

Amateur versus Professional

The major obstacle for amateur film-makers is their own sense of inferiority vis-à-vis professional productions. The very classification "amateur" has an apologetic ring. But that very word—from the Latin *amator*, "lover"—means one who does something for the love of the thing rather than for economic reasons or necessity. And this is the meaning from which the amateur film-maker should take his cue. Instead of envying the script and dialogue writers, the trained actors, the elaborate staffs and sets, the enormous production budgets of the professional film, the amateur should make use of the one great advantage which all professionals envy him, namely, *freedom*—both artistic and physical.

Artistic freedom means that the amateur film-maker is never forced to sacrifice visual drama and beauty to a stream of words, words, words, words, to the relentless activity and explanations of a plot, or to the display of a star or a sponsor's product; nor is the amateur production expected to return profit on a huge investment by holding the attention of a massive and motley audience for 90 minutes. Like the amateur still-photographer, the amateur film-maker can devote himself to capturing the poetry and beauty of places and events and, since he is using a motion-picture camera, he can explore the vast world of the beauty of movement. (One of the films winning Honorable Mention in the 1958 Creative Film Awards was *Round And Square*, a poetic, rhythmic treatment of the dancing lights of cars as they streamed down highways, under bridges, etc.) Instead of trying to invent a plot that moves, use the

movement of wind, or water, children, people, elevators, balls, etc., as a poem might celebrate these. And use your freedom to experiment with visual ideas; your mistakes will not get you fired.

Physical freedom includes time freedom—a freedom from budget imposed deadlines. But above all, the amateur film-maker, with his small, lightweight equipment, has an inconspicuousness (for candid shooting) and a physical mobility which is well the envy of most professionals, burdened as they are by their many-ton monsters, cables and crews. Don't forget that no tripod has yet been built which is as miraculously versatile in movement as the complex system of supports, joints, muscles and nerves which is the human body, which, with a bit of practice, makes possible the enormous variety of camera angles and visual action. You have all this, and a brain too, in one neat, compact, mobile package.

Cameras do not make films; film-makers make films. Improve your films not by adding more equipment and personnel but by using what you have to its fullest capacity. The most important part of your equipment is yourself: your mobile body, your imaginative mind, and your freedom to use both. Make sure you do use them.

Cinema as an Art Form

*To my father, who, when I was a child,
once spoke to one of life as an unstable equilibrium.*

— **ven** *the most cursory* observation of film production reveals that the entire field is dominated by two main approaches: the fiction-entertainment film, promoted internationally by commercial interests; and the documentary-educational film, promoted by individuals and organizations interested in social reform, visual education and cultural dissemination. What is conspicuously lacking is the development of cinema as an art form—concerned with the type of perception which characterizes all other art forms, such as poetry, painting, etc., and devoted to the development of a formal idiom as independent of other art forms as they are of each other.

The seriousness of this gap in our cultural development is in no way lessened by the utilitarian validity of the camera, as an instrument for recording and infinitely reproducing imaginative or factual material which would otherwise be accessible to a very limited audience. Nor should this lack of cinematic form be obscured by the growing body of sometimes sensational film techniques which are developed and exploited in the interest of a more effective rendition of the subject matter.

However, the most serious aspect of the entire situation is the passive acceptance and casual neglect of this state of the cinema by those whose active, compulsive interest and devotion is responsible for the varying but constant vitality of other art forms. This passivity on the part of those who should, presumably, be the most

20

actively interested, is the more serious since it derives not from an innocent ignorance of cinematic possibilities, but constitutes a reaction to the apparent failure of the film avant-garde of France and other countries. It is true that, out of the flurry of cinematic experiments which marked the twenties and early thirties, only a few emerged as art expressions of lasting, intrinsic value. The great majority of them are of interest as period pieces, symptomatic of a given stage of film history. But it is false to deduce from this, and from the dwindling away of the movement as a whole, that there is something in the very nature of film-making which precludes the possibility of its development as an art form.

