



## Studies in Visual Communication

---

Volume 6  
Issue 3 *Fall 1980*

Article 1

---

1980

### Volume 6 Number 3

---

#### Recommended Citation

(1980). Volume 6 Number 3. 6 (3), 1-96. Retrieved from <https://repository.upenn.edu/svc/vol6/iss3/1>

This paper is posted at ScholarlyCommons. <https://repository.upenn.edu/svc/vol6/iss3/1>  
For more information, please contact [repository@pobox.upenn.edu](mailto:repository@pobox.upenn.edu).

---

Volume 6 Number 3

studies in

# Visual Communication



---

**Editors:** Larry Gross and Jay Ruby

**Associate Editor:** Tobia L. Worth

**Business Manager:** Elvira Lankford

**Graphic Designer:** Penelope Malish

**Editorial Board:** Howard S. Becker (Northwestern University)  
Steven Feld (University of Pennsylvania)  
Larry Gross (University of Pennsylvania)  
Jay Ruby (Temple University)  
Carroll Williams (Anthropology Film Center)

**Review Editors:** Paula Ben-Amos (University of Pennsylvania)  
George Custen (Cedar Crest/Muhlenberg)  
Dan Schiller (Temple University)

**Consulting Editors:** Robert Plant Armstrong (University of Texas at Dallas)  
Howard S. Becker (Northwestern University)  
Peter Burke (Cambridge University)  
James Carey (University of Illinois)  
Richard Chalfen (Temple University)  
William Davenport (University of Pennsylvania)  
Phoebe Ellsworth (Yale University)  
Howard Gardner (Harvard University)  
Henry Glassie (University of Pennsylvania)  
Erving Goffman (University of Pennsylvania)  
Nelson Graburn (University of California at Berkeley)  
Julian Hochberg (Columbia University)  
Elihu Katz (Hebrew University)  
John Kennedy (University of Toronto)  
Rhoda Metraux (Museum of Natural History)  
Linda Nochlin (City University of New York)  
John Reilly (Global Village)  
Jean Rouch (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique)  
Gavriel Salomon (Hebrew University)  
Allan Sekula (New York, N.Y.)  
Joel Snyder (University of Chicago)  
Amos Vogel (University of Pennsylvania)  
Annette Weiner (University of Texas at Austin)

Society for the  
Anthropology of Visual Communication

President (1979-1981)  
Carroll Williams  
(Anthropology Film Center)

*Studies in Visual Communication* is a multidisciplinary journal drawing on the many areas of scholarship that focus upon aspects of visual communication. The editors welcome theoretical and empirical contributions devoted to significant problems and issues in the study of visual communication.

Manuscripts should follow the style of *Studies* and should be submitted typed, double-spaced, and in duplicate. Unsolicited manuscripts will not be returned unless accompanied by an addressed and stamped envelope. *Studies* assumes no responsibility for the safety of manuscripts.

All manuscripts, books for review, and communications concerning editorial matters should be sent to Editor, *Studies in Visual Communication*, The Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, 3620 Walnut Street, Philadelphia, PA 19104.

Inquiries and all correspondence regarding advertising should be sent to Business Manager, *Studies in Visual Communication*, The Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania, 3620 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104. *Studies* is printed at Pearl-Pressman-Liberty/Printers, 5th and Poplar Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19123.

*Studies in Visual Communication* subscription rates are \$15.00 for one year, \$28.00 for two years, and \$39.00 for three years. There is no additional charge for institutions (libraries) or for foreign surface mail. Single copies are \$5.00. Checks should be made payable to: *Studies in Visual Communication* and sent to *Studies in Visual Communication*, PO Box 13358, Philadelphia, PA 19101, U.S.A.

By agreement with the Society for the Anthropology of Visual Communication, the editorial board of *Studies* is jointly appointed by SAVICOM and The Annenberg School of Communications, and all SAVICOM members receive a subscription to *Studies* as part of their membership. Information on SAVICOM membership may be obtained by writing to SAVICOM, 1703 New Hampshire Ave., NW, Washington, D.C. 20009.

***Studies in Visual Communication* is published three times a year by The Annenberg School Press, an activity of The Annenberg School of Communications, 3620 Walnut St., Philadelphia, PA 19104. The subscription price is \$15.00 per year.**

**Third-class nonprofit postage paid at Philadelphia, PA, and at additional post offices. Copyright © 1980 by The Annenberg School of Communications. All rights reserved.**

**Postmaster: Send address changes to *Studies in Visual Communication*, PO Box 13358, Philadelphia, PA 19101.**

# Visual Communication

## Contents

---

### Essays in Honor of Sol Worth Part I

---

2 Sol Worth and the Study of Visual Communications  
**Larry Gross**

---

20 An Analysis of the Nazi Film "Hitlerjunge Quex"  
**Gregory Bateson**

---

56 The Perceived and the Named  
**Christian Metz**  
Translated by  
**Steven Feld and Shari Robertson**

---

69 Nikola Tesla Radiated a Blue Light  
**Dusan Makavejev**

---

76 Presidentes Municipales (Photo Essay)  
**Richard Tichich**

---

84 Media Events: The Sense of Occasion  
**Elihu Katz**

---

## Reviews and Discussion

90 **Bouissac** Circus and Culture: A Semiotic Approach/**Jean Alier**

---

92 **Greenhaigh and Megaw (eds.)** Art in Society: Studies in Style, Culture, and Aesthetics/**Marie Jeanne (Monni) Adams**

---

96 **Nahumck** Introduction to Dance Literacy: Perception and Notation of Dance Patterns/**Reader's Response and Reviewer's Reply**

# Sol Worth and the Study of Visual Communications

Larry Gross

The central thread that runs through Sol Worth's research and writings is the question of how meaning is communicated through visual images.<sup>1</sup> Coming to academic life after careers in painting, photography, and filmmaking, Worth was imbued with the conviction that visual media were forms of communication that, while fundamentally different from speech, could and must be seriously examined as ways human beings create and share meanings. Focusing on film he began with the question, "What does a film communicate, and how does this process work?" (1966:322). The answers he began with grew out of his practice as a teacher of film.

## Teaching Film as Communication

In Worth's initial experience in teaching film, as Fulbright Professor in Finland (1956-1957), he had utilized a method he later described as follows: "The teacher would make a film; the students would work along with him, learning and doing at the same time. Class discussions would be held in which the various aspects of the film were developed and demonstrated" (1963:54). The film he made during this process of teaching was *Teatteri*, now in the permanent collection of the Museum of Modern Art. When he came to the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Pennsylvania to set up and teach a course in documentary film, however, Worth adopted a different approach: the students would make a film. This choice was decisive in orienting him toward questions and perspectives that influenced all his subsequent work. It led Worth to consider problems few film scholars had posed or pursued.

The most immediate consequence of this pedagogical decision was a concern over the inexperience of his students:

The young men and women in my class were bright, but they had never before made a film. They had never used a camera, edited a shot, or written a script. There was not enough time. And I was worried. If I made a film, I could control it; if I let the students make their own films, they could fail. The films might be bad or unfinished, the cameras and equipment might be ruined, film might be wasted. [1963:55]

---

Larry Gross is Associate Professor of Communication at The Annenberg School of Communication, University of Pennsylvania, and is co-editor of *Studies in Visual Communication*.

This concern proved unfounded. The students succeeded in making films and the workshop technique seemed to engage them in the process Worth deemed appropriate to a school of communications:

The process of changing back and forth from conception as paramount, to the actual visual document as paramount, seems to me the key learning process in the Documentary Film Workshop. It is the way in which the students learn to see. It is the process by which they train themselves to find a meaningful visual image in relation to a concept which is usually literary or philosophical in nature. The purpose of the Workshop is not to produce films (this is our pleasure), but rather, to provide an environment in which students learn to see filmically; to provide an environment where they can learn about the techniques and the thinking necessary to communicate ideas through the filmed image. [1963:56f]

It was the final stage in the Workshop, however, that led Worth to the next set of questions. When the films were completed, they were screened before an audience of students, friends, and faculty. "It is in the period after the lights go on, when the comments are made, that the student begins to know how very complex and difficult the art of film communication is" (1963:57). The students weren't alone, as Worth himself became increasingly intrigued by a pattern he found in the responses of diverse audiences to the films made by his students:

The greatest involvement, identification, and understanding seems to come from the young and the untrained. The greatest hostility and incomprehension seems to come from the adult professional in the communication fields . . . . Adolescents find these films easier to understand than do adults. [1965:12]

## The Bio-Documentary

In trying to make sense of this unexpected pattern of responses Worth first clarified the nature of the films he was screening. He realized that the inexperience of the student filmmakers (their lack of socialization in traditional film codes), and his insistence that "the subject matter evolves from the student's own interests and experiences" (1963:56), lead to a particularly subjective kind of film. Worth called this kind of film "bio-documentary":

. . . a film that can be made by a person who is not a professional filmmaker; or by someone who has never made a film before. It is a film that can be made by anyone with enough skill, let's say, to drive a car; by a person of a different culture, or a different age group, who has been taught in a specific way to make a film that helps him to communicate to us, the world as *he* sees it, and his concerns as he sees them. [1964:3]

In posing the concept of a bio-documentary Worth was clearly concerned with analogies between subjective films and dreams as forms of visual imagery:

A bio-documentary is a film made by a person to show how he feels about himself and his world. It is a subjective way of showing what the objective world that a person sees is really like . . . . In addition . . . it often captures feelings and reveals values, attitudes, and concerns that lie beyond the conscious control of the maker. [1964:3]

But it wasn't enough to see the bio-documentary as a subjective, *individual* statement by a novice filmmaker. That might explain why adults could not "understand" these films, and especially why "hostility seems to be found most frequently among filmmakers, film critics, and communications professionals . . . (e.g. 'I think you are intellectually irresponsible to teach young people to make films like this . . . I think the whole thing is a hoax . . .')." (1965:7). After all, it is hardly a novel observation that those most engaged with a set of conventions in art are the most outraged at innovations or variations that ignore, challenge, or undermine these conventions.

It still remained to ask why young viewers responded with enjoyment and understanding; after all, even if they were not professionals, they were used to seeing "conventional" films. Worth decided that there was something in the subject matter and the structure of the films that was comprehensible to young viewers because it was closer to their way of talking and thinking. In particular he felt that the films used ambiguities and hints in a fashion that adults were no longer comfortable with, but which younger viewers found "safer and more comfortable for certain themes than [they] would an outright statement" (1965:18).

Although he himself probably did not see the implications of his inquiries at this point, Worth was laying some of the foundations for an important analytic shift that gradually became explicit in his thinking. I believe that he was already expressing some uneasiness with the psychological approach noted above—e.g., bio-documentaries as "dream-like" revelations of the unconscious. Although much of Worth's research on film during the rest of the 1960s is clearly dominated by the psychological model of individual expression, he increasingly focused his attention (often simultaneously, even contradictorily) on film as cultural communication. Even at this point, then, Worth was beginning to formulate two related sets of questions which he pursued for the rest of his life.

First, he was led to tackle the question of how meaning can be communicated in various modes and media: are visual images in general, and film in particular, better understood in light of an overall theory of communication as symbolic behavior; and what would this theory look like?

Second, he understood that his experience with novice filmmakers suggested a radical innovation in the way the film medium could be used as a research tool. If anyone could be taught to make a film that reflected his or her own world view, and the values and concerns of his or her group, then the direction of the film communication process could be *reversed*. This meant using the medium "to see whether the visual world offers a way of communication that can be used not only for us to communicate to *them*, but so that we might make it easier for them to talk to us" (1965:19).

Although these two sets of questions were pursued in tandem, and their interconnections formed the basis of much of Worth's intellectual development, it will be necessary for the purpose of exposition to discuss them separately.

### The Navajo Project

The first fruits of the bio-documentary approach and the realization of the potential it offered for communication by "them to talk to us" were not long in coming. In his first exposition of the bio-documentary film concept, at the 1964 Meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, Worth already saw the possibility of using this method to explore the world view of another culture.

In a documentary film about the Navajo you look for an objective representation of how they live as seen by an outsider. In a Bio-Documentary about the Navajo, the film would be made by a Navajo. One would not only look to see how the Navajo live, but one would also look to see how a Navajo sees and structures his own life and the world around him. [1964:5]<sup>2</sup>

In this capsule "proposal" for a research project, Worth later realized he was obeying Malinowski's injunction that "the final goal, of which an Ethnographer should never lose sight . . . is, briefly, to grasp the native's point of view, his relation to life, to realize *his* vision of *his* world" (1922:25). In this context, it is interesting to note Worth's sensitivity to one of the most important but often neglected problems in anthropological theory and practice: the influence of the researcher's own values and biases. The proposed use of the bio-documentary approach was, to use a term that achieved currency in later years, reflexive:

Of course no view by one man of another is entirely objective. The most objective documentary film, or report, includes the view and values of the maker. The standard documentary film tries, however, to exclude as much as possible of this personal value system. The Bio-Documentary, on the other hand, encourages and teaches the filmmaker to include and to be concerned with his *own* values. . . . The Bio-Documentary method teaches the maker of the film to search for the meaning he sees in his world and it encourages the viewer to continue that search by comparing *his* values with the values expressed by the filmmaker in the film. [1964:5]

This interest in what "other people had to say about themselves through film, and how one could teach them to say it" (Worth and Adair 1972:30) led to the Navajo Filmmakers Project conducted in the summer of 1966 by Worth in collaboration with John Adair, an anthropologist long familiar with the Navajo, and assisted by Richard Chalfen, then a graduate student working with Worth.

The project addressed a series of research objectives and issues:

- 1 To determine the feasibility of teaching the use of film to people with another culture. [Worth and Adair 1970:11]
- 2 To find out if it was possible to systematize the process of teaching; to observe it with reference to the maker, the film itself, and the viewer; and to collect data about it so as to assist other ongoing research exploring the inference of meaning from film as a communicative "language." [ibid.:12]
- 3 [To test the hypothesis that] motion picture film, conceived, photographed, and sequentially arranged by a people such as the Navajo would reveal something of their cognition and values that may be inhibited, not observable, or not analyzable when investigation is totally dependent on verbal exchange—especially when it must be done in the language of the investigator. [ibid.]
- 4 [To] create new perspectives on the Whorfian hypothesis, work on which has for the most part been limited to linguistic investigation of cognitive phenomena. Through cross-cultural comparative studies using film as a mode of visual communication relationships between linguistic, cognitive, cultural and visual phenomena might eventually be clarified. [Worth and Adair 1972:28]
- 5 [To see whether] the images, subjects and themes selected and the organizing methods used by the Navajo filmmakers would reveal much about their mythic and value systems. [It was] felt that a person's values and closely held beliefs about the nature of the world would be reflected in the way he edited his previously photographed materials. [ibid.]
- 6 To study the process of "guided" technological innovation and observe how a new mode of communication would be patterned by the culture to which it is introduced. [Worth and Adair 1970:12]

The Navajo project was enormously successful. The films made by the Navajo filmmakers were widely screened and discussed as "a breakthrough in cross-cultural communications" (Mead 1977:67). Worth's involvement with anthropology deepened after the completion of the project and the publication of its results (Worth and Adair 1967, 1970, 1972). He became increasingly identified with the revitalization of a subfield, the anthropology of visual communications, a term he proposed as an alternative to the earlier term visual anthropology.

Worth felt that most anthropologists viewed film and photography only as ways to make records *about* culture (usually other cultures) and failed to see that they could be studied as phenomena *of* culture in their own right, reflecting the value systems, coding patterns, and cognitive processes of their maker. His experience with bio-documentary films had clarified this distinction for him

and he saw it as crucial to the understanding of visual communications. Pursuing this distinction leads to three issues which Worth was concerned with:

- 1 The denial of the possibility of an objective, value-free film record and the assertion of an inherent cultural bias of a filmmaker raises serious questions about the way we all view photographic images, and our tendency to accept them as evidence about the external world. In particular Worth was disturbed by the lack of understanding and sophistication on the part of anthropologists regarding their own use of visual image technologies.
- 2 The use of these technologies to record the lives of others for *our* purposes, and the purveying to others of our own cultural products and technologies (again, usually for our own profit), raise serious ethical issues about the power and the use of media which we ourselves do not adequately understand.
- 3 There is a need to understand the nature of film as a medium of communication—is there a film code and what are its properties?

I will begin with the last of these, which takes us back to the question of how meaning is communicated through film.

### Film as Communication

In the process of analyzing the early bio-documentary films made by his students, Worth had realized that although they were subjective they were not wholly idiosyncratic. In his discussion of these films he noted that "the films all employ similar grammars (in the sense of editing devices and filmic continuities) . . . grammars of argot rather than of conventional speech" (1965:18). As I have noted, the decision to view these films as social rather than merely individual expressions led to the question of whether there were underlying rules for the shaping and sharing of meanings in film.

Worth began by employing a communications theory model, in which film is seen as "a *signal* received primarily through visual receptors, *which we treat as a message by inferring meaning from it*" (ibid.:323, emphasis in original). The implications of this last point were to become increasingly central in Worth's work, but he already was insisting that "there is *no* meaning in the film itself . . . the meaning of a film is a relationship between the implication of the maker and the inference of the audience" (ibid.). But how did this process of implying and inferring meanings actually occur? In two of his early papers



(1966, 1968) Worth laid out an initial model, some of which was retained and developed in future work, and some of which was modified or discarded as his thinking progressed.

Because much of the model of film communication presented in these papers is repeated in the paper "The Development of a Semiotic of Film" (1969), I will briefly discuss some aspects of the earlier papers which were less prominent in the later effort. In addition, I will focus on what I feel are the weaknesses as well as the achievements of Worth's approach as represented by all three of these papers.

In these initial papers Worth drew heavily upon a psychological framework for understanding film, again making an analogy to the dream as an "intrapersonal mode of communication through image events in sequence. The film is a similar mode of communication but most often extended to the interpersonal domain" (1968:3). He proceeded to outline "an intuitive experiential model" of film as a process which begins with a "Feeling Concern. . . to communicate something," a concern "which many psychologists feel is almost a basic human drive" (1966:327). This feeling concern should not be seen as an explicit message that one wants to communicate; it "is most often imprecise, amorphous, and internalized. It cannot be sent or received as a film in this internalized, 'feeling' state" (1968:4).

Here Worth makes a further point which he did not pursue at the time, but which can be seen as an early indicator of what later became an important part of his view of communicative phenomena:

Obviously, inferences can be made about internal feeling states by observing a subject's gestures, body movements, and so forth. . . . [However] there is an important distinction which must be made between the inferences we make from a person's own behavior, which can have a great variety of reasons explaining and motivating them, and the inferences we make from a coded expression in linguistic or paralinguistic form whose purpose is primarily communicative. [ibid.]

If the filmmaker is to communicate this feeling concern, then, Worth continued, the "sender must develop a Story Organism—an organic unit whose basic function is to provide a vehicle that will carry or embody the Feeling Concern" (1966:327). In practice, the story organism may be a story in the usual sense of the word, even a shooting script, but Worth was dealing more with the "organization into a system of those beliefs and feelings that a person accepts as true and related to his Feeling Concern" (ibid.:328).

The final stage in the encoding process occurs when, "after recognizing the feeling concern and finding the story organism, . . . the communicator [begins] to collect the external specific *Image Events* which, when sequenced, will become the visible film communication" (1968:4).

## Meaning as Mirror Image

Worth then proceeds to define the receiving process "as a kind of mirror image of the sending process" (1966:328). Because I feel that this position contains a fundamental error (and one which Worth later recognized), I will quote it in full:

The viewer first sees the Image Event—the sequence of signals that we call a film. Most often he knows nothing of what went on before. He doesn't know the film-maker and his personality, and he usually doesn't know what the film is about, or is meant to communicate. Should our viewer choose to treat these signals as a message, he will first infer the Story Organism from the sequenced Image Events. He will become aware of the belief system of the film-maker from the images he sees on the screen.

From this awareness he will, if the communication "works," be able to infer—to invoke in himself—the Feeling Concern.

As you can see from this suggested view of the total process, the meaning of the film for the viewer is closely related to the Feeling Concern of the film-maker. The single Image Events of the film are the signals, these specifically sequenced Image Events are what we treat as messages, and our inference about the Feeling Concern of the maker is what we call the meaning of the film. [1966:328]

This view is explicitly tied by Worth to a psychological model of communication in art enunciated by Ernest Kris in his *Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art* (1952). Worth quotes Kris's statement that communication "lies not so much in the prior intent of the artist as in the consequent recreation by the audience of his work of art. What is required for communication therefore is similarity between the audience process and that of the artist."

The primary problem with this argument is that it does not, in fact, represent the experiential realities of film communication.<sup>3</sup> Simply put, it is unreasonable to ever expect the process of viewing a film to mirror the process of making that film. Given Worth's own model of the filmmaking process, it should be clear that the maker interacts with the film in the process of creation in a way which can never be repeated by himself or by anyone else. The very acts of filmmaking are different in time, space, and pace from *any* act of viewing. Moreover, the model implies a static, unchanging feeling concern which leads to a fixed story organism, which in turn is represented by a sequence of image events. In reality, of course, the process of filmmaking—as Worth's own descriptions show—often involves changes and modifications in what one wishes to say and how one tries to say it.

The filmmaker's experience is one of choosing among alternatives, attempting to realize intentions, and assessing achievements as a means of confirming or altering those intentions. The viewer confronts only the arranged, final set of images, and can only deal with them in terms of conventional and specific expectations, and in light of assessments of the filmmaker's control and skill in choosing, sequencing, and implying meanings. This is hardly the same thing as "[reversing] the process by which the encoder made the film" (1969:290).

But if this position is so patently untenable, why did Worth hold to it for several years and repeat it in a series of papers? I think there may be several reasons for this. First, I believe that Worth was heavily influenced by his experiences in teaching students in his Documentary Film Workshop. His method of teaching concentrated on forcing the students to clearly articulate their intentions and their decisions in selecting and arranging images in order to convey ideas and feelings. The model of a feeling concern that leads to a story organism which is embodied in a sequence of image events may not capture the experience of all filmmakers, but it does characterize the method used in Worth's workshop.

Second, the influence of the student workshop experience may have contributed another flaw of the mirror-image model: the implication that films are typically made by individual filmmaker-communicators. This "mistake" is all the more odd given Worth's years of experience as a professional filmmaker. There is no doubt that he was aware that film is among the most collective of media and that most films could in no way be described as the embodiments of any one author's feeling concern. Worth was certainly not a naive *auteur* theorist; rather, I think we can see here, again, the influence of the psychologically based, individually oriented communications theory Worth was using at that time.

In his 1969 paper Worth had already begun to retreat from his claim of isomorphism between the receiver's and the sender's experience of a film. In this paper he gives several examples of possible viewer interpretations of a film (*Red Desert* by Antonioni) and concludes:

Most film communication is not. . . that perfect correspondence between the Feeling Concern, the Story Organism and the Image Events they dictate, and their reconstruction by the viewer. Most film situations, depending as they must on the maker and his context (both social and psychological), the viewer and his, and the film itself, are imperfect communicative situations. [1969:295]

Note, however, that perfect communication is still defined as the achievement of isomorphic correspondence; context and other factors are still viewed as "imperfections" which muddy the communicative stream.

## Film as the Language of Visual Communication

Despite their unfortunate devotion to the mirror-image model, these early papers were valuable for an understanding of film as communication. By using an approach that drew upon linguistics, communications theory, and psychology, Worth was explicitly differentiating himself from the evaluative concerns of film theorists who approached film primarily as an art form. The title of his 1966 paper, "Film as a Non-Art," was meant to assert provocatively this emphasis on looking "at film as a medium of communication, rather than as an art or an art form" (1966:322). He was determined that we understand the "difference between evaluation and meaning" (ibid.:324):

My concern is not whether film is art or not, but whether the process by which we get meaning from film can be understood and clarified. . . . While all art might be said to communicate, all communication is certainly not art. [ibid.]

Having elaborated a model of the film communication process, he saw as the next step the analysis of the mediating agent—the film itself.

The study of the Image Event. . .—its properties, units, elements and system of organization and structure that enable us to infer meaning from a film—should be the subject of our inquiry, and of our professional concern. [ibid.]

In pursuit of this inquiry Worth followed the analytic paths laid down by linguists in describing and analyzing the structure and functionings of lexical communication. He adopted, in fact, the heuristic strategy "that film can be studied as if it were the 'language' of visual communication, and as if it were possible to determine its elements and to understand the logic of its structure" (ibid.:331). Worth called this visual analogue to linguistics *vidistics*, and proceeded to elaborate a model of filmic elements and principles based on those of structural linguistics.

Vidistics in this early stage is concerned, first, with the determination and description of those visual elements relevant to the process of communication. Second, it is concerned with the determination of the rules, laws and logic of visual relationship that help a viewer to infer meaning from an Image Event, and the interaction of Image Events in sequence. Film as if it were language, as studied vidistically, is thus thought of as the study of specified elements, elements in sequence, operations on these elements, and cognitive representations of them that act as a mediating agent in a communication process between human beings—between a filmmaker and a viewer—between a creator and a re-creator. [ibid.]

Worth presented his solution to the first of these questions—the identification of the basic filmic unit, or visual element—through an account of the development of the film medium and of the theories that accompanied its growth. This account, given first in his 1968 paper, “Cognitive Aspects of Sequence in Visual Communication,” was elaborated in the 1969 paper “The Development of a Semiotic of Film.” After presenting various theorists’ positions, Worth casts his vote with Eisenstein, who isolated the “shot” as the basic element—“the smallest unit of film that a filmmaker uses” (1969:297). This seemed “the most reasonable” choice, “not only because it is the way most filmmakers construct films, but because it is also possible to describe it fairly precisely and to manipulate it in a great variety of controlled ways” (1969:299).

Moreover, the Navajo filmmakers “who were taught only the technology of filmmaking without any rules for combining units seemed ‘intuitively’ to discover the shot as the basic sign for the construction of their films” (ibid.). However, as Worth himself noted in his historical account, the first filmmakers saw the “dramatic scene” as the basic film unit. This was essentially a theatrical concept: “the first filmmakers pointed the camera at some unit of action and recorded it in its entirety” (1968:9). It took several years before Porter, in 1902, “discovered” that “isolated bits of behavior could be photographed and glued together to make a scene” (ibid.:10). In retrospect, we might wonder how naive the Navajo actually were (most had seen at least some commercial films), or whether Worth had been able to limit his instruction, as intended, to “the technology of filmmaking without any rules for combining units.”

Worth used the term *videme* for Eisenstein’s basic unit of film communication, previously called an Image Event, “that is accepted by viewers as something that represents the world” (1968:13). However, Worth then argued that a finer distinction was required “if we are to attempt further scientific analysis. . . . The shot is actually a generic term for two kinds of shots: the ‘camera shot’ and the ‘editing shot’ ” (1969:299). The camera shot, which Worth called the *cademe*, is “that unit of film which results from the continuous action of the movie camera . . . from the moment we press the start button to when we release it” (ibid.). The editing shot, called the *edeme*, is “formed from the *cademe* by actually cutting the *cademe* apart and removing those segments one does not wish to use” (1968:14). The process of filmmaking, then, involves the shooting of *cademes* and their transformation (in whole or part) into *edemes*. It is then possible to sequence these resultant *edemes* in ways that are determined by the individual filmmaker, his communication needs, his particular culture, and his knowledge of the “language.”

The *edeme* thus becomes the hypothesized basic element and building block of the language, upon which all language operations are performed, and a basic

image event from which all meaning is inferred (1968:14). Much of the balance of the 1968 paper was devoted to a discussion of parameters along which this basic element can vary. This discussion has much in common with the work of other writers on film (e.g., Spottiswoode 1935) who used the “film language” concept. However, Worth felt that “none of these authors developed a theory of grammar embodying ‘linguistic’ elements or rule-like organization capable of syntactic structures” (1968:12).

In Worth’s linguistic analogy, the parameters of motion, space, and internal time are thought of as semantic elements. Sequence, however, including the manipulation of apparent time, belongs to a discussion of the syntactic aspects of the film “language” because it deals with more than one *edeme* at a time. “Sequencing *edemes* can be thought of as applying syntactic operations to *edemes*. This does not in itself imply a code, a set of rules, or a grammar—but it does make it possible to test visual communication phenomena along these lines” (1968:17f). Sequence becomes the fulcrum upon which Worth supported his analysis of filmic communication:

Sequence is a strategy employed by man to give meaning to the relationship of sets of information, and is different from series and pattern. As I will use the word here, *sequence* is a deliberately employed series used for the purpose of giving *meaning rather than order* to more than one image event and having the property of conveying *meaning through* the sequence itself as well as through the elements in the sequence. . . . Man imposes a sequence upon a set of images to imply meaning. [1968:18]<sup>4</sup>

However, at this stage, Worth was still preoccupied with the quest for a universal vidistic syntax analogous to those identified by linguists and psycholinguists in the analysis of lexical communication. Following Chomsky (1957), he saw the goal of vidistics as the development of a grammar of film syntax, “whose rules we can describe in such a way that we can distinguish between what is a grammatical sequence and what is an ungrammatical sequence” (1966:334). Unfortunately for this enterprise, Worth admitted that he found “it almost impossible at this point to construct a sequence of shots that an audience will say is ungrammatical” (ibid.). Not willing to discard the concept of grammaticality in film, Worth hoped to utilize the notion of a semantic space having dimensions of meaning such as that developed by Charles Osgood, to arrive at “a grammar of probability, a system of possible, of more or less meaningful, sequences based on a concept of dimensions of syntax” (ibid.).

