for its content, one would not willingly have lost any of it nor had its gentle flowing speeded up. It tells the story of four men who harvest sea-weed on a small island. The two younger quarrel; when one of them has an abscess on his hand, he is jeered at. None of the others trouble to see what it is that makes him lie around instead of working, and use the valuable drinking water to bathe his hand. The tide washes up a knife which had been the cause of the quarrel, and the young man sees what is up, and tries to take his friend back to the mainland. Word has reached the mainland that something is wrong, because the lighthouse keeper, changing shift, reports that no work is being done on the island. The doctor sets out. The boats meet, and the boy’s thumb is lanced. He is taken ashore and put to bed. The film ends.

But it ends badly. Epstein has a very sincere sentimentality, and someone comes to call the doctor to another case, and the film ends with the idea that the doctor is at everyone’s service, and this that we have seen is only one of his cases. Nevertheless, the film is one of the few serious French works now on, and is very lovely. Epstein’s handling of the material should be seen; he not only gets grand effects with panchromatic, but knows the rhythm of the sea, and the way in which to comment on human lives. His use of landscape is important, and not less so are the angles and means by which he brings it in. The film’s acted throughout by the actual people of the place and the story is stated to be one that might easily occur in their lives. It needs a big screen.

R.H.
PARIS NOTES.

Pierre Braunberger, one of the most courageous and enterprising of the French renters, has created a new department to attend only to the distribution and sale of those films known as "avant-garde." Braunberger is convinced that although these films can appeal only to a restricted audience, they could yet be commercially successful if a world circuit for them could be created. There are actually enough special cinemas now scattered across the world to make this enterprise feasible.

By this move Braunberger will distribute foreign "avant-garde" films in France on one hand and sell French films of the same order abroad on the other, and thereby young directors will be able to continue making small experimental films that are not, just a blind alley, but bring new ideas to the cinema. Thus young directors, if they have cinematic sense, and if they know that some return is possible, can concentrate upon these little films.

Readers of Close Up who want more precise details can obtain them upon request from the Editions Braunberger, who will be grateful to all those who are willing to aid in the above enterprise.

Leon Poirier, the director of Verdun, Visions d'Histoires will soon begin the direction of La Symphonie Pastorale, from a story by Andre Gide. It will be entirely a sound film and probably made with the Tobis process. The director has left for Switzerland where the exteriors will be filmed.

JEAN LENAUER.
"DIE WUNDER DES FILMS."

Through the medium of the Volks Film Verband, this film is being shown throughout Germany, and has already met with outstanding success in Berlin and Hamburg.

The film depicts the exact methods of the modern cameraman, who produces the cinematographic marvels now to be seen. The film, which has been assembled very cleverly, was enhanced by the witty running commentary of Dr. Beytus of the German Film School.

The film is divided into five parts, the first being a plea for MOTION. It shows the advisability of introducing motion into the pictures of still subjects, such as architecture or landscape, either by introducing moving characters or by means of the ‘panorama’. Various uses and effects of the “pan” are shown; “panning” from side to side of landscapes, from the bottom to the top of heights, and ‘panning’ from an aeroplane. The aeroplane picture leads on to a very amusing sequence of ‘stop’ and ‘reverse’ motion pictures, in which are involved parachutists, who stopping in mid-air decide to return to their machine! The first part ends by showing the dangers a cameraman has to face to produce such pictures as volcanoes in eruption or mountain-climbing films, where he has always both his hands engaged in holding the camera.

To stress the variety of this film, it is sufficient to say that the second part dealt with subjects varying from eggs and negroes to clouds and operations! Opening with a chick leaving its egg, a perfect example of the cameraman’s patience, it continues with a series of beautifully selected
CLOSE UP

pictures dealing with Nature. Views of native-life and the importance to the interest of the film of showing them at their work or play, are followed by magnificent pictorial movement of clouds and water. Next comes Nature in the Jungle, and an electrical device is shown which enables Big-Game hunters to control their camera from a safe position and thus obtain close shots of wild animals. Micro-cinematography is dealt with, and also is the value of making cinematographic records of surgical operations, and here also is a special machine shown—a camera which can be placed at any angle over the operated part and which works automatically and quietly.

From the educative point of view the next two parts are the most important, and combined with the explanatory lecture, teach more than does any film-book yet published. Ultra-slow and Ultra-rapid motion are demonstrated and explained by many examples, such as a week’s growth of a flower representing ultra-slow camera motion, and a slow study of Rastelli, the juggler, representing ultra-rapid motion. Next comes an explanation of intermittent movement and of Film-Cartoons; how each phase of movement is drawn, cut out, and photographed singly by hand. Lottie Reiniger is shown moving the limbs of her cut-out Silhouettes, for each separate picture. Part of the silhouette film ‘Cinderella’ shows what can be achieved in artificial perspective and depth; but the gem is a fragment showing fifty or more figures dancing a Minuet simultaneously and rhythmically. Following the silhouettes come examples of ABSTRACT, the purest form of cinematographic movement.
CLOSE UP

The final reel treats, throughout, the question of colour in films, portrayed in an original manner by showing mono-chrome and colour films suddenly contrasted without a break.

This film not only reveals what a perfect educational means the cinema is, but can itself be considered the best lesson on the Cinema yet made.

CHARLES E. STENHOUSE.

HOLLYWOOD NOTES.

The Birth of a Nation, produced by Griffith in 1915, established a new standard of cinema production, and was rightly regarded in its day as the greatest of all American motion pictures. It still ranks among the film classics, and United Artists are said to be contemplating a phonofilm reproduction of it. Griffith is now associated with United Artists and will of course direct the talking version if it is decided to undertake it. As many as possible of the original players in the epochal photodrama will be included in the cast. Among these are Lillian Gish, Mae Marsh, Henry Walthall, Mary Alden and Walter Lang.

It is rumored also, that Douglas Fairbanks is considering a phonofilm reproduction of his Thief of Bagdad.

* * *

Pathé have inaugurated a new system of compensation for scenario writers. Following the practice of the stage in the matter of playwrights, scenarists will be paid on a royalty
basis, with an advance payment in cash of five hundred dollars. If the picture is successful the author will be bountifully remunerated. If, on the other hand, it should prove a "flop," for which he may not be in any wise responsible, he will have naught but his five hundred to console him. Somerset Maugham, the English playwright, is the first author to be signed by Pathé under this new arrangement.

* * *

Street Corners is the title of a two-reel picture recently produced by two newspaper men, Russell Birdwell and Lincoln Quarberg. Aside from this novelty, it is also notable for its inexpensiveness. Its cost was less than a thousand dollars. It has no interior scenes. As its title indicates, it was made at street corners—in Los Angeles and Hollywood—using the passing crowds for background and atmosphere. The picture is a sophisticated drama of realism, based on actual happenings that have come under the observation of its producers in the course of their newspaper work. They declare there is more real drama on a street corner than in the pages of any book of fiction; that there is a story in every human being—a story behind every lighted window. And Street Corners is designed to exemplify this contention.

* * *

Sound pictures have created a demand for animal imitators. Animals are an unfailing element of popularity in films, but except for the dog there are none of them that can be depended upon for their voices in the "talkies."
**CLOSE UP**

critical moment a rooster will fail to crow or a cat to meow or a donkey to bray. Hence the need for a human “double”—a man who can imitate a duck or a rooster or a cow or any other zoological actor that may have a “speaking” part in a picture. Already the Central Casting Bureau has a long list of men, as well as women, who are qualified for this particular work; some of them specializing in a single animal or bird imitation, and others prepared to double for any creature, from a bee to an elephant.

* * *

The motion picture rights to *The Miracle*, Morris Gest’s famous morality play, are again on the market for sale. They were purchased by First National sometime ago, and plans for an elaborate film production had been prepared. Since then, however, First National has come under control of Warner Brothers, and their vitaphone programs obviously have no place for a film of the type of *The Miracle*. And it may be doubted whether any Hollywood producer, in the face of the present vogue for dialogue, would now find this play a desirable acquisition.

* * *

The problem of the foreign market for American talking pictures is giving the Hollywood producers no little concern. Some are optimistic enough to believe that the popularity of American films will speedily bring about the adoption of English as a universal language. Louis B. Mayer, general manager of M-G-M, is one of these; but, pending that consummation, he offers a more practical and more certain solution. “I believe,” he says, “that for the immediate
future foreign rights to American pictures will be sold abroad. In other words, the right to reproduce an American talking picture in a foreign language will be sold to European producers, who will remake the picture with their own players and organization specifically for their home market.'

* * *

Warner Brothers have established a song-writing department as a part of their vitaphone organization. Experience has so far proven that songs in phonofilms are particularly popular, and the composing of original ones for screen reproduction has become one of the important offshoot industries of the new movie development. Song writers, therefore, along with scenarists and dialogue-writers, are taking their place as part of the professional personnel of Hollywood studios.

* * *

The filming of The Mysterious Island, under the direction of Lucien Hubbard, has been completed at the M-G-M studio. The picture is in color and presents many interesting, weird and fantastic under-water scenes. One of these submarine bizzarries is a race of grotesque creatures, half human, half fish, shown living on the bottom of the ocean. These Ichyanthropi—to coin a fitting name for them—are impersonated by dwarfs and midgets, more than a hundred of whom were gathered together from all parts of the country for employment in this picture.

* * *

Actors are as apt to forget their lines before the microphones as behind the footlights. Hence the need of a prompter on a
CLOSE UP

studio set. But he must be a silent prompter. A whisper from the wings would be caught by the sensitive microphone even more readily than by the actor's ear and probably amplified into a bellow on the screen. Accordingly, a studio prompter has recourse to be a blackboard or a slate, which, with the necessary cue scribbled upon it, is held up before the faulting actor, out of range of the camera.

C.H.

THE SOVIET SCREEN

I. Sovkino.

Eisenstein's new film The General Line will be released after certain additions in June. This is quite a new departure for Eisenstein, whose two films Potemkin and Ten Days portrayed exciting scenes of revolution and civil war. The General Line is entirely devoted to the development of o-operative village industries, and includes many striking pictures and much imaginative detail. It is particularly interesting from the fact that it has been produced entirely without the co-operation of "actors", all the parts being filled by actual peasants, who have never before posed for the camera.

The New Babylon, a spectacular film of the Franco-Prussian war and Commune, was released on the 18th March for the anniversary of the Paris Commune. The directors are G. Konsintzoff and L. Trauberg, producers of The Devil's
Wheel, Shinel (on a story by Gogol), the Great Alliance, etc. The operator is Moskvin.

* * *

An Art Council has been formed for the direction of the art policy of the Leningrad Sovkino works, composed of the director of the works, the technical director, members of the scenario bureau, three producers, two operators, an artist and two actors.

* * *

The Moscow Sovkino works has organised a scenario workshop for the systematic preparation of scenarios, for the purpose of technical training for a group of young proletarian writers and scenario-writers. The work of this group will be directed by experienced scenario-writers—N. Zarchi (author of the scenarios for Mother and The End of Saint Petersburg—Pudovkin productions), V. Shklovski (The Love-Triangle and Hollows, produced by Room, and The Wings of a Serf, produced by U. Tarich).

There will be twenty-five workers in this group, most of whom will receive wages from the works.

It is hoped in this way to create a body of scenarists guaranteeing the full realisation of the plans for future production.

* * *

A comedy entitled Jealousy is in preparation, on the theme of the struggle with slander and idle gossip in modern life. The chief parts will be played by Alexandra Chochlova (well-known from her acting in The Death Ray and Jack London's According to the Law), (Sühne) P. Galadzhev,
CLOSE UP

A. Zhukof, K. Gradopolof (who played in S. Utkevich's Lace), and others.

* * *

N.R.K. 32, by the young producer A. Usoltzef and the operator G. Giber, who shot The Love Triangle and Bulat-Bogatyn, is a film showing the role of transport in the civil war, and the heroism of the railwaymen. Art-mounting of film by V. Aden.

E. Ivanov-Barkof, having finished The Blast Furnace (a film version of Lyashko's novel), has begun upon a new picture, entitled Judas, in which the principle roles are taken by Kovrign, Rogozhin and Zessarskaya.

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II. Meschrabpom-Film.

Y. A. Protasanof, director of The Three Thieves, The Forty-First and The White Eagle, is working upon a new picture entitled The Meeting.

* * *

B. Barnet, is working upon The Mexican, founded on a Jack London novel. Negotiations are going on between the Meschrabpom Film and the Mexican Government, with regard to opportunities of taking landscape films in Mexico.

* * *

Dmitrief and Mosyagin have just finished work as director and operator on an interesting film entitled Rivals, and showing life in a remote village. The struggle between the active supporters of the new constructive life and the village
reactionaries, is vividly shown, and the pictures of Votsk holidays and festivities are of ethnographic value.

The producer, Lev Kuleshof having finished a picture entitled *The Merry Canary*, has begun upon a film entitled *2 Buldi 2*, on the scenario of O. Brik, founded upon the story by Philip Hopp. This will be a picture of circus life. The fact that I. Moskvin, People's artist, will take the principal role, together with the production by Kuleshof, lends additional interest to this picture.

New films in course of preparation are *120,000 a Year*, a picture of modern life, to be produced by G. Chernyak; *Whom and How to Kill*, a big scientific film, upon which Ekk is working; a comedy *Not for Sale!* to be produced by Gendenstein and Chernyak, with Igor Ilinsky in the role which he fills on the stage.

B. Barnet, producer of *The Hatbox Girl (Moscow That Laughs)* and *The House on Trubnaya*, is preparing *Première*, on the scenario of O. Brik.

A Meschrabpom Expedition has been sent to Kronstadt to shoot pictures for a new film entitled *Breaking-Point*, founded on the popular play of the same name.

A party to the Trans-Causasus has gone from the Meschrabpom to take pictures for the *Twenty-six Commissars*
CLOSE UP
(The Way to India), on the scenario of N. F. Agadzhanova-Shutko and N. Blyakhina.

* * *

III. WUFKU.

The Mechanism of Normal Birth, a scientific film under the direction of G. Pisemski, professor of gynecology, has been recently completed. The process of birth has been photographed, and the slow-motion method employed. With the aid of the latest technical photographic improvements the condition of the foetus in the womb has been established. The latest Zelgaim theory of the rotatory movement of the foetus is vividly proved.

* * *

Henri Barbusse gave the following appreciation on seeing A. Solovief's Clown George's Benefit: "I applauded Clown George's Benefit with all my heart, for it at the same time amuses, moves and absorbs. The simple drama leads one naturally from laughter to horror, from joking to heroism. Just as the juggler in The Paris Madonna offers the divinity his tricks as his only riches, Clown George, on becoming a soldier of the revolution, offers it, with splendid insolence, his acrobatic dexterity and mimic powers. This film deserves to become popular".

* * *

A. Solovief is working on a film entitled Five Brides; G. Stabavoi is preparing From the Show-Case, and V. Radish I Bestow on Thee . . .
A. Peregud is preparing *The Loop of Death*; P. Dolin *Mounds* and I. Tereschenko *A Little Woman’s Great Sorrow.*

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**IV. GEORGIAN GOSKINPROM.**

*The Cloud Refuge*, produced by Z. Berishvili, shows the picturesque localities of Georgia and Upper Tushetia. It describes the relations between the “old-timers” and youth in the village, and the victorious struggle of the latter for the new order of things.

*Verkhom na Holtye* shows the struggle of the poor peasantry in a Georgian village, with a group of “kulaks”, setting-up a pseudo “Collective Farm”. The picture is composed of material taken from life.

* * *

New educational films: *A Day’s Work in Karachai, Georgian Health Resorts, Chakva (Tea Industry), Dagestan and Tushetia.*

* * *

The Georgian Goskinprom is sending groups of workers from its factory to Moscow, Leningrad and Kiev, to acquaint themselves with work in the biggest and best-equipped kinoworks. Laboratory workers, mounting-and-setting workers, carpenters and lighting apparatus workers will be included in the groups sent. The aim of the organisation of such visits is the raising of technical skill.

* * *

The Malaria Congress in Tiflis will be shown *Malaria*, a new Georgian Goskinprom educational film, produced by L.
CLOSE UP

Push and S. Zabozlayev. This film will show the struggle of modern medicine with this disease. The pictures have been shot in Kahetia, Mingrelia, Georgia and Adzharistan. During the shooting of the film the forest and fishing industries and hydro-technical work of the draining of marsh-land in Mingrelia, were also photographed. Of special interest are the pictures of those parts of Upper Kahetia, Dzhanana and Turis. Tzihe, in which fifty years ago, those who did not die of the epidemic fled to other districts.

* * *

V. ARMENKINO (Armenian).

The latest Armenkino pictures have shown an advance from the old themes, and a tendency to choose revolutionary subjects. Such have been Barhudarof’s Pyat v Yablochko and The House on the Volcano of Amo Bek-Nazarof (director of Namus and Zare).

* * *

Peristiani has finished work on a film entitled Zamallu.

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A new Armenkino studio has been opened for the work of four producing groups. At the present moment work is being done in this studio by Madatof and Makunyan on a picture entitled Gashim.

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VI. VOSTOK KINO (Eastern).

Zelim-Khan, a big art-film, is being completed at Baku.

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A great expedition has been sent to take pictures for the film *Turk-Sibstroi* (Turkestan Siberian Railway), to be produced by V. Turin and V. Slavinski.

U. Raismann, the producer of *Hard Labour* (*Zuchthaus*), is working on a film entitled *The Earth is A-Thirst*, on the life of Soviet Kazakhstan. Its subject is connected with the problem of irrigation, which is of great importance for this republic. The scene is laid in the semi-desert and steppes of Karakedpakia.

* * *

*Zundukai* is a film on the life of the Goldi an almost extinct Tungusk inhabiting Manchuria and the shores of the Amur.

* * *

V. Massiko is completing work on a film for the tenth anniversary of the Bashkir Autonomous S.S.R.

* * *

New scenarios have been accepted by: V.Turkil and V. Inkischinoff (who played the principal part in Pudovkin's *Storm over Asia*), entitled the *Comet*; S. Bogatirev *The Blue Fox* (on the subject of co-operative work in the north; B. Shelontzef, on the theme of maternity and infant welfare in the Buryato-Mongolian Autonomous S.S.R. and V. Turkilya, *The Woman's Tragedy* on the exploitation of women in Kazakhstan.

Multiple films have been made for the popularisation of the new Turco alphabet.
A new Sovkino culture-film, of which there are stills in this issue, called *In the Taiga For a Meteorite*, has been released in the U.S.S.R. The Taiga is the region of the marsh forests of Siberia, where a huge meteor was observed to fall. An expedition was immediately organised to seek it, under the direction of Profesor Kulik, with cinema equipment controlled by the Sovkino camera-man, N. A. Strukof.

The work was carried out under extremely difficult conditions, and great privations. There were weeks when the entire food consisted of only flour mixed with water, and tea. Very often it was necessary to film standing to the waste in water—swamp-land infested with mosquitos! In spite of adversity, it was possible to film the road to the meteorite, marked by trees smashed for hundreds of miles around, with the crater formed where the meteorite had struck the ground. During the search a very interesting record was made of the Soviet organisation and customs prevailing in the pre-Amur region.

* * *

*New Babylon,* a Sovkino film recently made at the Leningrad studios is announced as one of those available for England through the agreement between British Instructional Films and the U.S.S.R. It was directed by G. Konsintzoff and L. Trauber, of the "FEKS" group, and co-directors of several films, including *The Adventures of Octiabuna, The Devil's Ring, The Cloak, Brother (or Little Brother),* and *S.V.D.*

*New Babylon* is a melodramatic story dealing with the French Commune. The subject of the film covers the period from the fall of the Second Empire (September, 1870) to the
end of the Paris Commune (May, 1871). The heroes of the film are the Versailles soldiers, who, through the horror of shooting the communards, come to understand the idea and the meaning of what has happened; and a little down-trodden saleswoman of a department store, who sacrifices her life on the Paris barricades.