It is true that an analysis of the failure of the first film avant-garde would seem to indicate certain formidable and paralyzing conclusions. First among these is that, since the production of films is necessarily expensive (much more so than the production of a poem or a painting), they must appeal to large audiences in order to meet their expenses—those very audiences who daily indicate their approval of the present Hollywood product. Second, but no less important, it seems that the machinery, the enormous personnel of assistant directors, cameramen, lighting men, actors and producers, represents a kind of collective monster who, standing between the artist and the realization of his vision, is bound to mangle any delicate or sensitive impulse. This is an obstacle which the poet, in his direct control over words, and the painter in his direct relationship to the canvas, does not confront. Finally, the use of the camera as a utilitarian instrument for recording remains such a fertile field of activity that a completely creative use of it will remain, both to potential producers and to potential audience, a rather superfluous excursion.

The basic fallacy in this entire line of argument consists in the fact that those who advance it have (unconsciously, to be sure) been the victims of elaborate propaganda. The cosmic production figures which Hollywood takes great care in making public, represent a

typically grandiose conceit. In Hollywood let no one be guilty of achieving something with less expense, less fanfare and less trouble than can possibly be employed, for in that glittering system of values, economy of any kind constitutes a debasement. In Hollywood logic, this is sound enough, for if a film is dependent upon the recording of reality, or rather its papier-mâché stand-in, then all possible lavish care must be taken in the construction of that reality—from the star (with her background of publicity, make-up men, etc.) to the real mink-lined dress in which she will dance. If however, a film were itself, through camera and cutting, to create a reality, the star salaries, the set-builders, the costumers, the full orchestrations, the million dollar gag-writers, the fantastic hierarchy of executives and overhead would disappear. A film can be created on 16mm for varying sums of from \$500 to \$10,000. Once this is achieved, the problem of a mass audience vanishes, for the audience which supports (in modest style, to be sure) the other art forms, is also sufficient to return such relatively modest production costs.

Moreover, the monstrous division of labor which characterizes the industry and makes of a film an assembly line product—passing from idea-man to writer to screenplay writer to shooting script writer to director to actor (while the electricians and the camera-men are engaged in another section of it), and so on until the dismal end—this is not only unnecessary, but completely destructive to the idiom. Intrinsic integrity is possible only when the individual who conceives the work remains its prime mover until the end, with purely technical assistance where necessary.

It is true that even with these simplifications, the magnitude of the purely practical problems of film-making is rather unique; but it is also true that, whatever they are, these remain problems of *execution* only, and should not be confused with the creative and esthetic problems of conception. Nor do they excuse films from incorporating those values which we expect to be present in other works of art.

21

When we agree that a work of art is, first of all, creative, we actually mean that it *creates* a reality and *itself constitutes* an experience. The antithesis of such a creative work is the merely communicative expression whose purpose it is to register, through *description*, an existent reality or an experience. When the created reality differs from the existent reality only by subtle variations, or when great skill and accuracy are brought to the description of an extra-ordinary reality, the distinction between the products seems almost obliterated. It resolves itself into a question of form, which I shall discuss later.

What is important, however, is that the descriptive expression approaches the creative expression when (as in all creative expression) it is devoted to the *experience* of reality rather than *reality* itself. It is revealing that the best use of cinematic form (camera, editing, etc.) appears in those commercial films which seek to describe an abnormal state of mind and its abnormal perception of reality.

The consistent popularity of horror films, on one level, and of 'psychological' films, on another, testifies to the seductive quality of experiential reality as subject matter for cinema, since cinema is uniquely capable of presenting the unbelievable with a show-it-to-me convincingness. It is significant that Hollywood conceives intense experience to be the particular attribute of abnormality either in the environment (horror films) or in the individual 'psyche' (psychological films). The implication is, that non-objectively real, imaginative forces (and here the sub-conscious appears as a manifestation of the supernatural) may be interesting, but that they are essentially malevolent. In the end, the imagination as a way of life does not pay. The imaginative individual is represented either as a psychic criminal who will receive his just deserts at the hands of a society determined to reestablish the sane way of life; or as a psychically diseased organism which should be restored to a normal condition.