This prospect was explored in a series of studies Worth conducted along with Shel Feldman, a psychologist then at the Annenberg School. Some of this work was sketched in his 1968 paper, and further publications were promised, but events led him to other approaches and this line of investigation was dropped.

## The Semiotic Model

Two factors played a role in shifting Worth away from the attempt to formulate a psychological and linguistic model of film communication. First, the Navajo project, which might have served to intensify his search for a universal "psycho-logic" of visual syntax "determined by cognitive processes that all human beings share" (1966:339), demonstrated instead that members of a culture developed film "syntax rules" which could be related to their lexical syntax and to their patterns of story-telling and their systems of value and belief.

Second, as he read more widely in linguistics and, increasingly, in the literature of semiotics—de Saussure, Pierce, and Morris—Worth found his central concern shifting to the role of social and cultural influences and away from the cognitive and psycholinguistic models he had earlier employed.<sup>5</sup> Rather than a grammar of film as the language of visual communication, he now looked to the broader scope of semiotics for an understanding of the rules by which we make inferences from sequences of signs.

. . . the development of a semiotic of film depends not on answering linguistic questions of grammar, but on a determination of the capabilities of human beings to make inferences from the edemes presented in certain specified ways. [1969:317]

This shift permitted Worth to place the linguistic model in a perspective which had previously eluded not only him but many other film scholars. As he noted, "most theoreticians from Eisenstein to Bazin have at one time or another used phrases such as 'the language of film', 'film grammar', and 'the syntax of film' " (1969:302). More insidiously, these metaphoric uses often served more as a hindrance than an aid to the understanding of film communication. Film was all too often stretched on a Procrustean bed of linguistic models and its contours destroyed in the attempt to fit it to an uncongenial frame. Worth came to the realization that tremendous care must be taken if one is to use "that most scientific of sign disciplines" for the study of film. He returned to his initial conception of the linguistic approach as a heuristic strategy with a far more modest estimate of its utility. The strategy had, however, led him to a better understanding of how film might be scientifically analyzed.

I am suggesting, then, that linguistics offers us some fruitful jumping-off places for the development of a semiotic of film, but not a ready-made body of applicable theory leading to viable research in film. If we accept Chomsky's definition of language we must be forced to conclude that film is not a language, does not have native speakers, and does not have units to which the same taxonomy of common significance can be applied as it can to verbal language. At this point our aim should not be to change the definition of language so as to include the possible rules of film, although this may well be

a result of further research in film, but rather to develop a methodology and a body of theory that will enable us to say with some certainty just how it is, and with what rules, that we make implications using film signs with some hope of similar inferences. [1969:318f]

In most of his work after 1969 Worth followed this prescription, but his focus shifted from film in particular to the larger class of visual images in general and, although the two sides of the communications process were always taken into account, increasingly his primary objective was to understand better how meaning is interpreted by viewers rather than how it is articulated by the imagermaker. Before discussing these investigations, however, I want to turn to some important papers in which Worth applied the lessons of his theoretical research to the practice of those engaged in the use of visual media in anthropology and education.

## The Politics of Anthropology

The most immediate application of Worth's emerging semiotic approach to film communication was in the field of anthropology. I have already mentioned his involvement with the sub-discipline of visual anthropology. With the completion of the Navajo project Worth found himself near the center of a growing "invisible college" of anthropologists interested in going beyond the limited uses of visual media characteristic of most work in the field. Visual anthropology, despite the important early contributions of Bateson and Mead, had come, for the most part, to mean the taking of photographic or film records in the field, and the use of these materials as illustrations to accompany verbal accounts or as "evidence" uncritically accepted as objective records of objects and events.

In a paper presented to the American Anthropological Association in 1968, entitled "Why Anthropology Needs the Filmmaker," Worth took strong exception to these assumptions and to the biases and limitations they entailed. In the first place, he maintained that we could not simply accept photographic or film images as "evidence" because they *always* reflect human decisions (conscious and unconscious) and technological constraints.

Further, he argued that by defining film exclusively—and naively—as a record *about* culture, anthropologists tended to ignore the study of film as a record *of* culture, "reflecting the value systems, coding patterns and cognitive processes of the maker" (1972a). Here, in addition to the obvious echoes of the Navajo project, Worth is explicitly drawing upon Hymes's concept of the "ethnography of communication" in which one is interested in what things are said (or not said), why, to whom, and in what form.

As a corollary of this position, Worth was led to the view that *any* film can be used for ethnographic analyses—of the culture of the film's subjects or of the filmmaker, or both; consequently,

[t]here can therefore be no way of describing a class of films as "ethnographic" by describing a film in and of itself. One can only describe this class of films by describing how they are used, and assigning the term "ethnographic" to one class of descriptions. [1972a]

Worth's argument was controversial, for it implicitly denied the *inherent* ethnographic validity of much "anthropological film"—it was not ethnographic just because an anthropologist made it. In fact, he went much further and attacked the "visual anthropologists" for their lack of sophistication in the use of film, a condition which he attributed in part to their naive view of film as "objective record":

*The only group of professionals involved in the making and use of anthropological films who have no training AT ALL in the making, analysis, or use of film are anthropologists. One can count on the anthropologists who are trained to study films, not as a record of some datum of culture, but as a datum of culture in its own right. [1972a:359]*

By the late 1960s Worth was actively engaged in efforts to change this state of affairs. He was involved with the American Anthropological Association's (AAA) Program in Ethnographic Film (PIEF) and in 1970, in collaboration with Margaret Mead and others, he helped found the Anthropological Film Research Institute at the Smithsonian Institution. In the summer of 1972 he organized and taught, along with Jay Ruby, Carroll Williams, and Karl Heider, a summer institute in visual anthropology funded by the National Science Foundation. That fall, at the annual meeting of the AAA, Worth was instrumental in the transformation of PIEF into the Society for the Anthropology of Visual Communication. He served a term as president of the society and was the founding editor of its journal, *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication*.<sup>6</sup> The society and the journal provided a continuing form and context for Worth and others to advocate and demonstrate the rich potential of the approach they represented.

## The Ethics of Anthropology

The issues Worth was raising in the late 1960s and early 1970s did not exist in a vacuum; in a real sense they were in the air. Anthropologists along with the rest of academia were facing political and social realities which cast into question many of the untested assumptions of their discipline. In 1972 a volume of essays appeared under the title *Reinventing Anthropology*, edited by Dell Hymes, in which sixteen authors discussed the field as a product of "a certain period in the discovery, then domination, of the rest of the world by European and North American societies" (Hymes et al. 1972:5). The essays in the book addressed many assumptions, biases, and limitations of anthropological theory and practice, exposing flaws and ethical problems and questioning whether it was possible to "reinvent" a more responsible and self-conscious discipline.

Worth contributed a chapter to this book in which he explicated many of his concerns about the way anthropologists have used and misused, understood and misunderstood the visual media in studying and reporting about various groups around the world. He identified a series of intellectual and ethical problems that have resulted from the development and diffusion of visual communication technologies.

For the field of anthropology Worth argued that "an ethnography of communication developed on the basis of verbal language alone cannot cope with man in an age of visual communication" (1972b:349). He maintained, as I have already noted, that the naive belief in film as objective record must give way to a more sophisticated understanding and use of visual media as research tools and of visual images as research data.

Worth also criticized the inertia of academic disciplines which leads us to "continue examining and thinking about *only* inherited problems, rather than those problems and modes our children, our students, and even ourselves pay most attention to" (ibid.:350). We cannot ignore the growing centrality of the visual media in all cultures, not only in Western industrial society. He spelled out in this paper some of the ways in which social scientists can become more sensitive students of contemporary, "visual culture."

The ethical problems he articulated are more difficult to resolve. When Worth first began to develop the bi-documentary method, he saw it as a way to learn "how others see their world," to "make it easier for them to talk to us" (1965:19). The Navajo project was an expression of his belief in the potential of film to reverse the one-way flow of most anthropological communication. But, in this paper, he reveals a considerably less sanguine view of the role of visual media in the lives of "others" in the modern world.

The Navajo project had as one of its aims the study of the "guided" introduction of a communications technology into a new cultural context. In the 1972 paper Worth is

all too aware of the realities of technological diffusion in the modern world. For most cultures and societies the question is not *whether* they will encounter and come to live with these new visual media, but *when* and *how*.

In teaching people to read, we implicitly teach them *what* to read. . . . The use of a mode of communication is not easily separable from the specific codes and rules about the content of that mode. [1972b:351]

One central problem, therefore, is that our technologies may carry with them "our conceptions, our codes, our mythic and narrative forms" (ibid.:353) unless we also make clear to other cultures that these new media "*need not* be used only in the ways of the. . . societies that introduce them" (ibid.).

Another ethical question raised in this paper focused on the importance of control over information as an instrument of power. Worth noted that "anthropologists are notorious for studying everyone but themselves" (ibid.:355). Is it appropriate for us to encourage others to reveal themselves when we do not? As visual technologies spread to groups in our society and to other cultures unused to manipulating these media,

what is our responsibility to help them to understand a world in which their every act of living can be televised and viewed by a watching world? . . . Should we teach them not only to make their own films but to censor ours as well? The problem as I see it is: What reasons do we have *not* to insist that others have the right to control how we show them to the world? [ibid.:355-358]

## Film in Education

Although I have concentrated on Worth's extensive involvement with anthropology, some of his earliest academic endeavors were in the field of education. His interest in this area was revived in 1971 when he was invited to contribute to a Yearbook which was to focus on communication and education. He agreed to write a paper on the use of film in education and he took the opportunity to draw together and to clarify several strands in his previous and current thinking.

Worth began by examining three perspectives which he saw as exercising major—and pernicious—influence on "the educational and film communities but with very little research evidence in their support" (1974a:273). First, and most intensely, he takes issue with Rudolf Arnheim's position, which he characterized as "visual primacy." Worth argued that Arnheim's theory of "visual thinking" carries to an unreasonable extreme the "reasonable assertion that visual perception contains or is part of what we normally call 'thinking'" (ibid.).

I believe that this is a fair characterization of Arnheim's work, and Worth goes on to pinpoint some of its major flaws. Rejecting in Arnheim an extreme version of the psychological, perceptual-cognitive "bias" he himself had earlier manifested (although he never expressed such a strongly "Gestalt" position), Worth concluded that Arnheim "underestimates or denies the extent to which symbolic systems or conventions mediate our knowledge of the world" (ibid.).

The particular error Worth located in Arnheim was most clearly manifested in his denial of the crucial role of culture in determining what and how we "see":

True visual education presupposes that the world can present its inherent order to the eye and that seeing consists in understanding this order. [Arnheim 1966:148]

In contrast to this position Worth aligned himself with most contemporary thinkers in saying that

what we see and what we think about is determined *at the least* as much by our symbolic systems and conventions for representing that universe as by the universe itself. [1974a:278]

Worth went on to outline the other two perspectives—that of certain film theorists (represented by Gene Youngblood) and film educators—which he felt were as inadequate and misleading in their own areas as Arnheim was in his. What these criticisms have in common is Worth's dismay at the failure of so many researchers and educators properly to understand or utilize film as a process of communication.

In the remaining sections of the paper Worth presented his own current view of how film could be understood as communication and how knowledge of this process enables us to use film in the very process of education itself. He restates an abbreviated version of the feeling concern/story organism/image event model (these terms are not used), but with several significant modifications. In this account the complexity and *non-linearity* of the filmmaking process are now emphasized, moving the model away from the somewhat misleading implication that the filmmaker moves in strict, irreversible steps from feeling to story to image sequence. However, the model is still conceived in "single author" terms. This is shown explicitly when Worth describes the completion of filmmaking:

At some point he decides to "release" his film. It is now no longer a personal act but a public and social one; it is a symbolic form available for participation in a communication process. [ibid.:285]

Worth was also ready to abandon the mirror-image model of viewer reception, if somewhat reluctantly:

When another person sees this film, he must (depending on how one talks about such acts) receive it, decode it, or re-create it. Since meaning or content does not exist within the reel of acetate, the viewer must recreate it from the forms, codes, and symbolic events in the film. . . . For communication to occur, meaning must be implied by the creator and inferred by the viewer or re-creator. [ibid.]

Note that, while perfect communication is no longer defined in terms of the viewer's ability to trace the filmmaking process in reverse and reach the author's feeling concern, the terminology suggests an ambivalence that probably reflects a genuine state of intellectual transition. Worth shifts between "receive," "decode," and "re-create" to describe the viewer's role in the process of communication, still echoing the isomorphic implications of "recreation" as he had used the term in earlier papers. Yet he also makes explicit the role of "conventions through which meaning is transmitted between people by a process of implication and inference" (ibid.).

Worth was now coming to focus more and more on the process of interpretation—how meaning is created by viewers—rather than on the process of articulation by imagemakers (as in the bio-documentary and Navajo projects). In order to clarify the importance of this shift, I have to backtrack to an earlier stage in Worth's work.

### Ignoring Interpretation

In one of his earliest papers Worth had introduced a discussion of audience reactions to his students' films with the comment, "Perhaps, in an attempt to understand a particular act of communication we can approach understanding by examining the reaction to the act, rather than the act itself" (1965:3). However, in most of his work over the next six years Worth focused more on the act of making than on that of interpreting meaning from images. In the study of bio-documentaries made by various groups in our society (reported in Worth and Adair 1972, Chapter 15), and in the Navajo project, it was the films and the activity of the filmmakers, not the viewers, that Worth was interested in.

In his 1966 paper, "Film as a Non-Art," Worth appeared willing to forego the investigation of the interpretive side of the communicative process:

This particular area of study—the interaction between persons and groups, and the stimuli they relate to—has been undertaken by the social and behavioral scientists. Although relevant to our interests, the specific study of the relationships between people and events cannot be the professional concern of those interested in visual communication. [1966:330]

Although I believe he was primarily distancing himself from an overly subjective approach which centers on individual viewers' reactions, Worth is clearly advocating the priority of the "study of the Image Event" itself. The extent of this "bias" is shown by the perfunctory way in which Worth and Adair assessed the reactions of other Navajo to the films made by their fellows. The account given by Worth and Adair of the films' world premiere on the reservation (attended by 60 Navajo) is the shortest chapter in their book (1972:128–131), but it is most revealing.

They make clear the fact that the idea of holding the screening at all originated with the filmmakers, not the researchers. More importantly, the account reveals how unprepared they were for this crucial opportunity to investigate the interpretations and responses of the Navajo viewers. Only nine viewers were questioned, and the questions failed to explore fully their reactions.

Two of the Navajo reported that they did not understand certain of the films. These were films judged by Worth and Adair to be "somewhat outside the framework of Navajo cognition" (ibid.) either in form or subject matter. The way these viewers expressed their lack of understanding was to say that they didn't get the meaning because the films "were in English." This is a most intriguing response, considering that none of the films had any sound at all. However, Worth and Adair continue:

Since these interviews were conducted in Navajo, we didn't see the translated tapes until we left the reservation, and have not been able to question our informants further along these lines. [ibid.:131]

By the early 1970s, in contrast, Worth was clearly insisting on the need to include the perspectives of both the interpreter and the imagemaker within the scope of investigation. In part, as I have indicated, this insistence was influenced by Hymes's advocacy of an "ethnography of communication."<sup>7</sup> However, in order to fully describe the development of Worth's work at this time, I have to discuss my own involvement with it.

## Personal Interlude

I met Sol Worth in the spring of 1968 when I visited the Annenberg School for the first time. My decision to join the faculty of the school (as opposed to taking a job in the field—social psychology—in which I had just received a Ph.D.) was motivated in large part by Worth's presence. It was immediately clear that we shared a strikingly similar set of interests and intellectual inclinations; and it was Worth who convinced me that my interests in the study of art and culture could be pursued far more readily in a communications program, where they were seen as central, than in a psychology department where (I already knew) they would be seen as peripheral. Certainly, my experience with the psychology of art subfield had been disappointing: those who seemed to have a feeling for art used poor psychology (e.g., Arnheim), while those who were psychologically rigorous did not seem to understand art (e.g., Berlyne). The field of communications—at least as it was represented at the Annenberg School—appeared to offer a framework in which the varieties of symbolic behavior (especially the kinds we call art) could be studied with a sensitivity to the role of psychological, social, and cultural determinants.

From the outset Worth and I engaged in discussions and arguments which helped both of us clarify and, I hope, improve our understanding of communications phenomena. In these discussions, I made clear my belief that the interpreter's role was at the center of the communicative process. Put most simply, I argued that before one could become a "sender" one had to become a "receiver." The competence needed for articulation derived in large part from one's prior experience in interpretation. Specifically, in the realm of art I maintained that "the process of artistic creation itself presupposes and arises out of the process of appreciation" (Gross 1973:115).

This position reflected two basic considerations. The first was the simple fact of ontological sequence: we all encounter symbolic events first as consumers and only later, if at all, as producers. "Only upon the basis of the competence to appreciate meaning presented in a symbolic mode can one hope to achieve the realization of creative potential in that mode" (Gross 1974:71).

Second, I was arguing that symbolic behavior occurs in a variety of distinct modes, and that meaning can be understood or purposively communicated *only* within these modes. "These modes are partially but not totally susceptible to translation into other modes. Thus they are basically learned only through actions appropriate to the particular mode" (ibid.:57).

Two papers which I wrote in 1971–1972 presented the outlines of a theory of symbolic competence and aesthetic communication which incorporated this position (1973, 1974). These papers and the theory they presented owed much to Worth's influence. At the same time my views and emerging theoretical formulations helped shape his views on a number of issues. The paper Worth wrote on film and education reflects our discussions. By the fall of 1971 these discussions had led—via an informal research seminar we conducted—to collaborative projects carried out by several of our students, and eventually to a joint paper.

This paper, written in 1972–1973 and published in 1974, presents the outlines of a theory of interpretation—the assignment of meaning to objects and events. Because I feel that the presentation in the paper is often unclear and overly terse, and because the model introduced in this paper figures importantly in Worth's subsequent writings, I will risk the appearance of immodesty and attempt to remedy some of the paper's deficiencies by discussing its contents in somewhat greater detail than I have devoted to the other papers.

## Interpretive Strategies

The questions we focused on in our discussions and research centered around the peculiar properties of visual images. Although our paper addressed the general issue of how people assign meaning to objects and events, in retrospect it seems clear that our concerns were mostly directed towards the visual mode in general, and film or photographic images in particular. The basic question we were asking might be phrased as: what can we "know" from these images and how can we know it? We felt that the first step towards an answer was to draw two basic distinctions in describing interpretive processes.

The first distinction we made was between those objects and events which do and those which do not "evoke the use of any strategy to determine their meaning" (Worth and Gross 1974:29). Most of the objects and events we encounter are interpreted "transparently" in the sense that we "know what they mean" without any conscious awareness on our part of any interpretive activity. We generally respond to their presence (or absence) in a way which indicates (analytically) that a process of tacit interpretation has occurred: our behavior has been affected by the presence (or absence) of some object/event in some fashion. We simply haven't needed to "think about it." Such tacit interpretations range from our "un-thinkingly" extending our hand to open a closed door when we leave a room, to our ability to drive a car along a familiar route while absorbed in conversation or reverie.

Worth and I used the term "non-sign events" to identify the events that we ignore or code "transparently." The



objects and events which *do* evoke an interpretive process we called sign events. However, we continued, these are not predetermined or fixed classes:

It is important to note that the distinction between sign and non-sign events must not be taken as a categorical classification of persons, objects, and events. Any event, depending upon its context and the context of the observer, may be assigned sign value. By the same token, any event may be disregarded and not treated as a sign. [ibid.]

The purpose of this first distinction, therefore, was not to isolate two kinds of objects and events in the world, but two ways in which we respond to the presence or absence of objects and events. Having made this distinction we turned our attention to the ways in which sign events are interpreted. Our second discrimination was between those sign events we called natural and those we called symbolic.

Natural events, as we used the term, are those which we interpret in terms of our knowledge (or belief) about the conditions that determine their existence. The meaning of these events for us, in fact, can be said to derive precisely from those existential conditions. They are *informative* about the stable and/or transient conditions of the physical, biological, and/or social forces that determined their occurrence (or non-occurrence) and configuration. The important point here is that, while we assign meanings to such events on the basis of knowledge (or belief) about the forces that caused them to exist, we do not see them as having been caused (to any important degree) *in order* to convey these meanings to us. Therefore, while they inform us about those factors which we assume (or know) to have caused their occurrence, we do not sense an authorial intent behind them.

Natural events may be produced by either human or non-human agency. "However, the signness of a natural event exists only and solely because, within some context, human beings treat the event as a sign" (ibid.). To give a simple example, if I observe a tree bending in the wind, my knowledge of meteorology may lead me to interpret it as a sign of a coming storm. My interpretation is based upon my knowledge of the forces that caused the event to occur.

Similarly, I may decide that a person I observe on the street is a former member of the armed forces because I notice that he has a crew cut, very erect posture, and walks with a slight limp. In this case I would be basing my interpretation upon stereotypic knowledge of the factors that would result in this configuration of characteristics. Needless to say, I could be mistaken. The point, of course, is that I would be treating the signs I attended to as informative about stable and/or transient characteristics of the persons I observe and/or their interactions with the situations in which I observe them.

In contrast, symbolic events are events we assume to have been *intended* to communicate something to us. Further, we assume that these events are articulated by their "author" in accord with a shared system of rules of implication and inference. That is, they are determined not by physical or psychological "laws" but by semiotic conventions. To assess a sign event as symbolic, then, is to see it as a "message" intended by its "author" to imply meaning(s) which can be inferred by those who share the appropriate code.

If I were to observe, for example, that the man I saw on the street, in addition to having a crew cut, erect posture, and a slight limp, wore a lapel pin which read "V.F.W.," I could then draw the inference that he was, in fact, a veteran and, moreover, that he was communicating rather than merely revealing this fact (I leave aside the obvious possibility of deception, both communicative and "existential").

Worth and I called the interpretation of natural events "attribution" and the interpretation of symbolic events "inference." The former term was adapted from the area of attribution theory within social psychology. Originally developed by Fritz Heider in the 1940s, and revived in the late 1960s by Harold Kelley (1967) and others, attribution theory focuses on the process by which individuals interpret events "as being caused by particular parts of the environment" (Heider 1958:297). However, our use of the term attribution as a label for the interpretation of natural events is narrower than that used in social psychology, because we limited it to those interpretations which do not assume authorial intention.

On the basis of these distinctions we proposed a definition of communication which, in effect, is limited to the articulation and interpretation of symbolic events:

Communication shall therefore be defined as a social process, within a context, in which signs are produced and transmitted, perceived, and treated as messages from which meaning can be inferred. [Worth and Gross 1974:30]

Although I have presented these distinctions and definitions in a rather general fashion, we had in mind a particular set of events and situations—those not obviously and easily defined as natural or as symbolic. We were interested, that is, in what we termed ambiguous meaning situations.

Most of the time there is little difficulty in deciding whether an object or event we notice is natural or symbolic. Most people who might observe the wind bending a tree outside their window and decide to take an umbrella when they go out would not think the wind was "telling" them that it might rain. Similarly, if we meet someone who speaks English with a distinct accent we may attribute foreign origin to the person but we are unlikely to decide that the accent was *intended* to communicate the speaker's origin (however, if we find out that

the speaker left his or her native country many years before at an early age, we may wonder about that assessment).

When we encounter a symbolic event, on the other hand, we are likely to see it as intentionally communicative. We usually have little difficulty recognizing these as communications addressed to us as individuals or as members of a group, provided we know the code. And we usually have little difficulty interpreting them, again providing we know the code. Traffic lights are rarely mistaken for Christmas decorations.

One further clarification needs to be made. We were focusing on the perspective of the person who observes the sign event and interprets it. A sign event is symbolic (i.e., communicative) *only* if it is taken as having been formed (to an important degree) with the intent of telling something to the *observer*. That is, if the observer is watching two people converse and knows that they are unaware they are being observed, their conversation, while it is a communicative event for *them*, is a natural event for the observer. It was not intended to tell the observer anything, and so it can only be seen as informative about the speakers' stable and/or transient characteristics as revealed in that situation. Of course, certain aspects of the observed event, such as the participants' clothing or hairstyles, might be assessed as being "messages" addressed not just to the other participant but to the "public" at large; these aspects might then be assessed as symbolic vis-à-vis our observer.

## Life vs. Art

With all these concepts in mind, we turn to events we encounter not through direct observation but through photographs or film. Here we find the situation to be more complex and more interesting. The point of the exercise, really, was to develop a way of dealing with the interpretation of those mediated events (although mediation can occur through words and paintings, etc., as well, photographic mediation is the most ambiguous and therefore the most interesting case).

In our paper we make the suggestion (supported by empirical studies) that there is a learning process by which we come to know how to interpret mediated symbolic events such as films. At the simplest level we merely recognize the existence of persons, objects, and events in the film and make attributions about them based on our stereotypic knowledge of such things in real life. With somewhat more sophistication we can see relationships between objects and events that are contiguous in time and/or space—they go together. The cru-

cial step, then, is to see this contiguity as the result of an intention to tell us something—to see it as a sequence or pattern which is *ordered*

for the purpose of implying meaning rather than contiguity to more than one sign event and having the property of conveying meaning through the order itself as well as through elements in that order. [ibid.:32]

The final stage in this hierarchical process is when we recognize the structure of a sign event, an awareness of the relations between non-contiguous elements and their implicative-inferential possibilities: the beginning and end of a story, variations on a theme, prosodic patterns, etc.

When we look at a scene recorded on film we need to decide whether the event was (among other possibilities): (1) "captured candidly" as it unfolded naturally in front of the camera, with the participants seeming not to know they were being filmed; (2) photographed unobtrusively so that, while the participants knew about it, it was done in such a way that they "almost forgot" they were being filmed; or (3) scripted, staged, and directed by an "author" working with actors.

If we settle on the first alternative, we are likely to feel justified in making attributions about the persons in the film (their characteristics, their feelings, their relationships, etc.). If we choose the second alternative we may feel somewhat less confident in making such attributions, as we will feel that the behavior we observe was somewhat constrained by their knowledge that they were being filmed. That is, their behavior may be less informative because we know it is also "messageful."

If we take the third alternative we are unlikely to make attributions of the former sort; here we will interpret the scene in light of our knowledge of dramatic conventions. These conventions may be nearly the same as the attributional stereotypes we use in the first two instances (consequently they might lead us to similar interpretations), and this is not surprising: naturalistic conventions in drama aim precisely at evoking attributional knowledge in order to convey "lifelikeness" to characters and situations. However, they need not be the same. We may "know" that the cowboy in the black hat is the bad guy without also believing that anyone we see in real life wearing a black hat is a criminal.

The point is that, although events encountered in "life" and in "art" may look the same, we make different assumptions about the factors that determine their occurrence and configuration. Because the conclusions reached may be the same, in order to decide whether an interpretation is attributional (the observer is assessing the event as "life"—a natural event) or inferential (the observer is assessing the event as "art"—a symbolic event), we need to know the grounds on which it would be

justified. If asked *how* we know something we have concluded about an event we have observed, we might say it is because of what we know about the way such things happen (attributional interpretation); or we might say we know it because we are assuming the event was made to happen that way in order to tell us something (communicational inference).

We hoped that this model would clarify some issues Worth had addressed in earlier papers. Most immediately, it allowed us to say that the tendency to see films as objective records of events rather than as a filmmaker's statement about events derived from a confusion of interpretive strategies. The naivete Worth had attacked in many anthropologists and others who were filmically unsophisticated took the form of assuming filmed events could uncritically be interpreted as natural. What such viewers failed to understand was that *all* mediated events are to *some degree* symbolic. There are always decisions made by the mediating agent—what to shoot (and consequently, what not to shoot) and how; and having shot, how to edit the footage (one rarely sees raw footage); and finally when, where, and how to exhibit the finished film.

A sophisticated viewer will recognize that the persons, objects, and events in a film are there at least in part because the filmmaker included them intentionally; that the sequence of events in the film has been ordered by the filmmaker's intention to say something by putting them in that order (which may not be the order in which they actually occurred); and that the overall structure of the film reflects the filmmaker's intention and ability to use implicational conventions in order to communicate to viewers who are competent to draw the appropriate inferences.

From this perspective it should be clear why Arnheim's statement that "the world can present its inherent order to the eye and that seeing consists in understanding this order" so infuriated Worth. He saw this view as contributing to the kind of approach to film represented by Youngblood's advocacy of a cinema which was "entirely personal . . . rests on no identifiable plot and is not probable. The viewer is forced to create along with the film" (Youngblood 1970:64). Worth's response to this was fierce:

Tyros in the arts always forget that creation and originality cannot even be recognized (or perceived) except within a context of convention and rule-like behavior—*especially* in the arts. It is not within the context of an ordered universe that art exists, but rather within the context of man's *conventions for ordering that universe*. [1974:282]

## Cracking the Code

In the period following the initial development of our theory of interpretation Worth devoted much of his attention to the elaboration and extension of this approach to understanding how people derive meanings from visual images. He was interested in exploring both the properties which were unique to visual communication and those which could be generalized to other symbolic modes. One of his first efforts in the latter direction came in response to a request that he prepare a commentary on a special issue of *New Literary History* devoted to metaphor.

Worth began his paper with the observation that "every author [in the issue] 'assumes' that metaphor is a verbal event—a verbal 'thing' of some sort" (1974b:195). He then posed the question of whether—and how—the concept of metaphor could be applied to events in other modes. The answer he gave was that "metaphor is a structure composed of elements in any mode . . . related in certain ways" (ibid.:196). The rest of the paper was largely directed towards an analysis of the metaphoric possibilities of visual images and the argument that "visual structures can clarify a general and abstract notion of metaphor" (ibid.:197).