Paris at night, the fall of the Vendome column, the Pere la Chaise cemetery, the Wall of the Communards—were all filmed in Paris.

The filming of the hill of Versailles and the barricades took place in the U.S.S.R., as well as the scenes in the department store, the ball "Mabil", etc.

That this film, together with the General Line and the Peasant Women of Riazan, may be shown in England will come as a surprise only to those who have not heard of the above-mentioned agreement between Russia and the British Instructional. Briefly, the arrangement is that British Instructional shall have sole rights of distribution of Russian films in England, with the provision that not only all films made in Russia shall be handled by them, but that this company shall have a call on the services of Russian directors and actors to assist at Welwyn. Pudovkin has definitely asked to be allowed to make a joint picture on a big theme of London, Canada or India. The first Russian pictures, including the three mentioned, will be in England very shortly.

Excellent as this is, let pleasure be tempered with curiosity as to the censor's attitude, and the intricate surgery that may
CLOSE UP

have to take place before they are considered sufficiently " disininfected " to be set before him.

* * *

Which reminds us that Crisis, in which Herr Pabst made the best of a bad job, has been remodelled, like a last-year's dress, by its distributors, who have tried to flounce it up with Entertainment Value, like the costumes of the Tiller Girls.

Truly, our next petition will have to be for director's copyright. They would try to make Ziegfield Follies of the Peasant Women of Riazan!

* * *

Incidentally, as we go to press it is still too early to give news of our censorship protest. The organisation is completed and all has been made ready. Next month there will be full details, and complete history to-date.

Refrain from tearing your hair over British and American Films for one minute, and—count your blessings.

You live in London, I believe, and from time to time cross over to the Continent. In other words, you can see a decent Film when you want to.

Now consider my case. I earn 35/- a week in a Provincial City. Do you see the difference? Unless you've lived in the Provinces, you will never comprehend the depths of my anguish. There are five visitable Cinemas in this City, and this week they are showing The Farmer's Wife, Rose Marie, The Singing Fool, The Butterfly on the Wheel and Mr. Wu. That is a fair example of the usual run of programs. Of
course, we had *Vaudeville*, *Metropolis* and *The Spy* with orchestral effects—but that's as far as we can ever hope to go. No revivals.

*The Loves of Jeanne Ney*—the only Pabst I have ever been able to see, came to a tiny little place, almost in the slums, where the most expensive seats are ninepence and it isn’t usual for females to attend unattended.

Brigitte Helm is considered "Weird", "Not quite nice"—"We wish we had gone to see Harold Lloyd instead."

Last night I went to see *Mr. Wu*. We were not amused. The secondary Film was *Miss Chaffeur* with Mady Christians, a rather weakly humorous affair, which being German, I suppose, had more sincerity in any given 10 feet, than the other had in 10 miles.

No, I don’t suppose I’ll ever see a Russian Film. Nor anything more "Unconventional" as the dear things say, than Lang, from Germany. All the same, I’m jolly well going to Stuttgart, although it means no new clothes this Summer.

What on earth is the use of pouring over stills by Eisenstein? And, anyway, what right has a poor but honest working girl to criticize the entertainment provided by art-loving, high-souled Cinema Managers? Especially when they wear a black, waxed moustache and a diamond ring.

D.L.H.

Intending visitors to the Stuttgart exhibition are referred for particulars of the advertisement in this issue. Films will be shown only between the dates of June 13th and June 20th.
CLOSE UP

A great deal of experimental work will be shown, in particular Dziga Vertoff's film, The Man with the Moving Picture Camera. Those who are able should certainly make an effort to visit Stuttgart as they will be enabled to compare the creative work of several different countries.

* * *

The Sovkino film of the Krassin exhibition showed recently in Switzerland. Children were admitted to the performances. It is not, however, possible to review the film, as it had been so cut for political reasons that the effect of it was jerky and obviously much had been left out. What was left showed an excellent understanding of the difficulties of Arctic photography, together with some lovely shots of the great blocks of ice breaking away from the Krassin and the other icebreakers. It achieved also a dramatic effect of loneliness and danger and gave a clear geographical record of where the events took place. But at the most interesting moments the film itself was cut and photographs of people connected with the drama inserted. This left a most disconnected impression upon the spectator's mind. The most interesting part was, perhaps, the waiting crowds when the Krassin returned to Russia. It is a great pity that a historical record should not be shown in its entirety. As it is, we must question whether it would not be preferable to withdraw the film, rather than show it in such a mutilated manner. We understand that the owner of the cinema was not to blame.
The Indians of Europe.

The Educational Department of the Ufa has dispatched a unit to the Northern part of Norway, where the Laplanders, a most interesting race, distinctly related to the American Indians are living. The expedition is headed by the Norwegian journalist Almar Björnefjell, a nephew of the renowned poet Knut Hamsun, and one of the best experts on the life and the habits of the Laplanders. His cameraman is Paul Lieberenz, who has several successful tropical expeditions to his record, and lately accompanied Sven Hedin during his trip through North China and Tibet.

Strange Animal Friendships.

One of the Ufa's educationals, which, like Killing the Killer", is likely to prove successful all over the world, is the new one-reeler, "Strange Animal Friendships". When this short was released at the Universum, Berlin, the audience broke out in spontaneous applause. The newspapers have hailed it as one of the best educationals ever produced. The demand for "Strange Animal Friendships" has grown to such extent, that the picture is now being screened at several Berlin theatres simultaneously.
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BY THE EDITOR

For no known reason—since that of spite must be discounted—they revived Feyder’s *L’Atlantide* at our local cinema. Revived is perhaps not the most felicitous word, for it was everything but that. And then, on top of it, came *La Roue*—by (need I say it) Abel Gance. And in between, tempering injustice with mercy, the quietly deft and living *Feme*.

This isn’t (though it could easily grow into) a parable. Leaving, however, Gance aside—as no more successful in this than his very own triptych—*L’Atlantide* did make me think, at times kindly, of some of the amateur films I’ve seen. The reference books easiest to refer to don’t seem to tell me when it was made, and it’s not worth a hands-and-knees search, but there is no doubt that that was a film in its day.

We had a duped copy, which was no help at all, and only accident had shortened, more wisely than censors’ scissors, some of the scenes within scenes from the stories within stories, that gobbled like a clogged fountain at a method similar to Boccacio’s or Cervantes’ young man’s tale of the
goatherd's tale of the maiden's tale. Alas, without the grace and wit which alone saves bawdiness from a limbo more cobwebby than Paul Leni's houses of mystery.

Not that *L'Atlantide* was meant as bawdy. That only happened when Madame somebody—with a name like the Russian princesses in anything from Oppenheim down—lay beetlebing on cushions, or biting embroidery off her day-bed. *L'Atlantide* was in a way a forerunner of all the beautiful gestures of the Foreign Legion, and a fairly frank imitator of *She Who Must Be Obeyed.* (Is there any one of my readers, by the way, who saw the ever epicene Delysia as the deathless Ayesha?) So Feyder plugged and plodded and panted, using an iris mix that never mixed, but stopped to argue across the following scene; an argument that by dint of never ending repetition heckled on to final need to join in likewise. Off with the iris, man, and let us *see!*

Just let me, please, have one more word. and I'll come to what there is of a point. In a'word then, lighting . . . .

I thought that would interest you!

I'll be driven presently, after all, to look up the date of *L'Atlantide.* Because when it was made, neither Mr. Feyder nor his cameraman had heard of reflectors. Consequently nearly all of it was in silhouette, and as one of them was Jean Angelo's, the effect was less realistic than *Achmed,* for example, and less ornamental. As far as I could judge, the interiors were partly lighted by magnesium flares. There was one "spot"—the most unabashed I have ever seen, flitting and trembling like a dragon fly in search of faces to alight on. The big sets—it is true, daylight can never be so bad as badly managed lamps, and the sunlight shining
CLOSE UP

warmly on the back of the throne and the good queen’s neck probably gave her sunstroke, but improved the look of things. Even of her.

What is interesting is what kind of a technique was this in its day? Because its shoddy, makeshift attempts to be impressive, the inordinate clumsiness and redundancy of the scenario, the general air of unrehearsed uncertainty, was equivalent only to the very early attempts of very ambitious amateur beginners, who, filled with vague ideas of what they want, think they will get what a professional would get, by working like this:

Scene: taken from life.

Young Man (with camera): Look, there’s some sun. Quick, go and stand in it.

Second Young Man: What have I got to do?

Young Man (with camera): It doesn’t matter. We must finish up this film. You can have strolled into the garden to light a cigarette.

Second Young Man hops into sun.

Second Young Man: Here?

Young Man (with camera): That’ll do, yes.

Girl runs out with a mirror. Shock (mine) on realising it is meant for reflector.

Girl: Is that light too strong in your eyes?

Second Young Man: Wow!
CLOSE UP

Girl: There. That's better.

Young Man (with camera): Ready. Go ahead.

Turns.

Second Young Man: Say, I haven't got any cigarettes.

Girl and Young Man (with camera): Well, do something!

Sun goes in.

Second Young Man: What can I do?

Girl and Young Man (with camera): Hurry up. Anything!

Second Young Man:

Stoops, stretching hand to pick flower.

Film runs out.

Young Man (with camera): My God! I forgot to refocus!

Girl: Never mind. We can use it for a vision or something.

Change the scene slightly, the words slightly, the accidents slightly, and you have a situation which regrettably might be happening in almost any amateur group in any part of the world, excepting always (or at least often) the organised groups who may in time justify their position, if position you can call it, of being the hope of the films.

Apart from these, the general attitude among amateurs, as well as among professionals, is to let things pass. This is
CLOSE UP

easier, so we’ll do it this way. Most people have said at one time or another, rather grandiloquently, like a statesman’s statue, it’s the tiniest details that build up the whole. Two or three careless shots may not ruin a masterpiece, but can horribly mar it. Witness Room’s Pits. Certain scenes stumbled over, impatiently, uneasily. Others labored.

And let me again say look at Pabst. I know they (in the abstract) call me Pabst’s publicity agent, to which my reply is find me others as good, and I’ll willingly be publicity agent to all of them. The single scene, the merest flash, is to him a thing of utmost importance. Crisis was saved from sheer tiresomeness by his handling of separate scenes. Beauty of pictorial composition; camera position expressing something. Without—which is one of the most important things—straining for its effect. Timing a silent, tense modulation set in the rhythm of the mood, and emphasising it. And so on and so on. Do you think he would have done so well by trusting to luck?

* * *

I’m not at all sure if this is a lesson to amateurs or simply chiding Feyder for what he did (now, how many years ago was it?) Neither seems quite indicated for the editorial of a Magazine Devoted to Films, etc., but there is perhaps a moral to it all somewhere. As the monkey said, you can’t be too careful over details.

Kenneth Macpherson.
MANY HAPPY RETURNS

The Avenue Pavilion, London, celebrated the first birthday of its repertory film policy in a highly commendable manner, by giving a film feast the like of which has never been equalled. In fourteen days six films were screened, all chosen by ballot by the Avenue’s regular supporters. Even the most hard-to-please movie fan would surely not fail to be satisfied with Waxworks, Warning Shadows and Jeanne Ney in one week, and The Nibelungs, Vaudeville and Student of Prague in the next.

"This repertory fortnight is the most successful thing I have ever undertaken ", Mr. Ogilvie told me. His pleasure is not merely occasioned by the box-office returns; he realises that he has done something which has earned the gratitude of every lover of the Cinema. (And we do love the Cinema).

Although Student of Prague topped the ballot, it was Jeanne Ney that attracted the biggest audiences. This, and Warning Shadows were the most favoured, judging by the many complimentary remarks made to Mr. Ogilvie.

All of them, however, did extraordinarily good business, and Mr. Ogilvie’s only regret is that he did not make it a repertory month, instead of fortnight.

The Avenue was fortunate in securing excellent copies of
CLOSE UP

nearly all the films, although one film, which shall be nameless, caused no little excitement. It was in such bad condition that after the first performance each reel was rushed to the cleaners. The first reel got back exactly two minutes before it was due for the second shewing!

Incidentally, Mr. Ogilvie tells me that when he made his proposal for the fortnight to Mr. Stuart Davis, of the Gaumont-British Company, he was given every possible help in getting the necessary copies, and no pains were spared in assisting the venture in every way possible.

And now the Avenue Pavilion enters upon its second year of great achievements. In twelve months it has given us, in addition to the six mentioned already, *The Street, Gosta Berling, Tartuffe, Cinderella, Berlin, The Last Laugh*, and others almost too numerous to mention.

As proof that we shall not entirely have to succumb to canned operas and similar abominations in the future, we have just had Rahn’s *La Tragédie de la Rue!* Yes, the censor has let it through, with modifications, but even a modified *Tragédie de la Rue* is better than Mr. Fox’s Ziegfeld Follies complete with screen half a mile square.

Hats off to the Avenue Pavilion!

A.W.
FILM RESPONSIBILITIES

Since the passing of the Quota Bill—a little distrait following the sensation of the Talkie Bill—we have heard much of the peculiar responsibilities which the film world has to face. We have been reminded, a little pompously sometimes, of the responsibility of the films towards the Empire, towards industry, towards education, towards many other things having the dullest relation to our daily entertainments; confusing rather than elucidating them. No doubt film directors in all countries are compelled to consider these matters and do their worst, which with great competence they do. But in the more adult film territory now coming into being, they are ceasing to matter, and we may well leave them alone. For it is clear enough that they are being crushed out of existence by the newer men, of harder metal, wider knowledge and greater all-round artistry.

Out of this chaos of responsibilities, the heaviest of which, at present, is the box-office, we may isolate one only which lies at the back of them all and dominates every film of any merit—namely, the responsibility of the film-maker towards himself. Probably every important director, from Griffith to Pabst, has recognised this, but it has only emerged quite
recently as a general proposition, and in actual practice it has probably not emerged at all in this country.

If the box-office is the primary responsibility, then what is the use of exclaiming, even through a megaphone: “This picture isn’t saying what I mean!” Such a complaint expresses a sense of personal responsibility, and it is this sense which appears in rising curves of significance as the finer type of film advances. It is appearing now. In my own mind—probably because The End of St. Petersburg and Mother were so impressive—I associate it with the name of Pudovkin, but it is arguable that Intolerance or The Scarlet Letter were inspired by a similar spirit, were points in the same curve. I do not think any student of films will deny that the Russian film, such as we have seen it, is the first to avow quite openly its individual beliefs, its passionate desire that the director shall be true to himself.

This seems to me (with no money in film shares) the only thing that really matters in film-making. And even if I had money in them, and a Rolls-Royce and enough spare cash to entertain all the plumper of Mr. Cochran’s Young Ladies—even so, I should still contend, from the footboard of my Rolls and at the top of my Royce, that the freedom of the film director must be preserved at all costs, and I would gladly cast Treasury notes in both colours and denominations to all and sundry who were of that opinion.

I went to see Volga Volga a short while ago at the Tivoli. Now, Volga Volga, notwithstanding occasional shots of good photographic quality, is an example of the mindless film in which the director, having nothing particular to say, is under every obligation to the producers and none to himself. It’s
true, this picture comes under the producer-renter-distributor category, with responsibilities outside my present point of view. At the same time, by being so interminably flat, the film sends up the peak of my contention to its height—that of the necessity for the director’s complete integrity of spirit in all that he directs. If a man is telling a story, be he Edgar Wallace or John Galsworthy, he owes it to his public to tell it as well as he can. Similarly with films. American programme and “super” pictures shoulder their technical responsibilities with astonishing efficiency. The responsibility of the director is here limited to his skill in the studio, and it is only now—with a few exceptions, such as Victor Saville, Alfred Hitchcock (in his pre-Champagne days) Dupont, Graham Cutts (in his pre-Confetti period), Manning Haynes and Anthony Asquith—that we can credit ourselves with as vital a technical interest. And this reform, moreover, coincides with the general air of cosmopolitanism, the “ask-the-foreigner” policy which is gradually and firmly and finally establishing itself in British studios.

When we shift from this technical world into the world of ideas—and it is here Pudovkin and his school triumph so completely—we are very differently placed. Our post-war philosophical habit—so cool in its a-moralities and immoralities—suddenly discovers the necessity for an attitude that goes deeper. At least, it has not discovered it yet, but it will have pretty soon if it is to compete with the Continent, if it is to achieve anything at all worth achieving. In short, it must break away from its own tyrannies—that of studio executives, public tastes, film formulas, Empire needs, production “highlights” and so on. That is the delegation of
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responsibility along lines which cancel each other out, leaving nothing but a messy entertainment for the oafs and yokels of Midgley-upon-Muff.

It is all very well to talk, you may say, but how is this to be done? Take away these highlights and you take away the film too in its own habitation, from its own cash-box. And inevitably. For you will never get freedom for the director until you do. I may have much in common with the village idiot, and, indeed, there is a sort of madness in clamouring for spiritual freedom amid blocks of materialism. But if Pudovkin or Eisenstein commands his freedom and nails down his responsibility by his greater knowledge of the game, and says what he thinks in the way he thinks by a long-laboured-for mastery, why should not we do so?

And, of course, we shall do so, though the time be far distant, and though England is not at all like Russia in her film-making opportunities. That is of no consequence. Mr. Bernard Shaw may say to Mr. Austen Spare "Knock anybody down who calls you an artist", because that is the sort of thing one only says to a man who is an artist already and has the highest sense of his calling. But that is the sort of man we want behind our films—preferably with £100,000 a year...

No; I will not be tempted. I have put all my money into talkies!

Ernest Betts.
I have a feeling that what is going to be set down here has all been said before. The feeling arises not from a sense of guilt direct, but by way of an anecdote, read from a psychology text-book now forgotten, that sprang to memory immediately I thought of writing. It was of a professor who studied over night thoroughly new and revolutionary scientific abstractions, slept on them, and delivered them to his students next morning as his own creations, quite honestly and entirely oblivious to his theft. Slight hallucination, I think... or was it displacement the text-book called it. Anyway I know it wasn’t dissociation. But it leaves me harassed and divided as to which is the most fearsome, to be a victim of incipient hallucinations or guilty of the theft of another’s thunder. But there is another feeling, a kind of parent feeling, which seems to say “Ah, it only seems like that. Really the doubt exists only because the things you think it necessary to say are obvious and should have, ought to have, been said before.” The voice has a pleasant sound, and I’m going to heed it and leave the Editor to decide the other points.

It struck me one day, in the way things strike even the
From *Arsenal*, Dovenkof's film, now finished, for Wufku, and to be released in Germany by Prometheus.
The Iris Family, British Instructional Secrets of Nature series. The pistil of the gladiolus coming forward to pick up pollen from a visiting insect after nectar.

The gladiolus petal cells, showing pigmentation that causes the formation of the guide-lines.
Scarlet Runner & Co., a further subject from the *Secrets of Nature* series. The young bean has thrown off its covering of the faded flower, and is beginning to grow.

The Man with the Movie Camera, Dziga Vertov's Wufku production—a film of life in the streets without actors or titles. Parts of this may be seen in Stuttgart at the Exhibition this month.
La Malemort & deCanart (The Duck’s Sad Death), a film by S. Silka, recently shown in Paris. See note in Comment and Review.
*Montparnasse*, Eugen Deslav's new film, which has for theme the life of the Montparnasse artists.
From Montparnasse. Above La Rotonde of Montparnasse.