Thus, the imaginative experience which is, for the artist, a *desired* normality, is, for the motion picture industry a dangerous, *psychic illegality*. As producer of a "mass art," the industry assumes a social responsibility. Accepting a pre-disposition towards evil in even the most innocent, it provides them with catharsis through the vicarious experience of its seductive aspects. At the same time it threatens them with dire consequences should they replace the vicarious experience with the direct.

In devoting at least some attention to the powerful potentialities of the imaginative experience, the industry has been more acute than that considerable body of theoreticians who hold that a "mass art" should concern itself with the *common* problems of a *common*, objective reality in terms of a *common* denominator of perception. Actually the distilled, experiential emotion of an incident is more universal and timeless than the incident itself. Fear, for example, as a subjective experience is as universal as the incidents of reality in which it arises are singular. Yet these critics claim that a work of the imagination is an esoteric object, accessible to the comprehension only of a select few.

It is therefore relevant to underline, here, the fact that the appreciation of a work based on experiential, or inner, realities consists not in a laborious analysis based on the logic of a reality which a "prepared" spectator brings to the work. It consists, rather, in an abandonment of all previously conceived realities. It depends upon an attitude of *innocent receptivity* which permits the *perception and the experience of the new* reality. Once this reality has been perceived and experienced, its logic may be deduced if one wishes. Such a deduction is not necessary to the perception and can only follow it as a secondary activity, much as an analysis of love, for example, can only follow upon the experience but can never induce it.

The audience for art is limited not by ignorance nor by an inability to analyze, but by a lack of innocent receptivity. The

defensiveness which is responsible for this reluctance to surrender one's own reality, at least temporarily, in order to experience another, is symptomatic of a social condition for which the artist is not responsible. It is based on the fact that if one conceded validity to contemporary realities other than one's own, the self-righteous convictions—those "absolute truths"—upon which social organization is based, are undermined. To this the average social being is instinctively, and traditionally opposed.

At the opposite pole to the objective realists stand the psychosocio-analysts, a movement which has gained impetus from the self-conscious alignment of the surrealists with Freudian and political theory. Here, any expression is regarded as a compulsive confessional, and a comprehension of it is considered dependent upon an analysis of the relationship of the images to the psyche of their source.

The most interesting results of this method occur in the work of a few highly intelligent, sophisticated film critics who regard commercial films as the somnambulistic confessionals of modern society. They proceed on the assumption that the significant meanings are not so much incorporated in the *intended statement* (which is the case with a work of art) but are *concealed in its decorative periphery and in the relationships between the statement and its source*.

The psycho-analytical approach is also rewarding in a comprehension of fantasy. In Hollywood films the significant meanings are derived from an analysis of the morally-determined (both conscious and un-conscious) censorships which give form, through limitation, to the work. In fantasy such censorships are presumably absent and the organizational integrity (hence the significant meaning) of these completely compulsive projections of psychic imagery, resides forever in its particular psychic source.

But if the psycho-analytical approach is brought to a truly creative, imaginative work of art, it yields a distorted interpretation. For such a work, although it is also based (like fantasy) on the

personal psyche, is a process in which the raw materials of fantasy are assorted, selected and integrated in terms of a dominant idea or emotion. The energies of the artist are devoted to so mating his psychic images with the art instrument that the resultant product is imbued with vitality independent of its source. Thus it is conceived, shaped, fed and formed towards the day of its emergence from the parent body as an independent, organized form. As such, its *reality and meaning are contained* within itself *and in the dynamics of the inter-relationships of its component parts*; even though the nature of that reality and dynamic is determined by the conceptual sources from which it derives.

Art is distinguished from other human activities and expression by this organic function: its form in the projection of imaginative experience into reality. This function is characterized by two essential qualities: first, that it incorporates, in itself, the philosophy and emotions which relate to the experience which is being projected; and second, that it derives from the instrument by which that projection is accomplished.