Worth described several examples of filmic metaphors and said that the problems they raise are those of "syntactic forms for nonverbal matters for which we have very little social agreement" (ibid.:199). How do we know what such metaphors mean?

When Eisenstein used a sequence in his film *Strike* in which a close-up of a factory foreman (who has informed the cossacks about a coming strike) is followed by a close-up of a jackal, audiences interpret this as "akin to the verbal notion of 'the informer is a jackal'" (ibid.:198). Or, to repeat an earlier example, we "know" that the cowboy in the black hat is the bad guy. Worth's point here was that the understanding of metaphor depends upon our ability to apply the correct interpretive strategy to infer the implied meaning:

Metaphor is a communicational code depending upon the recognition of structure and the assumption of intention on the part of the "articulator" . . . of the form we are to treat as metaphor. [ibid.:200]

For example, it is our recognition of metaphoric intention that tells us Eisenstein has sequenced his shots in order to imply that foreman=jackal, and that we should not read these as merely contiguous events. In this case, the brief introduction of the jackal shot as a "break" in the plot signals us that it is a metaphoric comment rather than a narrative development. "The important point is that every culture provides its 'native speakers' in any mode with a code for interpretation" (ibid.:202).

Worth devoted the second half of the paper to an analysis of caricature as visual metaphor. Using Sparshott's conception (in the collection he was discussing) that metaphor is "talking about something as it is not," Worth suggests that

metaphor might most fruitfully be understood in comparison with theories and concepts of caricature rather than with theories of representation. [ibid.:204]

Noting that verbal metaphors are statements which are neither literally true nor false, Worth says that a caricature is

a structure that reveals a set of meanings intended to communicate a certain set of relationships within some understood or understandable context and bounds. . . . A caricature is . . . a structure that relates several elements on one level (in shorthand—that of "reality") with elements on another level (the symbolic). It puts things together *both* as they are *and* as they are not, and the point of caricature, like that of metaphor, is that neither is only a "portrait." [ibid.]

Metaphor, in Worth's analysis, thus becomes a central component of the structural code we learn "for the intentional creation of meaning within specific contexts" (ibid.:209). It is a particularly rich syntactical device for implying and inferring meanings in each mode of symbolic experience.

Knowing about metaphor means knowing how to organize the universe within our minds, knowing systems of myth, of grammar, of behavior, value and art as they are defined by our group now, and have been in the past. [ibid.:208]

## What Pictures Can Say

The larger questions raised by Worth's analysis of metaphor were addressed in his next paper, in which he set out "to begin an exploration into how, and what kinds of things pictures mean" and also to explore "how the way that pictures mean differs from the way such things as 'words' or 'languages' mean" (1975:85).<sup>8</sup>

The title of the paper, "Pictures Can't Say Ain't," signals one of its main arguments, namely that among things pictures cannot imply are negative statements. But before getting to that point, Worth began by discussing the general status of pictures as symbolic events.

Using the model of symbolic vs. natural events first presented in our joint paper, Worth argued that a picture is *never* a natural event, but always a "*created social artifact*." He then recounts the notions of attributional interpretation as contrasted with communication inference, making the point that an appropriate interpretation of any picture always assumes that it was structured intentionally for the purpose of implying meaning. Worth invokes Grice's classic analysis of intention and meaning, quoting Grice's view that not merely must a symbolic event have been articulated "with the intention of inducing a certain belief but also the utterer must have intended an audience to *recognize the intention behind the utterance*" (Grice 1957:382).

The next point Worth emphasizes is that we must learn to interpret pictures by learning the system of conventions—the code—used by their makers to imply meanings. Pictures cannot be taken as merely "corresponding" to reality, and therefore we do not merely "recognize" what they mean; we infer meanings on the basis of learned conventions.

Worth here is arguing against two groups who have denied that pictures carry intentional meaning: certain logical positivists and linguists who believe that only "the linguistic mode is capable of meaning" (Worth 1975:93), and others, including some artists, who feel that pictures can mean anything anyone sees in them. "No artistic implication should . . . become a grab bag for everyone to reach into and *pull out what he himself* has put in" (ibid.:97).

If we take art seriously as communication, we must acknowledge the separate roles and responsibilities of the artist and the audience. Each performs a distinct and complementary task in the communicative process. The audience doesn't *make* the work, but interprets it:

. . . the reader . . . does not write *any* part of the poem, any more than the viewer paints the picture or makes the film. The reader (viewer), if he can participate in a communications event, recognizes the work's structure, assumes an intention to mean on the part of the creator, and proceeds to his extremely complex job of making inferences from the implications he can recognize. [ibid.]

Turning next to the question of what "pictures cannot do that words can do," Worth answers that "pictures cannot deal with what is not"; they can't say ain't. After disposing of several trivial examples of what might be seen as pictorial negation, calling these "*linguistic* uses of visual form which become sign events in a special language" (e.g., "no smoking" images), he discusses the general concept of what pictorial images affirm or deny.

Although much of "what is pictured is often valued for what it negates by *leaving out*," pictures cannot *specify*, out of all the things that are not shown, which the painter means to say are not the case. "All that pictures can show is what *is*—on the picture surface" (ibid.:98).

On the other hand, pictures should also not be taken as necessarily affirming the existence of what they *do* show. Worth draws a connection between the fact that pictures seem to show us things—particularly photographs, which we tend to believe are the product of a machine that "tells it like it *is*"—and our tendency to see "false" pictures not as negations but as false affirmations.

Pictures in and of themselves are not propositions that make true or false statements; that we can make truth tables about, or that we can paraphrase in the same medium. Pictures, it must be remembered, are not representations or correspondences, with or of, reality. Rather, they constitute a "reality" of their own. [ibid.:102]

But, if this is the case, how do we make sense of pictures? What do they tell us and how? Worth gives two answers: first, pictures imply—and we infer—an existential awareness of particular persons, objects, and events that are ordered and structured so as to imply meanings by the use of specific conventions; second, "what Larry Gross [1973] has termed the *communication of competence*." Pictures communicate the skill and control with which their structures have been manipulated according to a variety of rules, conventions, and contexts.

Pushing the argument further, Worth reiterates the point that "matching to the real world is insufficient to explain how pictures mean," and goes on to say that

correspondence, if it makes any sense as a concept, is not correspondence to "reality" but rather correspondence to conventions, rules, forms and structures for structuring the world around us. What we use as a standard for correspondence is our knowledge of *how people make pictures*—pictorial structures—how they made them in the past, how they make them now, and how they will make them for various purposes in various contexts. [ibid.:104]

Worth's answer, then, to the question he had posed at the beginning of the paper is that pictures communicate "the way picture makers structure their dialogue with the world."

## Toward an Ethnographic Semiotic

Worth's theoretical investigations did not draw him away from his concern with the development of a discipline which studies visual communications in a fashion compatible with that theory. In 1976 he delivered a paper at a symposium honoring Margaret Mead on her 75th birthday (1980). That paper addressed the need for scholars to understand properly the uses and the limitations of visual communications.

He distinguished between the use of visual images and media as research tools and as research material. In the case of the former he used Margaret Mead's work with Gregory Bateson as an example of how pictures can be used by a researcher to *illustrate* patterns of culture. The point he felt needed to be emphasized once again—it is a point we all forget too easily—is that "the photo is not the pattern" but something we use as evidence to *illustrate* pattern.

Taking photographs, or looking or taking notes are tools for articulating and stating patterns we, as anthropologists, wish to show to others. [ibid.:17]

And there is an important corollary: the value of the photograph lies in the analysis. The researcher-photographer who understands what patterns he or she wishes to present will take photographs which will be capable of showing these patterns to others. Success is not a matter of luck but of training, skill, and intention. Bateson's and Mead's photographs are valuable because of their knowledge of what they were photographing and why they were photographing.

The reason their photographs and films are records is that they were taken in ways which allowed them to be analyzed so as to illustrate patterns observed by scientists who know what they were looking for. [ibid.]

The second use of photographs and films is as objects and events which can be studied in the context of the culture within which they were used. Here the pattern is in the picture and the context(s) of its making. These images are analyzed as parts of culture in their own right, "just as conversations, novels, plays, and other symbolic behavior have been understood to be" (ibid.).

This latter approach is one Worth was later to call *ethnographic semiotics*, the study of how actual people make and interpret a variety of visual images and events. These images and events range from the personal and private to the collective and public, from painting and sculpture through television, movies, and photographs (including home movies, snapshots, and photo-albums), store windows, and other forms of everyday presentation of self through visual means.

Here one looks for patterns dealing with, for example, what can be photographed and what cannot, what content can be displayed, was actually displayed, and how that display was organized and structured. Was it arranged according to how these people tell stories? To how they speak, or to the very language and grammar that they use? [ibid.]

In the last two years of his life Worth gave considerable attention to the formulation of an empirical application of his concept of an ethnographic semiotics. He was determined to demonstrate rather than merely to advocate the feasibility and validity of his approach to the study of visual communications. At the time of his death he was preparing two grant applications. The first was for a fellowship that would give him a year in which to write a book, *Fundamentals of Visual Communication*, which would present a framework through which the process and structure people use to make interpretations of our visual universe might be understood.

The second application was for a grant to support a project he proposed to conduct with Jay Ruby. That project, to be carried out over a period of three years, was to be a study of the visual symbolic environment of a small American community in central Pennsylvania. This was an enormously ambitious and exciting project, proposing to use as the unit of analysis not specific symbolic products but the "context—the community and the community members' interaction with visual symbolic events."

In his paper honoring Margaret Mead Worth noted, "I am aware that, even as we try to develop a history in this field, we also are in many ways that same history." Sol will remain an important part of the history of studying visual communications.

## Notes

- 1 In the preparation of this introduction I benefited from comments and suggestions by George Custen, Paul Messaris, Jay Ruby, and Tobia L. Worth. I also drew upon Richard Chalfen's paper, "The Contributions of Sol Worth to the Anthropology of Visual Communication."
- 2 The choice of the Navajo in this example was not accidental. Worth had already been discussing this idea with John Adair, a longtime student of the Navajo, who later collaborated with him on the project.
- 3 I should mention here the fact that Worth's later repudiation of the mirror-image model was in large part the result of many discussions between the two of us during the period 1968–1972. The arguments summarized in this paragraph represent the position I maintained in opposition to the implication on Worth's part of sender-receiver "isomorphism" in the communication process.
- 4 I should alert the reader that later, in our joint paper, "Symbolic Strategies" (1974), this terminology was significantly altered. Needing a general term for intentionally articulated arrangements of elements, Worth and I used "order" for this purpose, using "sequence" to designate temporal orderings and "pattern" to designate spatial orderings of sign elements. In contrast to "order" we used the term "contiguity" to designate the "juxtaposition of units or events over time, space or position" (1974:32) where the perceiver does not assume that this arrangement was *intended* to imply meaning(s).
- 5 A major influence on Worth's thinking at this time was the emerging field of sociolinguistics. In particular, he was impressed with the work of Dell Hymes, who had come to the University of Pennsylvania in 1965.
- 6 As of the Spring 1980 issue (6:1), the name of the journal was changed to *Studies in Visual Communication*.
- 7 Richard Chalfen, who had assisted on the Navajo project, was at that time conducting dissertation research which combined the approaches of Worth and Hymes. Chalfen used the term "sociovisualistics" to designate an "ethnography of film communication" (Chalfen 1974, 1977).
- 8 Many of these questions were also addressed in a later paper, "Man Is Not a Bird" (1978).

## References

- Arnheim, Rudolf  
1966 The Myth of the Bleating Lamb. *In* *Toward a Psychology of Art*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Chalfen, Richard  
1974 Film as Visual Communication: A Sociovisualistic Study in Filmmaking. Ph.D. dissertation. University of Pennsylvania.  
1975 Cinema Naivete: A Study of Home Moviemaking as Visual Communication. *Studies in the Anthropology of Visual Communication* 2(2): 87–103.  
1979 Obituary of Sol Worth. *American Anthropologist* 81(1): 91–93.
- Chomsky, Noam  
1957 Aspects of the Theory of Syntax. Cambridge: MIT Press.
- Grice, H. P.  
1957 Meaning. *The Philosophical Review* 66(3).
- Gross, Larry  
1973 Art as the Communication of Competence. *UNESCO: Social Science Information* 12(5):115–141.  
1974 Modes of Communication and the Acquisition of Symbolic Competence. *In* *Media and Symbols: The Forms of Expression, Communication, and Education* (73rd Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education). D. R. Olson, ed. Pp. 56–80.
- Heider, Fritz  
1958 The Psychology of Interpersonal Relations. New York: Wiley.
- Hymes, Dell, C. B. Cazden, and V. P. John, eds.  
1972 The Functions of Language in the Classroom. New York: Teachers College Press.

- 
- Kelley, Harold
    - 1967 Attribution Theory in Social Psychology. *In* Nebraska Symposium on Motivation. D. Levine, ed. Pp. 192-240. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.
  - Kris, Ernst
    - 1952 Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art. New York: International University Press. (Reprinted New York: Schocken, 1964.)
  - Malinowski, Bronislaw
    - 1922 Argonauts of the Western Pacific. New York: E. P. Dutton and Co.
  - Spottiswoode, Raymond
    - 1935 The Grammar of the Film. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
  - Worth, Sol
    - 1963 The Film Workshop. *Film Comment* 1(5):54-58.
    - 1964 Public Administration and the Documentary Film. *Perspectives in Administration* (Journal of Municipal Association for Management and Administration, City of New York) 1:1925.
    - 1965 Film Communication: A Study of the Reactions to Some Student Films. *Screen Education* July/August:3-19.
    - 1966 Film as Non-Art: An Approach to the Study of Film. *The American Scholar* 35(2):322-334. (Reprinted in *Perspectives on the Study of Film*. J. S. Katz, ed. Boston: Little Brown, 1971, pp. 180-199).
    - 1968 Cognitive Aspects of Sequence in Visual Communication. *Audio Visual Communication Review* 16(2):1-25.
    - 1969 The Development of a Semiotic of Film. *Semiotica* 1(3):282-321.
    - 1972a Toward the Development of a Semiotic of Ethnographic Film. *PIEF Newsletter* 3(3):8-12.
    - 1972b Toward an Anthropological Politics of Symbolic Form. *In* *Reinventing Anthropology*. Dell Hymes, ed. Pp. 335-364. New York: Pantheon.
    - 1974a The Use of Film in Education and Communication. *In* *Media and Symbols: The Forms of Expression, Communication, and Education* (73rd Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education). D. R. Olson, ed. Pp. 271-302.
    - 1974b Seeing Metaphor as Caricature. *New Literary History* 6:195-209.
    - 1975 Pictures Can't Say Ain't. *Versus* 12:85-108.
    - 1978 Man Is Not a Bird. *Semiotica* 23(1/2):5-28.
    - 1980 Margaret Mead and the Shift from Visual Anthropology to the Anthropology of Visual Communication. (Presented at a symposium honoring Margaret Mead, American Association for the Advancement of Science, 1976.) *Studies in Visual Communication* 6(1).
  - ——— and John Adair
    - 1967 The Navajo as Filmmaker: A Report of Some Recent Research in the Cross-Cultural Aspects of Film Communication. *American Anthropologist* 69(1):76-78.
    - 1970 Navajo Filmmakers. *American Anthropologist* 72:9-34. (Reprinted in *Worlds Apart: The Sociology of Education*. London: Cassell, Collier, and MacMillan, 1975.)
    - 1972 *Through Navajo Eyes: An Exploration in Film Communication and Anthropology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Paperback edition, 1975.
  - ——— and Larry Gross
    - 1974 Symbolic Strategies. *Journal of Communication* 24(4):27-39.
  - Youngblood, G.
    - 1970 *Expanded Cinema*. New York: Dutton.

# An Analysis of the Nazi Film "Hitlerjunge Quex"

Gregory Bateson

## Introduction

This essay is an experiment in film analysis, and it consists in the detailed examination of a single Nazi film, *Hitlerjunge Quex*, which was released in Berlin on September 19, 1933. Other workers have applied other scientific methods to the analysis of film material; in particular, Dorothy Jones (n.d.) has examined American films statistically, noting especially the frequencies of various types of sociological events in film plots, and comparing these with the frequencies of the same events in real life, thus obtaining a picture of how life is distorted, exaggerated, or suppressed on the screen. Siegfried Kracauer (1942) has used another approach in the analysis of German newsreels and documentary films. He has examined a considerable bulk of these films from a technical point of view, using the contrapuntal relations between visuals, speech, and sound to give a general picture of Nazi propaganda methods and the special view of life which these methods express.

The present analysis differs from both of these in that it is concerned with the weaving of themes within a single fictional film. The purpose, too, of the present analysis is different, in that where Dorothy Jones asked, "How does what is shown on the screen differ from real life?", and Kracauer asked, "What are the Nazis trying to say on the screen, and how do they say it?", the present research asks, "What sort of people are the Nazis?"

The question has many sorts of importance. Wherever, either in war or after the war, we are concerned with Germany, our actions must be guided by an understanding of what sort of people the Nazis are and how Nazism is related to the character and culture of pre-Nazi Germany. Our whole intelligence service depends upon an ability to guess at German motivation, and when, for example, we analyze German radio propaganda, treating it as an indication of the state of the German morale, our analysis rests in the end upon certain assumptions about what sort of people the propagandists are. Equally, if we want to estimate the effect of Nazi propaganda in the United States or in South America, or in some other non-German region, we need to know what sort of people the Nazis are.

In this latter case the Nazi character is, of course, only one element in a complex situation, and even to estimate the direction of the effect of Nazi propaganda we shall need a similar study of character and culture in the affected country. With such a double knowledge of the nature of Nazism and of the propagandized population we will, however, be able to tell exactly what sort of susceptibility the population may have to the Nazi creed and which parts of the creed are likely to appeal to them.

At the present time the sciences of anthropology and psychology are engaged in devising the techniques for precisely this sort of description of the various sorts of character appropriate to and implicit in the cultures of different peoples (Bateson 1942; Erikson 1942; Gorer

---

**Editors' Note:** This article was completed by Gregory Bateson in 1945 as part of a multidisciplinary research effort called "The Study of Culture at a Distance" (see Mead and Metraux 1953 and Metraux 1980 for a description of the projects). Until now only excerpts of the work have appeared in print (Bateson 1943, 1953). The first three reels of *Quex* (approximately 45 minutes) with Bateson's analytic titles are available for rent from the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, 11 West 53rd Street, New York, N.Y. 10019. All illustrations in this article are frames from the film that were added by the editors. Frame enlargements are by courtesy of the Museum of Modern Art. The editors wish to acknowledge the assistance of Mary Corliss, Stills Archivist, Museum of Modern Art.

- Bateson, Gregory  
1943 Cultural and Thematic Analysis of Fictional Films. *In* Transactions of the New York Academy of Sciences. Pp. 72-78.  
1953 An Analysis of the Nazi Film *Hitlerjunge Quex*. *In* The Study of Culture at a Distance. Mead and Metraux, eds. Pp. 302-316. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Mead, Margaret, and Rhoda Metraux, eds.  
1953 The Study of Culture at a Distance. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Metraux, Rhoda  
1980 The Study of Culture at a Distance: A Prototype. *American Anthropologist*, 82(2):362-373.

---

*Gregory Bateson (1904-1980) was a naturalist, ethnographer, and pioneer researcher into human and animal communication. Among his many achievements are the "double-bind" hypothesis about the origins of schizophrenia; his collaborative studies with Margaret Mead on Balinese nonverbal communication; and his work in cybernetics.*



1942; Mead 1943). The present study is therefore intended to make two sorts of contribution: first, a contribution to the methods of analyzing human behavior and human culture, and second, a more specific contribution to our understanding of Nazism.

The film which is here analyzed has three principal connections with Nazism: (1) Nazis are shown on the screen, (2) the film was made by Nazis, and (3) the film was used to make Nazis, that is, to induce a Nazi frame of mind in the audience. Since we are interested to know the psychology of this Nazi frame of mind, we are naturally concerned chiefly with the second and third of these connections. The picture of Nazis which the filmmakers put on the screen cannot be taken as an objective or ethnological record of Nazi behavior, being no doubt subject to all sorts of distortion, exaggeration of some aspects and suppression of others. The camera—and especially the motion picture camera—can lie freely about whatever passes in front of the lens, but inasmuch as the film was made by Nazis and used to make Nazis, we believe that at a certain level of abstraction the film must tell us the truth about Nazism.

A painting, a poem, or a dream may give an exceedingly false picture of the real world, but insofar as the painter or the dreamer is an artist, insofar as he has complete control of his medium, the artistic product must of necessity tell us about the man himself. In the same way this film, insofar as it is an integrated work of art—and we shall see that it is very highly integrated—must tell us about the psychology of its makers, and tell us perhaps more than they intended to tell.

We shall not in the course of this analysis ask whether the filmmakers were conscious or unconscious of what they put into the film, but since this question is commonly raised by those who approach the analysis of propaganda for the first time, and since the notion of unconscious mental processes is difficult to grasp, it is necessary to make clear the assumptions about the unconscious upon which this analysis is based.

It is assumed that the filmmakers continually put together details which appeared to them to be artistically appropriate, and further, that in many cases what was implied by such montage or editorial arrangement was consciously meant. In other cases, no doubt, the filmmakers did not stop to ask what was implicit in the way in which they put the details together, but were only conscious of their appropriateness. In such cases we assume that they liked the symbolic implications of what they had done, at least so long as these implications did not come to their conscious attention.

It is not possible, however, to tell in any given case whether the filmmakers were fully conscious, partially conscious, or unconscious of what they were doing, and therefore this question is not asked in the analysis. There are several passages in the film where it appears that the script writers had at least a parlor acquaintance with Freudian psychology. In one case, for example, we are

shown on the screen an incident in which a Communist thrusts a banana into a girl's mouth, and this incident fails to achieve spontaneity. It is as if the filmmakers departed from their own methods of artistic creation to introduce a piece of Freudian symbolism almost by recipe. If they have done this once, they may have done it many times in the course of the film, and there are no criteria which would enable us to tell whether a given detail or combination of details was spontaneous or calculated. It is not possible ever to determine whether the filmmakers were conscious of the implications of the various themes in the film, and we shall therefore refrain from asking this question. Those who feel that the analysis leans toward overinterpretation are recommended to look for the sort of "artistic appropriateness" which probably appealed to the filmmakers and then to consider what the logical implications of such appropriateness are.

Another feature of this analysis which may be confusing to the nontechnical reader concerns the relationship between psychological and anthropological techniques. A film is not the idiosyncratic production of a single artist working by himself and for himself; it is created by a group of filmmakers working in close cooperation and with an eye on a popular audience. Therefore it has been assumed in the analysis that what seemed artistically appropriate to the filmmakers was also psychologically germane to Nazism—that the unconscious implications of the film were also themes implicit in Nazism as a whole, whether or not Nazis were or are generally conscious of them. In the analysis, the film has been treated not merely as an individual's dream or work of art, but also as a myth. We have applied to it the sort of analysis that the anthropologist applies to the mythology of a primitive or modern people.

The anthropologist has an essential touchstone by which he tests his interpretations of any given myth or record of behavior. His analysis is not confined to that one item; he has in his notebooks many other myths, many descriptions of the ritual behavior and the daily life of the people whom he is studying, and he is able always to take each detail of his interpretation of the myth and to compare it with the wider background of other data upon that culture. If the interpretation is correct, he will be able to find numerous other instances in the culture which the same interpretation would fit; and if the interpretation is incorrect, he will be able to find instances in the culture to disprove it. Still more important, he will be able to say immediately of many possible interpretations: "No; this is wrong. This interpretation does not fit the people whom I knew."

We have tried, in the present analysis, to create a touchstone of this kind. Before beginning the analysis of this film, and during the course of this analysis, the analyst has been cooperating in a more general study of German and Nazi culture (Erikson 1942). This work has been done under the auspices of the Council of Intercultural Relations, and has consisted in a series of detailed

anthropological interviews with a number of social scientists<sup>1</sup> who have had intimate experience of German culture.

These interviews have been of two sorts. The majority were directed toward discovering the major themes of German culture. The social scientists were asked in an anthropological interview to discuss their own experiences in Germany—especially their experiences as children in a German family setting. Simultaneously they were asked to comment as social scientists upon these experiences, their significance, and the degree to which they might be regarded as typical. These interviews were recorded verbatim.

A further series of interviews was used to check the specific interpretations arrived at in this analysis. The social scientists were invited to a showing of the film and were invited to comment on the interpretation. As a result of these various comments, the analysis has been revised in many ways, but since not all the comments made have involved reinterpretation of the analysis, the writer alone is responsible for the interpretations which are here offered.

Last, it is necessary to stress that this analysis makes rather unusual assumptions about the nature of propaganda. In most content analyses the various statements in a piece of communication—for example, a film or a statistical picture of the propagandic content of the communication.<sup>2</sup> In such an analysis, in its extreme form, Communist sentiment uttered by the Communists in this film would have to be counted as items of Communistic propaganda, which would be absurd. In the present analysis, however, the emphasis will lie on the context of each event shown on the screen, the film as a whole will be regarded as a single psychological or artistic unit, and each event on the screen will be seen as set in the context of the film as a whole.

This means that we shall attribute propagandic effect to the plot and its structure rather than to isolated details. We shall assume that what the audience learns from the film is not so much to ape the explicit sentiments of the hero nor to adopt his opinions, but rather that they acquire the ways of thought of the propagandist. We are interested in knowing what sort of people the Nazis are, and in order to find this out we shall assume that the audience learns from the film to accept as artistically appropriate those things which the filmmaker has put together—in fact, that the audience consciously or unconsciously will acquire Nazi habits of thought.

## Reasons for the Selection of This Film

For this type of analysis it was essential that the film selected should have certain characteristics.

1 It should show both the Nazis and their enemies on the screen. There are many propagandic films intended to promote a Nazi frame of mind which achieve this end by indirect means. *Faehrmann Maria* (1935), for example, contains an excellent symbolic expression of the Nazi attitudes toward death, but the whole film is set back in the realm of fantasy and the Nazis themselves do not appear on the screen. *Friesennot* similarly contains a great deal of material which expresses the Nazi attitudes toward sex and the Nazi notions of conflict between the generations, but this story is set in Russia and deals with an old German colony invaded by Bolsheviks; Nazism does not appear on the screen and, therefore, though the equation is obvious, it is not possible to say definitively that the younger generation of these colonial Germans stands as a symbol of Nazism.

To make all these other films available for analysis it was first necessary to establish the basic symbolic equations, and this could best be done by analyzing a film which showed the Nazis and their enemies explicitly labeled on the screen. Such a film makes it possible to dissect out the relationship between these two fixed points and the whole range of phenomena—parenthood, adolescence, maturity, cleanliness, sex, aggression, passivity, and death—which are embraced by the Nazi view of life.

Few German films meet this requirement. On Horst Wessel's birthday (October 9) in 1933, Dr. Goebbels addressed a gathering of German film producers and his speech contained the following passage:

We National Socialists do not particularly care for the mere fact that our S.A. marches over the stage or the screen. Its realm is in the street. But when somebody approaches the solution of National Socialist problems artistically, he must realize (*sich klar sein*) that in this case, too, art does not come from wishing (*wollen*) but knowing how (*kennen*). Even an ostentatiously presented National Socialist conviction (*Gesinnung*) cannot make up for the lack of true art, by a long way. The National Socialist government never has demanded that S.A. films be produced. On the contrary: it sees a danger in too many. But when a company nevertheless approaches the presentation (*Darstellung*) of the values arising from life (*Erlebnismwerte*) of our S.A. or the National Socialist idea, then this film must be of first-class artistic quality. Therefore it is not easy (*bequem*) but, on the contrary, extremely difficult because [the filmmakers are] responsible to the entire nation, to make an S.A. film. The task one undertakes there demands staking (*Einsatz*) of all the best (*alle besten*) talent, and only truly great artists can accomplish it. National Socialism is under no circumstances a guarantee of approval (*Freibrief*) for artistic failure. On the contrary: the greater the idea that is being presented, the greater the artistic demands that must be made of it. [Kalbus 1935].

What the effects of this speech were we cannot judge, but in any case very few films of this sort have been made. There have been documentaries (e.g., *Triumph des Willens*, 1934; *Fuer Uns*, 1937; *Sieg im Westen*) dealing with various sorts of Nazi ceremonial, newsreels, and the films of conquest which were made officially, but the only available fictional films containing the Nazi uniform were those produced in the early years of Nazism. These included *S.A. Man Brandt* (1933), *Hans Westmar* (1933), *Blutendes Deutschland* (1933), and *Ich fuer Dich* (1934).

2 For this type of analysis, the film should contain a large mass of material on the German family. This criterion was introduced for practical reasons. It so happens that in anthropology and psychology the most effective techniques for the description of human character have been based on analysis of family life, especially of the parent-child relationship. It would have been possible—indeed, in anthropology, we are often compelled to do this—to have performed similar analyses outside the family setting. But such analyses are less vivid and are less useful in comparative studies of more than one culture. If it is possible to refer the peculiarities of, say, religious behavior back to the family, then comparison between one culture and another becomes comparatively easy because, although the elements present in one religious system may be very different from those present in another, the basic elements of the family are almost universal and only differently arranged in different parts of the world.

Actually, the Nazis have used the family setting as a springboard for their propoganda in several films and even in *Mein Kampf*.<sup>3</sup>

3 The film should be a good film in two senses: first, the acting should be good enough to give an accurate impression of the emotions intended; and second, the film should be a close-knit artistic unit so that the themes and incidents of the plot can be readily seen in relation to the film as a whole.