*The Black Sail*, a Sovkino film, directed by S. Yutkevich.
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dullest of us sometimes, the incredible number of times the contributary factors to film making, which begin on the studio floor and end at the screen, have to be as it were, displaced from the dimension of its own individuality either into space or into the dimension of some other individuality if results are to attain any degree of success as art or even as entertainment. Searching the dictionary for a word to nail the idea with a single blow I am driven back to my original and immediate choice. No word seems to express so well as "orientation" the viewpoint it is desired the reader should get of what is aimed at here. Hence the title.

Consider the importance of orientation applied to the camera, which means, enquire into what dimensions it seems legitimate to displace the camera so that the images it photographs become most articulate when strung together in a complete film. I know that it has often been mentioned in Close Up before. I may not have read with due reverence and attention but I feel that those others haven't said just what I want to say about it. Elsewhere Oswell Blakeston looks at the problem for a brief moment through a yellow glass. Then he asks what would be wrong with clothing the camera itself with sinews and flesh, allowing it to take to the low habits of smoking, obligatory emotional standpoints or even a geniculated tripod. He, however, confesses to facetiousness—except for his creed of Pabst—though I think he is serious again when he speaks of moving camera and gyroscopic shots.

These he allows, but only so long as the camera remains a spectator. He thinks it interesting only to get a view of things orientated from the view of a character . . . "But . . ."
and then his smile breaks out again. “But...” I echo, if cinema is to be a new mode of expression, a further language, are we to, can we, bar visual thought and pictorial mental reservations by the characters, any more than it would be sanely advisable to excise dialogue and introspection from the novel, completely? Even Pabst used these things (In Jeanne Ney too). But supposing he didn’t and remained consistently objective, is that sufficient reason to insist that there is nothing to be gained—beyond being just interested—from subjective cinema?

I mean that we are not, through the camera, merely to be allowed to look on like omni-observant gods amused at the diminutive antics of fleas, ants and men. Although it mayn’t seem necessary to know how small the hero feels in the monstrous grip of a minion of the law it is well for us, if we are not to remain aloof, to see what they both together look like to the emotionally tinged vision of a participating character. Then we are right in the picture.

We can’t even stop there. Remember Mother. We (the camera of course being “we”) did not simply watch the struggle for possession of the clock that hung on the wall. We stood on the rickety chair, we wrenched at the clock, and we, in turn, were wrenched from the chair, the clock fell from our hands and smashed in a thousand pieces about our faces as they came to grief on the bare boards.

Mr. Sudzuky treats things in a musical simile, but I think (I beg his forgiveness if I’m wrong) he means much the same, at times, as I mean because even individuals cry out within a Beethoven symphony. The point is that though it is illegitimate in a piece of objective cinema to shoot from a
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fire-place, a roof or some other unlikely place for a spectator to be, it is not wrong in principle to orientate the camera to sympathise with the viewpoint of a character. Actually, such a purpose behind a camera orientation determines whether an unusual angle is, or is not, a natural and permissible angle and of consequent value in creating a definite emotional tone.

But let us pass on to the question of orientation in relation to the characters themselves. Its consideration is of particular value where the "star" system is in vogue.

When we see old favourites coming back it is hard to decide whether we were once easily pleased and uncritical, or whether our pleasure was only relatively secured because of the then even lower general standard of screen acting. The years having eliminated the crudities of mime and gesture, is it because of their faultless timing and unerring rhythm that we find the youthful quickies (otherwise so void of content) less tiresome than the old ones seriously doing their stuff? Or is it that we were grateful for the latter's early strivings but have moved on while they have not? Certain it is that the old ones "can't make it".

It would have been more pleasant to have excluded Chaplin from this for until The Circus he was always maleable, ever transient. Evolving. Like a famous brand of book-shelves "Always finished but never complete". It would be false to say The Circus was tiresome but it left a sort of heart-burn, a feeling that Parnassus was behind the little man, with Gold Rush glistening at the top.

A "Star" may have a powerful personality on the screen. That isn't enough. Or rather, it can be too much. It can
lead to a failure to completely orientate "self" in favour of "the part". I made a note at the time, that in *The Last Command* Jannings came through much stronger than Dolgrousksi. A bad example perhaps, because of interpreting, it seemed that in Dolgrousksi a part had been built round and fitted over Jannings, and the scenario built in a larger circle round them both. That was why *The Last Command* was unreal. But I added to that note that Jannings was there as much as Paul I in *The Patriot*. And now we learn that Brigitte Helm's secret is that she has been doing just that for a part which cinema, as much as theatre, demands. A complete orientation of one's own individuality. Not Gloria Swanson's registering of this, or Clara Bow's of that . . . but EdithJeheanne submerging EdithJeheanne and clothing herself in the clean sweetness of Jeanne Ney; Karine Evans displaying only the artless honesty and simple courage of Olga Wolgast in *Trial of Donald Westhof*. Louise Brooks is not chosen because she is Louise Brooks but because, for whatever reasons, she looks likely to find it easier than anyone else might, to sink into and become a visual expression of Lulu in *Pandora's Box*. Or so it appears to Pabst. And that's it . . . so far as Europe cares, Pabst seems to be the only director who is insisting or capable of insisting on this. So I'm saying here not only what has been said before—even if differently—but what has been done.

I did think I was going to have it all on the home ground when it came to the question of approach to construction. But I read March *Close Up* to find that H.D. had forestalled me. Only in a phrase though, happily enough. What she has done really is to sum up matters in a poetic generalisa-
tion, so we need not be jealous, one of the other. We shall come to that generalisation later.

Let our few, too few, directors of worth be encouraged to aspire to artistic perfection by all means. But let them be forewarned lest they reach erudition merely. It will help Shige Sudzuky considerably, no doubt, to compose his films with a musical sense but we must beg him not to let this become the apotheosis of his cinematic intentions. What shall it profit to transpose musical harmony into its most perfect representation in visual imagery, and that alone? Of what use will it be to translate through even the highest aesthetic formula evolved, literary masterpieces of the dead past, if results have no other value than to save it from burying its dead? We do not study the stones, the fossils, nor the cosmos for their own sake. Just so, art without an objective is purposeless; and without relation to the people, without touching their problems somewhere, even if only at a tangent, there is little or no objective and therefore little or no purpose. Construction—call it editing if you like—must orientate from the angle of the people viewing the problems with which they are faced. It must if it is to formulate, express and clarify their groping will and conflicting strengths. All the arts have been at their most vital when they have done this; when they have been full of an intimate sense and feeling of the people. Think of the best of Wagner, Lizst and Beethoven.

Or more simply, compare the negro spirituals or the Russian and Yiddish folk-songs with Kreisler’s music. They form an odd contradiction. The *spirituals* are, in reality, so full of blood and body. Blood that has been
drained and bodies that are racked and ache with pain. But Kreisler's art is that of the superb aesthete, beyond the intellect even. It ascends to heaven, becomes passionless, white and cold, its beauty as subliminal only in appeal as a vision of the silver city itself. Through his artistic perfection a Lizst composition, smelling of the earth, vibrating with the blood and sinew of the hungarian gypsy, becomes translated to another sphere. But has anyone heard Soermus the Russian, play? If you have you know the difference and will understand what I mean.

In theatre the last vital kick came from post-revolutionary Russia's Meyerhold, though there have been a few vigorous genuflections manifested in England and elsewhere in a few propaganda plays (plays of ideas as they are so respectably called). But all have derived what vitality they possess from the inherent attempt to formulate the groping will of the people towards their social, political and moral needs.

We can bring the matter nearer home.

There was Stroheim's Wedding March. Somebody will jump up and say "A Classic". I agree A Classic. But a classic victim of its own classicism. There was erudite cinema, impeccable technique, elaborate, grandiose and most eloquent symbolism. We watched, on Corpus Christi day, a conversation in pure cinema that said too much so sub-titles were put in to ensure misunderstanding, either to please the censor or to show that the princely Eric was not vulgar or suggestive or anything that he really was or was meant to be. Without the titles it showed that conversation in the cinema idiom is too charged with dalliance so that with them the whole had become torpid. Apart from that it was a brilliant essay
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in cinema but still so very tiresome. Why? It didn’t breathe of the people. It breathed only of the studio, the laboratory, the cutting room (with metronomes if you like) and of Eric. All that is so purposeless.

And this is where H.D’s. poetic generalisation that I promised you comes in. (Dear H.D. Pardon the theft). Writing of Dreyer’s Jeanne d’Arc it goes ‘I reserved far off, and unassailable, a sentiment that is never called forth and never inspired and never made to blossom by technical ability, by sheer perfection of medium, by originality and by intellectualism, no matter how dynamic . . . that sentiment is love simply.’

H.D. calls it love. It is the note of individual reaction. I merely want to expand the personal and postulate the mass. H.D. completes the generalisation later when she says ‘. . . there are times when art so far transcends itself that we are forced into another set of symbols.’

That happened to Berlin.

The approach to construction was made from an art standpoint purely. About its middle it got lost in the detours of musical rythms, hardly knew how to spend the afternoon till evening fell and happily changed the tempo. For the lack of a vital orientation the whole was held narrowly between a grand example of art for its own sake and a super-interest film when it might have been a superb symbol.

Because of its solely artistic approach the dependence of the city’s life upon the hands that toil and create was inherently forgotten as soon as the theme was under way. Its gravitational centre had, as it were, been shifted from LIFE not into visual imagery but through visual imagery into
musical rythms. Instead of forming (metaphorically) an enormous superimposition upon those hands which created and controlled them, the rythms of its circles and rectangles (wheels and vehicle bodies) formed the dominant note, missed the vital coherer that would have kept alive thematic unity and, though the film succeeded undoubtedly it succeeded only in orientating Life into another art dimension than itself.

In the same Close Up Jean Lenauer is, I think, hitting at this same erratic orientation.

He objects to l'Herbier's insistence in l'Argent upon the personal nature of the money feud between banker Saccard and banker Gundermann when it should have been representative of the general conflict inevitable to the presence and purpose of money itself. You see what it is. We are getting to know what we want, very definitely. And what we want is that the word shall go forth with fewer and fewer evasions. Less and less keeping the insinuating light of genius under a bushel. Naturally too, having seen a few, we want more Russian films (never mind the ardent young ladies of the wraps and reticules. It'll mean a tussle anyhow).

And now, though I flutter with apprehension, let us hope to have reached an orientation where no one shall come tumbling after me saying "Hi! you there, come off it . . . it's mine". That of the scenarist. Extreme caution is indicated here because I have to agree when they say the Russian films are biased. And they say—and I answer yes again—that where there is bias there is no absolute truth. But when they say "Art is truth" I just get stumped. It might be nice to have Brer Rabbit's temperament then. But how is that possible when, since Adam, there has been bias all the time and art
most of the time? . . . And atop of that, art has from time to
time and with the times changed its plea?

It has pleaded for Kings against the Church, and for the
Church against the Kings. It has pleaded for both against
the rabble, and for the populace against both. It has pleaded
for modern freedom to sell one’s self in place of the Feudal
custom of being sold. It has eulogised War then pleaded
for Peace; and each time, as art, it has claimed its justification
in truth. But each time it seems to have succeeded, or failed,
not as truth, but accordingly as the changes in Man’s
material affairs have made its plea acceptable or the reverse.
Sufficient unto the day is the truth thereof. And here the new
artist, the scenarist or the scenarist-director takes his stand.

Like a highly developed, nakedly sensitive amoeba he shall
float through experience evincing for the nonce no personal
reactions to it lest the inflow of its precious nourishment be
impeded, if only for a moment. He shall remain quiesantly
assimilative only, until the periods of receptivity pass and
creativeness begins. Only thus can maximum objectivity and
minimum personal bias be attained. At a creative moment
the artist will have a comprehensive static view of life pre-
senting itself to him (to him alone, his experience, in detail,
differs from all other) in a vision of truth. Will he be
without bias? How can he be when only a moment ago he
left a mould shaped from personal experience, while life,
flux and change have already moved on?

I leave that to you now brother.

Hay Chowl.
A MEMOIR

Somebody in Russia made a film about a cruiser. Great deal of fuss about it too. After all it's not because the producer has one of these perfectly impossible names (I always will hold that they are a distinct badge of inferiority, I mean these foreigners you know . . . ) that the public like the stuff. Why not get Jones on the job? No, he will be busy with Love in a Bathroom. Smith could do it, he could give us the great epic of the British navy. Great name, Smith, you can get your teeth into it. Damn, who wants to get their teeth into a name anyway? This writing stuff, soft I call it. The point is, what can possibly be the pride of England if it is not the navy? I mean even the highbrows put the sailors into ballets and things.

Old Jim could write the story. He may not know much about the sea but he does know the public. Rant about realism till you burst; my thirty-three—and next month add a half on to it—years as a showman have taught me that realism is little use to the regular patron. The idea is absurd on the face of it. Who wants to get seasick in a cinema? Let old uncle Jim do the scenario and keep things in the family.
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Now I knew that Jim would make a decent bit of work, the other fellows are fools. Young assistant director yelling that the big scene, the KICK of the picture, is a farce; yet I am damned if I can see anything farcical in a gallant hero boldly seizing a shell, an unexploded one of course, and hurling it over the side. The public have got sense enough to know that it may go off at any moment while the hero has it in his hands. I ask you, were would he be then? Don’t YOU think it noble of him? I call it a first-rate situation, and it shows that there are brains in our family, if I may say so.

Jack, saving the ship, winning the sweet little girl, to say nothing of the kids in the final fade-out. Swell, I guess! Not a bit of it, this brat tries to teach his betters. Thinks because he’s been to school at Cambridge he knows all about heart appeal. “Oh,” he says, “don’t you guys know that a shell which had been fired in that manner would be white hot?”

You and I may know that sort of thing, but I bet the public worries. Frankly I was discouraged but Jim is one of the lads. Inspiration comes as easily to him as other things do to you or I. If you don’t care for that snappy bit, he tells them, let’s have a fire! A fire at sea is the goods all right, the assistant director with the careful speech couldn’t hold anything against that. There was a good deal of wangling to be done with the board of directors, as you can’t stage a fire for nothing. To hell with the expense, Jimmy’s very words in the evening papers, isn’t it to be a memorial to our great and glorious navy?

If being a showman teaches you only one thing, that one is tact. So I let Smith more or less pick his own artistes.
Bobby was under contract, so he had to go in although I must confess that he is not everyone’s idea of what a British officer should look like. Smith insisted on Laura, and I gave way. After all she WENT with Bobby if you understand me. If she had been the right sort of girl for the part she would have matched up with what Bobby ought to have looked like but didn’t. It sounds a little complicated, nevertheless, you know what I am driving at.

Smith wanted a trip down to the coast so I let him have it with a condition; that he finished the picture in three weeks. This was rather cute because Smith wanted the trip and I had planned in my mind that the feature would take six weeks. There were pretty enough spots down there for location too, so I got Jim to have another peep at the script and set a little more of it in the open air. Economy counts. Indeed one might imagine that the ghastly assistant—what Smith chose him for beats me—had never heard this golden rule.

Each day he has to send a report of production back to me. The art director had accomplished real wonders with an old tub that I managed to hire reasonably cheaply. Admiralty co-operation is one thing and having a fire on an admiral boat is another. A few plaster guns and things give the right look; while the admiralty did lend a few boats to hang about in the distance and make effective compositions. Besides you have no idea what one can do with scraps of topicals. Well, this blessed assistant writes back to complain because you can pick fragments of rusted plating off the side, he calls it not sea-worthy. I call it lack of tact. Fancy pointing out things like that! Naturally he made
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Laura nervous and she nearly had a fit when the steering gear broke. What do they expect? Do they want me to hire a liner for them? They can want.

And they still do! This time they want ballast. The old steamer had been abandoned for several years and it would have been twice the expense to have it filled with ballast again. It appears however that the last time they set out in it they were blown back to port by the wind.

I have written to them and told them to get on with it and not make fools of themselves. In the trade paper I was horrified to see a publicity still of Smith being hauled on board by a series of pullies. He can't help being fat; he should, though, control his appetite for publicity. It is a good thing that the public are hardened to expect all they get in the shape of photographs from directors.

I have just viewed with Harvey, the critic of The Sun, Smith's rushes of the fire. Jim knew what he was doing when he put that sequence in. No doubt Harvey believes that he knows what he is doing when he says that we ought to take it out. Asked me why I did not go to the fabulous expense of burning the boat good and proper. His pretext is that he has seen it done in American movies. I explained to him, as patiently as I could, that American flicks are sure of a world-wide distribution and therefore could afford to spend. He retorted that it was just the other way round; then he is one of the kind that rave about the Russian films because they are not British.

For my part I take off my hat to Smith. Mind you I had given him careful instructions which may have cramped his style but resulted in no damage. No extras to pay. I shall
engage Smith for the next quickie. I do admit that the fire does look a wee bit organised, the flames are too orderly and even. Smith had to arrange that torches were placed in bins out of sight behind the bulwark, and the idiot who was supposed to carry out his orders spaced them neatly. It passes, and a second take would be wilful extravagance; for do you believe that the public will worry? Remember that I have been a showman for thirty-three years.

How proud I am that I can cap my career by giving the English public this super film which is representative of the best aspect of our magnificent navy. That will go to the four corners of the earth telling the fame of my native country, and my own name will be written on it . . . If I die at this moment, surely I will have accomplished something? Harvey would have me make a common shocker of it. Never, austere and beautiful, it will be a fitting advertisement for England and me . . . .

I insist on an apology to the reader for the above fantasy. Events are authentic. Disguises in the shape of grouping incidents from one or two features made by different companies. The style of narration is an attempt to give the reader an insight into the BRAINS behind the thrones.

O.B.
Almost Persuaded.

Never having experienced a Talkie, having sustained—in merely imagining a film breaking into speech, wrecking its medium, its perfection of direct communication—a shock comparable to that we should receive if our favourite Botticelli began throwing stones, we spent, far from films, a winter whose severity was the bitterer for our woeful apprehensions.

Every reading of a daily brought bad moments: cowardly avoidance of suspicious columns, alternating with shuddering sallies in search of facts.

March arrived heralding spring and with it the news that Mr. Wells had at last come forward not only to hail the film as the art-form of the future, but also to name this child with his happy aptitude for epithet.

In remarking that it is only at long last that Mr. Wells comes forward we do not attempt to suggest the impossible: Wellsian dilatoriness. Wells was amongst the first film-fans, Chaplin-fans. One of the first to see some of the possibilities and it would hardly be fair to label his predictions, though
coming at a time when so many possibilities are already realised, prophecies after the event.

Our delight of course was born of the name chosen by Mr. Wells for the art of cinematography: Music-drama. And so great is our faith in Wells' perceptiveness, in regard to anything he may scrutinise leisurely and at first hand, that we immediately cried, "Ah-ha. What price Talkies now?" and hugged more closely than ever our prejudice in favour of musical accompaniment, whether "Home, Sweet Home" on a cottage piano or cunningly adapted orchestral effects. For, if music be there, the screen must be more or less silent. Unless indeed the stars break into song . . . Wagnerian films . . . Film imitating opera side by side with film imitating theatre. These for the vulgar, pot-luck-taking continuous performance public of which we are a member, and beyond them FILMS, developing and developing and developing?

In the March issue of Close Up, we again met Mr. Wells, this time quoted as telling us with what extraordinary reluctance, if at all, we had been brought to admit the film's power of excelling the written word. Here it would seem that in deciding formally to sponsor the film—and good, for the prospects of the English film proper, was the day upon which he decided so to do—he deems it best to tell the world more than it can actually believe in the interest of making it believe that it believes something. For it is hardly possible to suppose that Wells sees in the arrival of the film the departure of literature.