While the relationship of form to content has been given much consideration and recognition, the role of the instrument, in the case of cinema particularly, deserves special attention. The relationship of the instrument to the *form—the oneness* between them—is clear enough in painting, where the form of painting is one with the paint and brush; or in poetry, where the form is one with the words. Here the conception of technique is expressed in the somewhat idealized notion that the brush of a painter should act, almost, as an organic, refined extension of the hand. But to think of the mechanism of the cinema as an extension of human faculties is to deny the advantage of the machine. The entire excitement of working with a machine as a creative instrument rests, on the contrary, in the recognition of its capacity for a *qualitatively different* dimension of projection. That is why, in cinema,

the instrument (and by this I mean both the camera and the cutting of the film) becomes not a passive, adjustable conveyor of formal decisions, but an active, contributing, formative factor.

- 26 The mechanical similarity between the lens and the eye is largely responsible for the use of the camera as a recording, rather than a creative, instrument, for the function of the eye is to register. However, it is in the *mind behind the eye* that the registered material achieves meaning and impact. In cinema this extension has been ignored. The meaning of the incident or experience is here made an *attribute of the reality* in front of the lens rather than a creative act on the part of the mechanism (including the human being) behind the lens.

In keeping with this theory of the camera as a registering eye, there is a substantial school of thought which holds that the documentary film, by exploiting the capacity of the camera to record reality, constitutes the cinematic art form. Certain sequences from *Fighting Lady* (a war documentary), in which enemy planes are engaged in combat and are strafed at close quarters, are advanced as an example of great cinematic achievement. Actually, these sequences were achieved as follows: the camera shutter was connected to the gun in such a way that it was automatically released when the gun was fired. These sequences are, then, the result of the automatic functioning of a brainless mechanism which operated in synchronization with another mechanism, a gun, which was operated because of the desire to kill. This, as a motivation, has obviously little in common with the motivation of art.

When the camera is used to register (for infinite reproduction) either theater, or a picturization of fiction, or a so-called "objective reality," there is no more *oneness* between form and instrument than there is between the poem and the typewriter. But whereas the typewriter can hardly be considered capable of creative action, the camera is, potentially, a highly creative instrument.

We are, however, in a period in which the reporter, the inter-

national correspondent, stands as a Man of Letters in the public mind. All who have read fine poetry could not confuse even the finest reportorial account with a poem. Documentaries are the visual counterparts of reportorial dispatches, and bear the same relationship to cinema art as the dispatches do to poetry. If, particularly in film, the flowering of the documentary has almost obscured all else save the "entertainment" film, it is because the events and accidents of reality are, today, more monstrous, more shocking, than the human imagination is capable of inventing. The war gives rise to incidents which are not only beyond the inventive power of the human imagination, but also beyond its capacity, almost, to believe. In this period, where we are concerned with the unbelievableness of incidents, we require a reportage and a proof of their reality. But the great art expressions will come later, as they always have; and they will be dedicated, again, to the *agony* and the *experience* rather than the incident.

What has been most responsible for the lack of development of the cinematic idiom is the emphatic literacy of our age. So accustomed are we to thinking in terms of the continuity-logic of the literary narrative that the narrative pattern has come to completely dominate cinematic expression in spite of the fact that it is, basically, a visual form. We overlook the fact that painting, for instance, is organized in visual logics, or that music is organized in tonal-rhythmic logics; that there are visual and auditory experiences which have nothing to do with the descriptive narrative.

Once we arrive at an independent cinematic idiom, the present subservience of cinema to the literary story will appear unbelievably primitive. It will seem comparable to those early days when airplanes flew above and along the highway and railroad routes. The fact that they moved by air—a dustless, faster, pleasanter method than railroad or automobile—does not negate the fact that they traveled *by earth*, and not by air. It is also true that, before one could travel really by air, many instruments, techniques,

etc.,...had to be developed. But the fact is that if these efforts to discover the element air, as contrasted to the elements earth and water, had not been made, airplane travel would have remained a merely minor, quantitative improvement over earthly locomotion and would never have so qualitatively affected our concepts of time and space and our relationship to them.