4 The film should carry the imprimatur of official Nazi approval and should have been successful with Nazi audiences. It is true that every film is a product of cooperative work and therefore must show a cultural norm rather than individual idiosyncracies, but this criterion is introduced as a further guarantee of Nazi cultural normality. The festivities at the premiere of this film and the fact that the film is said to have been kept on the commercial screens for an unusually long time are a proof of official Nazi approval, but, unfortunately, we have no data on audience reactions. The film *Hitlerjunge Quex* amply satisfies these criteria.

## Basic Data on the Film

The film *Hitlerjunge Quex* was shown to Hitler at the Ufapalast in Munich on September 12, 1933, and had its premiere in Berlin, at the Ufapalast am Zoo, a week later. This premiere was made into a great occasion with a symphony by Brückner and a speech by the Youth Leader, Baldur von Schirach.<sup>4</sup>

The print of the film which was used for this analysis was obtained from the Reichsfilmarchiv, in 1938, by the Museum of Modern Art Film Library, and in the analysis a mimeographed transcript of the film, also obtained from the Reichsfilmarchiv, has been used.

**Length:** The film is nine reels in length and lasts about 1 hour and 40 minutes.

**Titles:** The film carries credit titles in German, which are here reproduced in translation:

- a UFA presents (*zeigt*)
- b "Hitlerjunge Quex"
- c A film of the spirit of sacrifice (*Opfergeist*) of German youth.
- d Produced under the auspices (*Protektorat*) of the Youth Leader of the German Reich, Baldur von Schirach.
- e After the novel by—K. A. Schenzinger  
Script—K. A. Schenzinger  
B. E. Luethge
- f Camera .....Konstantin Irmen-Tschot  
Setting .....Benno von Arent  
Arthur Gunther  
Sound .....Walter Tjaden
- g Music .....Hans-Otto Bergmann  
Words of Hitler Youth Song .....Baldur von Schirach
- h Cast:  
Father Voelker .....Heinrich George  
Mother Voelker .....Berta Drews  
Heini .....a Hitler boy
- i Stoppel .....Hermann Speelmanns  
Gerda .....Rotraut Richter  
Wilde .....Karl Heixner
- j District Leader Kass .....Claus Clausen  
Fritz Doerries .....a Hitler boy  
Ulla Doerries .....a Hitler girl
- k Hospital sister .....Franziska Kinz  
Grundler .....Hans Ramspott  
Franz .....Hans Richter
- l Boys and Girls of the Berlin Hitler Youth
- m Director: Hans Steinhoff
- n Producer: Karl Ritter



Figure 1 Heini's father begging his wife for beer money.

- 
- o Prepared with Klangfilm apparatus
  - o Afifa—Sound—Track
  - p Ufa
  - q End

## Summary of the Plot

The five analyses which follow will all be in part selective summaries of the film, differing from each other in the type of selection involved. To orient the reader in these analyses, it is necessary to provide at this stage a somewhat less selective summary. All summaries are necessarily in some measure selective and therefore fall short of objectivity. The present summary is, however, objective in the sense that each statement is objectively true, but the summary as a whole was written *after* the study of the film had been completed and is specifically designed to enable the reader to follow the steps of the various analyses.

The hero of this film is Heini Voelker, a preadolescent boy, the son of a violent father and a drudge mother. His parents are of the lower middle class and have fallen in the world as a result of the inflation and the father's war wounds.

Two hungry Communist boys steal apples from a vendor in the street, and Heini's father intervenes in their favor when the vendor talks about putting them in prison. In the crowd there is a sinister Communist agitator, Wilde, who makes a speech and provokes a riot in which Heini's father hurts himself, stumbling over the curbstone. He is helped home by Stoppel, an organizer of Communist youth. The Voelkers live in a poor Communist district of Berlin. Stoppel helps the mother to dress the father's wound.

The father asks the mother for money to get some beer. She says that she has no money, and a violent scene follows, the father ransacking all the containers in the house in search of the mother's hiding place. At this moment Heini returns home from his work in a printing shop (arriving so that we see the climax of the scene between the parents through the eyes of the son). At the printing shop Heini had received a tip of 1 mark. He secretly gives this mark to his mother. She gives it to the father, who then goes off to get his beer. Stoppel is impressed by Heini's character and contacts him with a view to enlisting him in the Communist Youth International. (Figures 1, 2.)

After Stoppel leaves, the mother opens the window and lets in the mechanical music of a merry-go-round at the neighboring fair. Heini is thus reminded of a wonderful knife which he has seen in a lottery in one of the sideshows. He asks his mother to enter this lottery, which he is sure that he will win. She gets money from the hiding place in the coffee grinder and gives it to him. Heini goes to the lottery and loses. (Figure 3.)

Stoppel appears at Heini's elbow, comforts him, and invites him to join a hike of the Communist Youth on the following day. Heini accepts.

On the hike, Heini sees the Hitler Youth, a company of whom are hiking on the same train to the same woods. He is disgusted by the gross behavior of the "Communists" and especially by a kiss which Gerda, one of the Communist girls, forces upon him. Finally he wanders in the



**Figure 2** Heini's father demanding pennies for beer.



**Figure 3** Heini and his mother listening to the merry-go-round music while Heini begs for money for the lottery.

dark, away from the Communist camp, till he hears the "Hitler Youth Song" coming from the Nazi camp. He gazes through the buses at the Nazis who are celebrating the summer solstice. The Nazis find him and accuse him of spying; Fritz, the boy leader of one of the Nazi troops, sends him away. The voice of Ulla, Fritz's sister, is heard saying that he might have become a convert, but by this time Heini has sadly gone away. He sleeps by himself on the bare ground, and next morning, after watching the Nazis with longing eyes, he goes home to his mother. (Figure 4.)

He tells her he was with the Nazis and they were *not* so bad; they were wonderful. His mother is worried but not angry with him. She even lets him sing the "Hitler Youth Song" (without warning him that his father is in the next room). The father hears the song and comes in, furious. He compels Heini to sing the "Internationale," boxing his ears while he sings.

Next day at school Heini again meets Gerda and avoids her advances. He approaches Fritz and is invited by him to supper. Gerda meanwhile has been told by Stoppel to vamp Grundler, a weak Nazi boy, and while Fritz and Heini go off to supper, Gerda and Grundler go off to seek "Turkish Delight" at the fair.

At supper in this middle-class home, Fritz and Ulla ask Heini to come to the opening of their new Nazi clubroom (*Heim*). Heini hesitates because he has no key with which to return home after the meeting. Finally he accepts when put on his mettle by Fritz.

The father, meanwhile, has been persuaded by Stoppel to sign Heini into the Communist Youth. When Heini comes home, his father at once informs him that he is to go that night to the Communist Local. Heini says, "Do I get a house key?", and the father says, "Of course—you are now a grown man, and a grown man has a house key." The father then makes a long, friendly speech to Heini about the difficulties of life and how "you young ones must help us older people." Heini is almost in tears and says later to his mother, "Father is *not* so bad—I cannot lie to him—he gave me a house key." He is determined, however, not to go to the Communist meeting.

He goes out that evening but meets Stoppel, who draws him aside into a doorway and tells him that the Communists are going to raid the Nazi clubroom and that he is to help in the raid. Heini manages to slip away without taking an active part, but when the police come he is picked up and taken to the police station.

The police tell him to "go home to Mother." The Nazis think he has set the Communists onto them, and as he leaves the police station, they accuse him of treachery.

(We are given no further information about the events of that night, nor do we see Heini use the house key to return to the bosom of his family.)

Next day Stoppel tells Heini that he was a hero because he did not tell anything to the police and that tonight they will get dynamite from the Communists' cache in the Marschstrasse and blow up that nest of Nazis. Heini protests and finally says he will warn the Nazi boys. Stoppel is shocked and tells Heini that that is something which one does "only once in a life," but in the end Stoppel shrugs his shoulders and dismisses the matter.



**Figure 4** The “disorderly” Communists march past the Hitler Youth at the train station.

When Stoppel leaves, Heini rushes to the telephone to warn Fritz and Ulla. Ulla answers the telephone but Fritz tells her not to listen to that traitor. Ulla is worried by Heini’s mention of dynamite, but she obediently hangs up and Heini is left talking into a dead phone. In despair, he tries to persuade the police to interfere, but they again treat him as a child. He then tries to find Stoppel but cannot.

Suddenly, while Heini is at the fair looking for Stoppel, there is a violent explosion—the Nazis have blown up the Communists’ cache of dynamite—and Heini starts for home whistling the Youth Song.

Stoppel knows that it is Heini who has betrayed them, and he goes to the Voelkers’ home where he finds only the mother. In the conversation which follows, the mother gets at first an impression that Stoppel has killed Heini and later a general fear that the Communists will kill him.

Heini arrives after Stoppel has left and finds his mother in a state of despair. She tries to persuade him to make up with Stoppel but fails in this because Heini is now sure that the Nazis will accept him. Heini goes to sleep on his bed while his mother sits weeping beside him. Finally, she turns on the gas to kill both herself and Heini, and the screen is filled with billowing fumes.

Heini awakes in a hospital. A nurse says, “There is somebody to see you.” Heini says, “My mother?,” but it is the Nazi boys and Ulla. They give him a uniform and a mirror in which to admire himself. After they have gone the nurse comes, and while she removes the Nazi cap from his head, she tells him that his mother will never come.

While Heini is convalescent, his father and the district leader of the Nazis happen to visit him simultaneously and the question is discussed—“Where does the boy belong?”. The Nazi wins this discussion by a verbal trick, and Heini goes to live in a Nazi clubhouse outside the Communist district. Here he meets Grundler, the weak Nazi, and we are shown the contrast between the two boys. Grundler gives Heini the nickname “Quex” (an abbreviation of *Quexsilber*, “quicksilver”). He resents this and a small fight breaks out among the boys. The fight is quelled by a barked command from the district leader. The leader himself addresses Heini as Quex, and the name sticks.

The Communists are waiting for vengeance, and, in spite of the district leader’s opposition, Heini wants to return to the Communist district to distribute leaflets for the 1933 election. Grundler has been falling lower and lower under Gerda’s influence, and through Grundler’s treachery Stoppel finds out where Heini is staying. We are given to understand that Stoppel is fond of Heini and is wavering in his Communism. He goes to find Heini and makes a last attempt to persuade him to leave the Nazis. Heini is adamant, even against the offer of the original many-bladed knife which Stoppel produces from his pocket. Stoppel goes back to the Communists and with a gesture places the knife on the table. It is picked up by Wilde.

The Nazis are working on leaflets for the 1933 election, and Grundler and Gerda treacherously destroy all the available Nazi leaflets. Fritz has been wounded in an election riot, and Heini and Ulla meet at the door of the room in which Fritz is lying. They go off together to Heini’s printing shop, where they work to prepare new leaflets, and when the work is completed Ulla gives Heini a single kiss. Heini then goes out to distribute the leaflets in the Communist district. He is hunted and encircled by the Communists in the darkened streets and takes refuge in one of the tents in the deserted fair.

Accidentally, he touches a mechanical figure of a drummer and the figure starts to beat its drum, thus betraying him. The Communists enter the tent and Heini screams (presumably stabbed by Wilde). The Nazis come (it is now bright daylight) and find Heini dying. The knife lies on the ground beside him. Heini’s last words are, “Our flag billows before. . . .” The soundtrack takes up the “Youth Song” and the flag appears on the screen, giving place to marching columns of Hitler Youth. (Figure 5.)

## Analysis I: Time Perspectives

In any analysis it is important to determine the sorts of questions which we ask of the material and to set up our analytical frames in such a way that the whole unit which we are examining will not be lost in our attention to details nor the details lost through too much attention to the whole. This dilemma of the wood and the trees can best be resolved by employing a series of different types of analysis. We shall therefore look at this film from three standpoints: first, from far off we shall examine its total climax structure; then, in a somewhat closer inspection, we shall study the characterization of the two political groups and the backgrounds in which they are set; and last, examining the film in detail, we shall study the interactions between the various members of Heini's family.

The climax structure of any work of art is related to those characteristics of the artist which the psychologists call "time perspectives." All peoples must impose sense and coherence on the very complex stream of their experience. They must punctuate this stream so that the relations between events may be meaningful. But the type of sense which different types of peoples impose is known to vary greatly. Some people see themselves as living in a fatalist universe; others see their own behavior as determining the future; and still others believe in a Golden Age, and of these some will put the Golden Age in the past while others imagine it in the near or distant future.

Philosophers may try to choose between these various views of experience, attributing greater or less truth to one or the other, but with this question we are not concerned. We are only asking what sort of view of the past and future, what type of time perspective, a certain political cult had developed in 1933. Probably it is not given to man to determine which of these time perspectives is "true" because the stream of events to which the perspective is applied includes not only outside events but also his own behavior. His own behavior will be guided by his own time perspective, and thus whatever that time perspective may be, the total stream as he sees it will acquire the appropriate structure.

But because his behavior is shaped in terms of his time perspective, it becomes important to study this. A statement of a man's time perspective is a way of describing his character.<sup>5</sup>

The time perspective of this film is summarized for us in the "Hitler Youth Song," whose words were composed by Baldur von Schirach:



Figure 5 Heini dying in the arms of his Nazi comrades.

### "Through death to a millennium"

Our flag billows [*flattert*] before us!  
 We advance [*ziehn*] into the future man for man!  
 We march for Hitler through night and pain [*Not*]  
 With the flag of youth for freedom and bread!  
 Our flag billows before us!  
 Our flag is the new epoch [*Zeit*]!  
 And the flag loads us into eternity [*Ewigkeit*]!  
 Yes, the flag is more than death!

Or, in one phrase, we may summarize the time perspective of the film as "through death to a millennium." This time perspective is interesting in several ways. It is, of course, the characteristic time perspective of the great fanatical revivals and nativistic cults, from early Christianity through Mohammedanism and Marxism to the Ghost Dance of the American Indians and the Vaihala Madness of New Guinea. The same basic view of life, "through the unpleasant to the pleasant," recurs again and again, but the specific pictures which are drawn of the unpleasantness and of the later reward vary from one culture to another. The unpleasantness may be death or political chaos or persecution or striving effort; and the final reward may be either in this world or in the next. It may be a sensuous reward, a military victory, or an ivory tower. The prognosis for any cult will depend on how the two successive phases of this time perspective are conceived and on the likelihood of events fulfilling expectations.

In this film there are two such cycles, in which Heini goes through death: first, his incomplete death when his mother turns on the gas and second, his final death at the hands of the Communists. What sorts of death were these and to what sort of millennium did they lead?

The two deaths have a number of features in common:

- 1 Each follows some conspicuous achievement on Heini's part. The gas death occurs after he has rescued the Nazi boys and enabled them to blow up the Communists' dynamite; the final death follows his successful distribution of leaflets in the Communist district after the Communists thought they were all destroyed.
- 2 There is a woman involved in both deaths. The gas death is the final episode in Heini's relation to his mother; and the final death follows Ulla's kiss.
- 3 Each death is represented on the screen by a sort of billowing or waving motion. In the case of the gas death, we see the fumes fill the screen and move like heaving waves. In the final death, it is the Nazi flag itself which fills the frame and billows before us.<sup>6</sup>
- 4 Each death is accompanied by a change in illumination. The gas death occurs in a darkened room, and after it the fumes fade away to disclose Heini in a brightly lighted hospital ward. In the final death Heini distributed his leaflets and was encircled by the Communists in darkened streets; he takes refuge in the dark tent of the deserted fair; he is stabbed in the dark. We then see his legs faltering as he comes out of the tent in a half light and finally, when the Nazis find him dying, we see full daylight.

Each death accompanies a change in Heini's status. By the gas death he shifts from his family home to a hospital, a sort of neutral ground halfway toward Nazism. By his final death he moves from the world of the living to the world of reincarnated heroes.

In each death Heini's last words refer to the future. In the gas death, his mother says, "Heini, settle your quarrel with him [Stoppel] or else everything is lost [*sonst ist alles aus*]." And Heini replies, "But Mother, now it is just beginning [*Jetzt faengt es doch erst an*]." In the final death, Heini's last words are:

Our flag billows before us  
It leads . . .  
[See Figure 5.]

Each death is rather amply predicted. The gas death is predicted by the mother at the beginning of the film when the father comes home hurt. She says, "You'll bring us all into misfortune [*Unglueck*] again." Later, while Heini is coming home from the hike, we are shown a shot of the mother lighting the gas, and finally, just before the event, she says, "Everything is lost" (quoted above). The final death is predicted by the district leader's anxiety, by Stoppel's and Gerda's warnings, and by the heavily weighted scene in which Wilde picks up the knife. Each death is tragic in the classical sense of being the final outcome of an inevitable sequence of events.

These features which are common to the two deaths give us together a rounded picture of Nazi time perspective. To get this picture, it is important not to think of these features separately as they are enumerated above but to combine them into a hazy sense of the total *Weltanschauung*. The achievement, the woman, the billowing, the change of light, the change of status, and the destiny idea together make up a state of mind which can only very inadequately be expressed in words—an on-going state through some sort of orgasmic upheaval to a final millennium.

The final term in the Nazi time perspective is of special interest. The beginning of the cycle, through suffering and effort to individual death, is comparatively common in fanatical cults, but the final goal toward which the Nazi nominally strives is a rather unusual one. It appears to be a sort of multiple reincarnation in this world. Heini's corpse is replaced on the screen, first by the flag, then by columns of marching Nazis, and in this final shot some trick photography has been used so that while we see the innumerable marching figures moving obliquely away from us, we also see, faintly superimposed on them and much larger, the waists and thighs of uniformed Nazi figures striding toward us. Even after the passage through death, there is promise of future turmoil, sexual and aggressive.

A similar promise of multiple reincarnation is still more explicit in another Nazi film, *Fuer Uns* (1937). This is a documentary account of a Nazi party ceremony in which we see the dedication of sixteen concrete blocks to the memory of the sixteen martyrs of early Nazism. Each block has on it the name of a hero (Hans Schlageter, Horst Wessel, etc.) and the words "On call" (*Zum Appel*). Each block supports a great urn in which flames billow. As a wreath is laid at the foot of each block, the name of the hero is called, and a thousand men somewhere in the stadium answer "HERE." The procession goes on to the next hero, and again the answer comes back from another section of the stadium.

Before leaving the subject of Heini's deaths, it is necessary to ask why there should be two of them. In this, the film transgresses the ordinary canons of tragedy, but the reasons for this transgression lie in the peculiar social structure which Nazism seeks to set up. In place of the more common type of social system based on the family, Nazism substitutes a system based on what anthropologists call "age grades."<sup>7</sup> The youth of the nation is to be divided into blocks from small boys (*Pfimpfen*), from 6 to 10 years old, up to the fighting units of S.A. The step from each grade to the next is accompanied by an arduous initiation ceremony.<sup>8</sup>

Initiation ceremonies, and other rites which symbolize the passage from one social status to another, usually include a symbolic statement of the candidate's death as a member of his former group followed by a symbolic statement of his aggregation into the new group. Thus, in giving Heini two deaths, the propagandist has epit-



omized a whole social system and a time perspective which envisages repeated symbolic deaths. Heini's final death implies that the long series of symbolic deaths representing promotions from one age grade to another will reach its climax in a real death and multiple reincarnation. His first death by gas tells us that the entry into the age grade system is itself a passage rite, differing only from other passage rites and initiations in that Heini's mother, instead of mourning the loss of her boy when he leaves the family, is herself killed.

In killing the mother in this way, the film does more violence to the conventional folk philosophies than is immediately apparent. It is not only that the film kills off a member of the group which Heini is leaving but, specifically, the mother is the predictor of tragedy, the representative of fate. This theme is not very striking in this particular film. We hear the mother at the beginning say to the father, "You will bring misfortune on us again," and later she dies, but this combination is not shocking to the average spectator. That this combination may be significant, however, is demonstrated by another Nazi propaganda film, *Faehrmann Maria* (*Ferryman Maria*, 1936), an allegory specifically concerned with death. In this film, the old male ferryman (a figure who reminds one of Charon) dies in the arms of an austere male figure representing Death. The place of the old ferryman is taken by a beautiful ferrywoman, Maria. She cheats Death of a young male victim and deceives Death into following her across the swamps in search of this victim whom she loves. Death's foot slips, he sinks into the swamp, and the last we see of him is his hands pleading for rescue. Maria then tells her lover, "The way is open to the homeland [*Heimat*],"<sup>9</sup> and they go together hand in hand across the river and over the hill.

This second film does very great violence to occidental notions about Death and shows us that the death of the mother in *Hitlerjunge Quex*—the killing of the personification of fate—is possibly significant. German thought, both pre- and post-Hitler, is very much preoccupied with ideas of destiny, interwoven with ideas of duty, racial superiority, and providence, and it is natural to compare the destiny notions in *Hitlerjunge Quex* with those in *Faehrmann Maria*. The second film leads us naturally to look in *Hitlerjunge Quex* for a second Destiny or Providence figure who should be a young female, replacing the dead mother.

This role is filled by Ulla. Twice Ulla works like Fate or Providence behind the scenes, to reverse the course of the plot. First, when Heini is caught spying on the Nazi hike, Fritz is angry and sends him away, but after he is gone we hear Ulla's voice saying, "He might have been one of us." The audience is left with the impression that Nazism is inaccessible, and this impression is reinforced by the distant views of the Nazi camp at which Heini gazes the next morning. But on the following day Heini

has no difficulty in approaching Fritz, who at once invites him to dinner. Later in the film we see another reversal of the same sort when Heini telephones to warn the Nazis about the dynamite and Ulla hangs up the phone under Fritz's orders. Heini is left unable to make contact with anybody, but the explosion occurs. Nothing is said to explain either of these reversals, and only one explanation is possible: Ulla, on both occasions, worked like Providence behind the scenes. Thus into the whole notion of death and the time perspectives there has been infused a sense that Death and Providence should be the object of the sorts of attitudes which the Nazis would direct toward the desirable female (see Analysis IV). Such a reading of the film will account at once for the use of orgasmic billowing symbols to represent death.

In concluding this discussion of the time perspectives expressed in this film, it is appropriate to consider how this film differs from others. Insofar as a time perspective involves an expectation of change in the course of events, the perspective itself and its implications for character may alter as time goes on. The expected climax may occur, in which case the former time perspective is satisfied and a new one must be constructed. Alternatively, the climax may not occur and some modification must then be introduced into the time perspective to accentuate or relieve the frustration.

Almost simultaneously with the production of *Hitlerjunge Quex*, other films were produced with the same basic time perspective, "through death or chaos to a millennium," but the chaotic phase is not always symbolized by personal death. In *Bluten des Deutschland*, this phase is directly equated with the political chaos of the twenties, while in *Hans Westmar*, a film based on the story of Horst Wessel, individual death and the political chaos are simultaneously invoked. Thus in these films it was possible for the filmmaker to present the notion that the worst of the chaos was already over. The possibility of chaos still remains as a threat in case the nation should not dutifully follow its Nazi destiny, but the time perspective is not, as in *Hitlerjunge Quex*, that of a man faced with the whole uphill climb and only the distant promise of the summit. It is rather that of a man already more than halfway up the hill and able to look back on what he has accomplished.

When, however, we look at a much later film, *Ohm Krueger* (released in April 1941), we find an entirely different time perspective. This film deals with the story of the Boer War, and the Boers, fighting England, are clearly the model that is held up before the German audience. The film starts after the Boer War is over. We see Krueger as an old man suffering from psychological blindness in a hospital in Switzerland. He is looked after by a young nurse to whom he narrates the story of the war. The film then cuts back to South Africa, and we see the Great Trek followed by disreputable intrigues attributed to Rhodes, Jameson, Chamberlain, Queen Victoria, and others. The war begins with prodigious victories for the Boers and

ends with utter defeat. We see the graves of the Boers, and then the film returns to Krueger, in Switzerland, who predicts that all this suffering will be avenged by some greater nation.

The time perspective implicit in this film seems to be the precise opposite of that of the films of the early thirties. Instead of "through death to a millennium" this later film offers us "through preliminary victories to ultimate defeat"—a time perspective which probably results from the resemblance between World Wars I and II. We may note, however, that *Hitlerjunge Quex* and *Ohm Krueger* are alike in assuming an enormous pendulum swing in the tide of human events. *Ohm Krueger* may bode better than *Quex* for a United Nations victory, but the problem which will confront us after the war is that of steadying the pendulum—of inducing in Germany an expectation not of climax but rather of steady progress.

## Analysis II: Political Groups and Backgrounds

The first analysis of the film dealt with the climax structure of the film as a whole and related this to the time perspectives of Nazism. In contrast to this, the present analysis is static. The element of time is here deliberately overlooked, and instead this second analysis will consider how Nazism and Communism are characterized in the film.

The film actually deals with three types of social grouping—Communism, Nazism, and the family—but of these the family is a sort of no man's land over which the battle for Heini's future is fought. In this battle Heini's relationship to his parents evolves and changes, the emphasis shifting according to the propagandist's technical needs. Analysis of the family, therefore, cannot be handled in static terms, and is reserved for a later section. The present analysis is confined to Communism and Nazism, which are consistently characterized throughout the film.

The very first shot of the film lays the base for the characterization of Communism. It is a close-up shot of a single apple which fills the screen—a double symbol of food and sexuality. From this the camera trucks back to include the whole heap of apples in the vendor's store, and we see two boys, whom we later discover to be Communists, debating whether to steal the apples. They are hungry and without money, and suddenly one of them snatches an apple and runs. The vendor grabs the boy and begins to box his ears.

A second characterization of Communism follows in the same sequence. Wilde, the sinister Communist agitator, makes a speech beginning, "Workers [*Proleten*], hear me. It is not this boy alone who has been boxed on the ears. I tell you that all you who are here have had your ears boxed."

Thus in a single sequence Communists are characterized as unstoical in the face of temptations of the mouth and as making political capital out of purely human woes.<sup>10</sup> In doing this the propagandist has resorted to two sorts of biblical reference; he has invoked the apple and has put Christlike paraphrasing into Wilde's mouth.

Stoppel's behavior when he accompanies Heini's father to his home and helps the mother to dress the father's wound further illustrates this use of human woes. He takes advantage of the situation to contact Heini for the Communist Youth International, and later, at the fair, when Heini has lost his money in the lottery, he again exploits this woe, comforting Heini by inviting him on the Communist hike.

On the hike, we see the contrast between the ragged, disorderly Communists and the neat, disciplined Nazis, and we are told almost in so many words that this contrast is a part of the emotional dynamics upon which Nazism rests. A platoon of Nazi girls in uniform is standing on the station when a disorderly mob of Communists comes by. At the head of the Nazi girls is Ulla (though the audience does not as yet know that this girl will play a special part in the story). Just before the arrival of the Communists, Ulla's head droops forward in a very unmilitary posture, but when she sees the Communists, she suddenly raises it and holds herself properly erect. Her gesture implies that the emotional value of Nazism is not simple and positive; it is also negative: it is a pride in *not* being the sort of people that they accuse their enemies of being (see Figure 4).

Immediately after this incident, the film begins to develop the themes which were first suggested by the apple. We see the Communist boy who stole the apple take chewed food from his mouth and fling it in the face of one of the Nazi boys,<sup>11</sup> and in later stages of the film we repeatedly see the Communists indulging in grass eating, throwing their food, passing a half-eaten apple from one to another, smoking cigarettes (the Nazis apparently do not smoke), and drinking schnapps (the Nazis drink only beer).

The response of the Nazis to the insult of the thrown food is interesting. For a fraction of a second we see them break their ranks and prepare to indulge in a completely disorderly brawl. The district leader barks a command, and they return to attention. But in this fraction of a second the psychological base for the whole propaganda system is exposed. The Nazi assumption is that, but for the barked command and their veneer of discipline, they themselves would be the same sort of disorderly rabble they represent the Communists as being.<sup>12</sup>

This assumption reappears when Heini is living in the Nazi clubhouse. Heini is referred to as "Quex" at a meal, and when he shows resentment at this nickname, a disorderly brawl breaks out, involving all the Nazi boys. Some of them fight in one cluster and some in another in a completely disorganized manner, until a barked com-



Figure 6 Hitler Youth brawling in their clubhouse.



Figure 7 Heini is pulled down by Gerda and exclaims, "You are a girl!"

mand from the district leader freezes them into guilty immobility. (Figure 6.)

Here the disorderly characteristics which the film attributes to the Communists are another example of the Nazis' habit of attributing their own real or potential vices to their enemies, and we shall see that the whole characterization of Communism in this film is, in a sense, a *self-portrait of Nazism*. It represents what the Nazis think that they themselves would be like without their discipline or, psychologically speaking, what they *are* like under the veneer of that discipline.

The sexual suggestion which was implicit in the apple is also developed on the hike. When Heini enters the compartment on the train, Gerda, the Communist girl, seizes him around the neck and pulls him down onto her lap. His back is toward her, but she forces his face around until she is able to plant a kiss on his lips. Gerda is wearing a boy's cap, and as Heini stands horrified, she pulls the cap off her head. Heini, still more horrified, says, "You are a girl," and she replies, "You notice everything." (Figure 7.)

This kiss might appear sufficient to smear the Communists with the combined reproach of sexuality and mouthiness, but the propagandist was apparently not satisfied and he borrows a Freudian recipe to drive the point home. We see Stoppel push a peeled banana into Gerda's mouth with the palm of his hand, and this moment is chosen for the others to start to sing the "Internationale." (Figure 8.)