Certain kinds of writing, the directly tendentious, the propagandist and much of the educational it may in the end
supplant to the extent of compelling the theorist, the reformer and the teacher to produce their wares in a form suitable for translation into film. Meanwhile the film to date has created more readers than it has destroyed, if indeed it has destroyed any, and is more likely, as it progresses, to achieve for all the arts renaissance rather than death. In literature alone it is creating a new form. For just as the stage play created a public for the written play and many are the unplayable plays that are eminently readable and quite numerous those who in any case would rather read a play than see it acted—so will the practice of film-seeing create a public for the film literature of which, if we except the miniature scenarios from time to time appearing in periodicals, Mr. Wells' own book is characteristically enough, the first example.

But our delight in the hailing of the film as the art-form of the future, not this time by the bold editors of *Close Up* who so hailed it two years ago when they were voices crying in the wilderness of a filmless England, but by a prophet whose least word is broadcast over the planet—in so far as it was founded upon the development of the generous pronunciamento into specification of a form for that art that appeared to exclude Talkies—was short-lived. A moment's reflection told us that even Mr. Wells cannot stampede humanity by suggestion. The multitudes agog for novelty at any price will demand Talkies because they are new.

So we returned to the scanning of *Close Up*, and in a moment we were devoutly attentive. Here was Mr. Herring breathlessly falling over himself in exposition of Pudovkin's idea of the use of sound on the film. And when Mr. Herring grows breathless it is time to hold one's breath and listen hard
to what he has to say. We listen for several pages to his eager voice vividly interpreting, and return to a world that will never be quite the same again. (It never is, of course, from one moment to another.) For we have heard the crashing of a barrier against which modern art has flung itself in vain. The barrier Antheil drilled holes in when he “composed” mechanisms, (Did not one of his works require sixteen pianos and a screen?) and Dos Passos splintered when he described a group of straight-faced elderly relatives arrived in mourning garb at a house of death for funeral and reading of Will, gravely jazzing through the hall, and other American writers have severely shaken by their unashamed metaphoricality, and all those novelists have fist-punched who in pursuit of their particular aims produced texts retrospectively labelled cinematographic.

Is not Wells’ dirge then justified? (Did not he too, time and again, cry out within his text upon the limitations of the printed page?) Has not literature, for so long prophesying unawares the fully developed film, had its day?

No. The film is a social art, a show, something for collective seeing, and even in the day that finds us all owning projectors and rolls of film from the local circulating filmery it still will be so, a small ceremonial prepared for a group, all of whom must adjust their sensibilities at a given moment and at the film’s pace. Reading, all but reading aloud, is a solitary art—is this why it has been called the unpunished vice, and ought we to scrap these pages and swear only that we hope Wells may be right about the alleged competitor?—and the film can no more replace it than the Mass can replace private devotions. What film, to take a simple,
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current example, could supplant *Im Westen Nichts Neues* (recently translated, *All Quiet on the Western Front*) whose poetry both forces and enables the years of day-to-day unforgettable experience lived through in six or seven hours of reading. A stereoscopic film, complete with sound imagery might enormously enhance and deepen typical episodes and, by generalising the application of the whole, shock whatever onlooker—for a moment—into horrified recognition. But for that onlooker there would not be the intimate sense of having shared an irrevocable personal experience that is the gift of Remarque’s quiet book.

The film is skyey apparition, white searchlight, The book remains the intimate, domestic friend, the golden lamp at the elbow.

"Think," pursues Mr. Herring, "of sound-imagery in Pudovkin’s terms, and thank yourself you are alive." We do, thank you, Mr. Herring. We think, wishing the while that the whole of your exposé could be broadcast daily for weeks, printed and circulated with every Talkie programme, of angry man and lion’s roar preceding, of fire-engine bells announcing devastating lady and all the subtleties made possible by the composing of sound, the direction of sound-imagery, director using sound like a musical score. Unifying sound and spectacle.

So we could mark time more than happily through Herr Meisel’s certainties as to the marriage he is arranging between film and music and give full rein to our glee over his inclusion of the tinkling cottage piano which once we heard do some excellent sound-imagery in single notes for a Chaplin grotesque.
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The sound-film then, and music drama, and, moreover, the stereoscopically three-dimensional . . . .

For these we are almost persuaded we would abandon our silent screen. In spite of the risks. For the risks, like the difficulties and the triumphs, will be enormous. Between success unprecedented and failure more disastrous than the failure of the worst soundless film there will be less than a hairsbreadth.

Yet we hesitate. Even while hailing expression not only free from certain of the cramping difficulties of dramatic and literary art, but able to convert these difficulties into so many glorious opportunities. Hallelujah. Amen.

Why do we hesitate? Is it that the interference between seer and seen is to be too complete? The expressionism, the information, the informatory hint altogether too much of it? The onlooker too overwhelmingly conducted? It is said that the audiences of Russian films have to be held down in their seats. Excitement, collective. This is of the theatre. Would a single soul seeing his film in silence and alone have so to be held down? Here, in living sample is all the answer we need to any question as to the future of literature and, some would say, denying that wild eye and torn hair are ever the signs of the presence of great art, a question set to the film. But such perhaps forget that so far in the world’s history the birth of an art has not been a public affair, though the inhabitants of Cimabue’s native town beholding the first painted picture, did carry him in triumph through the streets.

If, beside the film grown solid and sounding the silent magic lantern show persists as we are told it will . . . . But will it, for example pay? Is it not already old-fashioned?
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We are reminded of a lady who remarked on hearing that Paderewski had played "The Bee's Wedding", "That old thing? Why Winnie could play that when she was eight!" Alas, alas, alas.

DOROTHY M. RICHARDSON.

THE COMING HERITAGE OF THE FILMS

(A vivid and trenchant attack upon Hollywood, its methods and mentality, by the editor of the short-lived and excellent Film Meteor. As we have continually pointed out, we do not necessarily have to agree, any more than we have to disagree, with what Mr. Kron, or, for that matter, with what any of our contributors may have to say. That the ensuing essay is the forthright and unhoneyed indictment of one of the most intelligent of contemporary critics is sufficient to warrant its appearance in these pages, the purpose of which is to express the views of all progressive thinkers, irrespective of their concurrence with editorial opinion. A conviction so dynamic must have foundation in truth. The confliction of its adjustment to personal concept will be the battleground which will seek to establish this truth on various planes.—Ed.)

We must not exaggerate this world; "even if one is tied fast to its earthly foundations by the subtle and tyrannical bonds of artistic conviction" (from page 127, Last Essays of Joseph Conrad on John Galsworthy.) In observing Galsworthy's characters, the Forsytes, Joseph Conrad says, "Life as a whole has come to be perceptible to them
exclusively in terms of property. Preservation, acquisition—acquisition, preservation. Their laws, their morality, their art, and their science appear to them, justifiably enough, consecrated to that double and unique end. It is the formula for their virtue.’’

Of Conrad’s words, the first can well be memorized with profit by any artist. The latter is a wide human truth easily covering the globe. Not only is it adaptable to the religion of property. It covers any fixed conviction harbored by the various stagnant fixed instinctive beliefs of the advanced mammal races.

Art and Science have had to kow-tow to the unionized hordes of victorious sects, and they run from the Babbitism of America to the Russian proletarian.

With this introduction, I will proceed to marshal my Anarchism on the film industry.

I.

As an active movie critic, often mysteriously moved by an inward urge to attack ignorance and hypocrisy as we of the world see it in celluloid—and by attack I mean a barrage, the wilful employment of invective, salty phrases, the saltier the better—my contributions to Close Up are expected to contain vigor and virility.

I hope to carry on in that fashion when an imposing target presents itself. So here goes—but with a full consciousness of literary standards as we of a supposedly civilized world know them.

Hollywood is at this moment a seething factory, making miles of transparent rubber and phonograph discs. For the
amusement of English speaking peoples, this hive is controlled by a group of gamblers as gaudy and as tasteless as any side-show barker.

This philosophy of living, the height of human progress, the values of life are visible, inanimate minerals—a two-carat diamond, a Rolls-Royce car, and a villa on a hill. The over-comfortable life concerns them primarily.

To enumerate these facts is a tedious business, for hypocrisy in these matters might be found in the condemner.

The human on two feet is awed by a prancing stallion, the largest railroad engine, and the moon. Yet with all that, these are the sole interests of the makers of celluloid drama in Hollywood to date.

The absence of taste, conscience, courage, and character is found in every bit of celluloid coming from these factories. They have attempted and have brought good talents in the way of directors. Yet the directors, after receiving a very good salary quickly fall into the modes of life and thought to agree with the physical philosophy of the producers. If one sees the work of Murnau as it comes out of a Hollywood foundry, the taint is visible to the most abject of critics. This cannot be the man who directed *The Last Laugh*. I have seen his monstrous floundering in *Sunrise*. It is not necessary for me to see *Four Devils*.

Lubitsch is no fiery individual demanding releases of fine expression. He is coralled, and a dull steel ring hangs on his nose. These fellows are well-housed and fed regularly. Their output, while full of puerilities, is consumed with relish by the savages of the earth. They must be dismissed as traitors, and may God have mercy on them!
II.

The most amusing event in Hollywood is première night, the opening of a new release. When the sun has settled over the sage-covered hills of Hollywood on this night, the participants scurry around to prepare themselves to astound the herd. Sophisticated actors, actresses, producers, and directors roll up to the theatres. With them are wives, relatives, and friends. They swagger in before powerful lights and grinding cameras. The bodies are clothed with London tuxedos, silk hats, pearls, Spanish shawls, and dresses, and dresses of gaudy colored silks.

Policemen guard the lane of gawking faces. The row of countenances flash brown, the eyes peer, the mouths reflect emotions, the emotions of the bottoms of wash pans.

Here a star bows, in comes a smiling producer standing before a grinding camera; inside, on this vast occasion, the makers of flashing rubber call each other by their first names.

"Hello, Bob! How are you, Jim?"

In a daze, Christ and Satan sit to listen. They hear the buzzing of expectancy. A great event is to be enfolded on the screen. Finally the title is flashed—Broadway Melody. This is the thing that shall go down in the corridors of cinema history. For this have men corseted themselves and women caked their faces and burned their hair.

To ponder with irony on this, to voice a protestant gurgle against it seems futile while man's life on this planet is so short. One cannot love these people or respect them. Mars slaughters hordes of them in war. Then, why should we condone war? One Guy De Maupassant is worth a billion of them, boxed and crated in their man power. They irk
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because God has chosen to make them equal physically to first rate men.

While one might refuse to commune with an ape, one cannot refuse to commune with those of the same blood stream. Some carry the physical contours of passionate flesh and the richness of health. Their very numbers drown mortal supermen.

III.

To expect higher aspirations from the movies, to look for something even half-way to the higher heights of genius, particularly in America, is certainly not promising.

Only mounte-banks and frauds are winning the apples. High grade, genuine men, unless they are a Cellini or a Count Cagliostro, could not smash the barrier of fawns and mediocrities in it to-day. They will now write their talkies, only travel the well-cut path of third-rate stage plays.

The tendency of all classes in America to-day is toward regimentation. The soul of America for want of a better word is middle class, or bourgeois. To arrive at this sterile status of meek security is the aim of the masses. Many are arriving at it; with it they imagine they have discovered the Absolute.

It is a point of conservatism, deadly and boring. With it comes hypocritical tastes, intolerance, and intellectual vigor bled white. The less emotional Nordics are the welcomed immigrants. They regiment better.

These are the people American film makers must please. The old world can easily laugh at America’s drama. Yet, if what we read is true, Europe enjoys some of them.

The masses are masses everywhere. De Maupassant riles
and spears them, Anatole France smiles about them knowingly. Moliere and Honore Balzac harpoon them with relish. The French have always had them.

America, a gigantic fusion of all the nations of Europe, Africa, and Asia, has the same mass easily stampeded and lacking in discrimination.

The real ill in the world to-day is the absence of cosmopolitan ideals of aristocracy; not the inferior blooded aristocracy of the Bourbons but the aristocratic, universal ideals of the intellects.

The world should have genuineness in all phases of life including the movies. Until this time arrives, slaughter, rapine, and selfish striving will be the heritage of man.

The British and the French are very touchy about their nationalism. If a fine picture is French, or British, instantly national consciousness comes into play.

What does it matter who makes the picture? Worth should be measured by the thing itself.

Nature, art, and life are not measured by these superficial boundaries, and no artist takes his blood and his government thoroughly to heart. If he fights for it, he does so in the same manner as he would set traps for rats that infested his home.

The breed of men making American motion pictures are business men. If they have ideals of a sort while making them, hide-bound conservatism is one. The high cost of talking apparatus makes individual effort prohibitive to inspired craftsmen. If any Shakespeares or Ibsens are found they will be dialogue writers. And if they happen to be so divinely endowed, the stage will claim them instantly.
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IV.

The real degrading influences of the movies can be found in the stuff written by the newspaper scribes; the women are the worst offenders. Their ideas of drama and personalities are cheapening and dense. I will draw an example as written by Louella Parsons of the Hearst papers: “His work as Lord Nelson in “The Divine Lady” proved what a really fine artist he is. With an arm missing and blind in one eye, he still managed to have sex appeal.”

The civilized person can only smile at such masterpieces of rot. Female critics are moved by their libido, not the brain. This is a good case of neurosis.

The average critic on American newspapers is not a critic at all. The actual title is Chatterer. His understanding of the art and literature of the world is null and void. He is moved by presents, publicity, and petty movie politics. Show me a real movie critic on any American newspaper, and I’ll show you a green jackass.

The puppets and directors pay out yearly sums of money running into thousands for puffs of publicity masquerading as modesty. Every newspaper dramatic editor in America is flooded daily with reams of it. He is besmirched with this dross stuff. He becomes saturated with falsity and error. He cannot find his way to a real judgment of values. A newspaper estimation of a picture is less than worthless.

I’ve worked in a newspaper office, specializing in screen fare. The junk came in at all hours by mail and messenger. Often players would call personally for boosts and write-ups. Merit has to have a band wagon, and advertising can make a sap into a personality of engaging significance.
Critics are moved not by the understanding of shades in acting but by sex appeal. Civilization has taught these simpletons the use of words and how to make sentences, but it has not given them much else.

V.


*The Letter* starring Jeanne Eagels is the best of the lot because of the superior acting talents of Miss Eagels. The directors of these photographed plays do not deserve any particular honors, as they have created nothing. Directing talkies is not a creative business. Little attention is paid to atmospheric touches on the talkies, and the examples seen to-day promise some things, as yet never quite arrived at. Plainly the world can only wait.

*Walter Kron.*
CABBAGE AND KINGS

"The time has come," the Walrus said,
"To talk of many things—"

The stage and the screen have come to grips. And the stage, calling in vain upon its sacred tutelaries, finds itself helpless. The last stronghold of the aristocracy of art has fallen to demos. Already music, painting, literature, architecture have been dragged from their traditional sanctuaries of exclusiveness to become vulgar property. And now the drama. Grown a bit shabby and undignified, to be sure, but none the less still ranking among the elect, it has been stripped of its ancient rights and position and reduced to the ranks of democracy.

The cinema, the arch democrat, has defied it and overborne it and replaced its mantle with a common jacket. Henceforth Shakespeare, Wagner, Ibsen, Goethe will be dished up indiscriminately with Al Jolson, Irving Berlin and Sophie Tucker, and served to the multitude for the price of a good cigar.

Democracy is in the saddle. Cabbages and kings are on a level.

It is no longer possible in America to discuss the cinema in
terms of yesterday. The movies have ceased to exist, except as fossils. We are in a new age, a new order of cinematic existence. The film has ceased to be a thing in itself. Its office now is but to serve as the skeletal framework of a new creation. The talking picture is distinctly different from its ancestral movie—different in character, in expression, in purpose.

The scope of the cinema is now all-embracing. Would we discuss it adequately we must indeed talk of many things—"Of shoes, and ships, and sealingwax; of cabbages and kings," to say nothing of microphones and dialog, of color and music, of third dimension and acoustics, of dramaturgy and grand opera.

Hollywood has turned to the manufacture of art. All of its leading studios—Fox, Paramount, RKO, Warner, M-G-M, United Artists, Pathé, Universal, First National—have definitely abandoned the making of movies. And only yesterday we were assured that the talkies would never replace the silent film. Even Joseph Schenck has capitulated. As head of United Artists he has declared his allegiance to the new regime. To him, in company with all other Hollywoodians, the movie has become a back number.

Only Charlie Chaplin, the St. Simeon Stylites of moviedom, remains loyal to the historic and battered banner of the primitive. From his pillar of isolation he swears he will never make a talkie. A seemingly courageous determination. But Charlie never has talked, even on the stage. He has made his money and his fame as a pantomimist.

Nor is it alone the Hollywood producers who recognize the advent of the new era. William Hammerstein,
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Winthrop Ames, Charles Dillingham, and other outstanding American impresarios and theatrical producers are preparing to abandon the stage for the screen. A coterie of such leading men, who a few months ago were tilting their noses at the film, have recently organized a ten-million company to produce phonofilm opera and drama.

Many of the big New York theatres have discontinued stage productions and substituted celluloid plays. And theatres all over the country are following suit.

The revolution has been as sudden as a Mexican rebellion. But far more spectacular and successful, and immeasurably more significant.

There is no gainsaying the victory of the talkies, and no avoiding it. Out of the confusion and bewilderment resulting from this over-night overturn—this vitaphone coup d'état—the clearer heads are already hailing it as a boon and envisioning an enlarged future replete with signs of a greater and freer dramatic art.

Speaking both as a dramatist and as a picture director of long experience, William de Mille does not hesitate to say—expressing himself through the pages of Scribner's magazine—that, "if the talkie realizes its possibilities, it may well become the greatest of all popular arts; it will carry the full benefit of the spoken drama to millions who otherwise would never see a good play; it will make a real national theatre possible; it will foster the growth of dramatic taste in the general public and help them grow to an appreciation of the spoken word as quickly as they have learned to appreciate the finer values in the silent picture during the past ten years."
Even some of the critics, for all of their congenital cynicism, are acknowledging the potentialities of the celluloid drama. As typical of their utterances, Robert Sherwood confesses in a recent contribution to the *American Mercury*, "that the talkies have come as a veritable blessing. They are exercising a profound salutary influence upon the movie industry, and the revolution which they have caused will be known in time as a memorable Renaissance. They have shaken the insecure and essentially phoney foundations of Hollywood, and beneath the resultant wreckage lies much of the fat-headed incompetence and stupid conceit that has dominated the movie during the protracted period of its infancy."

As I have myself pointed out in a former article, one of the beneficent effects of the talkie will be the eliminating of the incompetent and the uneducated from the ranks of those now controlling the making of films. The novelty of a moving picture has long since vanished, and with it have gone many of the pioneer picture makers who rode to financial success on the first wave of popular interest and enthusiasm in this new form of entertainment. No brains were required in those days. Merely smartness, initiative, and the gift of showmanship.

A number of producers and directors, possessed only of these qualities, held on during the ensuing years, because of their control of the market or because of their "pull" with the moneybags at the head of the industry; and some of them—entirely too many—are still with us. But their days are unquestionably numbered. At any rate, they are destined to slip into the background and give place to those who are
At work on *The General Line* again. Filming a scene of a religious procession, with a travelling wind machine.
From the new Emelka film, *Prisoners of the Bernina*. Ilse Stobrava and Peter Voss.