There are also those who, riding in an airplane, turn their attention to recognizing earth landmarks and who complain for the absence of bird songs and flower perfumes. In their fixation upon the familiar and the recognizable, they fail to enlarge their experience. As long as we seek for literature in cinema, whose peculiar beauty and creative potentialities have hardly been touched, it will be denied development.

The fact that an individual may find walking in the country more satisfying than swimming in the ocean or flying through the air is a question of his own personal preference; but it is only in terms of personal disposition that preferential comparisons can be made between experiences which differ qualitatively. Moreover, ideally, such personal preferences and pre-dispositions should not be permitted to minimize the value of an experience which differs, qualitatively, from that towards which the individual may be pre-disposed.

I hope therefore that it is clear that, in my repeated references to literature and other art forms, in my insistence upon the independence of cinema from them, and in my suggestion that, as an art form, cinema seems especially appropriate to some of the central problems of our time, I am not implying a comparative value judgment. On the contrary, by insisting upon its independence from other art forms, I strike at the very heart of the growing tendency to think of motion pictures as a somehow superior method of communicating literary or theatrical experience. Dance, for example, which, of all art forms, would seem to profit most by cinematic treatment, actually suffers miserably. The more successful

it is as a theatrical expression, conceived in terms of a stable, stage front audience, the more its carefully wrought choreographic patterns suffer from the restiveness of a camera which bobs about in the wings, on-stage for a close-up, etc. There is a potential filmic dance form, in which the choreography and movements would be designed, precisely, for the mobility and other attributes of the camera, but this, too, requires an independence from theatrical dance conceptions.

The development of cinematic form has suffered not only because the camera has been used almost exclusively to pictorialize literature and to document reality, but also because it came into a world in which other art forms had already been firmly established for centuries. Painters, for instance, inspired by the possibilities of this new medium, brought to it the traditions of the idiom with which they were first pre-occupied. Consequently, in many abstract films, the film frame has been used as an animated canvas. But these are developments in painting rather than in film. In most cases the creative energy of the artists who came from other fields was dedicated first of all, to the arrangement of objects in front of the lens rather than the manner of manipulating the mechanism behind the lens.

Nor does the direction of cinematic form consist in a wide-eyed game with the camera as if it were a new toy in the hands of a curious, clever child. It does not consist in making things appear or disappear, go fast or slow, backwards or forwards, just because a camera can do that. This results merely in a sensationalist, virtuoso exercise of skills and techniques. Cinematic form is more profound than that. It is a concept of the integration of techniques, a search for the meaning of a skill.

Cinema—and by this is understood the entire body of techniques including camera, lighting, acting, editing, etc.—is a time-space art with a unique capacity for creating new temporal-spatial

relationships and projecting them with an incontrovertible impact of reality—the reality of show-it-to-me. It emerges in a period marked, simultaneously, by the development of radio in communication, the airplane and the rocket-ship in transportation, and the theory of relativity in physics. To ignore the implications of this simultaneity, or to consider it a historical coincidence, would constitute not only a failure to understand the basic nature of these contributions to our civilization; it would also make us guilty of an even more profound failure, that of recognizing the relationships of human ideology to material development.

The Nazi concept of racial integrity, for instance, belongs to that period in which a mountain between two valleys served to localize the tribes of each. In such primitive civilization, subject to all sorts of natural disasters, rigidly localized by geographical and material restrictions, a philosophy which placed the unity of the tribe above all else was appropriate. The isolation gave reason to an absolutistic philosophy of time and space. The need for tribal unity gave reason to the concept of absolute authority in the state, religion and mores in general.

Today the airplane and the radio have created, in fact, a relativistic reality of time and space. They have introduced into our immediate reality a dimension which functions not as an added spatial location but which, being both temporal and spatial, relates to all the other dimensions with which we are familiar. There is not an object which does not require relocation in terms of this new frame of reference, and not least among these is the individual.