Later, in the camp, we see another characterization of the Communists, in which a Freudian recipe is once again borrowed. They play a buttocks-slapping game (*Schinken kloppen*). The boy who stole the apple is held

bent over so that he cannot see who slaps him. Gerda supplies the slap and then self-consciously looks the other way. The boy guesses correctly that she is the guilty one, and she in turn is grabbed by the crowd and held while the boy spits on his hands preparatory to taking his revenge. Heini at this point turns away in disgust.<sup>13</sup>

These characteristics are attributed to the Communists whenever they appear on the screen. Almost always they have food in their hands, and when the filmmaker wants to show us that Grundler's character is degenerating under Gerda's influence, he does so by having Grundler smoke a cigarette in a lackadaisical manner. While he smokes he sings a snatch of a cheap popular song, and when he sees Heini's photograph of Ulla, he assumes that she is a sexual object (*Flamme*).

In contrast to the Communists, the Nazis are almost colorless. We see their parade-ground smartness, we see them dashing into the sea to bathe, but these behaviors are the negative of the excesses which are attributed to Communism, and throughout one is left with the feeling that Nazi life is empty. On three occasions we see them eat—on the hike, in the Nazi clubroom, and at the home of Fritz and Ulla—but except on the hike, where the Nazi eating is contrasted with the throwing of food by the Communists, their eating habits are not specifically used to characterize them. In the Nazi clubroom the meal is merely the setting in which Heini's nickname is given him, and at the home of Fritz and Ulla, it is the whole upper-middle-class background which is significant, rather than the eating.

On the sexual side, the film shows us something of the courtship behavior and attitudes which Nazism held up as an ideal in 1933. These, however, can be analyzed only in connection with their whole handling of the family,



**Figure 8** Comrade Stoppel stuffs a banana in Gerda's mouth while the others sing the "Internationale."

and we shall therefore confine ourselves here to the question of the psychological nature of the sexual contrast. We have noted that the contrast in terms of orderliness is based on the Nazi habit of referring their own disapproved weaknesses to their enemies, and two types of evidence are available to show that the same is true of the sexual conquest.

The first evidence is of the same general type as that which we used in the case of orderliness-disorderliness. The Nazis used the premise that they themselves would be disorderly but for their discipline as an argument in favor of their whole system; and in the same way they employ the argument that they would be sexually deprived. The story of Grundler's fall is propagandic in this sense.

The story begins on the morning after the hike when he and the other Nazis are distributing leaflets. Gerda, under Stoppel's orders, contacts Grundler, asking him for a leaflet and then for another and another till he gives her all he has. Then she throws all the leaflets into the river and starts a flirtation with Grundler by asking him for a cigarette. A few minutes later she says she wants "Turkish Delight." He asks where they can get this, and she says, "At the fair." We then see Grundler falling in step with Gerda on the way to the fair. Later we see them dizzily riding the merry-go-round, and the camera stoops to pay special attention to the swinging legs of the boy and girl. From this point on, Grundler's uniform becomes more and more slovenly, and finally, under Gerda's influence, he enters into a plot to destroy the entire supply of Nazi leaflets. He brings the leaflets on a barrow to a rendezvous with Gerda, and together they throw all the bundles of leaflets into the flowing river.

The inclusion of Grundler in the film can partly be explained as a bid for "truthfulness," an attempt to make the audience say to themselves, "Yes, the film is not an idealized picture of Nazism because, after all, they do show a bad Nazi," and, of course, the propagandist can safely show this bad Nazi because the showing is accompanied by disapproval of Grundler's weakness. Actually, however, they have shown a Nazi who is not only bad but *deteriorating*, and thus, consciously or unconsciously, they have again preached that Nazism has a double quality. On one side, Nazism may have the fine overpurity of comradeship (*Kamaradschaft*), but this purity carries with it, on the other, the tendency to deteriorate in a particular direction.

This is by no means the double nature attributed to many by the more familiar Christian sects. Christianity has classified the forces which work to mold man's behavior in many ways, and no doubt the Nazi tendency toward dualism owes something to the dualistic thinking in other religions, but the actual content of the dualism is fundamentally different. Christianity sees man in various dualistic frames; it sees him as divided between mind and spirit, reason and emotion, soul and body, conscience and temptation, and so on. But even the most pessimistic of Christian beliefs, those which assign maximum strength to the taint of Original Sin, have never omitted from man's nature some traces of spontaneous goodness. The Christian dualisms have always assumed good and bad elements *within* the individual man; they may have insisted that the good side needed external help from church or minister, but they have never seen man as a mechanical creature who should be passive vis-à-vis an external disciplinary authority. In the Nazi view—and the same is true of the handling of temptation and depravity in many pre-Nazi German films—man's nature will respond almost mechanically to bright lights, the whirl of circuses, and city life. He will inevitably be sucked down into a swamp.<sup>14</sup>

The second type of evidence, which shows that, in attributing a certain sort of sexuality to the Communists, the Nazis are merely describing the worst side of their own nature, is indirect. If the Communists were represented as merely different from Nazis, the filmmaker could claim that he was simply giving an objective picture. But these "Communists" are not simply different from Nazis; they are a *systematic opposite* of the Nazi ideal. This relationship is, of course, what we should expect if the attributes of "Communism" are psychologically rooted in the Nazi character, and while it is conceivable that this relatedness might be due to coincidence, such a coincidence would be unlikely.

The clearest indication that "Communism" as here depicted is only the obverse of Nazism comes from the makeup of the two girls, Gerda and Ulla. Gerda, the Communist, is more heavily female in her head and torso. Her hair strays loose; she continually expresses her sexual desires and frustrations with gestures of the lips; and

her breasts are evident through her sluttish blouse. But in contrast to this femaleness in her head and torso, her legs are usually clothed in slacks. Ulla, on the other hand, is the precise reverse of this. She wears a skirt, but from the waist up she is progressively more boyish. Instead of a blouse she wears a Nazi shirt open at the collar and loosely held with a tie. She has straight blond hair, bobbed and severely parted. She wears a beret.

This contrast may be summarized by saying that if Gerda's head and torso were set on Ulla's legs, a complete female figure would result; whereas Ulla's torso on Gerda's legs would give us a complete boy. They are not just two people, different one from the other; they are a pair of people, each systematically related to the other. Gerda is a postadolescent female with male legs, and Ulla is an adolescent or preadolescent boy with female legs.<sup>15</sup> The same type of systematic contrast occurs also between Heini's father and the district leader, and again between Heini and Grundler, and these two contrasts will be examined at a later stage of the analysis. It is evident, however, that the likelihood of these three systematic contrasts all being due to coincidence is very small, and we may take their systematic nature as evidence for the fact that the depiction of the Communists is a function of the Nazi character.

Last, we cannot leave the consideration of the contrast between Nazism and Communism without examining the backgrounds in which these two political groups are set. The filmmakers went out of their way to blacken Communism by photographing the Communist scenes in poor light. Even Heini's home is murky and sinister; the fair so much frequented by Communists is poorly lit; and the room in which the Communists meet is clouded with tobacco smoke. In contrast to this, the home of Fritz and Ulla and the Nazi clubroom are brightly lit, and on the hike we see Heini progress from the murky Communist camp through darkness to the scene in which the Nazis celebrate the solstice, where their beacon fire gives bright contrasts of illumination. When he is dismissed as a spy, Heini retires into the darkness, but next morning he is shown a brilliant scene of the Nazis on the beach in the morning sunlight.

In general, these shifts between light and dark are satisfactorily woven into the plot, but at the very end of the film, one shift from darkness to light seems arbitrary. We see Heini encircled in the darkened street and he is killed in the dark, but when the Nazis come to pose beside his dying body, it is broad daylight.

In addition to darkness, the background of Communism is characterized by various kinds of spinning objects, the merry-go-round, the lottery wheel, and spinning targets in the shooting booth. It appears that the Nazis conception of the sort of sexuality which they attributed to Communists is closely linked with feelings of dizziness. Man, the mechanical puppet, is endlessly liable to be swept off his feet into some sort of whirlpool.<sup>16</sup>

The relationship between the dizzy background and sex is especially clear in the scene in which Stoppel invites Heini to the Communist hike. Behind them while they talk is the whirling merry-go-round, and their conversation is interrupted not only by the mechanical music but also by Gerda's voice. Gerda is riding one of the horses, and whenever she passes Stoppel she calls out to him. Finally, at the end of the conversation, Stoppel jumps on the moving merry-go-round, like a frog jumping into his pond.

In addition to the use of these dizziness symbols, Communism is twice characterized by the river. This occurs at the beginning and end of the story of Grundler's fall. First we see Gerda throw Grundler's leaflets over her shoulders into the river, and finally we see Grundler and Gerda together throwing the main supply of leaflets in bundles into the water. Probably the appropriateness of this symbol derives from some notion that Communism sweeps all good things away.

German cameramen are exceedingly fond of photographing waves and ripples, and these symbols are usually used to denote some pleasant or desirable emotional state. In the first scene, when Gerda throws the leaflets over her shoulder, we see the river behind her, smooth and shining in the sunlight. Here the river probably reinforces the idea of Gerda's attraction. In the final scene, we see the river at night with the lights of the city reflected in it so that the river becomes a symbol of the seductive, bright lights. On neither occasion do we see waves, which are reserved instead for association with Nazism. We see the sea (or possibly a lake) when the Nazis run into it to bathe, and the Nazi flag, whenever it appears on the screen, billows with a wave motion, and the gas fumes billow like a flag or like water. Thus Nazism is associated with the movement of waves.

There is clearly a rather close relationship between the hypnotic fascination that comes from staring at waves and that which comes from looking at spinning objects, and this relationship is probably another facet of the relationship which we have already noted between Nazism and the Nazi characterization of Communism. There is, however, an important difference between waves and spinning objects. Waves contain an illusion of progress, of forward movement, but spinning objects evidently get nowhere. It is possible that the waves used to characterize Nazism are related to the endless marching which has such great fascination for Nazis and which appears in almost every Nazi film. Only in its endlessness does this marching resemble the spinning of the symbols associated with Communism.

These two introductory analyses, the first of Nazi time perspectives and the second of characterization of Nazism and Communism, enable us now to go on to examine how the filmmakers handled the mixed emotions present in the German family and how they have marshalled these emotions to make them support Nazism.

### Analysis III: The Family of Origin

From a propagandist's point of view, and also, perhaps, from that of an artist, the contrast discussed above, between Nazism and Communism, is the weakest part of this film. The contrast is stated openly and didactically so that the audience is fully conscious that a contrast has been presented and, being fully conscious, is therefore free either to accept or to refuse it. Indeed, we may suppose that if the only propagandic message in this film were its idealization of Nazism and its caricaturing of Communism, its effect on a mixed audience would be merely to reinforce Nazism in those who were already converted, while those who preferred Communism would be able to repudiate the caricature so that the film would only anger them and make them more Communist than before. The contrast by itself would not make converts; it would only increase antagonism.

The great strength of the film lies elsewhere, however. Heini's preference for Nazism dates clearly from his seeing the contrast, but from then on his progress toward Nazism is tied up with his relations with his father and mother in a way that endows Nazism with a psychological force much greater than it would otherwise have. The family scene as it is presented to us is one of extreme intensity, from the first moment that Heini appears in the doorway and sees his father in a temper tantrum, demanding money from his mother. And later, when we see a pleasant, warm relationship between Heini and his father—when the father gives him the house key—the emotions, though of a different kind, are no less intense. In general, the propagandist evokes all the intensity of emotion that lies latent in the German boy's relationship to his family, and as the film progresses, these emotions are rearranged and harnessed to give dynamic force and fanatical violence to Heini's Nazism.

The present analysis from the kinship angle is an attempt to show how this is done and to outline the implications for the Nazi character that follow if we suppose that the fanatical intensity of this cult is largely derived from certain themes of pre-Nazi German family life.<sup>17</sup>

In a strict, narrow sense (excluding possible spouses and parent substitutes), Heini's family consists of himself, his father, and his mother, and of these the first to appear on the screen is the father. We see him in the opening sequence of the film as an unknown man in the crowd at a food riot. He is a big, heavy man, poorly dressed, clumsy and violent, but with unexpected warmth and gentleness. The first characterization of him is as a kind person. We see him speak against the crowd that wants to imprison the two boys who stole apples when driven by hunger. The father pushes his way forward through the crowd, and he speaks simply, as a human being without party alignment. He sees the incident not as a political allegory but simply as a peccadillo. He points out that you don't put a boy in prison for one apple—"especially when the boy has not even bitten it." At this stage, the propagandist

is careful not to associate the father with Communism and the father is sympathetically treated. A riot starts, however, fomented by Wilde, the Communist agitator, who treats the incident of the apple as political material: "Workers, listen to me. Here not only this boy has had his ears boxed, but also you who are here have been boxed on the ears." In the riot the shopkeeper upsets his own apples, and then there is a shout, "Police!" As the crowd scatters, the father stumbles over the edge of the sidewalk and strikes his head against the wall. He stands leaning against the wall and groaning on the porch of his own home. He is helped up the stairs by Stoppel, an organizer of the Communist Youth.

The following sequence includes the father, the mother, and Stoppel, and it is important to watch how Stoppel becomes included in the set of relationships which constitute the family. The relationship between father and mother is immediately and sharply defined. The mother is dominated by the father, and yet he is as dependent on her as a child. When he enters with his injury, she cries out in horror. This is the only evidence of love for him that she shows, and as the sequence develops we realize that his injury is not serious. The father groans when the wound is washed, but this is plainly due to his lack of stoicism. Stoppel joins the mother in ministering to the father.

The mother, after washing the cut, solicitously offers the father a drink of water, but he with an oath demands beer. The mother says, "But that costs money!" He then asks where Heini is so that he can send him to get two bottles, but the mother replies that Heini is still at work.

This sequence has set up the following definitions of the personalities and their relations to each other: the father is unstoical and dependent upon the mother; the mother is a drudge, solicitous for the father, and Stoppel is associated with the mother in caring for the father.

At this point the sequence is cut to let us see Heini at work in a printing shop, where he receives a tip of one mark from a customer. He and the printer regard this as a great windfall, and the printer makes a tentative effort to take the mark from him (lest the mark should appear to the audience to have been too easily earned). Heini successfully resists this and goes home.

The camera now returns to the father, mother, and Stoppel. The father asks for money so that he can buy beer—"Mother, won't you give me a few pennies?"—thus underlining his dependence on her; and when she professes to have no money, he becomes more and more violent and domineering. He starts searching in all the containers in the house, first looking in the coffee pot and then throwing it down, pulling out drawers and scattering the clothes, then scattering the photographs out of the family album, and so on. Both Stoppel and the mother try to quiet him. Stoppel says, "Man, don't make a circus (*Zirkus*)<sup>18</sup> here." But the father continues to advance, angry and domineering, toward the mother, who slowly retreats backward, facing him (see Figures 2, 3).

At this point, Heini appears in the doorway. He arrives home at the precise moment of the height of the father's tantrum, and for a moment he hesitates in horror, so that, when the camera returns to the father and mother, we see their relationship through the eyes of their son. Almost immediately Heini goes over to the mother and secretly slips the mark into her hand. She raises her hand and opens it, and the father seizes the mark. His temper tantrum suddenly subsides; he spits on the mark and says, "There, you see, one has to show one's teeth in dealing with women."

This very dramatic sequence burns into the audience the whole stereotyped family picture from which Nazism draws its emotional power. Heini is for a moment paralyzed with horror at the conflict in which his parents are engaged, but this hesitation is resolved when he goes and gives his mother the mark. In contrast to the father, he, Heini, is the mother's slave, and she, at least in this instance, is dependent on him. He is the rescuing hero in his own eyes and in the eyes of the audience.

The emotions and attitudes of the rescuing hero are precisely those which the propagandist would like his audience to apply to Nazism or to Germany. But this incident has a double significance. At a superficial level we can see Heini as the hero, but while he is being heroic, he is also at a slightly deeper level joining his mother in passive appeasement of the father.<sup>19</sup> And this passivity also can be orchestrated into the emotions which Heini will give to the Party. In the end, the propagandist wants the audience to feel that utter passivity to the demands of the Party is a form of rescuing heroism, and this incident presents the ideal model for such a combination of emotions. Heini's passivity toward his father is glorified by being at the same time a rescuing of the mother, and this glorified passivity has now only to be shifted to the Party and/or the nation.

The film does not go into the question of the relationship between Party and nation, and it seems that to have attempted this would have landed the propagandist in difficulties. Starting from three symbolic units, the son, the father, and the mother, he would have had to end up with two, the party and the nation, and the basic instability between these two would eventually be disclosed. If the nation were equated with the mother, then the Party would have to combine the father's authority with Heini's heroism, and would therefore become a recipient of ambivalent emotions. We should see all too clearly that Party and nation could only exist side by side if perpetually fed on scapegoats and enemies, which would provide an object for the negative parts of this ambivalence. Passivity can be glorified only by emergency, and there must be imagined danger from which somebody can rescue somebody else.

We have now seen son and mother united in mutual love against the father, and Stoppel has received a sympathetic characterization through his association with the mother in aiding and placating the father. Now Stoppel

takes advantage of the occasion to contact Heini for the Communist Youth International. He first praises Heini to the father and then asks if Heini is "organized." The father tells him to ask the boy himself. In a later scene the father signs Heini into the Communist Youth willy-nilly and brushes aside the mother's suggestion that Heini ought to be asked, but at this stage of the film Communism is still being given a favorable build-up. We are not allowed to identify the father as an active Communist but only, perhaps, as a mild Social Democrat.

Stoppel has a few words with Heini. He asks him if he is "organized," but Heini apparently does not even know what the word means. Stoppel says that of course Heini belongs naturally in the Communist Youth International—"or do you want to be a Nazi?" The father scoffs at this idea, saying, "What!—my boy a Nazi—I'd sooner kill him." The father then goes off to get his beer, and after taking leave of Heini and saying that they will talk it over later, Stoppel, too, goes away.

This leaves Heini still the rescuing hero with his loving, drudging, and weeping mother. She sighs, "That is no life—I cannot bear it (*das halt ich nicht mehr aus*)."

Heini continues in a comforting role for a moment, telling her not to be always so sad. But she goes and opens the window. This act lets in the mechanical music of the fair, which, as we have seen, is associated throughout the film with the orgies and degeneracy of Communism. It is the mother who lets in this music, and Stoppel the Communist has so far been associated with her rather than with the father. And now it is the music of the fair which leads Heini to desert his heroic role. He gazes for a moment out of the open window, and then he remembers a wonderful knife he saw at the fair in a lottery in one of the sideshows. He turns back to his mother and starts to describe the knife, listing its many blades—"and it has a saw, too." She says, as she said before about the father's beer, that it must cost money, but Heini tells her it is in a lottery and can be had for a penny. He begs her for the penny just as his father begged her for money (see Figure 3).

In spite of the fact that Heini has now shifted from a rescuing to a dependent role he is still a hero in her eyes, and very slowly she smiles on him—a slow, almost seductive, Mona Lisa smile. Thoughtfully she rises to her feet and moves across the room. As she moves, the music of the fair, which hitherto has been almost formless, becomes rhythmical, and she moves in step with it. She goes and gets money from a hiding place inside the coffee grinder.

Thus she confers on her son the favor she had refused the angry father, but we are shown very clearly that Heini is no longer really a hero. As she crosses the room, he watches her appraisingly—judging the success of his plea for money. He smiles secretly when she starts to shake the coffee grinder and rapidly removes the smile from his face the moment she turns to give him the money. Then he dashes out to get the coveted knife.

In thus going out to get the knife with his mother's money, he is performing an act closely comparable with the father's going out to get beer, and indeed both the knife and the beer are natural symbols for a certain sort of virility. Through this crack in the knight's armor Communism enters. The pennies are, of course, immediately lost in the lottery, and the "of course" element in this loss is underlined by the casual impersonal quality of the lottery scene. The lottery is a swindle, in which a large number of prizes are exhibited but the competitors do not know which prize is being put up at any given turn of the wheel. When the wheel is spun and the winning number announced, the prize is not the knife but a cheap vase<sup>20</sup> of artificial flowers, and it is won by a silly woman. Heini shyly asks how much the knife would cost to buy, and the man says, "8 marks"—the knife is inaccessible.

But Stoppel, the Communist, is there in the background. For a moment Stoppel and Heini pause to listen to a ballad singer (*Moritaet*). Each stanza of the ballad ends with the words "Often the thing succeeds. But for our George it failed." Stoppel tells Heini to note this text, then offers him a sort of substitute gratification instead of the knife. He invites him to a Communist hike in the country. Heini says, "But won't that cost money?" but Stoppel says, "I will take you, you are my guest." Then, further underlining the fact that the hike is a substitute for the knife, Stoppel goes on to list its charms just as Heini in the previous sequence listed the charms of the knife. They will have tents, they will play, they will bathe. Heini agrees to meet the Communists at the railway station the next day.<sup>21</sup>

The preliminary build-up of the family structure is now complete, and a link between the two parents and the political background has been constructed. The position which the film has so far achieved may be summed up in Diagram 1.<sup>22</sup>

The first fifteen minutes of the film have been devoted to building up Communism into a straw man. The audience has been led to accept unconsciously the premise that the symbolism of the family is applicable to the political scene by being shown how this symbolism could be used to create a sympathetic basis for Communism. Heini's world is shown as split into two great halves by the scene of violence between the two parents. Heini himself is repulsed by his father's violence and dependence. He has just been shown a side of his father's character with which he cannot identify, but he is attracted by his mother, who smiles upon her hero. Communism has been quite definitely linked with the world of the emotions in two ways, first through Stoppel, the Communist, who is associated with the mother, vis-à-vis the father, and second, through the knife and the fair. The mother opened the window and let in the music of the fair, which reminded Heini of the knife, and then she gave Heini the money to get the knife in the fair. The link between the fair and Communism has already been discussed in the analysis of backgrounds, and it is accen-

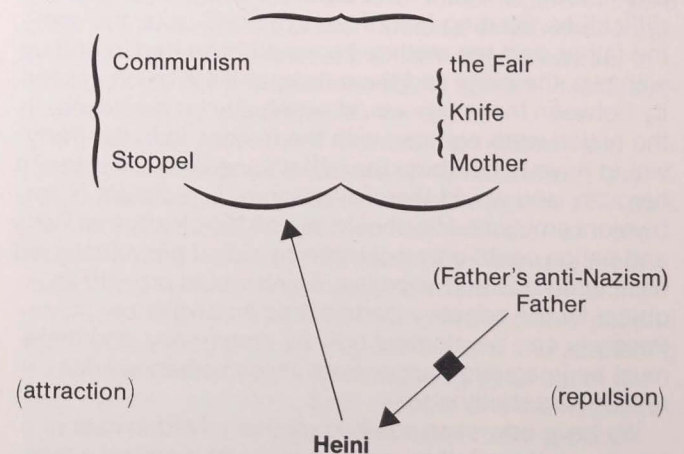
tuated by the clear symbolism of the incident in which Stoppel jumps onto the merry-go-round from which Gerda, the seductive Communist girl, has called to him.

This diagram is, of course, fundamentally false. The propagandist has deceived the audience into accepting links which are psychologically unsound. In particular, the knife as a symbol of virility cannot really be linked with the mother, and the film will go on to destroy this preliminary picture. The basic premise, however, will remain, and remain unconscious—that the symbolism of the family is relevant to political ideology—but the symbols will be rearranged.

At this point the story jumps to the railway station where Heini joins the Communist hike. The scenes at the station and in the woods, in which the contrast between Communism and Nazism is built up, have already been discussed. But there are a few points relevant to the family in these sequences. The first of these concerns not Heini's family of origin, but his courtship and the sort of family in which he might be a father. Gerda, the Communist girl, grabs Heini around the neck as he enters the compartment on the train, pulls him down onto the seat, and kisses him on the mouth. While she does this Gerda is wearing a boy's cap, which she takes off after the kiss. Heini is shocked and disgusted by the kiss and apparently still more shocked to discover that she is female. He says, "You—you are a girl?" She replies, "Yes, you seem to notice everything." (See Figure 7.)

Later, after Heini is disgusted by the Communists, he wanders away from their camp and sees the Nazis celebrating the summer solstice. They find him and think he is a spy. Fritz, the boy leader of the group, recognizes him as one of the Communists who were on the railway station and abuses him and sends him away. Ulla, Fritz's sister, is heard expostulating with Fritz. She is not shown on the screen but we hear her voice telling Fritz that he ought not

Diagram 1







**Figure 9** Heini's father forces Heini to sing the "Internationale."

to have been so hasty. Perhaps Heini might have become a Nazi. These two incidents, Gerda's kiss and Ulla's expostulation, provide the beginning of Nazism's answer to the adolescent's problem of sex.

Next morning there is a symbolic reference to Heini's family of origin. While Heini is looking longingly at the Nazis, who are now inaccessible, Stoppel comes through the woods looking for him and calling his name. Heini hides in a hole in the ground and then runs down the hillside to a road where he gets a lift from a truck and goes home to his mother. The hole in the ground is probably a piece of conscious symbolism introduced by a propagandist who had read a little folklore and who wanted a maternal symbol for blood and earth (*Blut und Boden*). That Heini should hide in this way from Stoppel is the first indication we are given of the complete reshuffling of the symbolic roles which is now about to occur. Formerly Stoppel was linked with the mother vis-à-vis the father. Now we see Heini hiding in the hole vis-à-vis Stoppel. Similarly, the return to the mother now that Nazism has become inaccessible is another indication of the same reshuffling.

When he arrives home his mother is surprised to see him so early and asks him about the hike. Heini is enthusiastic, and she asks, "What then did Stoppel do (to make the trip so successful)?" Heini says, "Mother—but I was with the *others*—with the boys with the—the hooked cross." His mother says, "But not with the Nazis!" And when he says "Yes," she heaves an anxious sigh; she is not angry but rather regretful. Heini says, "But mother, they are *not* so bad. They cooked and they wheeled and they swam and they sang a song"—and Heini then sings the "Hitler Youth Song" to his mother.

The father, meanwhile, is reading a newspaper in the next room. The mother must certainly have been aware of this, but she does not warn Heini. At first the father smiles when he hears his son's voice, but suddenly he hears Hitler's name and rushes in, furious. The mother tells him to leave the boy alone and even tries to pull Heini away from his father. The father holds Heini fast and compels him to sing the "Internationale," slapping at his face with each beat of the song. The mother, almost crying, stands there helpless, and a special close-up shot is inserted into the sequence to show us the mother rubbing her own cheek with her hand—thus underlining her link with Heini. This slapping of Heini's face clearly echoes the earlier slapping which was administered to the boy who stole the apple, and we may suppose that this second slapping is likewise administered to "all you who are here"—i.e., the audience. The final shot of the sequence is a close-up of Heini's weeping face (Figure 9).

This violent scene completely destroys the alignment shown in Diagram 1. At that stage of the film Communism was in the mother's half of the diagram, but now with every slap of Heini's cheek we are told that *Communism is the father* and especially that it is all that is violent and shocking in that parent. The mother is as yet only very slightly associated with Nazism, though already we are in a position to feel that such pro-Communist sentiments as she professes are due entirely to the father's influence. This indeed is the great difficulty with this German mother. Heini cannot get her to himself unalloyed by her allegiance to the father, and while she is not angry with him because he goes with the Nazis, she is regretful and does not trouble to save him from detection.

The new alignment can again be stated in diagrammatic form. The situation is, however, somewhat more complicated than it was in Diagram 1. And it is now necessary to draw two diagrams, one representing the point of view of the mother (Diagram 2) and the other representing Heini's point of view (Diagram 3):

**Diagram 2**

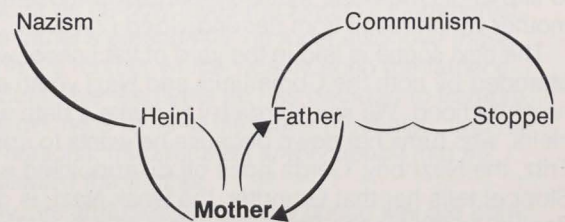


Diagram 3

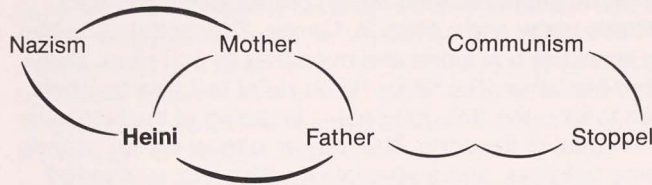


Diagram 2 shows that the mother has no clear allegiance or attraction uncomplicated by repulsion. In psychological terms, all her relationships are ambivalent. Even her love for Heini is complicated by the fact that Heini is linked with Nazism. She herself is not actively anti-Nazi but, duty bound to her husband, must oppose it, so that the arrow representing the repulsion she feels for Nazism is really an echo of the attraction which binds her to her husband. However, her relationship to the father is also ambivalent, and the repulsion she feels for him, while partly her response to his violence, is also partly an echo of the attraction she feels for Heini.

From Heini's point of view (Diagram 3), the position appears at first glance to be much simpler. He is attracted by Nazism and by his mother, and he feels repulsion for his father, Stoppel, and Communism. If only his mother felt as he does, life would be simple for him, but unfortunately the "Mother" (in Diagram 3) is a complex being whose attitudes are shown here in more detail. Heini cannot be fully united with his mother because of political sentiments induced in her by the father. The propagandist has built his lesson into the structure of the family where the audience will absorb it without knowing what they are absorbing. Earlier in the film, when the mother slowly smiled on her hero and gave him money which she had refused to the father, we were given a taste of how sweet the world might be if only mother love were unmingled, and now, by contrast, the propagandist is able to slip in his message that Communism *is* those flaws in mother which result from her undivided (?) love.