From *Pori*, the successful Ufa travelogue.
Filming *Nuits de Princes*, Marcel l'Herbier's production for Sequana Films. Above, rails laid for a travelling shot. Below, part of the travelling shot as it will appear.
V. Pudovkin likes to be photographed as an actor. Here he is playing a small part in the shop scenes of *New Babylon*.

*New Babylon*, directed by Konsintzoff and Trauberg (photographed by Moskvin). Production: Sovkino. This is Ludmila Semenova, who played the principal part in *Bed and Sofa*.
From a Soviet news reel. Children demonstrating against alcoholism.

*Pamir*. The joint expedition of the Academy of Science of the USSR and the Notgemeinschaft of German science, to the unexplored territory at the boundaries of China and Afghanistan. See The Footstool of Death in this issue. *Pamir* will be released in Germany by Prometheus.
From Überfall (Accident), the censored film of Erno Metzner, of which there were full particulars last month.
The Last Attraction, directed by Olga Preobrashenskaya and Pravof, which they have just finished mounting. This film will be released in Germany by Derussa.
From *I Do Love to be Beside the Seaside*, a new POOL Satire by Oswell Blakeston, with music by Meisel. Editions Pierre Braunberger.
CLOSE UP

fitted to assume leadership in the new art of cinema-dramaturgy.

That such leaders of the stage as Ames, Reinhardt, Dillingham, Brady, and the Shuberts, and such playwrights as Somerset Maugham, Owen Davis and Eugene O'Neill, are turning to the vocal film as a medium of expression, is already sufficient evidence of the changing order. From a plaything the film is evolving into a serious institution, a vehicle of inspiration and education. From a mere money-making enterprise it is taking on the dignity of an art.

Moreover, because of the limitless possibilities inherent in the audible picture, with its imminent accompaniment of color and stereoscopic relief, much new genius will be developed. Many individual gifts and talents, now dormant or denied a propitious milieu for their expression, will be stimulated and brought into full play.

Already within its brief existence the talkie has inspired numberless technical inventions and improvements. Not a week passes without the contribution of some added device for the perfecting of vocal photography. The developments of this character since the appearance of the first vitaphone productions are nothing short of marvellous. Each succeeding talking picture marks an advancement, a betterment of the mechanism. And once the creak is eliminated from the machinery, its various cogs smoothly meshed, and its many intricate parts perfectly co-ordinated, skill and energy can be focussed undistractedly upon the development of art.

In the meantime we are passing through a phase of experimentation, of flounder and ineptitude. In the flush of our initial excitement over the novelty of the phonofilm the
impulse has been to make moving pictures of stage plays. Our first efforts have amounted to little more than transferring the stage to the screen, and the job has been none too gracefully accomplished. We have thoughtlessly hampered ourselves with the limitations and the conventions of the theatre.

And this in face of the fact, that it is the very possibility of freedom from these traditional restrictions that makes the phonofilms so truly attractive and worth while. We are overlooking for the moment its paramount virtue. It is essentially a liberator of art. It stands ready to free us of the shackles of the stage as well as of the movie. It offers us an opportunity such as the world has never known for the expansion and flowering of dramatic art; for the portrayal of thought and emotion and vital problems with an effectiveness and a realism heretofore impossible through any other means.

Unfortunately we are all too prone to confuse the medium with the art itself. The very limitations of the stage, for example, are accepted as an inherent particularly of the sacred art and tradition of the drama. No doubt, to a certain extent this is justified. It has unquestionably required ingenuity to circumvent the hampering restrictions of the stage, in order to present plays with any degree of verisimilitude to life and reality. And this ingenuity, with its resultant tricks of technique and craftsmanship, has not unnaturally come to be regarded as one of the elements of dramaturgy and without which drama itself could not exist.

And the same holds true in the case of the movie, the silent picture. The hindrances imposed by its muteness have created devices of camera craft and pictorial composition, as well as
of pantomimic acting, which have come to be accepted as essential parts of the photodrama. But the confusion lies in assuming that they are necessary elements of photographic drama *per se*. They are a species of art, to be sure, but only incidental art made necessary by the lack of speech; by a basic limitation of the medium.

Once these inherent imitations of the stage and the silent screen are abolished, the need for such incidental art and ingenuities disappears. But controlled as we are by associations of ideas, both the cinema devotee and the theatre traditionalist are finding it difficult to adopt the new medium now at hand without dragging over to it the old make-shifts and devices of the stage and the screen. And the conservative critic contributes his part to delaying the march of events by bewailing an innovation that threatens the conventions attached to the old order, notwithstanding they were built upon the exigencies of restriction and deficiency.

However, the ball has been set rolling and nothing can now stop it. And it is rolling so rapidly, that only the most nimble can keep pace with its progress. Each day brings some fresh surprise, some additional revelation, some new turn of affairs. But all in the direction of assurance and achievement and the complete democratizing of the drama—the spoken drama, produced with unprecedented lavishness and skill and effect, not alone for the entertainment of some imperial potentate, but for the enjoyment also of the village bootblack and Uncle Silas.

**Clifford Howard.**
FILMS IN THE PROVINCES

If you are young and live in a Manufacturing Town, where Art in any form is considered slightly immoral, you find it quite a difficult thing to be allowed to take the Cinema seriously.

Parents tell you that it is bad to go so often to the Pictures when you have been working in an Office all day. Your associates are even inclined to despise you a little—"She's absolutely film-struck, you know". I suppose it really would be more healthy to fill in most evenings with sport and exercise, but its an awful bore if keenness is lacking. So eventually you get into the habit of going off alone to different Picture Theatres each evening, and picking up what good you may from the films. Severely criticising the bad in them, and thinking how you could have done some of the directing a great deal better, you feel sure; and wondering why they didn't choose so-and-so for a certain character, because he has just the right appearance and manner for the part. In fact you become your own film-critic, and learn to take no heed of the weekly reports in the local papers, as they are obviously written by men who are afraid to speak the truth, or else don't know how to. Also, you become quite an expert at guessing that the programme filler which is backing up some big film is going to be quite a find in the way of a
CLOSE UP

foreign film; and sometimes discover that you can see something really good and German at some little off-the-map and unadvertised Cinema, if you are brave enough to go alone into the particular slum which it favours.

People here don’t seem to understand that Films can be any more than an amusement for them after a day’s work. They begin to look quite uncomfortable if you suggest that apart from being vehicles for good acting, they can also bring beauty of form and light before their audiences. Young men and young girls go to the pictures to while away an evening, hold hands in the dark and have a laugh now and again. Women who spend their days doing housework like to go and see a good love story, and pass their opinion on the Heroine’s behaviour in certain circumstances. Presumably they can frequently imagine themselves in her place. Spinsters from twenty to that indefinite age confess that they like to see a sad film. “A good cry makes me feel much better” kind of thing. Elderly men go in hordes, unaccompanied by wives or families—amusing and pathetic. Younger men past the love-making stage, scorn the Cinema altogether for the most part, and prefer to stay home with a detective story. All this I know to be quite true in our Town, but of course, I can’t answer for other places, they may be more advanced.

Anyway, on the whole people here seem quite satisfied with what is shown to them in the way of average British and American films, and any attempt to introduce less stereotyped foreign films or “scenery” or “experiment” films, does not meet with success. I know several people who considered Metropolis was revolting and The Spy incomprehensible.
CLOSE UP

They took the children to see Chang and then said it was quite unsuitable for children—kept them awake at night.

In the face of this it is pretty difficult to keep any ideals you may have formed about the Cinema as an art; but I have found quite a good way of retaining mine. That is, by putting myself in the place of a discerning producer wherever I am. My mind’s eye is a mental camera lens and it is developing a wonderful faculty for picking out beauty in unsuspected places. All the actors chosen by this director are ordinary men and women, who as far as he knows, have never before appeared on any screen. He prefers his players to be men of the working class because he considers that their faces often show more character than those of their social betters. He has a flair for getting unusual lighting effects and he collects the material for most thrilling plots from real life. Some of his crowd scenes have been really remarkable—notably a street accident on a rainy day, where a morbidly curious crowd was dispersed with almost humorous speed by a fire-engine dashing through the narrow street. He is very fond of taking odd scenes down at the Docks, where he gets splendid effects with reflections in the sluggish water, foreign types coming off the cargo ships and silhouettes of cranes and steamers against the sky-line. The characters in some of his films have included factory girls, seedy-looking clerks, urchins playing in the gutter, office-cleaners, navvies and dray-horses. Although you will never see his films exhibited at your local cinema, he is very fond of giving himself a private show of them at odd moments when he has nothing else to do.

Well, that is my way of developing the part of me which
appreciates the artistic side of the Cinema, and I find it very satisfying to utilise a rather excessive imagination. Until I can go abroad and see the productions of the Great Masters of the Camera it is a consolation to be seeing everyday scenes in the light that they should be visualised on English Screens, but rarely are. Of course, it is quite easy to foresee the danger that lies in making a habit of this kind if you are not the possessor of a strong mind and have not the real spirit of adoration for films. For instance, any one with an obsession for a certain filmstar could make a really ludicrous exhibition of themselves by pretending to be the perpetual hero or heroine of some sticky romance in which their idol featured. But then, that type would not be likely to be reading Close Up. To them, however, it would be necessary to point the moral contained in Merton of the Movies.

Another source of interest lies in the plots and styles of the films. They may be as realistic as a Russian’s, or as psychological as any German’s. There need be no study of the conventions and the box-office hasn’t to be considered. It is so refreshing to be able to see the film growing day by day as you pass a certain spot on your way to the Office, and see a poor down-trodden, moustached little clerk sorting the mail in a huge wholesale warehouse, and know that after a few more mental vicissitudes he’s going to slay his employer in a most ingenious manner with the date stamp he’s been punching the mail with for the last twenty years. Of course, like all actors, he’s allowed to have some private life, and I don’t begrudge him his stout wife and growing family in the least, as long as they don’t try and intrude into my film!

The other day I made a list of the Continental films which
have visited this town during the last year or two, and as far as I can remember this is fairly complete:—*Vaudeville, Metropolis, Faust, The Spy, The Loves of Jeanne Ney, A Daughter of Destiny*, (I am not arranging them in any special sequence) *The Circus of Life* and *The Fugitive Lover*. This last was wickedly cut, quite obviously. We have had too, a few less serious films, such as *The Last Waltz, The Blue Danube, Miss Chaffeur, Matrimonial Holidays* and *Crazy Mazie*. Without any exception, it is always the case that however improbable, fantastic or flippant these films are, they are more vital and sincere than the big British or American production that they are backing up on the programme.

I would like to give as an example of this, one of my favourite films *At the Edge of the World* with Brigitte Helm and an old windmill. It was cruelly cut-about and mutilated, so that in places the sequence was quite confused, but some of the scenes were so beautifully conceived that I should have liked to tell the operator to stop, and keep them on the screen for a few minutes.

The story began with an intense atmosphere of mystery and threatened horror that I do not consider was even surpassed in *The Spy*. There were some very clever touches in the uniform of a modern army and some of the interiors were almost Old Masters come to life. One scene showing the swinging sails of the Windmill reflected in a pool—whether faked or not—was almost too good to be true. The story was really enthralling and the characterisation must have been thought out ever so carefully. What English Producer would have considered that Brigitte Helm could be convincing in the part of the Miller’s Daughter? After seeing her
CLOSE UP

in *Metropolis* and *A Daughter of Destiny*, it is hard to dissociate her from sinister parts, and yet she was most certainly the one and only woman for the character. Well, this film came to a large local Theatre to fill up the programme for a big Harold Lloyd picture. It it hard to imagine a greater contrast than this—between the smooth-running commercial comedy and the rather rugged, windy German story. People grimly sat through the fill-up in order to relax in the comedy. I reversed the order. One really brilliantly clever business man who went to see this programme said that *At the Edge of the World* was an insult to a man’s intelligence. Heaven help the Cinema-lover in the Provinces.

D.L.H.

RUSSIAN CUTTING

"We will do some Russian cutting on these scenes!" (yards, or rather inches of it) ... The phrase sounds clever. It has a magic significance for many amateurs, whom, as yet, seem to have devoured but the skin from the milk. They have missed the meaning of Russian film *construction*.

Take a dozen shots from an express train, or, should road traffic fill you with keener delight, of taxis, omnibuses, and "One Way Street" signs. Sprinkle a liberal dose of
'unusual angles' over the conglomeration, measure your film to the nearest centimetre, and stick the pieces together. You have achieved 'Russian Cutting'.

But have you?

Take a couple of close shots showing just how angry two people can become with each other, cross cut them at an increasing tempo to suggest the rising excitement of fury,—and you have achieved 'Russian Cutting'.

But again, have you?

Not at all. This kind of thing is merely clever. Do we not strive to be something more than clever? We must get beyond the stage where we utilise a mechanical device, which, like the automatic telephone, becomes ordinary, accepted fact, as soon as the polish of its novelty has worn off.

We can blame our own mechanical age for the fact that, as soon as a technical development in films arrives, it's mechanical or 'clever' aspect is seized upon, while it's intellectual depths remain untouched. And so we get 'rhythm cutting' on traffic, cross-cutting of train and car chases, and summer lightning displays of close shots.

True, Russian film construction is built upon a foundation of psychology, yet many really keen amateurs are unacquainted with the works of such thinkers as Freud... The psychological processes of symbolisation and association are mostly visual (as a film thinking friend has pointed out to me), and therefore one of the highroads to intelligent cinemas. A little reading of Freud, and a little more thought in the application of his principles to film construction, together with a course of really good films (Shaftesbury Avenue Pavilion) and one suddenly sees light and feels brilliantly rewarded.
CLOSE UP

‘Russian cutting’ no longer remains a magic phrase, but comes to signify a developed cinema.

Let us then cut out some of these traffic shots, releasing ourselves from these playful externals, which mean nothing. Let us, instead, try joining up our shots in a form with which the human brain would, or might associate its mental visions, then we shall begin to achieve meaning.

Before we commence, we must know what psychological effect we aim at achieving, or what our definite idea is, then we can construct our film on its foundation, as Pudovkin has said, and done. Our idea need not be anything so tremendous as a new social order, it may be simply to convey a certain state of mind. It may be to present an aspect of modern life, to compare the dash of the City with the calm of the Countryside, and here you do not need much traffic, but persons, symbols with a meaning, associations, sudden little comparisons, all working towards, and directed by your definite idea.

The definite aim, a little knowledge of psychology, a few good films, seen in a new light as a result of the psychology, that is the diet which, I am sure, many amateurs will find as nourishing as I myself have found it to be.

Orlton West,
Film Guild of London.
LE CINÉMA ET LA TROMPETTE DE JERICHO

Voir, Pour quarante sous voir un peu tout : la vie privée de Madame Truc, spectacle calorifiant ; le Mystère du Smoking-palace ou l’Impérissable Amour. Pour quarante sous, pénétrer dans l’alcôve, surprendre mille secrets, caresser des regards une anatomie nouvelle, s’affranchir en un mot des retenues imposées ou volontaires de la vie courante, violer impunément le domicile de quiconque et lire en lettres grasses le destin de chacun. Voir le soleil sans transpirer, traverser un cyclone dans un fauteuil amarré, contempler l’incendie de tout un quartier sans être incommodé par la fumée, voir rugir un tigre à deux pas et sucer une ice-cream. Le cinéma libère les hommes, témoin oculaire aussi intrépide que subtil, métaphrase de la vie, jusqu’ici, peintre et psychologue bientôt si d’aphone on ne le transforme en music-hall visuel. Le cinéma est l’élargissement temporaire de l’individu emprisonné par le temps, l’espace et les conventions. Tel Asmodée, il perce les toits des maisons et ses regards glissent dans les mansardes, surprennent le mystère des existences. Il est mais non, il n’est rien de tout cela, à vrai dire, il ne surprend rien, il crée. La différence et sensible.
CLOSE UP

Il observe bien les moeurs des Esquimaux ou des Cambodgiens, celles des fourmis ou des crocodiles... mais de l'homme civilisé, il ne donne que la représentation, c'est pourquoi il peut être un art, un langage approximatif de vérités saisies et recréées au moyen d'images propres exprimant un rapport d'analogie entre la pensée, le fait, et sa manifestation visuelle. Un art... le mot n'est pas exagéré, car le cinéma peut créer la beauté, le tableau qui émeut, soit par ses qualités picturales seules, soit par l'intensité émotionnelle qu'il est susceptible d'éveiller chez le spectateur. L'oeil est de tous nos organes le plus apte à percevoir le caractère esthétique des objets naturels, il est le plus puissant auquel rien n'échappe, le plus rapide aussi... et c'est à lui seul que s'adresse le cinéma... tel qu'un artiste le voudrait... visuellement explicite, riche de pensées et d'imagination, de secrètes harmonies qui doivent être découvertes, senties, et non imposées, obligatoires. Mais pour cela il faut que le metteur en scène soit lui-même poète, habile compositeur d'images. Il faut surtout le temps à la maturation... et c'est cela précisément qui manque à notre époque. Produire le maximum dans un laps de temps minimum est une excellente formule commerciale; appliquée au cinéma, elle n'a fait jusqu'ici que retarder considérablement son évolution. Il n'est guère que Chaplin qui sache consacrer au film le temps nécessaire pour en faire un chef-d'oeuvre pensé sans défauts, sans cette hâte préjudiciable qui nous vaut de si pitoyables conclusions, la plupart du temps. Le public s'est lassé... tout au moins une certaine fraction de ce public... tant va la cruche à l'eau... et Hollywood a inventé le film parlant. Une évolution cela? Révolution plutôt, trahison et
subterfuge grossier destiné à masquer une insuffisance de fond spirituel, un aveu d'incompétence, retour à la foire, au cinéma primitif, net, compréhensible sans effort, à la copie. Le silence est une poésie qui idyllise maint visage ; le silence, comme disait Chaplin, rend toute femme aimable et ... supportable. L'intention devinée, l'état d'âme surpris par le spectateur en font en quelque sorte un personnage actif ; lorsque l'héroïne du film accompagnera un baiser cinématographique d'une déclaration d'amour, si éthérée soit-elle, le public, alors, redeviendra ce qu'il était auparavant, un consommateur de vérités toutes faites. Il ne faudra plus rien chercher car rien ne restera à découvrir, la parole ou le chant, pourvu que l'on n'en perde miette, suppléeront à tout.

A vouloir singer le théâtre, le cinéma perdra son originalité, qui est sa force, son essence même. Il perdra de plus la faveur de tous les délicats, de tous ceux qui, après avoir longtemps hésité à le considérer comme un art possible, se retireront devant la physionomie nouvelle du film redevenu le vulgaire amuseur populaire sans ambition. Une autre conséquence fâcheuse de cet état de choses est que ce ne seront plus tant des acteurs de cinéma qui seront nécessaires, mais des diseurs, des chanteurs ... des équipes de music-hall. Tel acteur fameux disparaîtra de l'écran pour n'avoir pas la parole assez nette ou facile et l'on fera appel à telle vedette des planches dont la mimique sera assommante au possible. Retour aux Coquelinades.

Le film sonore est moins nuisible déjà car sa mission se borne à enregistrer les bruits naturels. C'est un précieux appoint, sans doute, pour les documentaires, mais est-il bien nécessaire, d'autre part que nous entedions les sonneries de 62
CLOSE UP

téléphone, les coups frappés à la porte, les pas, les craque-ments du plancher . . . et autres menus sons sans importance réelle quant à leur signification. Sonorité pour les scènes d’extérieur, rien de plus réaliste, peut-être ; il n’en est pas de même pour les “ intérieurs ”. Quand le fracas assourdis-sant des machines se ferera entendre au cinéma, nul doute que l’impression ressentie sera violente, mais nul doute aussi que des excès fatigueront le spectateur.