Imperceptibly, almost, this sense of relativism has begun to influence our thinking. In spatial terms, for example, the absolutistic differentiation between *here* and *there* loses meaning as *here* and *there*, being so mutually accessible, become, in effect, almost identical. In terms of time, the chronology of the past, present and future has also increasingly lost its meaning as we have come

to understand the continuity of the past with the future—and, prodded on by the actual acceleration of historical processes, to deal with the present moment as an extension of the past into the future rather than as an independent temporal period.

Moreover, because of the quality of this new referential frame, validity is no longer a function of the object itself. It has become instead, a function of the position of that object in the constellation of which it is a part. The concept of absolute, intrinsic values, whose stability must be maintained, gives way to the concept of relationships which ceaselessly are created, dissolved and recreated and which bestow value upon the part according to its functional relation to the whole. We face the problem of discovering the dynamics of maintaining an *unstable equilibrium*.

The individual, deprived of the absolutisms which moulded the moral patterns of his life, is faced with a critical, desperate need to discover in himself an integrity at once constant enough to constitute an identity, and adjustable enough to relate to an apparently anarchic universe whose gravities, revolutions and constellations operate according to a logic which he has yet to discover. The solution does not rest in the infinite adjustments and revisions of a Ptolemaic system of description.

Cinema, with its capacity to manipulate time and space seems eminently appropriate as an art form in which such problems can find expression. By manipulation of time and space I do not mean such established filmic techniques as flash-backs, condensation of time, parallel actions, etc.... These affect not the action itself, but the method of revealing it. In a flash-back there is no implication that the usual chronological integrity of the action itself is in any way affected by the process, however disrupted, of memory. The turning of spring into winter by one swift dissolve is a condensation of the presentation of the seasons, but does not affect the implication of customary seasonal rhythms. Parallel actions—as in a sequence when we see, alternately, the hero who rushes to

the rescue and the heroine, whose situation becomes increasingly critical—is an omnipresence on the part of the camera as a witness of action, not as a creator of it.

32 When dislocations of reality occur in commercial films they are inevitably presented as a quality, not of the reality itself, but of a distorted view of it. But the dislocations of modern life are, precisely, dislocations of reality itself. And it is conceivable that an individual should be incapable of a distortion of vision which, designed to complement and "correct" these dislocations of reality, results in an apparent "adjustment."

The external universe which we once considered, at least in our immediate locality, as the passive recipient of the manifestations of the individual will—the stage upon which the conflict of human wills was dramatically enacted—has been revealed as an active, creative force. And again, cinema, with its capacity for animating the ostensibly inanimate, for re-relating the ostensibly immobile, is especially equipped to deal with such experiences.

The potentialities of cinema are rich and unexplored. It can relate two unrelated geographies by the continuous unity of an un-interrupted movement begun in one and concluded in the other. It can project as simultaneities, chronologically distant events. Slow-motion, and the agony of its analysis, reveals in the most casual incident a cosmic constellation. Yet no verbal description can convey the sense of a medium which is basically visual.

And here we return to the first considerations of this article, for such potentialities as the cinema contains for giving expression to these problems, will be developed only when cinema is treated as an independent art form, rather than as an instrument for the illustration of literary narrative. How little that is understood is evidenced by a recent article by the film critic of *The New York Times*. In a review of the "Best Film Plays of 1943-44," he applauds the fact that "the plays are presented—uncomplicated by the numerous camera directions which used to be the bane

of the reader." When the day comes that the camera—the visual element—ceases to be thought of as an annoying complication by "film writers" who concern themselves with cinema not out of an appreciation of it as a medium, but because the film industry provides the most lucrative employment for "writers," cinema as an art form will begin to come of age.

An Anagram of Ideas on Art, Form and Film

Preface

critical statement by an artist which
-concerns the field of his creative activity is usually taken to be a manifesto or a statement of the theories upon which the creative work is based. Art abounds in works designed to demonstrate principles and manifestos, and these are, almost without exception, inferior to those works from which the principles were derived.