The next scene is laid in the yard of the school which is attended by both the Communist and Nazi youth of the neighborhood. We see Gerda try to make a date with Heini, who turns her down because he wants to approach Fritz, the Nazi boy. Gerda goes off disappointed and Stoppel tells her that Grundler, the weak Nazi, is due (*faellig*) to fall for her. She says with a pun that Grundler does not attract her (*gefaellt mir aber gar nicht*). Stoppel says that that is not important. She must go ahead and vamp him (*einzuseifen*, "Soap him in"). This she proceeds to do and we are thus given to understand that the sexual seductions of Communism are not only dangerous but actively treacherous.

Heini meanwhile has been waiting for Fritz, and when he tells Fritz that he wants to join the Nazi troop, Fritz says, "Famous!" (*fabelhaft*), and takes him to his home.

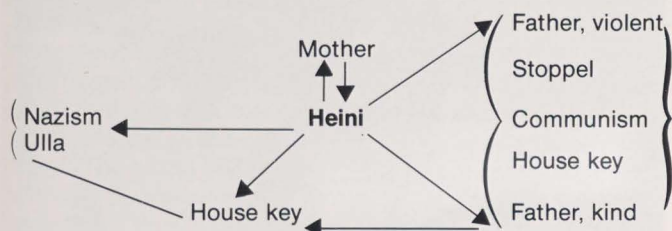
We then see Gerda falling into step with Grundler on their way to the fair, and Heini falling into step with Fritz on the way to the latter's upper-middle-class home. At the door, Fritz invites Heini to eat with them, mentioning that his father is away at a doctor's conference. (None of the committed Nazis have visible parents, and we shall see that the propagandist's use of the emotional forces of the family to give intensity to Heini's conversion is, in the end, totally destructive of that family.)

At this meal Heini meets Ulla, who shakes hands with him with a conspicuous show of frankness and then cooks eggs for the two boys. While they are eating, Fritz invites Heini to the opening that night of the troop's new "home" (*Heim*), or clubhouse. Heini exclaims, "A real home!" in a tone of longing which recalls the whole torture of Heini's real home and suggests the possibility, which is to be worked out at a later stage of the film, of completely substituting Nazism for family life. At this stage, however, Heini sees a difficulty—how will he be able to get back into his parents' house after the meeting when he has no house key? Fritz replies, in the slogan of Nazism, "If you *will*, you can do much" (*wenn Man will kan Man vieles*), and Heini replies, "Yes, I shall come."

In the following sequence we see Stoppel getting the father's signature to a paper entering Heini in the Communist Youth International. The mother suggests weakly that they ask the boy whether he "will," but the father violently exclaims, "What do you mean, 'will'?" There is no more to be said. He can be glad that they accept him. Call it rather luck (*Glueck*). And he signs the paper. At the beginning of the film, when Stoppel first approached the father to get Heini for the Communist Youth, the father rather pointedly told Stoppel to approach the boy himself. Now, the propagandist deliberately draws the reverse picture, either to correct an impression of the father's kindness, which he did not intend should remain, or else to give us a total picture of the father's personality, in which we see him as mild only when he is certain of getting his own way, but violent and overbearing when opposed.

Heini now comes home from his meal with Fritz and Ulla. He sees Stoppel just leaving the house and anxiously asks his mother what Stoppel has been doing. The mother weakly says, "Yes, he was with your father—Father will tell you. Go on in." Heini, a little afraid, goes in to his father, who tells him he is to go to the Party Local that night at 9:00 o'clock. Heini says, "And do I get a house key then?" And the father replies, "Of course you get a house key. You are entering the Party and now you are grown up—a grown man. And a grown man has a house key."

Diagram 4



Fumbling to free the key from his ring, the father then makes a long speech, awkwardly groping for words but fully expressing an extraordinary warmth of feeling for his boy. "Sit down a minute—I have wanted to have a word with you—you see, there is much happening in these days that you don't understand—but we, Workers [*Proleten*], we must look after our own skins. That's it. Look how we live here—your mother, you, and I—it was not always so. We had better days formerly. But now we are thrown out of our tracks [*Geleise*]. I'd have liked to do more for you. Many a night I have racked my brains how I could make things better for you. But now work for years on end—no wages—that's what breaks one. And now even you young people must help us—must stand by us old ones. Else we'll never get on, do you see? Else we'll be stamping [on a relief line] forever. You understand?" "Yes, father." "Now—you have the house key. Your father is your friend [*meint es gut mit dir*]. Now, go along and see to it that you enter your Party."

This scene is in a sense a recapitulation of the whole story. The film has carried its audience through all the combinations of the family alignment and has built up by implicit reasoning the notion that all the psychological forces in the family are linked with Nazism, while the unpleasant are due to Communism personified in the violent and childish elements of the father. Now the film goes on from its depiction of the internal structure of the family to invoke on the side of Nazism all the emotions which can be aroused in the boy when he achieves adult independence of the family. We are told almost in so many words that the house key represents responsible maturity, and this symbol is sufficiently well known in Germany to stand alone even without the father's words, "A grown man has a house key."

In this new beginning, the film again gives Communism a favorable opening, and the trap is baited exactly as it was in the first scenes, except that instead of posing as a hero in saving his mother, Heini is now invited to save his father ("us old ones") and the symbol of virility is changed. Instead of a knife, he is offered a key.

Heini comes away from this talk with his father almost weeping. He sits down beside his mother and lays his head on his hands. "Father is *not* so bad, mother—father is quite different, quite different [*ganz anders*]. What am I

to do now? He gave me a house key and now I cannot lie to him any more. What am I to do, mother? Tell me."

In this speech, Heini echoes his earlier speech about the Nazis—with exactly the same emphasis he told his mother that he had been with the "others" (*andern*) and that those others were "*not* so bad." Thus, the moment the father begins to show a pleasanter side of his character, the propagandism takes steps to link this pleasanter side with Nazism.

The mother weakly replies, "It would be good if you would obey [*folgen*] your father." Heini says, "But I cannot." The mother says, "One *can* do everything, even if it is painful [*Man kann alles. Muss dir eben Muehe geben*]. One cannot always do as one would like [*gern moechte*]."

This last speech apparently recalls to Heini the full strength of Fritz's challenge ("If you *will*, you can do much") and he says definitely, "I will not go to the Communists. I will go to the *others*."

The father's change of tone and Heini's decision to use the key to go not to the Communists but to the Nazis have introduced important changes into the alignment, and a new diagram (Diagram 4) must now be substituted for Diagrams 2 and 3.

Heini has placed himself in a false position, and instead of the comparatively simple alignment shown in Diagram 3, we now have one in which almost all of his relationships have become somewhat ambivalent. His relationship with his father, which was one of simple repulsion, is now mixed, and we can represent it only by showing the father in two separate parts of the diagram—the remembered violent event in one place and the gentle, warm father in another. Even with this division of the father into two personalities, Heini is still left in an ambivalent relationship to the friendly father. "I cannot lie to him"—but Heini is going to lie to him and this lie must necessarily introduce a negative element into his attitude toward this new, kind father. And this negative element is not the simple hate we feel toward those whom we dislike and fear, but the subtler guilt we feel when we take a course contrary to those who love us and whom we love.

His attitudes toward the mother are similarly complicated. Insofar as he now loves the kind but Communist side of his father's personality, he must also love those elements in his mother which weakly echo the father's policies. But these elements he has decided to trample, so that his decision to lie to his father must also, and for the same reasons, introduce an ambivalence into his attitudes toward the mother.

Similarly, his attitudes toward the house key are confused in that the key is very clearly linked with Communism, but he proposes to use it in cooperation with Nazism. The key, therefore, also appears twice in the diagram.

Of all his relationships, only that toward Nazism remains almost uncomplicated. The attraction here is even stronger than before, since Ulla has now been added to the picture, but even here his attitude is simple only insofar as his "I will" is absolute.

We now have a long series of sequences dealing with Heini's adventures outside the family home, but these sequences must be followed in this family analysis since their structure is evidently determined by the fact of Heini's lie. Heini is stopped on his way to the Nazi "home" by Stoppel. The Communists are about to raid the Nazis, and Stoppel says, "It is good that you have come—now you can join us." He draws Heini onto the porch of a house and they stand there waiting for the raid. We see Gerda try to seduce Grundler away from his post as sentry, and we see the Communists creeping up in the dark from different directions.<sup>23</sup> Just as the raid begins, Heini dodges away from Stoppel, but he runs straight into the arms of the police who have come to quell the disturbance.

The police have already been characterized in a beautiful shot near the beginning of the film. In the food riot the apples are scattered, and we see a little girl eating one of them in the middle of the street. Two policemen dash up on horseback, as though about to ride over her. She quietly continues to eat her apple, and the police halt their horses harmlessly on each side of her. This shot has told us that the police are supposedly infinitely reliable and impersonal, and since it is their relationship to a child which is used to characterize them, we are justified in saying that they are in some sense parental. (Figure 10.)

Heini is taken to the police station and questioned by these parental police. He refuses to give his name because he is afraid it will get into the newspapers, but he says that he had nothing to do with the affair—that he was on his way home (*nach Hause*) when the police picked him up. The police agree that he does not look like a gangster (*Revolverheld*) and tell him to "go home to the mother." The first payoff of his lie is that the police label him *child*.

As he leaves the police station, he encounters the Nazis and especially Fritz. They accuse him of setting the Communists on to them. Fritz's facial expression in this scene is a study in what Nazism stands for. His lips are drawn back to show both canines in complete and savage repudiation of all human contact with Heini. It is, however, interesting that the Nazis should have been willing to show us this expression on a Nazi face and directed against the hero.<sup>24</sup> The second payoff of Heini's lie is that the Nazis label him *traitor*, putting him back to that earlier state which he fell into when he was caught watching the Nazi hike and accused of being a spy. Nazism is again inaccessible, as it was then.

We see no more of the events of that particular night, but this omission is significant. Heini must have gone home and something must have been said at home about

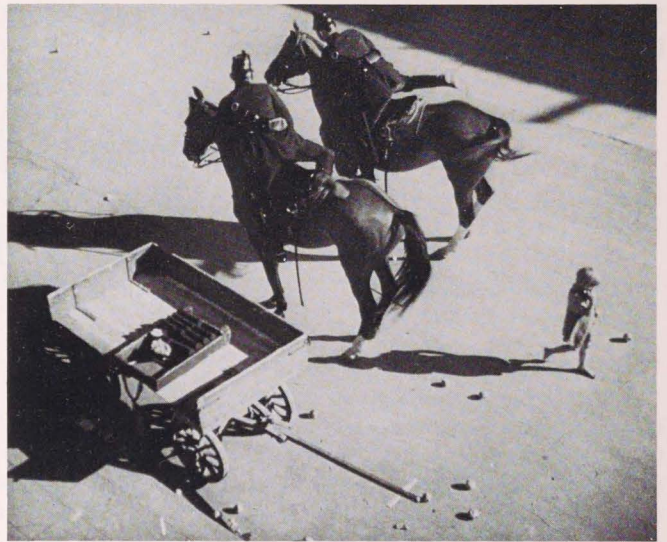


Figure 10 Mounted police arrive to quell the food riot.

the raid, but the filmmakers do not take Heini home. To take him home would have involved them in working out and recognizing the unacceptable implications of the particular symbol chosen to represent maturity and the achievement of independence of the family. That key, the symbol which stands for all this, is a tool for *returning* to the family. Its symbolic meaning is: "If you will accept responsible sexual maturity, you need not break with your family background." Thus in letting the father give Heini a key, the filmmakers have unconsciously left open an alternative to Nazism. This alternative they avoid by passing over without a word the other events of that night. What did Heini and his parents say to each other when he got home? The film does not tell us and assumes that we will not notice the omission.

The film now jumps to the following afternoon, and we see Heini at work in the printing shop. Stoppel enters and compliments him on the way he conducted himself last night in refusing to give information to the police. The third payoff of Heini's lie is that Stoppel hails him as a *hero*. Stoppel goes on to say that tonight Heini must join them in "finishing the job." They will get their "bonbons"—dynamite and hand grenades—from the secret cache in the old factory in the Marschstrasse. Heini protests, "I will not that you do this—You must not laugh—I am fully determined (*es ist mein vollen Ernst*)—I shall warn them." At this threat, Stoppel suddenly becomes serious and tells Heini that that is something which one does only once. Heini says, "This then is that once." Stoppel stares at him for a moment and then relaxes suddenly with a smile, saying, "Lad, you're on the level [*Junge, du bist richtig*]"—I'll see you at 6:30."<sup>25</sup>

Heini has now, like Hitler, told his enemies what he will do, and he has succeeded in not being believed. Stoppel has dismissed the possibility that a mere boy would commit a mortal sin. The assumption implicit in this scene seems to be that the older generation (i.e., the enemy) will always let you get away with murder if you tell them that you are going to commit it and especially if you underline the generation difference between yourself and them. The same theme was implicit in Heini's interview with the police, when the inspector ignored the evidence in favor of Heini's guilt in favor of his impression of Heini's childishness. (The same theme is also to some extent implicit in Hitler's war against the "senile" democracies.)

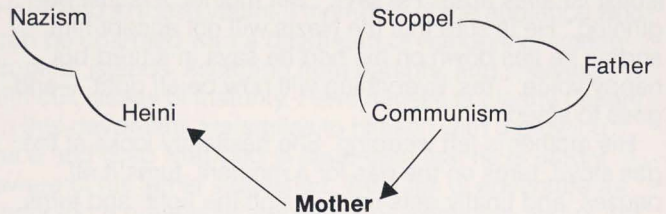
Heini's lie has now been expiated by telling Stoppel that he will warn the Nazis, but the daydream that Nazism is inaccessible persists. As soon as Stoppel leaves, Heini rushes to the telephone and rings up the home of Fritz and Ulla. Ulla answers and Heini passionately tells her about the plot and the cache of dynamite. But Fritz is in the room with her and asks who is telephoning. She tells him it is Heini and Fritz says, "That spy! It is a trick. Hang up!" Ulla hangs up the telephone thoughtfully, saying to Fritz, "but he said 'dynamite.'" Heini is left talking to a dead phone.

He dashes to the police, but the inspector says, "My constables are not nurses for your Hitler boys." Next, he runs to the house of Fritz and Ulla, but they are out, and finally he goes to the fair to try to find Stoppel. At the fair, the action of the film is delayed while we listen to fifteen and a half lines of the ballad singer's performance, one of the longest consecutive speeches in the whole film. At the end of the second stanza, as the ballad singer is saying, "Often the thing succeeds. But for our George it . . .," the explosion occurs, in the Marschstrasse. All the explosives have been destroyed. The Nazis have done it. The Communists know that someone has betrayed them—and Heini goes home smiling and whistling the "Youth Song."

In fact the inaccessibility of Nazism was only a daydream: Heini's warning was effective and Ulla must have prevailed on Fritz. Ulla's role as a personification of Providence has already been discussed in the analysis of German time perspectives, but here we have to note specifically that this role is given to Heini's future mate.

After the explosion, there follows a curious scene between Stoppel and Heini's mother. In all the remainder of the film the dialogue is perfectly straightforward, but in this one scene we have a series of misunderstandings and things half said. It is night, and Stoppel comes beating at the door. The mother tries to keep him out, saying "My husband is out! What do you want? I tell you my husband is out." Stoppel forces his way in and tells her to put out the light. She does this hesitatingly and asks Stoppel, "Why are you looking [*glotzen*] at me like that—are you being followed?" Stoppel says, "Yes, by the Homicide Squad." The mother then gets the idea that Stoppel has committed a murder, and he goes on to say

Diagram 5



that he will always kill when he is betrayed—that he has been betrayed by the Nazis—"And where is your Heini?" The mother then jumps to the conclusion that Stoppel has killed Heini. She grabs a knife from the table and attacks Stoppel, who easily disarms her, saying, "You ought to be glad that you are not Heini." The mother then asks who betrayed *them*. Stoppel answers, "Just a stupid boy," and goes out. The mother is thus left afraid of Stoppel and Communism but still uncertain of what has happened.

The effect, and perhaps the purpose, of this scene is to shift the alignment shown in Diagram 2. We saw there that the mother's allegiance to the father made it impossible for Heini to get her complete love. Now this difficulty has in some sense been removed. The mother's allegiance to the father is now replaced by hatred and fear of Stoppel and Communism. In terms of the diagram, the triangle Father-Stoppel-Communism has been turned around so that, instead of the corner representing the father being directed toward the mother, Stoppel and Communism have come into the foreground of her attention. (Diagram 5)

The scene, however, is an awkward one. Stoppel's acting, never very good, leaves more ambiguity in it than the filmmakers perhaps intended, and it is possible to see in the sequences a hint of potential sexual attraction between Stoppel and the mother.<sup>26</sup> What exactly the filmmakers intended in this scene is not clear, but we have to remember that Stoppel is later to appear capable of conversion to Nazism. The filmmakers therefore had to work within narrow limits. Stoppel could not be frankly vilified; he could not come in seeking to kill Heini—and yet a scene was necessary to make the mother afraid of Communism. The scene consequently built up on misunderstandings and half-understood threats.

Immediately after Stoppel's exit, Heini comes in and the mother says, "Did you do it, Heini?" Heini answers, "Yes, I rescued the boys! . . . Why are you crying, Mother?" Earlier in the film, Heini rescued his mother from his father and tried to prevent her from being so sad. Now he has rescued the Nazis from the Communists, and she weeps.

The mother pleads with Heini to go and be reconciled with (*versoehn dich mit*) Stoppel, "else all is finished [*sonst ist alles aus*]." He says, "But mother, it is just beginning." He is sure that the Nazis will not accept him, and as he lies down on his bed he says in a tired but happy voice, "Yes, everything will now be all right"—and goes to sleep.

His mother is left weeping. She hesitantly looks at the gas stove, turns on the gas for a moment, turns it off, pauses, and finally gets up, turns off the light, and turns the gas fully on. The music, based on the first bars of the "Youth Song," modified and slowed down to express terror or threat, mounts slowly, and the gas fumes begin to appear on the screen as wisps of haze. Finally, the screen is completely blotted out with these billowing fumes, and the music evolves from terror to a triumphant and almost martial climax. Heini is finally united with his mother and with Nazism—and the propagandic use of the family has now finally broken that little group.

In place of the sharply defined diagrams which we have so far been able to draw of the attractions and repulsions within the family, we have now the billowing haze in which the mother, Nazism, triumph, and death are indistinguishably blended together.

Heini, however, does not die. The gas fumes clear from the screen and reveal Heini awakening in a bed in a hospital where he is being looked after by a middle-aged nurse. When he realizes where he is, he asks about his mother, but the nurse only tells him to drink his milk.

The sequence is then cut to show the father, who is now being looked after by a neighbor who brings him food and opens the window to let in some fresh air, as the mother did at the beginning of the film after the violent scene with the father over the money. The double role of the mother has in fact been divided between two women—one to look after Heini and make him drink the milk, and the other to look after the father.

Returning to Heini, the nurse enters and says, "There is someone to see you." Heini says, "My mother?" The door opens and Fritz enters, accompanied by Ulla and four Nazi boys. The Nazis are thus brought in as the word "mother" leaves Heini's lips.

Fritz makes a speech to Heini asking forgiveness for the way they behaved to him at the police station and inviting him to join the troop. Ulla comes forward and presents Heini with a parcel. He opens it and finds in it a beautiful new Nazi uniform with, in one pocket, some money which has been contributed by the group, and in the other, a photograph of Ulla with her brother Fritz. Heini puts on the cap of the uniform, and Fritz produces a mirror from his pocket so that Heini can admire himself—a knight in shining armor with the symbol of Aphrodite in his hand.

The nurse returns to tell the Nazis that visiting time is over, and when they have gone, she removes the Nazi cap from his head while telling him that his mother will never come. Thus, in this scene Nazism is twice substi-

tuted for the mother—first when the Nazis enter in the mother's place, and second, when the Nazi cap and the mother are simultaneously removed.

In the next scene we see the father selling part of the furniture in the home. He receives 30 marks for this, and then agrees to sell the rest of the furniture for another 30. The second sum is counted out into his hand, and then he sees the men removing Heini's bed—the last possibility of Heini's returning to his home. The father tries to stop them, but the bed is already sold. In helpless anger, he flings the 30 marks on the floor—probably evoking in the audience an almost unconscious echo of Judas and the 30 pieces of silver.<sup>27</sup>

Some days later, Heini is still in the hospital and we see him walking forlornly in the garden. The doctor remarks that his recovery is slow, and the nurse replies, "He cannot forget his mother"; and we see him refuse to play with another boy in the hospital garden.

Meanwhile, Heini's father is in the waiting room of the hospital, and while he sits there slumped heavily in his chair reading a fashion magazine, the district leader of the Hitler Youth comes in and sits down in the next chair. The father eyes the swastika on the leader's sleeve and moves away. The leader and the father meet, however, when the nurse comes in and announces that Heini is in the garden. Both of them rise. There is an awkwardness as they both go toward the doorway, and the father says, "Where are you going then?" and the leader replies, "To Heini Voelker." "What? To my son?" "Oh, are you the father?"

When they reach the garden, the leader waves to Heini with enthusiasm while the father greets his son a little gruffly. The father says that the doctor has given Heini permission to leave the hospital whenever he wishes, but Heini says, "But where should I go?" The father says, "What a question! To your father, of course—where you belong [*hingehoerst*]." At this point, the leader cuts into the conversation with "*That* is the question—where does the boy belong today [*heute*]?"<sup>28</sup>

We have seen Nazism equated with the mother. Now we have a triangular scene, whose structure is revealed by Heini's sitting between the two older men so that they are in analogous positions relative to Heini, though arguing in opposite directions. Thus Nazism comes to be equated not only with the mother but also with the father, as it was when Heini said of both the Nazis and his father, "They are *not* so bad." Nazism is ready to be substituted for those aspects of the father's personality which are congenial.

The scene consists of a long ideological conversation, the function of which, in the plot, is to formalize the shifting of Heini from the family setting into the Hitler Youth organization. This conversation must be given in detail:

Leader: That is just the question—where does the boy belong today? I had very good parents. But when I was fifteen I got out of the rut (*bin ich ausgerueckt*). I wanted to go to sea—to become a sailor—to wherever there were islands, where there were palms—to Africa. In there thousands of boys have left the rut.

Father: And there were bad boys (*Lausejungen*).

Leader: Boys are something that is wonderful! Boys are a great mystery (*Geheimnis*)! In all times it has been so. They have run away to the gypsies. Always a day has come and they have joined the great caravan (*Zug*). They, they begin to wander. Where does a boy belong? You—ask your own boy.

Father (to Heini): Well—you—you say a word now. (Heini smiles to himself, imagining the palms, the islands, and the wandering.)

Leader: I don't know whether you were in the war (*im Felde*).

Father (resentfully): Yes—indeed.

Leader: Two million boys then freely offered (*gemeldet*) themselves for service. Every one of them was the son of a father—and, more important, of a mother. And where did they belong?

Father: I am a simple man. I am a worker (*Prolet*).

Leader: But you must have heard of the Movement (*Bewegung*). No?

Father: Movement! Attention! March! March! That was my "Movement" till I stopped a bullet. And then I was laid in plaster of Paris, and then there was more "Movement" stretching the bones. Bend! Stretch! Bend! Stretch! And then I hobbled on the stamping ground (*Stempel*; where men stamp in line, waiting for relief). Week after week, year after year, that was my "Movement." Nothing else "moved" me. I was unstuck (*Aus dem Leim bin ich gegangen*). Do you think it was eating (*fressen*) that made me so heavy? And where I belong, that is where the boy belongs. To his class comrades (*Klassengenossen*).

Leader: You mean—to the International?

Father: Yes, indeed. To the International.

Leader: And where were you born?

Father: In Berlin.

Leader: And where is that?

Father: On the Spree.

Leader: On the Spree. Yes. But where? In what country?

Father: In Germany—yes—in OUR Germany. Think that over.

This dialogue has a rather complicated propagandic structure. The first two speeches are clearly addressed to Heini and to those youthful members of the audience who can be charmed with a daydream of wandering among tropical islands, escaping from parents, and shelving the difficult issues of maturity. Heini himself is clearly caught in this daydream. He smiles to himself with a glowing face and is so wrapped in his dream that he is hardly aware of his father's question. We think of adventure as inducing a greater awareness of other people and of the outer world, but *wandering*, the escape of the German Youth movements, was different. It was rather a withdrawal into a dream, an introversion of the personality.

It was hardly necessary, perhaps, to provide Heini with this dream because we know that his heart is already set upon becoming a Nazi. But this particular scene is crucial. It is the final scene between Heini and his father, the scene of the final disruption of the family. The propagandist cannot say bluntly that Nazi ideology is logically the bane of the family, that its propaganda is parasitic upon the emotions which dwell within the family, and that, in the end, the ideology is totally destructive of the family unit. Therefore, this final scene must be sweetened, and we are offered the theory that youth has "always" escaped "from the rut" and the lyrical illusion that they escape to palm trees and tropical islands.

The second half of the scene is addressed to the father and to the men of the war generation. Heini and the problem of where Heini belongs fade away almost completely. The leader brings up the question of the war, again and again, "Where did they [the soldiers who fought] belong?" This is tantamount to asking the father not "where does Heini belong" but "where do you belong." In reply to this latent question, the father is then allowed to express all his own bitterness about the war, his own wound, and his own unemployment, and must at the end argue rather lamely, "Where I belong, that is where the boy belongs." The leader ignores this last reference to Heini and pushes the father into equating class consciousness with internationalism (by means of a pun on the word "Internationale"). Then he builds up the trap by dialogue until he can spring it with the words "Our Germany."

In truth, the family drama is finished off with the leader's speech about hunger and gypsies, and in the second part of the sequence, the filmmaker has proceeded to an entirely new task—that of showing that *all* the principal characters of the film, with the exception of the sinister Wilde, can be converted to Nazism. It is difficult to ensure that every member of the audience will see the story of any film through the eyes of the right character, and whenever, as in this film, two opposing sides are presented on the screen, there is always a danger that

some members of the audience may see the story through the eyes of some character in the wrong camp. If, however, all the characters make progress toward the side favored by the propagandist, then there is hope that all members of the audience will be encouraged in the same direction.

The father is told to "think over" the fact that he was born in *our* Germany, and later we see the result of his cogitations. He is drinking with Stoppel and asks Stoppel which he would prefer—English beer or the local *Molle Helles* beer. Stoppel says, "*Molle Helles*," and then the father asks, "Where was it brewed?" which leads successfully to "In *our* Germany—think that over."

Later we see Stoppel trying to save Heini from the vengeance of the Communists; and we see Gerda scorning the traitor Grundler and expressing a preference for Heini. She has taken a first step toward becoming a Nazi in admiring Heini's loyalty to Nazism, and even Grundler himself seems sobered by her scorn.

In sum, by closing off Heini's relationship to his family of origin with this scene, the filmmakers have been able to lay the foundations for the conversion of almost everybody in the film to Nazism. (The family of origin has served its function as a source of emotional intensity, and the propagandist has been able to collect from it all the favorable attitudes directed toward the parents to redirect them toward Nazism while the unfavorable attitudes have been collected and redirected toward Communism.)

#### Analysis IV: The Future Family

The family of origin has been destroyed, the mother is dead, and after the scene in the hospital garden, we never again see Heini with his father—but this analysis of the film's use of family symbols must follow Heini to the end, because the beginnings of another family structure are appearing. Every individual whose life is complete has membership in two families, the family into which he is born and that other family which he himself sets up when he marries.

It is clear already that no future family could be set up by Heini on the old pattern. The film has indicated great disapproval of Gerda's lusty sexuality and has frustrated all Heini's symbolic moves toward normal masculine virility—his desire for the knife and his acceptance of the house key presented to him by the father. The old virility has been condemned, and if we want to know about Nazism, we must ask what sort of pattern the film will suggest as a model for the future Germany. In answer to this question the film contains two types of material—Heini's courtship relations with Ulla and the district leader's relationship to the boys. The leader, in the last scene, has been set up as an alternative to the father, and to this extent he can be regarded as a father substitute, so

that from his behavior we can get one segment of the future German family pattern while from Heini's courtship we get another.

The scene between the leader and the father is cut off after the leader says, "Think that over," and the next shot shows us the leader and Heini entering another Nazi "home" in the district of Bannheim. Heini is to be protected from the vengeance of the Communists by being removed from the Beusselkietz district. On entering the home, the leader introduces Heini to his new roommate—Grundler.<sup>29</sup> The leader says, "So, Heini, you will live here. And that is your roommate (*Stubenkamarad*), Grundler. And this is Heini Voelker—he is alone in the world like you." Thus the leader underlines the notion that Nazism is a substitute for the real home and at the same time marks the parallel between Heini and Grundler. This parallel is at once used, as it was earlier in the film, to point up the contrast between them. Grundler starts to sing a snatch from some popular song:

That is the life of any sailor—  
Never think my love will last,  
Anchors cannot there hold fast . . . .

(Das ist die Liebe der Matrosen—  
auf die Dauer, lieber Schatz,  
ist mein Herz kein Ankerplatz. . . .)

His association with Gerda is evidently causing his character to degenerate, and while he sings he walks around the room with a curiously footloose air, expressing complete casual detachment. He pauses in his song to offer a cigarette to Heini, who refuses disapprovingly. Grundler shrugs his shoulders, lights one for himself, and resumes his song. Heini meanwhile pins up over his bed the photograph of Ulla and Fritz which they gave him in the hospital. Grundler strolls over and looks at this, saying, "So, you have let yourself be photographed with your wench [*Flamme*]." The insulting implications of this remark are much stronger than we would guess. In most of the German Youth movements—Communists, Social Democratic, and Nazi alike—there was a very strong taboo on any suggestion that ordinary sexual attraction might play a part in "comradeship." It is probable that not only the Nazis but also other groups were on their way toward evolving sexual patterns of the type indicated by the relationship between Heini and Ulla.