La musique accompagnant la vie animée de l’écran idéalise celle ci, crée une atmosphère de sérénité, une possibilité de rêve illimitée. L’on ne songe pas assez à cette influence pour ainsi dire passive, tellement elle est discrète, mais dont les effets sont indéniables. L’on s’en rendra peut-être mieux compte, à l’avenir, car à vouloir mettre trop fidèlement les points sur les i on enlèvera au film une bonne part de son potentiel de vie mystérieuse, de sa profondeur même. Or quand nous ne participerons plus pour rien à l’impression qu’un film est susceptible de créer en nous, lorsque notre rôle sera d’écouter et de voir, qu’il nous faudra tendre l’oreille pour ouïr des propos banals, je gage bien que nous nous lasserons assez tôt.

Le premier moment de curiosité passé, le public se prendra peut-être à regretter le film silencieux, si modeste et pourtant si plein de signification, si éloquent et généreux, parfois, d’images proprement artistiques dont l’imagination, la nôtre, se nourrit en transformant les apparences visuelles en idées, opérant ainsi une assimilation intellectuelle d’éléments diversement combinés par le metteur en scène. L’art ciné-matographique se fonde tout entier sur l’esthétique visuelle . . . à peine vient-on d’en effleurer les possibilités, à peine
à-t-on posé quelques principes, appliqué certaines conceptions personnelles que déjà l’on abandonnerait l’art muet aux bonimenteurs. Une telle lâcheté n’est pas à craindre, pourtant, car les croyants sont encore nombreux qui poursuivront toujours leurs efforts dans la seule voie possible afin de conquérir au cinéma la place qu’il mérite au rang des activités humaines supérieures.

Freddy Chevalley.

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LETTER TO AN UNKNOWN

I am quite distressed, dear friend, not to be able to write you a serious letter, already owing to you, which would not omit any Parisian cinema event of recent times. But circumstances have taken me away for some days—which you will understand pleases me a great deal—and the dull and disagreeable atmosphere of the cinema life of la-bas against which I rant unendingly, is lacking.

In any event, I think I may hope you will pardon me, for my absence is on account of reasons of cinema. Yes, you may be surprised, but I have at last engaged myself as assistant for a little film documentaire, and to improve matters, a foreign film made in Switzerland. I must admit,
CLOSE UP

there is little to say about the place in which I find myself. Cinematographically speaking there is nothing of interest to remark, except that the Swiss renters do not seem to find it necessary to mention the names of the director and the actors on the films they send out, as is customary in other countries. Is it necessary for me to say more?*

I have found in this country only a mechanical piano with a cruelty of resonance nothing short of marvellous, attacking the brain with a prostrating insistence, and which, were I not already, would have converted me definitely to the sound film.

But all this is only an explanation for the unusual benevolence which you will find in the rest of my letter. It’s extraordinary how cinema work, no matter how trifling, reconciles you to things . . . .

One feels thus that one is doing something useful, and I who am fully aware of the almost complete inefficaciousness of my journalistic exhortations, am only the more aware that in spite of the contrary and flattering opinion of certain directors, nothing is changed by a too uneven contest. G. W. Pabst once said to me—and rarely do I forget a word of what he says—that only the journalists can change the abominable state of affairs in the cinema world. I am of the opinion that Pabst said that to give me pleasure, for it is not his genre, but meantime I see more and more clearly that our complaints, our pointing out of errors eternally made by the idiots who direct the European cinema, our demands for

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* It seems to depend entirely on the cinemas. The smaller family halls, the cheaper theatres and the country halls—houses, in short, likely to show old or fairly old films—do not do so. Otherwise it is usual. I imagine it is the same in most countries.—Ed.
better cinema conditions, are only beating the water with a stick. But that is not the question. I can do nothing else, and I will continue along my route.

However, I have just spoken of Pabst, and want to stop there. Before my departure, chère amie, we had the presentation of Pandora’s Box, the work of this director. You will not overlook, I think, my great love of Pabst, which has already caused a fair number of gratuitous remarks from the people who form in France what one is obliged to call the cinematographic corporation. These have not impressed me one whit, for I am reckless and where I love I do so with a complete absence of all limitation. I suffered well enough at the time on account of the revolting misunderstanding of Crise, and I was already rejoicing, like a child, because of the new film which I was going to see.

The criminals, really there is no other word, judged it necessary to mutilate this work in the most repugnant manner. Of the film conceived by Pabst nothing is left but a little sequence without continuity with the result that the spectator who is aware, as I am, of the scenario and of the spirit of the author, leaves revolted by such an act of vandalism. (Need I tell you though, that the little that was left excited me as I am seldom excited by the cinema?) It made one want to cry and if the people responsible had been there I think I should have had to tell them what I thought of such an action. Now do not tell me that I am hysterical, because sometimes hysteria is more salutary than strict intelligence, to express the disgust one feels for the part of humanity that dares to touch things that are sacred to us, while they regard them only from a horribly limited point of view, pretending that
commercial ends justify them. Nothing is more true and nothing has been more often said.

And now, will you be so kind as to follow me. This is what has been done on the film, calling the unqualifiable process adaptation! They started by calling Frank Wedekind Thoma Wedering; Schigolch, the splendid character personified by Karl Goetz, Papa Brommer. Of Dr. Schoen’s son, Alwa Schoen, they have made Mark Heding, secretary, negating clearly by this means the value of the extraordinary conflict—that is to say, the love of the son for the woman who has killed his father. The Comtesse Geschwitz, given also another name in the French version, becomes a dainty and charming childhood friend, Lulu is not here condemned, but aquitted. The escape is thus not shown, nor the explanatory and significant interlude with Casti-Piani, the flight of the party to Marseille. All this cut, and more and more the understanding of the trend of the film, is made impossible. The end, and this is truly ignoble, is completely changed. Jack, the Ripper, does not appear, Lulu does not die at his hands, but goes down with Mark Heding (read Alwa Schoen) into the street where she perceives the Salvation Army, which, as a subtitle so intelligently tells us “Will be her last hope.”

My God, can you wonder that one feels at the end of one’s resources? To make of Pabst a cheaply awful moraliser, that passes all limits. He who is in Europe perhaps the greatest, and has most understanding of sex, is transformed into a colourless and hybrid creature, such as one meets, alas, without end in the European cinema. I don’t think I could stand the day a film of mine were released, changed, adapted
"commercially ", as they say. For, mark you, this alteration has been effected by the editing firm without any intervention beforehand from the censor. Don’t you find also that the manner is a little rank, and the arrogance of these people could not be surpassed? One has worked, cried out, gesticulated, against the censor, and when at last it seemed that body was a little becalmed in the fury of its method with the scissors, when one had begun to hope that some small success had come about, the head of a French society brags that he has “arranged” a film of Pabst. But doesn’t he understand that the merest foolishness of a Pabst is always a hundred thousand times more important and valuable than his own personal efforts? There are no words for the squalor of these peoples’ spirits. And here we are, helpless, hands tied, nobody to defend those who have worked, and the game continues. Don’t you agree too that it goes too far? When will we be able to force a legislation, heedless of all which would be pleased to interfere, and to forbid machinations which the smallest sub-Dekobra would not allow in the translation of his book?

It is evident that this cannot last and that we should demand of our governments and even of the League of Nations, (being in Switzerland I think of it) to take up these matters extremely seriously. So long as we allow the commercial cinematographic world to continue its misdeeds unchecked, we deserve no other treatment than that which we are now receiving. The intellectuals of all countries if they wish the word to retain any significance should join firmly in the protest. Brutal force must be answered with violence. Simply because they have more money than we have, that
CLOSE UP

does not mean that we are obliged to submit to their judgment.

I feel, my friend, that you will be annoyed with me because I tell you only of these sad and disagreeable incidents. But you must forgive me, for my feelings are too turbulent for me to keep silence.

Here, however, are a few trifling happenings which may distract you as much as they have amused me. Le Vieux Colombier gave in its programme a few weeks ago, a somewhat mediocre German film Les Tisserands. This film, because of its historical story, caused some tumult in this respected hall where a somewhat annoying routine grows more and more arbitrary. The spectators began to make manifestations. There were blows, even one injured, and when all was calm the fighters remarked they were all of the same opinion ! ! ! ! ! The prefec
ture of police immediately forbade the projection of such a dangerous film. For my part, I enjoyed myself magnificently, as rarely before. Just think, these colossal idiots fought each other over a film that happened to be vaguely revolutionary in this Paris where they seem to desire more and more to sink into an absolutely stifling atmosphere which resembles very nearly the concentrated essence of small town life.

Oh, and there was the Semaine du Cinema Française. But as I left before it opened I do not know what happened there. But I do know what they assuredly did not mention there. That 98 per cent. of French directors will be obliged to seek another trade and that they have done nothing to permit the young to start a renewal that might be healthy. So I can
CLOSE UP
tell you already that you have missed nothing by my absence from Paris during this re-union of French cinema officials.
You will not be surprised that I have not changed my opinions on the French cinema more particularly as I have noted, working myself in films for a short time, and for a film of little importance, that all rests on the will to work, and that the mass of words so dear to French cinéastes cannot advance this form of “artistic” production in any way. And the day when this will be changed, when for example a bad director shall be liable to be put in prison, is still so far off that I will not bore you further but will finish my letter with a profound distaste for the thing which, I perceive every day a little more, I love as nothing else.
I forgot to tell you that Myrga and Tallier, the directors of the Studio des Ursulines, will take over the direction of the Agriculteurs from May 15th and I am sure that under the new direction much more interesting films will be shown than have been in this cinema to date.

JEAN LENAUER.

THE FOOTSTOOL OF DEATH
In May, 1928, the Academy of Science of the USSR jointly with the Notgemeinschaft of German science organized a large expedition for the study of the unexplored territories of the Pamir.
CLOSE UP

The high plateau of Pamir which extends across Central Asia with the limits of the USSR at the boundaries of China and Afghanistan, has in its Western part, a territory which so far had not been reached by anybody, and was considered one of the riddles in the world of science. Great world travellers including Swen Hedin attempted to penetrate into this territory, but the rapid mountain streams and enormous glaciers covered by tremendous fissures and holes barred the way to the courageous explorers.

To investigate this mysterious territory the above mentioned expedition was formed. It was composed of distinguished German and USSR scientists. To overcome the natural handicaps, the expedition was accompanied by a special Alpine group, composed of the best mountain climbers of Germany and the USSR. Besides, a special cinema group chosen from the Meschrapom Film, consisting of the director Shneiderof and the operator T. Tolchan, were accompanying the expedition.

About the middle of June the expedition started from the town of Osh with all its equipment, its food supply and fuel, loaded on 200 horses and 250 camels, of which a few horses were lost during some of the difficult passages.

Passing through the Valley of Death the expedition reached the river Tanymass, which is on the boundary of the unexplored territory. Here its horses were left and its baggage loaded upon specially collected baggage carriers of the Tadgiks, whereupon the expedition proceeded to the mountains following the river Tanymass.

Over a month was spent in this mysterious territory, in an altitude frequently surpassing 15,000 feet, where there was
much suffering from lack of oxygen and mountain sickness, from heat and cold. However, under conditions of exceptional difficulty the expedition succeeded in thoroughly exploring a zone which heretofore had been a white spot on the maps of the world.

The greatest glacier in the "Fedchenko" was discovered, besides a number of other glaciers. Several enormous mountain peaks were put on the map, new mountain passes were found, copper was discovered, as well as gold and other minerals. The riddle of the gold bearing rivers of this region was thus solved. New forms of fauna were found and meteorological surveys were prepared. An exact map of the region was made, besides many other accomplishments, impossible to mention in a brief statement.

Finally a great mountaineering feat was accomplished—namely, reaching the greatest height in the USSR, the peak Lenin (21,600 feet).

The cinema section of the expedition followed the chief squad of the expedition everywhere and succeeded in filming the gorgeous regions, the life of the local population, the life of the expedition, the difficulties it surmounted and various adventures on the way, such as the falling of horses into abysses, crossing of rapid rivers and hanging bridges, the crossing over glaciers, including even the fall of a man into a glacier fissure—all this has been recorded, and before long on the screens of the cinema theatres of the USSR and abroad will be shown what until now was absolutely unknown and unchartered on the maps of Pamir. The film is called *The Footstool of Death*.

P.A.
BERLIN STANDS ON ITS HEAD

The work-organisations of the German film, united in the "DACHORGANISATION DER FILMSCHAFFEN- DEN KUNSTLER" assemble with the collaboration of their official organ regularly on certain evenings to hear lectures and to debate actual problems of art, technics and economics of the film. Immediately before the last of these evening debates, the telephone of the administrative offices rang incessantly. Hundreds who belong to the limited and wider film circles, and their neighbouring spheres—people who passed by the announcement of former occasions indifferently or with an ironical shrug—proffered the most cunning excuses to get tickets. To most of them these had to be refused; many of them, names well known in Berlin’s public life. Nevertheless the big hall of the Vereinshaus Deutscher Ingenieure was overcrowded on the evening of April 26th. At the last minute it was even necessary to install microphones on the lecturers’ desk and loud speakers in the other rooms, in order to convey more than detached words to all the people who crowded at the doors. And, indeed, a most heterogenous audience very patiently gave
its attention for hours to the technical lecture of Dr. Ing. h. c. Fritz Lüschen on — The Soundfilm.

This lecture and the following discussion of German film directors, lasting to the early morning, has been of a certain instructive importance to those who had only a fragmentary knowledge of this new phase of cinematography.

In spite of this, the lecture would not have been important enough to be broadly reviewed in this place — had not everything that hinged upon it — especially the fact of the sudden general interest in the situation — been so extremely characteristic of the mood, the excitement of Berlin's film-world during the last weeks.

The oldest experts can hardly remember a nervous tension like it — due to uncertainty like this, that has made fearful for their trade all theatre folk, renters, producers and studio owners, technical experts and artists, workers and theorists: driving them from day to day into whispering groups, exposing them to the convulsing effect of the most wild rumors. Notes in the newspapers, increasing daily, present alarming news from abroad. The rest has been done by travellers returning, actors coming back from Hollywood, honoured guests of London Premieres, and so on.

It remains doubtful whether the right of spreading authentic news can be claimed by those who have on almost all occasions time and money for travelling. In any event, they are able to tell about cash-records, fantastic successes, evolution of a new trade, rise of different technics, revaluation of all art and — about the death of the merely "dumb" film.
CLOSE UP

If "fire" is shouted with increasing wildness on all sides into one's ear, whatever one has learnt in school, one cannot resist the mass-psychological influence of panic,—and one is seized by it, even if no single smoke cloud is visible. Besides, the school instruction of many of our famous film people seems not to be very developed. Even the manner of their growing up in the sphere where they work, predestines them to be exposed to all possible mass-movements, effect of rumor and psychoses. Their acting, their direction, their order of film production are dependent upon the most exterior circumstances, because of a much too incomplete, much too superficial, much too timorous knowledge, of the nature of what is called Film.

This is the reason that at this moment hardly any more films are being made. Certainly no serious and big ones. Because they have been convinced that the "silent" film is dead. In autumn only the sound films will be produced. The sole question is by whom and how should they be produced?

* * *

But the situation is not so simple. Only with extreme difficulty would it be possible to bring the American successes of sound film production, The Jazz Singer, The Singing Fool, White Shadows, Interference, etc., to Germany; first on account of the English text, secondly and especially because of the complications over the patent rights.

It is well known that the invention of the sound films is not of to-day. The principle of it was known twenty years ago and in the interim invention was always proceeding. One of the basic and some of the applied patents are still
valid. They—like so many other things—have been sold for little money to America and there been developed in the hands of skilful engineers and still more skilful merchants, as the times required. Their return to Europe, especially to Germany, will not be easy. Since in the meantime, most of these patents have there been taken up by far-seeing merchants and syndicated. The multitude of rights controlled by them has made it possible to force the great German electro-technical industry,—interested in the sound film in respect of construction of apparatus—to enter their camp. So the collaboration of the Tonbild Syndikat A.G. "Tobis" with the Klangfilm G.m.b. H. came about.

We do not need to discuss at the moment whether such a monopoly of rights of sound film is a cultural advantage or disadvantage for the public. At any rate it is certain that all the possibilities of fabrication, of import and performance of sound films in Germany remain dependent on the will of a single great concern or upon arrangement with it. At least where it deals with the already applied practical and, to some extent, experienced methods.

The other systems, fallen out, and in part good, are in a very precarious situation. We know only too well that in these cases it depends less on the ingeniousness of a single inventor than on the power of the capitalistic group that stands behind the invention.

* * *

If the difficulties that must be overcome were only in the sphere just spoken of, and characterised by economics, it would not be difficult to subdue them. Merchant holders of different patents would sooner or later find ways and means
CLOSE UP

to find that understanding, which only untiring exploration of their object can make possible. If the understanding can be found, one has to begin to remove those obstacles, whose existence in Germany, a country of thoroughness and love of order, is especially felt to be painful.

The most striking disorder exists in the various technics (taking the strictest sense of the word) for it is known that very opposed systems of sound films exist. We have no absolute scale for their theoretical and practical value. In opposition to the single inventors and their financiers, who endeavour to push exclusively the possibilities of their apparatus in the foreground, stands the desire of the film people that apparatus generalized and applicable to all systems, should be produced. Understandable as this wish appears, so is its fulfilment difficult. For beside the principal technical approach of the principal forms that could be accelerated by means of commercial transactions, remains the necessity for regulating all those hundred little questions, signified by the comprehension of norm-problems. An example will make clear this complication: one of the most used systems is the method of light-on-film, in which the sound is registered by light waves on the film itself. Without considering that the ways and places of applying this light-science may cause sharp divisions between the different systems, at any rate there are already methods in principle allied to one another, as, for example, Movietone and R.C.A. Photophone in America, similarly the concern of Tobis and Klang film in Germany. But even here differences are obvious; differences in the size of the picture, which the tone strip leaves for the photographic determination of the frame.
It deals only with the question of single millimetres; but millimetres are able to mean considerable dimensions in technics. Indeed the consequence is that while with one system the dimensions of the former pictures remained only in a smaller scale, with the other a squarer frame resulted. We see it is only a trifle in question, but one on which all the future of film composition must depend. But if somebody should realise that one could say: yes, then it is understood that we shall keep the form that is more similiar to the old one,—to which the technicians will reply with a dozen "buts". One can negate their right just as little since we see the fact on the other side—when both of them have been worked out in practical application.

Still more complicated are those circumstances where absolute technics touch practical work. The fact that some copies of recording apparatus have been put in use here and there is by no means sufficient for film fabrication. A forest of questions, especially of acoustics, are unsolved in spite of this, and make the construction and equipment of those modern sound film studios more difficult for lack of that certainty without which every work must remain tentative experiment. Such experiment cannot be avoided for a good length of time, especially as our experts and artists will have to assimilate even the most primitive routine in this sphere.

However great may be the obstacles presented to the technician, so keen are dreams and theories already, that all new possibilities are being discussed both in intimate circles and by the public. They like to speak of the profound discovery of the acoustic world that is able to follow the advanced optical discovery. They have already found the
expression of "acoustical montage", for instance, that will unite the shaded differences of the same sound resonance in different rooms. They seek especially for characteristic sounds in which one expects new dramatic power. They fight with the dynamic direction of sound intensities, on communication with the different optical impressions. They discuss the new division of competences between author and director as well as optical and acoustic recording technicians. One longs everywhere for the future type of new actor. Some revive the Wagnerian theory of "Einheitskunstwerk" to new meaning.