In my case I have found it necessary, each time, to ignore any of my previous statements. After the first film was completed, when someone asked me to define the principle which it embodied, I answered that the function of film, like that of other art forms, was to create experience—in this case a semi-psychological reality. But the actual creation of the second film caused me to subsequently answer a similar question with an entirely different emphasis. This time, that reality must exploit the capacity of film to manipulate Time and Space. By the end of the third film, I had again shifted the emphasis—insisting this time on a filmically visual integrity, which would create a dramatic necessity of itself, rather than be dependent upon or derive from an underlying dramatic development. Now, on the basis of the fourth, I feel that all the other elements must be retained, but that special attention must be given to the creative possibilities of Time, and that the form as a whole should be ritualistic (as I define this later in the essay). I believe, of course, that some kind of development has taken place; and I feel that one symptom of the continuation of

| | The Nature of Forms | The Forms of Art | The Art of Film |
|---|------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------|
| The State of Nature and The Character of Man | IA Page 38 | IB Page 55 | IC Page 74 |
| The Mechanics of Nature and The Methods of Man | 2A Page 44 | 2B Page 60 | 2C Page 85 |
| The Instrument of Discovery and The Instrument of Invention | 3A Page 49 | 3B Page 68 | 3C Page 96 |

such a development would be that the actual creation of each film would not so much illustrate previous conclusions as it would necessitate new one—and thus the theory would remain dynamic 36 and volatile.

This is not, therefore, to be taken as a manifesto. It is an organization of ideas in an anagrammatic complex instead of in the linear logic to which we are accustomed.

An anagram is a combination of letters in such a relationship that each and every one is simultaneously an element in more than one linear series. This simultaneity is real, and independent of the fact that it is usually perceived in succession. Each element of an anagram is so related to the whole that no one of them may be changed without affecting its series and so affecting the whole. And, conversely, the whole is so related to every part that whether one reads horizontally, vertically, diagonally or even in reverse, the logic of the whole is not disrupted, but remains intact.

In this essay the element is not a single letter, but an idea concerned with the subject matter of its position in the anagram; that is, 2B, for instance, deals with the forms of art in reference to the mechanics of nature and the methods of man. In every other respect the principles governing an anagram hold. As printed, it proceeds from the general to the specific. Those who prefer the inductive method may read the elements in reverse order. Or one may slice through on the diagonal, picking up the sides afterwards.

I recommend this form to anyone who has faced the problem of compressing into a linear organization an idea which was stimulating precisely because it extended into two or three different, but not contradictory directions at once.

It has seemed especially useful to me in this essay. In the effort to apply the currently accepted esthetic theories to the first new art form in centuries, I have found it necessary to re-examine and re-evaluate principles which had become so "understood" a qual-

ity of other arts as to have constituted, for the past century, the unquestioned premises of creative action. And so I have found myself involved in fields and considerations which seem far from my original concern with film. But I believe that these are not as irrelevant as they may, off-hand, seem. 37

Modern specialization has discouraged the idea of the whole man. One is timid to invade or refer to territories which are not, strictly speaking, one's own. In the need to do so, nevertheless—for to arrive at principles requires comparative analysis—it is possible that I have been inaccurate in various details. And in seeking for the principles of various concepts of art form, I have examined not those talents whose genius is to transcend all principles, but those lesser lights who, in failing to transcend them, illustrate them best. This may give, at times, the impression of a wholesale underestimation of modern art; and for this impression, which does not reflect my real evaluation, I must apologize. Whatever the errors of generalization or the weaknesses of critical omission, they are committed in the interest of showing film (in such a relatively short space) not as a localized, specialized craft but as an art form, sharing with other art forms a profound relationship to man, the history of his relation to reality, and the basic problems of form.

In an anagram all the elements exist in a simultaneous relationship. Consequently, within it, nothing is first and nothing is last; nothing is future and nothing is past; nothing is old and nothing is new...except, perhaps, the anagram itself.