Heini replies, "That is no 'wench,' that is the Group Leader [*Kamaradschaftsfuehrer*] with his sister!" But Grundler says, "To me it only looks like a fine girl [*strammes Maedchen*]—a very fine girl." We have already had hints that Ulla approves of Heini, and we have seen Gerda's desire for Heini and her seduction of Grundler. Now the fourth possibility of sexual attraction is hinted at—Grundler thinks that Ulla is a "fine wench." We are being told that the sort of love which Grundler and Gerda and the Communists affect is different in kind from anything in Nazism.



The sequence is cut off at this point to show us the scene in which the father tries the trick dialogue on Stoppel with the two pots of beer: "And where was it brewed—in our Germany."

When we next see Heini, he is sitting with the other Nazi boys at a meal in the clubroom. Grundler refers to Heini as "our 'Quex.'" Heini protests against this nickname, but the other boys all say that he is a real Quex—a real Quicksilver [*Quexsilber*].<sup>30</sup> They all start to point at Heini and call him "Quex! Quex!" A disorderly fight breaks out between Heini and the others. Heini throws water in Grundler's face,<sup>31</sup> and in a few seconds one or two subsidiary fights start among the other boys, as though they were all really fighting each other just for the sake of fighting. At this moment the district leader enters and restores order with a single barked command, and the whole scene thus forms a further illustration of the premise that disorderly depravity underlies Nazi discipline. This incident of the nickname requires, however, further interpretation. The name itself—"Quex," or "Quicksilver"—fits well enough with Heini's quick, responsive character, his "mercurial" temperament. But it is interesting that the name should first be applied by Grundler, that Heini should resent the name, and that the name should be allowed to stick—it is later used by Ulla at the highest point of her relationship with Heini, and of course it is used in the title of the film (see Figure 6).

We may guess that Grundler's use of the word follows naturally from the contrast which has been drawn between himself and Heini. Grundler is weak and wavering, his heart is no place for an anchor [sic]; but Heini has really changed—he has been converted to Nazism and stands firm in that faith. It is natural, therefore, for Grundler to quiet his own conscience by accusing Heini of changeability. Such a reading, however, will hardly account for the adoption of the nickname in the title of the film. We have to recognize that, in addition to the meaning of mere changeability, the word "Quex" implies a certain sexlessness, or, more strictly, a certain sexuality distilled from the normal lustiness arising from the differences between the sexes—purified until either sex may have the shining, untouchable charms of Mercury or Hermaphroditus.<sup>32</sup> Such an epithet, bearing these implications, could certainly be applied to the preadolescent Heini, and its overtones—verging on the homosexual—would certainly explain Heini's resentment.

The nickname comes close to being a reproach, and its adoption into the title of the film is best understood as an instance of the rather common phenomenon by which a term of reproach is picked up and worn as a badge of pride—like the Garter and the motto *Honi soit qui mal y pense*.

If we put together the intersexual implications of the word "Quex" and the narcissistic implications of the incident in which the Nazis give Heini a mirror in which to admire himself, we get a rather clear picture of one side

of Nazi character. The badge of reproach is proudly worn, and the uniform is self-admired. This type of narcissism has led to the development in Germany of an entirely new kind of film, which we may call the "pseudodocumentary." These films, of which *The Triumph of the Will* is the outstanding example, depict historical spectacles such as the Nuremberg Parteitag of 1934, but they differ from ordinary newsreel material in that the spectacle is expressly created and staged for the motion picture camera. Reality becomes a carefully dressed shop window in which Nazism exhibits itself.<sup>33</sup>

The ordinary technical terms of psychology and psychoanalysis are not applicable to the particular type of personality implied by this combination of intersexuality and self-admiration in Nazism. The word "narcissism" suggests not only self-admiration but also effeminacy—which Nazism does not exhibit; and the word "homosexuality" implies dominance-submission relationships, usually with a strong emphasis on the erogenous zones. Nazism has gone to the opposite, and equally pathological, extreme of repudiating all such emphasis. We are of course talking only about the *ideal* Nazism as it is presented in this film and not about the reality. The film indicates to us that the ideal in 1933 was not merely without emphasis on the erogenous zones, but emphatically *anti-zonal*, and the psychiatric expectation would be that a cult with such ideals would produce frequent cases of underground homosexuality with pronounced zonal emphasis and dominance-submission patterns following the lines of the overt authoritarian system.

It is, however, the ideal which we are here investigating, and in order to get a clearer picture of the sort of human relationships which would be based on combining narcissism and intersexuality, it is necessary to look carefully at the relationships between Ulla and Heini and between the district leader and his boys. In the last two reels of the film, there are two scenes between Heini and Ulla, and it is interesting to note the ruse which the filmmaker deemed artistically appropriate as a means of bringing this boy and girl together. The script writer has shown considerable resourcefulness throughout the film, and he is here faced with a comparatively easy task, so that we may legitimately assume that the device which here seems to be artistically appropriate is also psychologically significant.

It is the time of the 1933 election, and after a series of shots of election crowds and processions, one very quick shot shows us a crowd scene in which Fritz's head is slightly wounded. Fritz reports back to the Nazi headquarters where everyone is busy working on leaflets. The leader seizes Fritz by the head and gazes into his eyes, then gives orders that he is to lie down. Heini and Ulla meet at the door of the room where Fritz lies in bed. Heini tells Ulla that Grundler has treacherously destroyed all their leaflets and that he is leaving immediately to print a new supply. Heini and Ulla then go off together to print more leaflets in Heini's workshop.



**Figure 11** Ulla gives Heini a "Nazi" kiss of friendship.

Thus Heini and Ulla come together by temporary elimination of Fritz, so that Heini is substituted for Ulla's brother. The relationship between them, which is clearly meant to have sexual overtones and to romanticize the mating of pure types under the Nazi aegis, is structurally equated with a relationship between brother and sister.

The second scene between Heini and Ulla is a very short sequence in the printing shop. They have worked all night on the leaflets and finally Heini says, "So—that's done [*so das haetten wir geschafft*]," and Ulla exclaims, "Quex, you are colossal [*du bist ein kolossaller Kerl*]," and bends forward, giving him a quick, sisterly kiss—a kiss which contrasts sharply with that earlier kiss Gerda had forced upon his lips. Heini is delighted, and says, "Ulla!—and now for Beusselkeitz!" He then goes out to his death. (Figure 11.)

The preliminary base for the future German family is thus envisaged as a courtship between two mercurial beings stripped of the outward manifestations of sex differences and symbolically equated as brother and sister. Nazism offers us a recipe for life based on regression to those themes against which most of the civilizations of the world have striven since human communities first had culture—psychological homosexuality, narcissism, and incest. This probably is the logical outcome of building a cult on the preadolescent daydream of perpetual youth.

Corresponding to the metamorphosis which courtship has undergone at Nazi hands, we find corresponding changes in the father and son relationship. The film unfortunately does not show us a Nazi father, but we have seen that the district leader is cast as an alternative to the real

father, and therefore by comparing him with the father, we may arrive at some indication of what the father-son relationship would look like in the ideal, future Nazi family. When we compare the leader with Heini's father, we find the same sort of systematic contrast that we found earlier in the comparison of Ulla and Gerda. As Ulla is constructed to be the physical opposite of Gerda, so the leader is the physical opposite of Heini's father. He is a curious but not unfamiliar type. The father is a very heavy, broad-faced man, clumsy and fumbling in his movements, his voice a deep bass and his speech broken and halting. He roars when he is angry but he is warm and awkwardly charming when he wishes to be kind. In contrast to this, the district leader is tall and thin, hatchet-faced, fluent and even eloquent in his speech and in his movements. When he is angry, instead of roaring he emits a single, sharp bark. The two men are about the same age, perhaps in their early forties with at most five years difference between them, and yet the district leader is boyish where the father is manly. The leader's youthfulness is enhanced by the uniform he wears which confers upon him the air—slightly embarrassing to non-Nazi eyes—of an overgrown Boy Scout, a Boy Scout who has grown old insofar as the lines of his face are concerned but whose physique has never filled out. He clings longer than he should to a certain boyishness of manner, a certain romanticism of youth maintained almost by recipe after youth should have given place to maturity. In fact, the district leader bears just about the same relationship to the old stereotype of the lower-middle-class father that the ideal sexuality of Nazism bears to the caricatured sexuality of Communism. He is an emasculated father but not an effeminate one. When he talks of the mystery of boys, we are reminded of those nineteenth-century romantic notions about the "long, long thoughts" of adolescence, and yet there is a difference. The nineteenth-century labels were applied to underline a contrast—even a barrier—between male and female, and between the mature and the adolescent, but the district leader's speech and tone indicate rather that he himself is one of the boys whom he romanticizes. He recognizes no such barrier. He shares their dreams and romanticizes himself by some twist of narcissism.

All of this is repellent to non-Nazi eyes, but this is the enemy's idealized picture of himself, and if we are ever to help that enemy pull himself out of the swamp into which he has sunk—and thereby endangered us all—we need to understand him and the dreams on which he has fed.

### Analysis V: The Knife and Death

Two ingredients of the plot remain to be examined in order to complete the analysis of the propagandist's handling of the symbols which derive their force from the loves and hates of the German family. These are the knife and Death.

The knife is referred to, either openly or implicitly, no less than seven times, and while it only appears on the screen at three of these points, the whole series must be brought together to get a full impression of its significance:

- 1 The first reference to the knife is in the dialogue between Heini and his mother, after the father has gone off to get his beer. Heini is reminded of the knife by the music of the fair, and turns to his mother. He lists the charms of the knife and begs for money to go and get it. We have already noted earlier that, in doing this, Heini is deviating from the role of the self-sacrificing hero and is doing something which more nearly parallels his father's irresponsible virility. (See Figure 3.)
- 2 We then see the knife in the fair, and we see Heini lose his money in the lottery. He asks the price of the knife and is told "eight marks." Stoppel appears at Heini's elbow and says, "Now—don't let your head hang so—I promise you'll have the knife sooner than you think—have you thought about it? About the Communist Youth Organization?" and then Stoppel invites Heini to the hike, listing the charms of the hike just as Heini had listed the charms of the knife to his mother.
- 3 When the Nazis come to Heini's bedside in the hospital, they give him a uniform and tell him to look in the pockets. In one pocket he finds the photograph of Fritz and Ulla, and in the other some money. They tell him that they have all contributed to make up this sum. (There is no overt reference to the knife on this occasion.)
- 4 When Heini is hiding in the Nazi clubhouse in another part of Berlin, the leader sends him to get some beer. He goes and gets the beer from a bar, and on the way back, carrying two full mugs of beer, he encounters Stoppel. Stoppel makes a last effort to persuade Heini to come back to the Communists and even produces a knife from his pocket, offering it to Heini if he will come with him. Heini's two mugs of beer are in imminent danger of being upset by Stoppel's sudden movements (a little actually spills), but he stands firm against temptation and Stoppel finally leaves him, with the emphatic warning not to show himself in Beusselkietz or he, Stoppel, will not be responsible for the consequences.
- 5 Stoppel then goes back to the Communists, who are plotting Heini's death. He says, "Whether you want it or not—there it is! [*Wer nicht will, der hat schon*]," and lays the knife on the table with a gesture dimly reminiscent of Pilate or Judas. The camera then closes in and we see the hands of all the other Communists crowd over the knife. The sinister Wilde lifts the heaped-up but unresisting hands, takes the knife, and puts it in his pocket.

- 6 When Heini and Ulla are working in the printing shop on the new supply of leaflets, the following dialogue occurs:

Ulla: What will your master say?

Heini: Oh, I will pay him tomorrow for his current [electricity] and paper.

Ulla: Have you money then?

Heini: You all brought money for me to the hospital.

Ulla: Yes, but with that you wanted to buy the knife for yourself.

Heini: Never mind [*Ach!*]. Leaflets are more important [*wichtiger*].

- 7 Hunted and surrounded by the Communists, Heini takes refuge in a tent in the deserted fair grounds. He accidentally touches a grotesque mechanical figure of a drummer, and his touch sets the machine working. It gives a few beats—thus betraying Heini to the Communists. Heini's scream is heard, but no shot, and we are left to presume that Heini was stabbed by Wilde. The knife is seen a moment later on the ground beside the dying Heini.

These seven incidents build up into a definite picture of the psychological significance of the knife. Throughout it is a symbol of the old sort of virility which is imputed to "Communism." Heini's going to get the knife is analagous to the father's going to get his beer. Before Heini appeared on the scene, the father had said, "My boy can just go and get a couple of bottles of beer—Where *is* the lad?" Thus the two glasses of beer which Heini goes to get for the leader are an echo of the two *bottles* which he never went to get for his father. The equating of leader and father is again indicated by this echo, but the difference between them is underlined. The beer that Heini fetched for the leader stands for his *passivity*, which is happily given expression within the framework of Nazism, and this beer, the symbol of passivity, is pitted against the knife—the old symbol of active virility and temptation. We need hardly be surprised that the audience is made to feel anxious lest the beer be spilled, nor need we be surprised that the beer wins against the knife in this symbolic conflict.

Stoppel's handing over of the knife to the other Communists then becomes a statement that he, for his part, is sick of them and has progressed at least from active participation in Communism to neutrality.

The dialogue with Ulla about the money and the knife is of great interest, since there are two obvious reasons which should have prevented the inclusion of this

dialogue: first, Heini is obviously being a little hypocrite—he has seen the knife in Stoppel's hands and knows very well that it is no longer on sale at the fair; second, the dialogue has an unsatisfactory result—the audience, who have not hitherto been told to associate the money with the knife, now must do so and may well ask what has prevented Heini from acquiring the knife in the interval. We are not told how long Heini spent in Bannheim, but Grundler remarks to Gerda that Heini has been with them there “ever so long [*schon ewig lange*].” He could easily have asked one of his Nazi friends to go to the fair and buy it for him.

Thus, by including this little piece of dialogue, the propagandist has let Heini appear to be a hypocrite and has created an unexplained blank in the plot, where previously no explanation was called for. We are entitled, therefore, to conclude that this dialogue was psychologically important to the propagandist.

This importance seems to be of two kinds. First, there is a marked parallel between this weakness in the handling of the knife and the weakness which we have already noted in the handling of that other symbol of maturity and virility, the house key. The propagandist was compelled to pass over the night of the raid on the Nazi clubroom in order not to let it appear that by using the key Heini could combine maturity with a return to his family. And now, again, the propagandist has been constrained to pass over a stretch of time. He seems psychologically impelled to leave open the way to a satisfactory mature sexuality in spite of his ideological trend in the opposite direction.

Second, the dialogue is important at a more superficial level, since it is Heini's formal repudiation of normal sexuality in favor of Nazism and *Kamaradschaft*. He had, of course, already repudiated the knife once before, in the dialogue with Stoppel, but now he does it again. The propagandist makes him protest perhaps once too often than was quite necessary, but still this second repudiation is artistically appropriate here since it immediately precedes Ulla's kiss.<sup>35</sup> The abnegation of normal sexuality is rewarded by achievement of Nazi sexuality, and from this reward Heini goes out to meet the knife for the last time.

As to Heini's death, the filmmaker goes to great pains to show us that the Nazis are in no way to blame for it. The district leader has done all he can to save Heini from the vengeance of the Communists by keeping him away from Beusselkietz, hidden in the Bannheim Nazi home, and the filmmaker even goes to the quite unnecessary length of setting up two trains of events, either of which could in the end lead to Heini's death.

The first depends upon Grundler's treachery. Gerda has made Grundler completely subservient to her,<sup>36</sup> and she and Stoppel find out from him that Heini is in Bannheim. Stoppel does not pass this information on to the other Communists, but himself goes to try to tempt Heini back with the knife, just as we have seen Gerda similarly not passing on the information (perhaps because she is in love with Heini). The train of events, therefore, which the filmmaker could have used to kill Heini if he had wanted to, leads nowhere.

The second train of events springs from Heini's suicidal ambition to return to Beusselkietz. Ever since he has been in Bannheim, Heini has been wanting to get back to his old comrades, and the screen shows two arguments between Heini and his leader on this subject. The leader insists on caution and backs up this insistence with appeals to discipline. He points out that those twelve in Beusselkietz are not the only comrades that Heini has—that he has “hundreds of thousands” of comrades all over Germany who wear the same brown shirt—and this appeal to the bandwagon and to narcissism prevails in the first argument. In the second argument Heini says, “You said that a Hitler boy is a soldier—and you yourself were an officer in the war . . . and did you forbid your soldiers to advance after the battle was on?” The leader is much moved by this argument. He takes Heini's head in his hands and gazes into his eyes saying, “In God's name, go then to your Beusselkietz.”

Thus it is Heini's fault—overzealousness—that leads to his death, so that this, his real death, like the former symbolic death which he shared with his mother, contains elements of suicide: the one was inflicted on him by his mother, the other results from his own Nazi zeal.

Objectively speaking, the final death was inflicted on him by Wilde with the knife, so that the suicidal elements discussed above provide only a partial explanation of the events and must be supplemented by a further explanation. Actually the death is the meeting point of two separate trains of circumstance, the development of Heini's character, on the one hand, and the history of the knife on the other. At the beginning of the film, Heini wanted to possess the knife, the symbol of old-fashioned virility, but on this occasion the knife was denied him, and later, in the interests of ideological purity, he abjures the knife in favor of two glasses of beer—his passivity. This passivity mounts to suicidal zeal and finally, in the end, again meets the old virility symbol, the knife.

## Conclusions

### The Nature of Nazism

The first purpose of this analysis has been to draw from the film as much insight as possible into the psychology of Nazism, and in conclusion, those characteristics of Nazism which have appeared at various stages of the analysis are presented in the form of a list. Such a listing of psychological characteristics is necessarily a distortion. Every characteristic of a human being is dependent on, is indeed a section of, a whole character. Each item in the list is only a special view of the central Nazi character, brought to light by some special form of analysis. For example, it is probable that the Nazi tendency to project their own failings upon the enemy is only another way of describing the double nature of their attitudes toward sex, and this again is probably only another way of describing their climactic time perspective—insisting, however, that any separation of the characteristics one from another necessarily does violence to our view of the whole. Such a list may still be useful. The whole character cannot be expressed in words, but the list may help the reader to synthesize in his mind some vague feeling or impression of what the whole is like.

The principal characteristics of Nazism are here listed in the order in which they appeared in the analyses.

*Characteristics which appeared in the study of time perspectives:*

- 1 In 1933, the Nazis had a climactic view of the future which we summarize as "through death to a millennium." Evidence was produced also for believing that, in 1941, this time perspective was already giving place to its obverse, "though preliminary victories to a final defeat." From these two conclusions, the central hypothesis emerges that Nazi time perspective is reversible and subject to a swing between two extreme positions. It is likely that either of these extreme positions is more stable, more psychologically attractive than the more common-sense middle positions, and also it is possible that indulgence in either of the extremes strengthens in the Nazi soul the potentiality for the other; therefore, while a swing toward the more pessimistic time perspective may bode well for a United Nations victory, the psychiatric problem which Nazism presents is of how the more realistic middle position may be made more stable and the extreme positions less stable, so that the pendulum may come to rest.
- 2 Nazism is an age grade system. Important educative functions of the family, especially the function of giving to the growing boy some sense of self-sufficiency, are taken over by another set of institutions, the youth organizations and the army. These institutions are divided into a number of age grades, and the psychology implicit in this age grade system is basic to Nazism, so that such a film as this, which does not specially deal with the grading of

Nazi youth, is nevertheless patterned like an initiation ceremony. Thus, at least in 1933, the Nazi attitude toward death included the notion that death is a sort of promotion.

Some sort of age grade system will inevitably persist in Germany after the war, because the large number of broken homes and the general social dislocation will increase rather than decrease the importance of any institution which takes over the educative functions of the family. But it will be important for any such institution to find some new phrasing of its philosophy of death and promotion. The linkage between death and the passage from one social status to another will probably persist—even in commencement exercises in American schools the students often sing Tennyson's "Crossing the Bar"—but Germans will have to find some phrasing different from the notion of death itself as an achievement. Perhaps death might be seen more definitely as the sloughing off of the old personality and less as a step toward the new.

- 3 In Nazi ritual it is assumed that death is followed by multiple reincarnation. This notion has a number of undesirable implications. It necessarily diminishes any sort of dignified and responsible individualism. The individual sees himself as a mass-produced object, identical with a thousand others. He may like this view of himself, and he may reverse the tradition of dead Nazi heroes, but his chances of discovering his own worth and dignity, his own power of responsibility, are necessarily reduced.

*Characteristics which appeared in the study of political groups:*

- 1 Nazi propaganda continually resorts to projection. The propagandist smears his enemy by attributing to him characteristics which are latent in Nazism itself. Analysis of the various sorts of projection recognizable in this film indicates three fundamental splits in the Nazi character. In each of these splits it is probable that each side of the personality promotes the other, the more extreme positions of the personality being more stable than the intermediate positions. The stability, however, of the extreme positions, especially of the overpurified extremes, is in part dependent upon being able to recognize or imagine some enemy on whom the other extreme may be projected. All three splits are recognizable in the pre-Nazi movies of the 1920s.
  - a. *Between discipline and disorder.* Discipline as imagined in the Nazi ideal depends upon extreme passivity—almost an impassivity—in the face of sudden, barked commands, and these commands appear to be the

stimulus which prevents lapse into disorder. In the Nazi ideal at least, discipline is not so much a toadying to authority as a controlled steadying in the face of sudden shock, whether this shock be a sudden command or an enemy attack. (There is here an interesting psychoanalytic possibility of identification between authority and the enemy, and some identification of this sort would be expected since many of the unpleasant characteristics of the old father stereotype are projected onto enemies. The film, however, does not provide material for examining this identification.)

Psychologically the passivity is wrapped in an aura of romantic heroism, typified in this film by the incident of the mark, in which Heini in one and the same act joins his mother in passive submission to the father and does this act of submission as a piece of rescuing heroism. And the passivity is further romanticized by substituting it for an identification with the father. The lusty and aggressive behavior of the father—his going to get beer, etc.—is replaced in the son by the two glasses of beer which express the son's passivity toward his leader.

The disorderly underside of the coin is typified in the film partly by the momentary outbreaks of disorder among the Nazis, and more fully by their representation of "Communist" behavior. It is a system of behavior characterized by lusty virility and aggression. When the Nazis themselves lapse into this state, they become disorganized, but when they are projecting this state upon the Communists, they attribute to them a considerable degree of malevolent organization.

The split between disorder and discipline is an old theme of German dreams and nightmares—recognizable in, for example, *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919)—and it has its roots undoubtedly in the stereotype relationship between father, mother, and son. We do not know what the parental relationship looks like in families where the parents grew up as Nazis, but it is here that we must look to determine whether this particular nightmare is likely to persist in Germany and to find the means by which the Germans may remedy it.

b. *Between sexual "comradeship" and sexual grossness.* We have noted that the overpurified Nazi ideal of sex leans toward the homosexual side even though, in the ideal, the sexual object (Ulla) may be of the opposite sex. On the other side of the picture, we have the sexually gross and heterosexual relationship to a sexual object (Gerda), whom Heini, in the curious incident of the kiss in the railway carriage, mistakes for a boy. In the characterization of sexual grossness, there is an extreme emphasis on the mouth and buttocks, and this emphasis on the mouth spreads from the purely sexual to include gross eating, the throwing of food, and even the use of chewed food as a weapon. On the side of the Nazi ideal, the eating and sexual functions of the mouth are minimized, but the mouth still appears as an organ of aggression in

the facial expression of the district leader when he gives his barked commands and on the face of Fritz when he repudiates Heini as a traitor.

The middle position between these two extremes is not represented in any way in this film, but it does appear in some other films (e.g., *The Street*), where we see a husband tempted away from domesticity by the bright lights and whirl of the city. Significantly, in *The Street*, the middle position, domesticity, is characterized as dull and almost regressive, in the sense that the husband's relationship to his wife is almost that of a son to his mother.

Essentially this split between an ideal homosexuality and a gross heterosexuality seems to be an expression of preadolescent psychology. It is significant that Heini is a preadolescent and that the audience is encouraged to see life through preadolescent eyes. It is to eyes of this age in German culture that Nazism appeals, and we may suppose that where it appeals to adults, the attraction is a nostalgic longing for a preadolescent purity. It would seem, in fact, that German culture has in some way overvalued that preadolescent period of life and has inflated the romance of this period until it has become a model for the culture as a whole. To correct this, some change will have to be introduced, either into the family pattern or into the pattern of whatever institutions and youth organizations perform the function of giving a boy self-sufficiency and introducing him into adult life.

c. *Between light and darkness.* This split is, of course, common to most occidental cultures, which associate fear, dishonesty, and vice with the dark, but it is interesting that in this film the split between light and darkness takes two forms: light is used to characterize the Nazi ideal while darkness characterizes the Communists; but also within the Nazi ideal, light and darkness are used to characterize different stages of the step from one status to another. In this way, over and over again the projected and repudiated themes find their expression within the ideal system.

2 Nazism assumes that the individual is in a sense a mechanical object. He is not endowed with free will, or with any internal tendencies toward good or evil, but rather is seen as responding mechanically and inevitably to an external dualism between authority and temptation. This theme occurs in pre-Nazi Germany film material in two forms: we see the mechanization of man in numerous robot fantasies (e.g., *Metropolis*) and, inversely, we see machines endowed with malevolent semihuman personality (e.g., in *Metropolis* and *Berlin*). This notion is closely linked with the Nazi idea of discipline, multiple reincarnation, and the whole psychology of the Nazi parade grounds. It is interesting to note, however, that in the twenties these ideas of mechanization were especially spread by filmmakers and writers, who were not themselves engineers. In its origin, the idea was probably in part a reaction to the enormous industrialization of Germany by people who were not actively concerned with mechanics. It would be very important to know how much the en-

gineers themselves have consciously or unconsciously adopted this fantasy, and perhaps among them there might be people who could correct it. It is also possible that the fantasy has undergone changes in the course of the war, and it will be important to know, for example, what attitudes have developed in regard to the tanks and airplanes against which the Germans are fighting. We (especially the English) tend to think of our own tanks, etc., as tools or vehicles or horses—creatures whom we endow with free will. What attitudes the Germans, who personify their own machinery, have built up in regard to ours is not known.

*Characteristics which appear in the study of the family:*

1 One of the major appeals which Nazism had for German youth was the solution it offered of the complex and intense emotions implanted in the boy by his pre-Nazi German family background. The Nazis have used the old family background as a springboard for their propaganda, not only in this film but also, for example, in Hitler's account of his own boyhood in *Mein Kampf* (Erikson 1942). Specifically, in this film we have seen how both father and mother are characterized as mixtures of good and evil, so that the attitudes of the boy are ambivalent toward each parent. The propagandist has rearranged these attitudes so that by the end of the film all the positive attitudes toward both parents become directed toward Nazism while the negative attitudes are focused on the enemy. Thus, the Nazi clubhouse becomes a substitute "home," the district leader is played off against the father, and passivity becomes heroism when it is seen as a means of rescuing the mother.

This complete reorientation of the attitudes and stereotypes which were available in pre-Nazi Germany leads logically and necessarily to the destruction of the old family unit. Thus the obvious and necessary procedure for correcting the German tendency toward Nazism and other such cults would seem to be the resuscitation of the family. The mere resuscitation of the old German family pattern, however, will not be sufficient, since this pattern has been used again and again as a springboard for cultist youth movements. If the pattern were merely resuscitated, it would act only as a stimulus for such movements. The old German family pattern with all its ambivalences may have provided a stable base for German society in the nineteenth century, but it would not provide such a base today. Habits die hard, and today the habit of regarding this old-style family as something to be rebelled against, as an inspiration for revolutionary ideology, is too strong.

The family must be resuscitated, but the roles of father and mother must be modified in some way. The youth organizations, as we have noted above, are likely to persist in the postwar world simply because *any* organization will be valuable in that period of dislocation. It will be

essential, however, that entry into these organizations and membership in them not be conceived as a rebellion against the parental background, and for this to be so the parental background itself must alter.

As to the direction of this alteration, no prescription is possible until we know what the new parental patterns in Germany are, how Nazi-trained young men and women behave toward their sons, what character is today being implanted in small children by mothers whose husbands are away from home, and how the people of Germany will feel about Nazism after the war. It is out of these attitudes and patterns that the solution must be developed, and these patterns should be the subject of intensive inquiry today.

2 In the analysis of the episode of the house key, we noted that the propagandist in 1933 was psychologically unable or consciously unwilling to exclude the possibility of a persistent and satisfactory relationship to the family background. The house key, the symbol which he chose to represent Heini's independence of the family, is itself a symbol for Heini's return to the family, and the film, therefore, must pass over Heini's use of the keys that night. This would seem to indicate that there is available in Germany, even among the Nazi propagandists, a psychological opening for the revival of family life. There is a crack which could admit an entering wedge. If such an opening exists among the propagandists—and the men who devised the script of this film were undoubtedly enthusiastic Nazis—then it is likely that a very large portion of the population of Germany is ready for a return to a world in which the family would again be an important educative institution.