But all these are beautiful and sometimes clever triflings of imagination; dreams, fairy tales, blurbs and discussions. One fabricates them to smuggle light rays of artistic hope into this horrible muddle of refined economic details and technical primevality.

Deeds lack now as well as before. The greatest German sound film produced till now, by Walter Ruttmann, Melodie der Welt, could only be a disappointment, because it was indeed not a sound film at all but only a silent strip, mounted with foreign pictures, by means of pictorial association that afterwards had been fitted with mechanical music accompaniment. Only in some places where scenes were re-shot afterwards with the original sounds of machines, sirens and so on, came spontaneous applause. Whether this applause was contributed to the first technical sensation or to the artistic effect can hardly be examined to-day.

Perhaps we shall know more to-morrow. More about what sound film itself can attain and what it can destroy of the silent film. More about what has arisen out of this
unfortunate muddle of the year 1929. A muddle, whose intention and extension may excuse the manner of this report.

A. Kraszna-Krausz.

COMMENT AND REVIEW

Film Curiosities.—No. 7.

The banned sequence in Alraune (The Woman of Destiny)

Produced by: Henrik Galeen.

Valeska Gert played the procuress in Joyless Street, she was the camériste in Nana, she has also appeared in Wood Love, she danced for a few seconds in Alraune. As far as I can discover that is a complete list. Therefore when Alraune, chastely re-christened The Woman of Destiny, was to be trade-shown at the Astoria, I said; “I will sit through this agony for the promise of the Gert”. But in England the sequence with the Gert had been cut out!

Abroad I was given a chance to see Alraune again; this time without the fear of our censors. I remembered all that had been written (modestly this is submitted rather than “what I thought”) about THE procuress and THE camériste; in consequence I was ready to brave again Paul
CLOSE UP

Wegener and Herr Galeen's art director. And the Gert is on the screen for little more than fifty feet!

The back number of a French illustrated paper fallen on the worn plush of a sofa at a cheap barber; the cartoon smudged with the dirt of anxious fingers. The face of that cartoon, with the smudges, come to life! That is the nearest I can get to a description of the Gert's one close-up.

Her dance . . . Outside a brothel. Studio set which looks as innocently cardboard as a Christmas-card drawing. A nigger dancing to the girls, dressed in their professional attire and waiting for customers. The nigger is loose-limbed, he is made for movement; he gets his stuff across because of it.

There is a popular phrase, born of our inhibitions; "At least you can keep quiet about it." We feel that a friend has gone too far and that each of his boasts makes IT so much more unendurable; so we admonish: "At least you can, et cetera". The Gert's dance is the visual side. All that was in her close-up is so much the worse for movement. She sets out to force people to say; "At least she might keep still about it." She gets her stuff across because of that.

I will walk miles to see a picture with the Gert any day of the week.

OSWELL BLAKESTON.
CLOSE UP

Film Curiosities.—No. 8.

Wood Love

Directed by R. Newman from a scenario based on Shakespeare's A Midsummer-Night's Dream.

Produced—1924.

Do chorus girls treading a measure belong to the screen, or even to the stage? They belong to the past. While the maidens foot it lightly this picture resembles the Arcadians and certain shorts condescendingly manufactured by a British producer.

The Gert also in this picture dances her part; and that, you may tell me, belongs to the stage. But the camera adds something to the Gert, gives fresh angles on her static poses, on that Gertian tongue lolling from lascivious mouth.

Krauss is so delighted to be allowed to cast off restraint and think of himself as a Shakespearian actor that it would be brutal to spoil his pleasure.

"I draw the line here, I draw the line there . . . ." We know the respectable whose lives are led in a patch of arid ground shut in by a complicated geometrical pattern of lines. Valeska Gert steps beyond the lines as a hierophant; to show what fun one can get from being released; Krauss steps beyond the lines to show what a great actor he is. The Gert puts out her tongue at the audience in devilment; the Krauss puts out his tongue for the audience to see how well he can act the part of a devil.

From pity for those gentlemen who have spent their money on a private projector let me pass them the "dirt"; there are 82
CLOSE UP

things in this picture more ineluctably Rabelaisian than I have ever discovered in the most boisterous German comedy.

Those who demand more from a single movie had better be warned that characters in the wood sequences are superimposed, and a great many of the Gert’s double-meanings become indistinguishable, almost lost in double exposure.

The heartiness in this picture is not biased, it spreads to the simple pleasure of hacking a man in two with a battle-axe.

Ruth Weyher manages to be very bad in a simple role.

Oswell Blakeston.

FILMS IN HISTORY

No. 1.—THE DANGEROUS AGE.

Direction—Eugen Illes.

Who’s Who in Film Land, a manual picked off a railway bookstall, catalogues artistes who dare, and those who dare not, tell when they are born. Those who dare not are mostly those out of work. Not many film stars live to grow weary of the esteem of—THE PUBLIC, and in like manner for another two pathetic paragraphs.

There is the fear, then, that the Nielsen may not make another film. Producers ought to be forced to give her one more part to take away the taste of her last. My back is permanently, and prematurely, bent with adoration at the Nielsen shrine; but The Dangerous Age is a shock to me and
if revived in ages to come may make the cinéastes wonder with moans. "The Nielsen whom they all used to talk about" is the Nielsen in whom I still believe.

There are three parallel romances of disaster. Mr. Illes must have believed that on being shown so much evidence we would say, "Ah! surely this is life"; instead we murmur: "If so common, why trouble to show us?"

Things begin less badly with one lump or two lumps of sugar in your cup of tea; the hatefulness of that can be linked on to life. Asta Nielsen in "suitable-for-young-matron" gowns shows large eyes to express weariness in a face tricked out to suppress wrinkles.

Another family is preparing for the evening's wildness at a bridge party, the wife handles cosmetics, she uses her mouth for beautifying herself, the husband employs his as an entrance to his stomach for biscuits soaked in tea. The complete tragedy of that ménage is already told!

Or, Walter Rilla does not know where to put his cigarette ash and we are completely conscious of another tangle; the development is therefore unduly boring.

Walter Rilla, Bernard Goetzke and Asta Nielsen eat a great deal of food; knowing studio food, I doubt if they got more fun out of it than I did watching them.

Oswell Blakeston.
CLOSE UP

SPITE MARRIAGE

The Manchester Guardian published an illustrious article explaining the method of Buster Keaton as revolt against standardization. It is ironical that United Artists (or whoever it is Keaton works for now) are standardizing his films.

O.B.

THAT MARVEL THE SILENT FILM

Mr. Herring and Mr. Lenauer we know to have ample cause for their bitterness; but we have a cherished reputation for optimism with our editor, and when in Paris did the round of the avant-garde abstracts. We went to Guy-grand’s Contraste, and saw Germaine Dulac’s fountains in Arabesque, and all the cinéastes despaired of our salvation.

What did we get out of it? A firm conviction that we live in a cute age, the pre-synchronization period! Even Mr. René Guy-grand manages to get over joy without a character exclaiming; “Gosh, how happy I am!” As for Dulac, why is it that people will tolerate in the cinema pictures that they would scorn if frozen on to Christmas cards?

Les Agriculteurs has an exclusive run of Cigarette with Simone Vaudry and Jean Devalde. It is like the series of advertisements of “What should A do?” run off in continuous strip; for the director suggests a cigarette to catch the eye of a cocotte or to reconcile a wife. We were
grateful for the suggestion of the cigarette as the panacea and
smoked about thirty to survive this little "band". They
say that P. Bert is the youngest French director. French
journalists take this as an excuse, we consider it a warning,
and P.B. should be glad that he has found out in time!
The shorts at the Studio 28 are sharp commentary on one
another. A gentleman said to us in London that he found
the Secrets of Nature as abstract as Man Ray; we find
Crystallizations more in tune with the antimacassar. Joris
Ivens brings the steel trellis of a bridge into line in Pont
D'Acier, Eisenstein did not say a bridge is exciting, let us
make a film about a bridge, a bridge was drawn into the net of
the story. On the other hand, Ivens would turn the bridge
into antimacassars, oblongs of pattern to be admired. How
right Mr. Herring was, for Feyder gets the same stuff with
the white ballerina skirts in his background to Les Nouveaux
Messieurs. Still we did enjoy ourselves, and we hold that it
is not a case of how seriously the so-called avant-garde is
taking itself but how seriously some people are taking the
black hats!

O.B.

LE MALEMORT DU CANART.

Most favoured of the critics told me he would like to make
a film about . . . . . I could not breathe when an approximate
subject chanced to be broached idly in conversation, so afraid
was I of giving away the idea belonging to the most favoured critic.

The plot was to take a day in a dog’s life, using the camera as the dog’s eyes; the idea being that a room must look like a jungle to a dog.

Nix on dat Judas stuff, for Monsieur S. Silka has run away with the idea. A duck, who tires of the monotonous barnyard, seeks the great world—the pond round the corner! What a saga the search for that pond becomes, with tapestry tree-tops far above, travelling shots from the duck’s viewpoint, and landscapes.

A poem it is called, and a poem it is in achievement. Simply; the duck lures a hen to share his travels; a viper puts them on the wrong path; the duck enjoys himself in the finally discovered pond; the willing hen drowns in an attempt to adapt herself to life in the water; darkness leads the duck back to the barnyard where the farmer’s wife is seeking a nice fat bird for the table. So the bad duck gets his!

I cannot imagine an audience who would not enjoy this short. The cutting is a fine art, the photography without flaw.

Monsieur Silka used a hand-camera of French make; and his picture, although in every way professionally secure, is a lesson to the amateur who has no larger resources.

O.B.
Mother, End of St. Petersburg, Bed and Sofa have been given to us by the Film Society this season, otherwise we might have spontaneously combusted on being presented with The Marquis of Bolivar as a farewell gift.

On the same programme was Deslau’s March of the Machines. We missed the music from the instrument of exclusive design which provided such a thrilling accompaniment when the film was screened in Paris. At the Studio 28 the fun at the emotional climax was to attempt to distinguish the hisses of one’s neighbours from the glorious cacophony of the epic instrument.

C.O.D., a “mellow drama”, is the kind of burlesque that our amateurs love to give us, and the young men of Stoll Studio are rather playing into the enemy’s hands by showing us the product of their boredom while they awaited the installation of sound equipment. George Jean Nathan has given the world the wonderful phrase; “the producers found themselves with their aesthetic pants down” . . . .

Dimitri Kirsanoff’s sentimental Brumes d’Automne will not actually do harm if it is ever publicly shown.

O.B.

MAN RAY—RUTTMANN—L. REINIGER

Trois essais techniques dans une même séance de Ciné-Club, le 20 Avril, sur des matières, au fond, passablement arides.


CLOSE UP

*Étoile de mer*, poème surréaliste de Man Ray, sur un argument d’A. Artaud, présente ceci de particulier qu’il est écrit en images déformées. Pas plus compliqué que cela ; un film tourné au travers d’une surface légèrement opaque et ondulée peut être baptisé : poème surréaliste, quand bien même les phénomènes qui s’y observent relèvent plus de la dioptrique que des principes de l’esthétique visuelle. Deux hommes, une femme, une étoile de mer, constituent les objets perceptibles à notre oeil, avec une banane, un journal et une bouteille. La bouteille, le journal, la banane et l’étoile de mer forment un assemblage assez hétéroclite pour offrir une vision originale, aussi peut-on la distinguer nettement. Quant au surplus, qui ne compte rien d’anormal dans le groupement, la réfraction le "versifera" à son gré, aplatis-sant les fronts, écartelant les oreilles ou brisant net un nez trop académique. Force m’est d’avouer qu’à part une ou deux coincidences harmonieuses du dessin, *étoile de mer* ne signifie pas plus visuellement parlant qu’au point de vue "légende". Ici, un sous-titre, oublié par mégarde, annonce gravement : " des dents de femme qui étaient des perles " et qui ne sont plus que des jambes. Là le vocable "éternèbre" fait tomber en extase simples et érudits.

Ruttmann, lui, a composé des *opuscles* … qui ne sont pas, comme vous pourriez le croire, des ouvrages d’art ou de science, mais de petits rouleaux de films sur lesquels l’auteur s’est plu à inscrire des figures géométriques … Découpages, surimpressions, défilés de lignes parallèles qui fuyent sur l’écran, comme des rails sous les yeux d’un observateur placé sur un train. Succession frénétique de cubes engendrant d’autres cubes, angles sombres qui, des
bords de l'écran, cernent un centre lumineux qui se déforme et disparaît. Le cinéma est ici tour à tour escamoteur et prestidigitateur, subtilisant une forme, aussitôt entrevue, pour en restituer une autre. Sans trop de peine l'on conçoit les ficelles des tours magiques exécutés par l'auteur de ces "opuscules", qui ont le double mérite d'être courts et de n'avoir aucune prétention.

Lotte Reiniger, à qui nous devons cette fine dentelle que sont les aventures du Princes Ahmad, a droit certes à notre admiration pour avoir su mener à chef pareil jeu de patience. Un conte des Mille et Une nuits, évoquant la cour du sultan, les randonnées aériennes du prince Ahmad, à dos de cheval, et les interminables combats que le prince doit engager pour délivrer la princesse de son coeur des mains de petits diables repoussants. Grâce à la bonne volonté d'une vieille sorcière édentée, et à la complaisance d'Aladin, qui lui prête sa lampe, Ahmad réussira à vaincre un vilain enchanteur, à exterminer un serpent de dimensions respectables, et l'essaim des globules blancs que sont les bons esprits bousculera celui des globules noirs malfaisants dans l'antre qu'ils méritent. Pour animer bonshommes et animaux découpés devant les décors minuscules, il ne fallait certes pas ignorer les lois du mouvement organique. A de rares exceptions près, les gestes et les attitudes obtenus témoignent, sous ce rapport, d'une parfaite maîtrise. S'il y a quelques déplacements un peu saccadés qui rappellent les guignols du théâtre de marionnettes, il y a aussi, par ailleurs, une étonnante souplesse dans certaines démarches, une étonnante réalité de vie aussi. C'est ceci précisément qui est digne d'être relevé, je crois. D'autres visions, celle, par
CLOSE UP

exemple, du combat de la sorcière et de l’enchanteur présentent des métamorphoses successives de formes très bien réalisées. Un reproche pourtant me semble devoir être formulé à l’égard de cette bande, ou plutôt au mode de présentation... le métrage est trop long pour tenir en éveil l’attention du spectateur. Projéte en deux fois, par exemple, ce film y gagnerait certainement.

A examiner les physionomies des cinéphiles présents, à la fin de la séance, j’ai constaté que bon nombre d’entr’elles accusaient un peu de fatigue. Rien d’étonnant à cela, à vrai dire, étant donnée la composition du programme visionné. Les films d’intérêt purement visuel, dans lesquels la vie ne se manifeste que sous forme d’apparences souvent fort éloignées même de la réalité, et où le mouvement est très fréquemment exagéré, provoquent une tension nerveuse qui ne cesse de s’accentuer au fur et à mesure de la projection... Il serait bon, je crois, d’administrer par petites doses poèmes surréalistes et opuscules.—

FREDDY CHEVALLEY.

LE CHAPEAU DE PAILLE D’ITALIE

(Ciné-Club de Genève, 2 Mars 1929)

René Clair ne s’est pas contenté de traduire fidèlement Labiche, il l’a transposé à l’écran, où l’expression spirituelle du verbe est devenue image pleine et combien éloquente. Ce n’est au reste d’une réincarnation de la pensée dans le corps
même, une fusion parfaite de tous les éléments écrits en une masse originale. Dans le moule du cinéma, tel que le réalise René Clair, se cristallisent les observations les plus fines en une langue souple et lumineuse, émondée de ponctuations, qui a pour elle ce que le théâtre ne peut acquérir : la pulsation propre de la vie, la fugacité d’expression inhérente à toute action humaine.

Il n’est guère possible, après avoir vu le chapeau de paille d’italie de contester l’opportunité de certaines adaptations théâtrales à l’écran. Tout dépend naturellement du talent du metteur en scène, talent d’improvisation, de “lecture” optique et d’adaptation au rythme cinégraphique. Il n’est pas trace d’effort ni de servilité dans le film qui nous occupe. Son auteur a saisi avec art la signification picturale des descriptions de Labiche ; il se sert avec une rare habileté des accents et retrouve par le jeu ingénieux des situations évoquées l’ironie foncière du canevas littéraire. L’objectif n’a pas trahi la plume, ni René Clair, Labiche.

Tel succès n’aurait pu être réalisé, il faut en convenir, sans une collaboration d’acteurs de première qualité. Là encore, le metteur en scène a su choisir très intelligemment les types propices à l’extériorisation la plus frappante. Tous, sans exception, concourent harmonieusement à la composition de cette charge un tant soit peu agitée par endroits, mais si intensément vécue que son passage à l’écran n’égratigne aucune susceptibilité.

Quoi de plus réussi que cet interminable va et vient, dans la rue, des compagnons de noce de Préjean, qui se rencontrent, le matin, nets et lucides, pour se retrouver le soir en flagrant désarroi. La cravate qui ne tient pas, l’épingle
malencontreuse dans le dos de la mariée, les souliers neufs atrocement blessants, le gant disparu, donnent lieu à d'incessants rappels comiques, volontairement appuyés. C'est précisément le mérite de René Clair d'avoir obtenu avec une matière en somme trés peu cinégraphique, une bande de réel intérêt. Eludant tout ce qui, de près ou de loin, rappelle le théâtre, sans infirmer pour autant la qualité spirituelle des diverses scènes ni interpoler d'invraisemblables passages Clair a établi le trait-d'union possible entre la scène et l'écran, réalisant du même coup un film essentiellement français au rythme nerveux et souple.

FREDDY CHEVALLEY.

HOLLYWOOD NOTES

Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks are preparing a joint production of The Taming of the Shrew. Fairbanks as Petruchio is readily imaginable; but the petite Mary, so long associated with juvenile rôles, is not so easily pictured as the shrewish Katharina. However, her sophisticated characterization in Coquette has revealed a hitherto unknown Mary and proven her capacity for more mature and exacting rôles.

* * *

Color photography, which is now being generally adopted by all the studios, is calling for a new art of make-up. Experience has shown that the make-up used for panchromatic film is not suitable for color film. Orange is now the
predominant shade used. A deep orange lip rouge and a slightly lighter shade for the cheeks are found best for natural effects. And no longer is the dark shading about the eyes necessary, owing to the extreme sensitivity of color negative to dark pigments.

* * *

Emil Jannings is on his way to Germany for "an indefinite vacation." In this euphemistic manner Paramount-Lasky allows it to be known that the talkies have ousted another foreign actor from the Hollywood colony.

* * *

Pathé is preparing to film grand opera. Among the first seven scheduled for production are *Faust*, *Aida*, and *Carmen*. These will be produced in condensed versions, limited to two reels each, in order to test the public's reaction to this type of phonofilm. If the venture proves popular, other operas will be put on with the full scores.

RKO is also entering the singing field by way of the lighter musical comedy. *Rio Rita*, *Hit the Deck*, and others of like type are scheduled for early production. Altogether there will be eight of them during the coming year. Pietro Cimini will conduct them.

* * *

Will Rogers, the famous cowboy humorist and actor, will play the lead in a forthcoming Fox movietone, *They Had to See Paris*. It is interesting to recall that the first picture in which Rogers appeared, some ten or eleven years ago, was designed as an experiment to determine whether a picture would sell on its merits, aside from its cast. The star system was then at its height, and it was generally contended that no
picture could be successful without a big name. Rogers was then unknown. The picture, however, because of his work in it, proved immensely popular.

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The chimes of Big Ben have been phono-photographed, and the film containing the boom of the big bells has come to Hollywood, to be used in Richard Dix’s next picture for Paramount-Lasky, *The Wheel of Life*.

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George Arliss, the English actor, is in the midst of his first talking-film production. It is an adaptation of his popular stage play, *The Green Goddess*, and is being directed by Al Green for Warner Brothers.

* * *

Sudermann’s *Stephen Trumholt’s Wife* is being filmed at the M-G-M studio, with Lewis Stone and Peggy Wood in the leading rôles. Clarence Brown is the director. The picture will be released under the title *Wonder of Women*—not that this is any better than Sudermann’s title, but merely that the world may not lose sight of the fact that Hollywood is as good at inventing titles as Sudermann or any other literary giant!

* * *

The research engineers of Paramount studio have devised a means of successfully combining both natural color and the human voice on a single strip of film—another milestone in the progress of talking pictures. Heretofore in color-talkie filming it has been necessary to use either a separate film strip or the disk method of reproduction.

* * *
The cast of *The Green Ghost*, a mystery laid in London, is wholly a British one. Among the players are Ernest Torrence, Claude Flemming, Clarence Geldert, Sydney Jarvis, John Roche, Richard Travers, Natalie Moorehed, Richard Tucker, Philip Strange, John Loder, John Miljan, Boris Xarloff, Lionel Belmore, and George Cooper. The picture is being directed by Lionel Barrymore for M-G-M. Aside from the suitability of such a cast for a London story, Barrymore selected it because of his contention that the British actor has invariably a perfect speaking voice and is ideal for talking dramas. (? Ed.)

* * *

In marked contrast to this single nationality of cast, a Paramount Oriental mystery play, *The Insidious Dr. Fu Manchu*, includes players of seventeen different nations. In addition to Americans the actors in this picture include natives of Sweden, Germany, France, England, Australia, Russia, Spain, Italy, Austria, Denmark, India, China, Japan, Persia, and British Guiana.

* * *

*The Locked Door*, which was to have been Norma Talmadge’s first talking picture for United Artists, will be done instead by Barbara Stanwyck, supported by Rod La Rocque. Miss Talmadge has selected *Tin Pan Alley* for her initial talkie venture, with Lewis Milestone as director and Gilbert Roland for her leading man. In preparation for the picture Miss Talmadge took an intensive course of voice culture.

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CLOSE UP

When M-G-M completes its extensive rebuilding program, it will have eleven complete sound-proof stages. Included in the program is also a fifteen-hundred-seat theatre on the lot for private showings and previews, as well as stage rehearsals.

With the constant increase of air traffic, Hollywood studios have been suffering in the shooting of talking pictures by the noise of overhead motors. Arrangements have accordingly been made whereby red balloons will be flown from the roofs of studio buildings when pictures are in the making, as a warning to pilots to steer clear or maintain an altitude of not less than twenty-five hundred feet while flying over the lots.

C.H.

NEWS OF THE SOVIET CINEMA

I. SOVKINO.

For the purpose of studying the spectator the Psychological Institutes in Moscow and Leningrad carry on large research work, the results of which is afterwards tested upon the spectators in the theatres. Before long will be established a special Scientific Research Institute in Moscow, which will study all problems confronting Soviet cinematography.

The proletarian writer M. Sholokhov whose novel *The Silent Don* enjoys great popularity in the USSR, has been
engaged to participate in the production of a film on the theme of his novel.

The film is directed by Olga Preobrashenskaya and Pravof, who have finished making *The Last Attraction*.

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The director Kassianof (author of the film *The Seventh Fellow Traveller*) is now making a film *Yanysh Returns Tomorrow*, treating the subject of international proletarian solidarity.

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The director A. Room has completed the mounting of *The Ghost That Never Returns*. The scenario is taken from the novel of the French writer Henri Barbusse.

* * *

The State Technicum of Cinematography have commenced the making of the picture *Accordion* after the poem of Alexandre Sharof. Sovkino is financing the production. Students of the Technicum will participate exclusively in the picture.

* * *

Sovkino is working at the production of the following cultural films: *Chemisation of the USSR*, it treats the problem of chemisation of the Soviet industry. The scenario is prepared by the Academician Bach. He also is supervising the work of its production.

*Chaos and Order* treats the problem of standardisation in industry, in agriculture and in material supplies to the population.

*Kolkhos* treats the problem of collective agriculture. Director:—Kopalin.
CLOSE UP

Rationalisation of Factory and Home Construction including a history of architectural styles.

Three films on the subject of a healthy village: (1) Live Clean and be Well, (2) The Clean Cottage, (3) The Peasant Household and the Water Supply in the Village.

The Struggle with Contagion.

Soviet Fordism, treats the problem of the convoy system in industry. A methodical film for workers to improve their qualification.

The Giant, the problem of mass grain production. The picture shows the largest Soviet farm in the USSR, located in the Salsk district of the North Caucasus.

* * *

For the sowing season Sovkino issued a special film, Campaign for a Crop.

* * *

Sovkino is energetically working to mount a picture from news material: The Government's Report to the Fifth Congress of Soviets.

* * *

V. I. Pudovkin having returned from vacation has commenced to work on the picture Life is Beautiful, scenario by Rzheshevsky.

II. MESCHRABPOM FILM.

The producer L. Kuleshof has commenced to film 2 Buldi 2, after the scenario of O. Brick. P. Ermolof, operator. In the chief parts are S. Komarof, A. Sudakevitch, F. Feit, V. Kochetof, S. Sletof, and others. As associate director in
certain scenes has been engaged, Williams Truzzi. The picture depicts the life of circus artists during the revolutionary period.

* * *

Meschrabpom-Film organized a cinema night in which V. I. Pudovkin gave a lecture on his trip abroad. An introductory address on the joint production of foreign proletarian cinema organizations with Meschrabpom-Film, and on the success of the Soviet Film abroad, was made by B. F. Malkin. V. I. Pudovkin was greeted with an ovation by the representatives of the press, the Party, social and professional organizations.

* * *

Meschrabpom-Film has completed the new picture *Ivan Galay the Sailor*. V. I. Urinof—director. Shefenkof—operator. In the chief parts the Honored People's Artist of the Republic, N. M. Blumental, Tamarina, the Honored Artist of the Republic—A. P. Petrovsky.

Before issuing this picture for circulation, Meschrabpom-Film organized a demonstration of the film before workers, and social organizations and for the workers of the tram service with participation of the Press.

* * *

In the *Chekhov Almanack* which is prepared by Meschrabpom-Film for the 25th Anniversary of the death of Chekhov, the director, V. Protasanof and the associate director, M. Doller, included the following themes: "Anne Around the Neck", "Reference", "Chameleon", "Revenge", "The Mask", "Death of the Official" and "Failure",—Louis Forestier—operator.
CLOSE UP

Tatiana Lukashevitch—director of Meschrabpom-Film, has commenced the production of the picture \textit{Self Made Man}. The theme of the scenario is taken from an article of A. Zorich. S. Govorkyan—operator.

* * *

The Meschrabpom-Film expedition for the picture \textit{26 Commissars (The Way to India)} has returned from Transcausasia to Moscow. The scenario was written by Agadzhanova-Shutko and Blyakhin. The production is carried out jointly with Azgoskino, Goskinprom-Georgia, and Meschrabpom-Film. V. S. Meyerhold and N. Shengelaya have been engaged as directors. K. Kuznezof—operator. The nature scenes will be taken in Baku.

* * *

The director, L. Zamkovoy, and operator, E. Alexeef have completed at the Meschrabpom plant the filming and mounting of the film the \textit{Breaking Point} (according to Grebner's scenario). The picture will appear shortly. In the chief parts are: Honored People's Artist of the Republic Narokof, the actor Gladkof, Zhdanova, Klubkova and others.

* * *

B. Barnet is doing preparatory work for a joint production of \textit{Premiere}, by Meschrabpom-Film and Prometheus (Berlin).

* * *

The director, V. A. Protazanof after completing the \textit{Chekhov Almanack} will produce the film \textit{Feast of Holly Yeorgen}, according to the scenario of O. Leonidof and V. A. Protazanof.
Meschrabpom-Film director A. Hendelstein and operator Shelenkov have commenced the filming of *The Animal's Trail* (according to the scenario of Hendelstein). Simultaneously the group will film 10 short educational films on timbering. The filming will take place in the North, the expedition has departed for Archangel.

* * *

The director, A. Obolensky has completed the mounting of the film *The Dead do not Return*, after the scenario of L. Obolensky and N. Galich, Dorn—operator. In the chief parts are Anna Sten, A. Sudakevitch, V. Aksenof, V. Y. Volkof (G. Barsky, P. Pole, Korf, and others

* * *


* * *

From the Cinema materials of the Soviet-German Pamir Mountain Expedition, filmed by the Meschrabpom producer V. Schneiderof and operator I. Tolchan, was mounted a picture entitled *In the Unexplored Pamir*. Besides this several other short cultural films will be mounted from additional material. The USSR Academy of Science has given a good report on this picture.

* * *

The decree of the Council of People's Commissars relating to the development of the cultural film in the USSR has prompted Meschrabpom-Film to appeal to all social and co-operative organizations informing them of the special dates
CLOSE UP

of circulating cultural films. At the same time Meschrabpom-Film is collecting a fund of cultural films, of its own and foreign production. Various common accidents and the importance of showing prompt first-aid has called forth a Meschrabpom-Film known as First Aid in Accidents. The scenario was written by A. C. Berland and A. N. Tiagay. A. D. Dmitrief—director, V. Pronin—operator.

Director-operator A. Golovnya, who filmed the pictures: The End of St. Petersbourg, Storm Over Asia, and others, and the operator K. Venz have departed for Astrakhan, Baku, Vladivostok and Sakhalin for filming the cultural film Fish. En route they will film a picture Trip to Sakhalin.

The USSR Society for Cultural Relations with Foreign Countries, together with the administration of Meschrabpom-Film, organized in the Museum of the Revolution a cinema night to which were invited representatives of the Soviet and Foreign Press, cinema Workers and Cinema Social co-operators. The Chairman of VOKS, Com. O. D. Kameneva presented a paper of the "Cinema as a Factor of Relations with Foreign Countries." V. F. Malkin, Chairman of the Meschrabpom-Film Administration presented a paper on our work in foreign countries. Operator A. Golovnya told about his impressions of his trip abroad. In conclusion was shown the film The Living Corpse. There was also an exhibit of German, English, French, American and Dutch press reports, relating to the Soviet film abroad.

* * *

The Rails are Sounding a picture after the scenario of the proletarian writer, V. Kirshon, has been completed. The picture was filmed in Tiflis, (nature scenes) and in the chief
railway and locomotive repair-shops and on the railway lines. Interior scenes were taken in the studio of Goskinprom of Georgia. Director—U. A. Leontiev, G. Kabalov—operator. Sets by V. Eristof.

The administration of Meschrabpom-Film has signed a contract with Kino-Sibir, for a term of two years, for a joint production of not less than four films—two art films from the life of Siberia, from the epoch of the Civil war and of the present, and of two cultural films. The chief production will be *Kolchakovzhina*, Meschrabpom-Film has already commenced the work on the scenario for this picture.

Director for the second picture will be L. Obolensky, operator—N. Tolchan.

* * *

Meschrabpom-Film has commenced production of a cultural film *The Morning of a Healthy Man*. A. Dmitrief—director, Peter Possiagin—operator.

* * *

Director N. Bronitzky and operator Peter Mossiagin have completed a Meschrabpom educational film *The Amputation of the Uterus*, which is destined for demonstration in the medical faculties of the Universities.

Scientific consultants were Prof. M. O. Malyanovsky and Dr. E. I. Kwater.

* * *

Meschrabpom-Film director Petrova has commenced the filming of the picture *Mother and Child*, according to the scenario of E. I. Yakhnina and S. Sukharevsky.

Meschrabpom-Film has organized a Social Scientific Council in its Department of the Cultural Film. The
CLOSE UP

Council consists of representatives of Party, Labor Union and Scientific Organizations, the Press, People’s Commissars of Education, Health Preservation, Agriculture, etc.

* * *

III. WUFKU.

I. Kavaleridzé has completed the picture Flood from the history of the gydamacks in the Ukraine. Scenario writers Iohansen and Yourtik (Authors of the scenario “Zvenigora”) are now preparing for I. Kavaleridzé a theme on the Perekop, relating the story of the victory of the Red Army in the Perekop.

* * *

Director G. Stabavoi has commenced the filming of Expositions from the Panopticum, according to the scenario of K. Koshevsky. It reflects the inner struggle in the Ukrainian family between the young and the old generations on the ground of political differences.

* * *

Director S. Rashall is working on a picture Two Women, the picture represents two opposite types, the woman participating in socialist construction and the women of the home. M. Belsky—operator.

* * *

The well-known French writer Henri Barbusse is working on a scenario for WUFKU, based upon his own story Justice.

* * *

The Odessa plant is completing the art film The Death Loop from the life of the Soviet airmen, Directed by A.

* * *

A. Solovief recently completed the picture *Benefit of Clown George* and is now filming *Five Brides* according to the scenario of D. Marian. A. Kune—operator.

* * *

**NEW CULTURAL FILMS**

*Sea Warrens* is a cultural film, the production of which was commenced by WUFKU this spring. This picture calls for three expeditions, along the coast of the Black and Azov seas in the territories which are declared as State Warrens.

The first expedition took place in early spring for filming the migration of birds and the spring vegetation of the steppes; the second expedition takes place in the middle and end of May and will have a wider task. Besides filming the nesting period of birds and the development of birds societies it will also film the social life and work of the population of these regions. Finally the third expedition will film the fall vegetation on the steppes and of the coast land, as well as the autumn migration of the birds.

The film will be of normal length, its plan is prepared by the Scientific collaborators, N. Sharleman and A. Lazarenko.

*Heredity, its Laws and Significance in the Economic Life of the Land*, the scenario for this film has been prepared by Professor I. I. Klodnitzky by order of WUFKU. The film will have its scientific and scientific-popular aspect in the basis
CLOSE UP

of materials from selectional and experimental stations, horse breeding plants etc. Various selectional work in the animal and plant kingdoms, which is carried on in the Ukraine will be shown.

Besides the best experimental and breeding stations the very rich materials of the Chapley (State Breeding Stations on the Territory of former "Askania Nova" will for the first time be used). The filming commenced in early spring.

WUFKU AND THE SPRING SOWING CAMPAIGN

With the beginning of the spring sowing campaign WUFKU is issuing for the screen several interesting pictures.

Besides the art film New Ways (P. Dolin — producer) on the village screens will be shown the films Bessarabian Commune (G. Alexandrof — director) and Tractor (G. Heller — director). The films purpose to demonstrate the advantages of collective farming against individual, and the role of the tractor in collective farming.

The rural cinemas will also show the pictures The Struggle with Drought, Buriak Helped, Harmful Insects.

In the districts of the sugar beet will be produced a new picture of WUFKU, Planting of Sugar Beet, in four parts, B. Zanoza — director, Y. Kraevsky and G. Alexandrof — operators.

* * *

IV. VOSTOK KINO

The filming of Comet from Tartar life has commenced. V. I. Inkishinof — director, B. V. Franzisson — operator.
The Thirsty Land according to the scenario of C. A. Ermolinsky, treats the water problem of Central Asia, G. A. Raisman—director, L. Kosmatof—operator.

Work has commenced on the picture, The Red Yourta, on the subject of protection of motherhood and infancy in the Buriato-Mongolian Republic. It is based on the social life of the Buriats.

Director-operator A. G. Lemberg has departed to Buriatia.

THE CENSORSHIP PETITION

Those who signed the protest against the present conditions of film censorship will have wondered what has been done with the petition.

Sorting, verifying and checking the names took longer than was anticipated. The petition was printed and ready to be posted when several Members of Parliament who had promised their support, asked us to hold the matter over until after the election, as there was no possibility of presenting it before, owing to the mass of business that had to be cleared away.

We decided, therefore, to postpone the presentation of said petition to Parliament until after the election when we understand it is probable that the entire question of censorship, film, literary, and dramatic, is to be taken up.

We can assure those who signed the petition that the protest will be presented as soon as possible, and that in the meantime opposition to the present conditions is increasing.
To the Editor, Close Up,
Sir,

I find in the issue of Close Up, dated May, 1929, a review by W. Bryher under the heading "Private Showing of Cosmos". In justice to my principals, Messrs. Wardour Films Ltd., my colleague, Professor Julian S. Huxley, to this Association and the British Social Hygiene Council, who approved of the film, and to myself, I wish to emphasise that the film seen by Bryher was not Cosmos, but the German version of the same material—Natur und Liebe. This latter, which she saw, while consisting of the same shots, was based on an entirely different theme to that of Cosmos.

When Professor Huxley and I undertook the re-editing of Natur und Liebe for the British market, we decided that it was not only desirable, but also necessary to eliminate, as far as possible, the sexual theme and base it on the fundamentals of Evolution. This alteration, which was called for both on the grounds of suitability for general exhibition and for scientific accuracy, necessitated the entire re-modelling of all the sequences of the film—as is shown by the enclosed synopsis of the new version.

Yours faithfully,

Vernon J. Clancy
( Editor of Cosmos ).
The following letter has been received from Brunel and Montagu, Ltd.

The assertion, twice repeated, in the issue of your paper for May, that the copy of BED AND SOFA shown to the Film Society was cut or abbreviated is a lie.

The copy shown was that supplied to my Company by the Russian Trade Delegation in Berlin; it contained several scenes not appearing in German release copies and was loaned by us to the Film Society and shown entire, save for a length of approximately six feet, part of shot representing soldiers in gas masks walking through a cloud of gas, damaged in rehearsal exhibition. The titles were translated, as exactly as the English language permits, from the Russian flash-titles supplied in the copy.

As a member of the Council of the Film Society I may add that it is the invariable practice of that body, where any departure from the version supplied by the director of a film or his representative is sanctioned in the copy shown, to state that fact clearly in the programme.

Yours

Ivor Montagu,
Director Brunel and Montagu Ltd.

Close Up replies to Brunel and Montagu.

Dear Mr. Montagu,

It's too bad we were so careless, but anyhow, your facts would seem—if published here—to adjust matters. Like Miss
CLOSE UP

Dorothy Richardson, we are "almost persuaded", though, you know, we had some letters also making the same complaint. Probably the complaint of variation was due to the fact that differing versions of the film were circulated abroad. I have myself seen two different endings, both showing in Germany at different times. It all hinges on the absolute necessity for director's copyright. Until this is secured there will always be disputes of one kind or another. I don't need to tell you this.

Your own program, too, if I may say so, was worded rather vaguely and did not state that sequences removed before submitting the film to the Board, were afterwards replaced. Board, also is rather obscure—as a word. Following your comments, clearly enough it means Board of Censors. It might easily have meant the Council of the Film Society.

I'm sorry our contributors were mistaken—begging your pardon—were liars. There's an ever so subtle distinction, but all the same, I don't think the gentlemen were lying. What, after all, would be the point of it?

With every good wish for your continued success,

Yours,

KENNETH MACPHERSON.
Editor Close Up.

The Manchester Film Society have begun work on their new film. The story concerns a labourer, an assistant elephant keeper at the Manchester Zoo, and a girl who keeps a tobacco and sweet kiosk. Panchromatic stock is being used and it
should have interesting possibilities. It is estimated that it will be two thousand feet in length.

Ninety years ago the painter, Daguerre, succeeded in producing the very first "photographic" pictures. An interesting collection of these originals which cannot be printed and so keep the beauty of a "real" photo, has been contributed by Dr. Steyn to the Stuttgart Exhibition. This represents an important addition of high documentary and artistic value.
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