3 The old German interest in ideas of destiny has been picked up by Nazism and become one of the cornerstones of Nazi ideology, but in the process the concept of destiny has changed. In this film the mother, the tragic predictor, dies, and her place is taken by Ulla, who twice works like Providence behind the scenes; and we noted that in another film, *Faehrmann Maria*, the old masculine personification of Death is killed, and his place is taken by a sexually desirable young woman. We do not know the psychological dynamics which lay down a base in the child for this curious interest in destiny; we only know that this interest is characteristic for German culture and that it has changed. The destiny idea is certainly related to the climactic time perspective we noted above—destiny is the climax to which man must look forward, and it is his duty to follow that destiny. We noted above that the German time perspective shifts between two extremes—one optimistic, the other pessimistic—and that it would be important to substitute for both of these some more stable middle position. Such a substitution would probably exclude the notion of destiny or would, at any rate, rob this notion of much of its psychological attraction. This attraction is probably the result of those unidentified parental patterns which lay the base for the whole destiny idea, and therefore it becomes ex-

ceedingly important that these patterns be identified and that they be altered or eliminated in the future German family.

- 4 In the course of the film, Heini graduates from coveting symbols of virility—a knife and a house key—to wearing a Nazi uniform and admiring himself in a mirror, and this narcissistic theme has been exploited over and over again by the Nazis so that it has become one of the dominant themes in the cult. We may like or dislike narcissism according to our own cultural standards and tastes, but at any international level, we are concerned only to make sure that no nation shall induce in its population a character structure which is inevitably committed to an internationally aggressive role. Some of the most peaceful people in the world are the most narcissistic; the Balinese, for example, are among the most peaceful and the most narcissistic. Warfare and personal aggression are virtually unknown among them, and internationally speaking, they would be ideal neighbors. Thus, narcissism itself is no blemish and may lead to all sorts of cultural achievements. The important factor is what is admired in the self. If the self is admired for beauty or for virtuosity in the arts of peace, then narcissism will promote these characteristics; if, however, the self is admired as a mechanism of aggression, then narcissism must promote aggression. There is, therefore, no reason why narcissism should not even be encouraged in Germany, provided the Germans shift its content and admire themselves for qualities and virtues which will make good neighbors of them.

### Learning, Culture, and the Propagandic Process

Besides the psychology of Nazism, the detailed study of this one film has bearing on a number of other types of problems, which vary from the most general questions about human nature, the ways in which we learn, and the propagandic process to the forms of propaganda which can be carried in fictional films. Our analysis has shown that in this film there are a large number of themes—especially those connected with the family—which are more or less easily overlooked by the casual audience but which nevertheless may have very high emotional force. That those themes are actually present in the film and were put there by the filmmakers, consciously or unconsciously, there can be no doubt. The film itself provides continual verification of this fact. We have seen, for example, that Ulla not once, but *twice*, acts like Providence behind the scenes so that the significance of this theme is verified by its repetition. Similarly, we have noted that the contrast between Ulla and Gerda parallels that between the father and the district leader, so that all our descriptive analysis of the difference between the Nazis' picture of themselves and their picture of Communism rests not upon one instance, nor yet upon one contrast, but upon two contrasts which mutually verify each other. The material which we have analyzed shows

an extraordinarily high degree of internal consistency, which enables us to detect the same state of mind at work in all the various contexts of the film, and so to obtain a real picture of what sort of mind participated in and approved the total creation.

On the whole, this is what we should expect of any daydream or artistic creation—that the way in which the work of art is structured is psychologically characteristic for the creators—and ranged behind this generalization and supporting it, there is the whole mass of our anthropological and psychiatric knowledge of human nature. We know that human beings are generalizing creatures in the sense that they will bring to any new context emotional and intellectual habits acquired in other contexts, and especially those habits that they acquired in early childhood. The behavior of any individual in a new context reechoes all his earlier experiences and forms of behavior. The individual is a single organized entity, not a collection of bits and pieces, and when we watch his behavior and look at his creations, we find running through all the same principles of organization.

The next step from this generalization is to say that a similar character and similar principles of organization will be typical for the various individuals in a given tribe, a given community, or a given unit, and this is vouched for by anthropological findings among primitive peoples and more recently by the findings of anthropologists in the study of the higher oriental and occidental cultures. It is true that, when we are dealing with cultures, the levels of similarity between individuals are necessarily somewhat more abstract, but still we are beginning to be able to define (Bateson 1942) these levels and arrive at a systematic understanding of any given culture in terms of the thematic handling of the various contexts of life.

But this is a propaganda film, and therefore there is a further question we must ask. Granted that the film is structured and built in terms of specifically Nazi themes; granted that the handling of the family, of courtship, and of death are consistently Nazi—these themes are still not articulately stated by the propagandist, and it may be doubted whether the film would serve to *propagate* these themes. The obvious methods of testing such a question are barely available. Audience research techniques have specialized in examining the reactions of an audience to what was explicit in a film, but themes of the type with which we are here concerned are usually not explicitly recognized—therefore, their effect upon an audience cannot be obtained by direct questioning. There is, however, very strong evidence, especially on the psychiatric side, for supposing that, in many cases, themes which can be accepted so long as they are not explicitly stated may be violently repudiated the moment attention is consciously called to them—indeed, one of the purposes of our whole analysis has been to bring the Nazi themes out into the open where the reader can recognize them and so be fortified against them.



In place of audience research we must rely on our general knowledge of man as an educable creature and our knowledge of the circumstances under which learning occurs. Simple learning, we know, occurs principally in those contexts which contain elements of either reward or punishment, and it is probably safe to generalize from this experimental finding to the very much more complex type of learning with which we are here concerned—the modification of the individual's character and view of the universe in which he lives, and his reading of the events in which he participates.

We should then have to ask whether the individual member of the audience is rewarded in any way for accepting the themes which are implicit in the film, and whether he is punished in some way for refusing to accept them. Here the answers must be affirmative. It is exceedingly difficult to enjoy a good film without accepting the thematic premises upon which it is based. Either we accept the premises and enjoy the film or we resist the premises and suffer a psychological or physical headache. It is in general exceedingly difficult to maintain any sort of intellectual detachment, to carry along as a part of one's mental state some reservation, while enjoying any form of entertainment. The audience may say to themselves: "This is a very good film"; and they may say to themselves: "But I disagree with the contrast which the film draws between Nazis and Communists." But combining these two statements is exceedingly difficult and tends to result in: "If this contrast between Nazis and Communists were true, this would be a good film." Thus the premise which an audience tries to repudiate easily ends up as a supposition which it temporarily accepts.

The propagandic effect of a film is perhaps stronger when, like *Hitlerjunge Quex*, the film contains both explicit and implicit suggestions. The audience member who repudiates the explicit contrast between Communists and Nazis may find it exceedingly difficult to repudiate the less explicit propagandic themes which the film contains. His critical sense is focused on one feature of the film, and if he is to go on enjoying the film, he cannot become critical of such assumptions as the way in which Heini's progress toward Nazism is made easy for him by Ulla's intervention.

There is thus an *a priori* case to be made out for the propagandic effectiveness of themes which are not explicit. The audience is rewarded by enjoyment of the film for accepting these as implicit premises and is, in a sense, punished for refusing to accept them. This case is based, however, upon the structure of simple learning experiments, and it is a very long step from these experiments—from the rat which learns that the sound of a buzzer is the precursor of an electric shock that can only be avoided by lifting the right foreleg—to the more complex learning phenomena with which we are here concerned. The Nazi convert learns to remodel his *Weltanschauung*, his interpretation of the universe in which he lives, and his interpretation of his own behavior. To

compare him with the experimental rat, we should have to suppose that the rat learned not merely to lift his leg whenever he hears the buzzer, but also to expect future sequences of experience to be patterned like the experimental setting; that pain would always be preceded by some warning; and that, for him, the problem of life consisted in trying to guess what magical behavior would avert these pains. Such a rat might be said to have learned not only the connection between a buzzer, lifting the leg, and pain, but also to have learned a *Weltanschauung* or ideology. Unfortunately, we have almost no data on this order of learning.<sup>37</sup> That much learning occurs, there can be no reasonable doubt, and it is probable that the generalizations about reward and punishment take less tangible forms, such as the enjoyment of the film or the psychological headache to which we referred above.

The verification of the central hypothesis—that themes implicit in an artistic structure may be propagandically effective—must depend upon the development either of methods of audience testing which will tap unconscious or semiconscious levels, or of learning experiments which will demonstrate this more complex type of learning at an animal or human level.

### Acknowledgment

I thank the following persons for their cooperation: Gotthard Booth, Elizabeth Halbersberg, Hans Herma, Karen Horney, Siegfried Kracauer, Ernst and Marian Kris, and Robert Waelder.

### Notes

- 1 This study was completed in the spring of 1943 while I was film analyst attached to the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art. As it is now presented primarily for its methodological implications, no attempt has been made to bring the comments about Nazi Germany up to date. These should be read within the research context of the state of the war in 1945.
- 2 Lasswell and others have published formal methodological statements and even experimental data on contrasting methods of content analysis. They show the differences in the final findings which result from differences in the size of the unit chosen for diagnosis. In terms of Lasswell's system, the present analysis might be described as an extreme case in which the unit of analysis is the whole film, and in which, therefore, only qualitative, nonstatistical conclusions can be reached.
- 3 The present study supports a number of the conclusions which Erikson (1942) arrived at by analysis of other types of German material.
- 4 These data are taken from "Vom Werden Deutscher Filmkunst" by Oskar Kalbus (1935), where a part of von Schirach's speech is quoted.
- 5 For more detailed and systematic discussion of time perspectives, see Frank (1939) and Lewin (1942).

- 6 In translating the "Nazi Youth Song," the word *flattern* has been rendered as "billow." The dictionary meaning of this word is "flutter," and the German word is certainly sometimes used in this sense (e.g., in referring to birds). A small experiment shows, however, that Americans, when asked to visualize a flag fluttering, usually see a small flag moving rapidly or a large flag rather far away, whereas the image called up in Germans by the words *Fahne* and *flattern* is of a large flag close up. In Nazi films, the flags are usually photographed to fill the frame, so that the emphasis falls not on the changing outline of the flag, but rather on the wave motion in the middle of the fabric. This billowing motion is clearly intended to have a fascination similar to that of waves in water.
- 7 For the Nazi Age Grade system, see Gregor Ziemer, "Education for Death."
- 8 Unfortunately, we have no data on the symbolism of these ceremonies, but it is almost safe to predict that they contain a mortuary element—certainly referent to the heroic deed and probably actual symbolic representations of the death of the candidates.
- 9 The *Heimat* is an important symbol in Nazi ideology. It differs from the *Vaterland* in several respects. In particular, the *Heimat* seems to be a pleasant place to which one returns or dreams of returning, so that the emotion evoked by this word is a nostalgic, rather than a disciplined, patriotism. The word *Heimat* is feminine.
- 10 The whole film is, of course, an attempt to make political capital for Nazism out of human woes, and the suggestion that Communists do this is a typical example of the technique and mental state of Nazi propagandists, who project their own characteristics onto their enemy.
- 11 The boy who receives this insult is Grundler, the weak Nazi. I do not know of any psychological reason why he should have been selected for this, unless it be because he is the only named professional actor among the Nazi boys. Heini, Fritz, and Ulla are all anonymous "Hitler Youth," but Grundler is a named actor, Hans Ramspott.
- 12 The general opinion of informants who were in Germany at this time and in touch with the Youth Movements is that the Leftist groups were slightly more disciplined than the Hitler Youth.
- 13 An official propaganda photograph of the "Strength through Joy" movement shows that this identical game of Schinkenklappen is commonly played at Nazi picnics.
- 14 Actual death in swamps occurs rather frequently in German films. The case of *Faehrmann Maria* has already been mentioned. And in *Friesenet*, a girl is punished for sexual relations with a Communist by being led to the edge of a swamp where she must commit suicide. The film suggests that this punishment is traditional among the peasants of this old German colony in Russia.
- 15 In Nazi youth films, the camera rather frequently provides shots of the backs of the legs of boys, showing the bare inside of the knees.
- 16 This type of symbolic treatment of temptation is also common in pre-Nazi German films, e.g., *Variety*, *The Street*, *Sunrise*.
- 17 For several of the suggestions here put forward, I am indebted to conversations with E. Erikson (1942). On the whole, the findings in the analysis of this film coincide very closely with those of Dr. Erikson in his analysis of *Mein Kampf* and other Nazi literature.
- 18 This metaphor is probably put in Stoppel's mouth to prepare us for the association between the fair and Communism.
- 19 I have to thank Dr. Marian Kris for pointing out the underlying passivity in this episode.
- 20 The fact that a vase is contrasted with the knife provides additional verification for regarding the knife as a virility symbol, and it also verifies our assumption that the filmmakers had at least a prior acquaintance with theory.
- 21 Stoppel does not at this stage offer the knife as a reward if Heini will become a Communist, but the possibility is clearly in the air; later in the film this bribe is actually offered.
- 22 The diagrams used in this analysis are necessarily on a rather crude associational level and fail to indicate the finer points of the various attitudes and relationships. Psychoanalysis is still a verbal rather than a diagrammatic science.
- 23 It is interesting to note the frequency of encirclement themes in German films. Even in much earlier films (e.g., *M, Emil und die Detektive*) this theme is recognizable and seems almost to replace the chase themes so popular among American filmmakers.
- 24 The same expression appears on the face of the district leader when he gives his barked commands to the Nazi troop.
- 25 This scene is somewhat awkward. Stoppel's acting is not convincing, and we are left without any clear idea of why he did not worry about Heini's threat.
- 26 In the novel on which the film is based, this scene takes place in two parts. First, there is a conversation between Stoppel and the mother, in which the mother is described as hypnotized with fear in Stoppel's presence; later there is a conversation between Stoppel and the father which is overheard by the mother. In this conversation, Stoppel tells the father that he will give Heini one more chance to come back to the Communists, but if he does not take it, he will be killed.
- 27 Echoes of Christian mythology occur rather frequently in German films, usually in a much disoriented form. In the present film, it is perhaps significant that, at the beginning of the film, Wilde, the Communist villain, is allowed to echo Christ, whereas at the end of the film the Communists echo Judas and Pilate.
- 28 *Heute* may mean either "today" or "in this period of history."
- 29 The film gives us no rationalization for Grundler's removal from Beusselkietz to the new district. He was certainly a member of the Beusselkietz troop, under Fritz, in the earlier scenes.
- 30 So spelled in the Reichfilmarchiv transcript. The usual spelling of the metal is *Quecksilber*.
- 31 This is probably an echo of the earlier episode in which chewed food was thrown in Grundler's face at the beginning of the hike. The psychological reasons for this repeat are not clear.
- 32 This interpretation would not necessarily imply that either the filmmakers or the audience were familiar with the classical myth of Hermes and Aphrodite. It would be equally possible for the name "Quex" to get these overtones from the properties of the metal: its curious "quickness" and its "touch-me-not" behavior, the way in which it shatters into shining pieces when shaken, combined with its power of recovery into a single mass when the disturbance is over.
- 33 See Kracauer (1942) for a careful discussion of this fake realism in *Triumph of the Will* and in German newsreels.
- 34 In an earlier footnote it was pointed out that the relationship between the Nazi party and the nation would not be handled in the symbolic terms set up by this film. It is possible, however, that this in-turned narcissism—whereby the leader is romantic about himself as though he were one of the boys, in spite of the fact that he is also in part a father figure—may provide a partial solution of the problem of reducing three symbolic entities (father, mother, and son) to two (party and nation).
- 35 One shot of the Communists, in which they gleefully boast that no Nazi literature is reaching Beusselkietz, intervenes between the two scenes and covers the night during which Heini and Ulla went to the printing shop and completed the printing of the leaflets.
- 36 In Nazi ideology, it seems that, while Nazism itself stands for a disciplined obedience and the repudiation of full heterosexuality, normal sexuality is prescribed as an equally passive form of moral enslavement.
- 37 There is a great deal of experimental evidence to show that animals can be taught to learn more rapidly. A new experimental animal will learn only slowly to associate buzzer, lifting the leg, and pain, but the animal with much past experience in experimental settings of this general type will learn to adjust to any particular setting quickly. For a more general discussion of these problems, see Bateson (1942).

---

## References

- Bateson, Gregory  
1942 National Character and Civilian Morale. *In* Civilian Morale, Yearbook of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. New York: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Erikson, Erik  
1942 Hitler's Imagery and German Youth. *Psychiatry* 5:475-493.
- Frank, Lawrence  
1939 Time Perspectives. *Journal of Social Psychology*: 4:293-312.
- Gorer, G.  
1943 Some Themes of Japanese Culture. *Trans. New York Academy of Science* (Feb.).
- Jones, Dorothy B.  
Preliminary Report on Motion Picture Content Research Based on an Experimental Group of Twenty-Five Films. Unpublished manuscript.
- Kalbus, Oskar  
1935 Vom Werden Deutscher Filmkunst. 2 Teil, Cigaretten-Bilderdienst, Altona-Bahoonfeld, p. 121.
- Kracauer, Siegfried  
1942 Propaganda and the Nazi War Film. New York: Museum of Modern Art Film Library.
- Lewin, Kurt  
1942 Time Perspective and Morale. *In* Civilian Morale: Second Yearbook of the Society for the Psychological Study of Social Issues. New York: Houghton-Mifflin.
- Mead, Margaret  
1942 And Keep Your Powder Dry. New York: William Morrow.

# The Perceived and the Named\*

Christian Metz

Translated by  
Steven Feld and Shari Robertson

The viewer of an image feels the need to "recognize" (*identify*) the objects which are represented therein. When the image is figurative, as is the case in photography, painting, and film, it meets this need itself by offering objects to recognize. However, it can happen, even with strongly representative images, that the demand of the consumer remains more or less unsatisfied. For instance, the westerner who watches an ethnographic film often remains perplexed by the objects that he sees in it but cannot name or classify (e.g., cooking utensils, hunting or fishing equipment). To name, to classify: our problem starts here, with the problem of cultural taxonomies, encompassing both the taxonomy of cultural objects and the cultural taxonomy of natural objects, such as zoological or biological classification, which varies from one society to another. Phenomenology has clearly shown us that we live in a world of objects, that our immediate perception is a perception of objects, and that this arrangement is neither superficial nor transitory (so much so, I will add, that it is deeply reassuring, and that is doubtless one of the roots of its existence). So why not link this striking character of our lived world consciousness with the even more deeply embedded force of cultural classification and sociolinguistics?

The case of nonfigurative images (modern painting, avant-garde films), only confirms the initial impressions that emerge from this study. Notably, the spectator very often has the tendency to forceably reintroduce to the image, by the way he looks at it, objects which the author wanted to leave out. The vague forms, curves, blurs, or shadings become clouds or dancing waters; the rectilinear drawings become railroad tracks. There are many fewer nonfigurative images received than are sent. And even at the sending end, the tendency toward representation is sometimes stronger than is believed by those who consciously would like to escape it. The free contours that we have in mind are often involuntary variations on objects of recognizable form. There are fewer nonfigurative images than there are images that would like to be so.

---

Christian Metz is author of *Film Language, Language and Cinema*, and many other works in film theory and general semiology. He teaches at L'École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris.

Steven Feld teaches visual and sound communication at The Annenberg School of Communications, University of Pennsylvania. Shari Robertson is an independent filmmaker.

## Codes of Iconic Nomination

Work in philosophy, and the psychology of perception and observation, taught us long ago that the identification of tangible objects was closely mixed with their linguistic nomination. The semantic organization of natural languages, within certain sectors of the lexicon, overlaps with the variable margins of shifting configurations and demarcations of perception. The visible world and language are thus not without multiple and deep structural interactions, and these have not yet been studied in the detailed technical terms of intercodal relations. It is exactly to such a study that I would like to address myself. But one thing already seems certain to me: even if the connection between language and the viewed can hardly be conceived of as a complete "copy"—either one served by the other—certainly one function of language is to name the units that vision demarcates, and to help demarcate them. And one function of vision is to inspire the semantic configurations of language, and also to be inspired by them.

Recently, from the semiological perspective, these problems, which are exceedingly old in themselves, have been approached from two sides—on the linguistic front by A. J. Greimas (1968) and on the iconic front by Umberto Eco (1968, 1970). I have myself devoted some brief analytical sketches to them, where the main interest was the articulation of the two sides (Metz 1971, 1973). That is really the heart of the matter. I have proposed the term "codes of iconic nomination" for the systems of correspondence which explain that within figurative imagery, even schematics, one can instantly recognize and name objects. These codes are thus the constituent mechanisms of "analogy" and "iconicity," or the impression of resemblance and reality that give us representative images. They contribute to the creation of fiction, diegesis,<sup>†</sup> and the pseudo-real. It is now time—and the general state of previous research does not deprive the undertaking of all risk—to try one's skill at a more detailed and systematic description of these bridging devices. Between image and language, they facilitate the *objective production* of a whole network so interiorized by the culture that, on the one hand, the phenomenologists were able to describe them as spontaneous (which they are in effect) and, on the other, as deeply tied in the West to the Aristotelian tradition (quantitatively dominant even today) of diegetic or mimetic art, in short, representative art.

## Which Part Image, Which Part Language?

It is first necessary to delimit the object of this research and establish boundaries on both its sides. The codes of iconic nomination do not relate the whole of language to the whole of imagery. Their study should not aspire to exhaust the vast question of the links between the perceptual and the linguistic but on the contrary should concentrate on one of its levels in order to attempt to better illuminate it.

### Lexicon

On the side of language we will limit ourselves to the *lexicon*. It hardly seems possible, for the moment, to seriously establish even slightly precise correlations between the perception of objects in a society and the phonological and grammatical structures of the corresponding language. This difficulty, which perhaps will not be eternal, is connected to another one which is more general and well known to linguists: in spite of some interesting attempts<sup>1</sup> no one has succeeded thus far in linking, in a convincing fashion, phonological or syntactic systems with social structures. It is across these two systems that language preserves for the moment its great relative autonomy in comparison with other institutions where the very existence of linguistics is founded, inasmuch as the discipline is distinct from sociology (but belongs to the social sciences since language *is* an institution). Of all the internal sectors of language it is, on the contrary, the lexicon which brings the most important and most immediately exploitable materials to those who wish to found a sociolinguistics.<sup>2</sup> It is clear that words are linked to culture (and, among other things, to the faculty of sight), following a shorter and more direct circuit than do phonemes or rules of grammar. Moreover, the lexicon is the only part of language which immediately exercises the function of *nomination*, that is to say, which enumerates the objects of the world and gives them a name. The referential dimension, which characterizes all of language, appears in a direct fashion only within the lexicon.

The dissymmetry of the situation is certainly reflected in the concepts of a semanticist like A. J. Greimas (1966). *Sèmes*, as such, constitute the "semiological level," that is, that level at which language articulates about the "natural world." These are distinguished from *classèmes*, whose entirety forms the "semantic level," that is, the level of autonomy of the linguistic organization. Thus we see the differences between semanticisms like "in an oblong shape," "made of leather," or "belonging to the feline species," which are *sèmes* or "nuclear" to the degree they are as diverse and specific as the perceived objects of a culture which they designate and constitute at the same time. Units of meaning like *human/nonhuman*, *material object/abstract notion*, or *animate/inanimate* are *classèmes*, or "contextual *sèmes*," which have a more general significance within the lexicon and which

intervene in the naming of numerous tangible objects. Furthermore, at a different level, they submit also to a second classification (whose links are in fact larger than the first operated by the nominations themselves), which extends beyond the lexicon to grammar, where they often correspond to some formal markers. Thus we have the case of human/nonhuman, the difference between *qui/quoi* in French, and *who/which* in English. Just as the *classèmes* within a language are common to the grammar and the lexicon, the nuclear *sèmes* (which I will henceforth simply call *sèmes*, since this study is limited to them) are suited only to the lexicon. I will not discuss all the lexical *sèmes* but only those which intervene in the lexicon of visual objects.

### To Recognize the Object

In the domain of the image, the codes of iconic nomination no longer involve the whole ensemble of semiological material. We no longer need to review every sense and all senses of the representative image. To recognize the object is not to understand the image, even if that is the beginning of it. It is only a question of a level of meaning, that which is called the literal (= denotation or representation), and not the entirety. The apprehension of relationships between objects, or at least of their more factual relations, still participates in the literal sense, but is taken over by other codes. Notably this involves montage in the most general sense of the word, encompassing the internal composition of the still unique image. To understand that one object, in a narrative, appeared only a few minutes after another, or that they are constantly copresent, or that one is to the left of the other, or farther back, is already something more than visually identifying each of these objects. The "recognition" should therefore be understood as an operation which articulates certain sectors of linguistic activity and not directly the whole of language over the whole of perception.

### From the Word to the Sémème

If one poses the problem in this way, it becomes essential to know to what sort of linguistic unit the optically identifiable object exactly corresponds, since language includes units that are very diverse in figure and status. Common-sense response leaves no doubt—it is the *word*. The act of nomination, considered in its concrete and directly observable form, corresponds most often to a word, that which comes to mind when our eye recognizes an object: "It's a dog," "it's a lamp."

Yet the pertinence of a word does not resist analysis. The word is a two-sided unit, with its signified and its phonic signifier. Accordingly, that which can "correspond" to an iconic element will necessarily be a unit of the linguistic signified and therefore only a one-sided unit. The naming of visible objects is a case, among others, of transcoding. In all transcoding (translation, for example) the only direct transit is that which passes between the two respective signifieds. (I will return to this point, which is in fact more complex). Nomination is more than transcoding, though it is that also. It is clear that no direct correspondence between the signifier of an image representing a house and the signifier of the word *house* (or *maison* or *casa*) is conceivable. This is a consequence of the "arbitrariness" of linguistic signs. The two materials are absolutely heterogeneous; one is outlines, colors, shades, and so on, the other an emission of the human voice. The optical aspects of a house bear no relation to the fact that the French word *maison* has four phonemes rather than three or five, and exactly those four. These are the signifieds which articulate one another, the *recognized* object and the *meaning* of the word.

The lexeme (lexical morpheme) is another sort of linguistic unit, smaller than a word, that for the same reasons no longer suits our purposes. It is still a two-sided unit which includes phonetic elements. So, how shall we distinguish the signified of the word from the signified of the lexeme? At the level of the word or even the lexeme the signified can include several units which are quite distinct on the optical plane. For example, the French word *chèvre* means both the animal called "goat" and the tool called "sawhorse." That is the problem of multiple meanings.

In sum, the visual correspondence should have become established with a linguistic unit that is a pure signified, which is smaller than the signified of the lexeme—or the signified of one sense of a lexeme, or of the unique sense of a lexeme with one meaning. But the linguistic unit we are studying can in certain cases coincide with a longer segment than a lexeme or even a word, on the condition that one always pictures a single meaning for the signified of the segment. The object which one names *betterave* ("beetroot" in English) is recognizable in an image, and corresponds in French to two lexemes (*bette* and *rave*) grouped here in a single word. The object which one names *pomme de terre* ("potato" in English) corresponds to three French lexemes, which also happen to be three words. Nevertheless, as perceptual elements they are obviously at the same level as the French *carotte* (English "carrot"), where the nomination uses a single lexeme that coincides with a word. This is not an accident since within the linguistic order itself it is a question in this case of a sequence of several lexemes (eventually of several words) being lexically congealed and turned into a single lexeme. In the terms of André Martinet (1967) these are not syntagmes (free syntactic

combinations) but *synthèmes*, combinations which have been formed by the language once and forever and which enter the lexicon with the same status as undecomposable segments. If a potato (*pomme de terre*) is red in color (*rouge*), one speaks of a *pomme de terre rouge* and not of a *pomme rouge de terre*. As Martinet proposes the term "thème" for jointly designating *synthèmes* and proper lexemes, we can ask that the visually identifiable object correspond at the level of nomination to *one meaning of thème*, which is to say exactly what Greimas<sup>3</sup> calls a *sémème*.

### Cultural Taxonomy of Objects

Each *sémème* (a specific unit at the level of the signified) denotes a class of occurrences, not a single occurrence. There exist thousands of "trains" even within the single sense of "railroad cars," and these differ greatly from each other in color, height, number of cars, and so on. But the cultural taxonomy which is contained in the language has determined to hold these variations to be irrelevant and to consider them the same object (of a single class of objects). It has also determined that other variations are pertinent and sufficient "to change" the object, as, for example, those which separate *train* and *miceline*.‡ It is the same apportionment, so variable among different societies, of pertinent and irrelevant traits—in sum the same "arbitrary" principle of the *enumeration of objects*—which presides over spontaneous classifications that operate the perception of corresponding objects within the same culture. The sight itself is slightly obscured to the extent that the image does not determine whether it is a train or a *miceline*. Once it is demarcated, the viewer of the image has the feeling of "recognizing the object." It is notable, then, that one false perception of the color of this *miceline* (if it is one) or of its exact length or of the metal of which it is made does not constitute a comparable obstacle.

The traits that do not participate in this *découpage* of objects are culturally experienced as types of secondary qualities, determinations superimposed as something extra and not indispensable to the immediate intellection—adjectival qualities rather than substantive ones. It is most often true that linguistic expression of these visual particularities is conveyed by adjectives (a long *miceline*) or by certain determinants which are larger in size but syntactically interchangeable with adjectives, as, for example, the subordinate relative phrase "a *miceline* that goes very quickly." To the contrary, pertinent visual qualities, those which, by their grouping in "packets," determine the list of objects to recognize, express themselves in language through nouns. As we have known for a long time, the nomination of objects—because there are also those of actions, to which I will return—proceeds by nouns. Traditional grammar says that nouns correspond to objects, adjectives to qualities

and verbs to actions. Simply, "objects" are only sets of qualities considered as definers, and what we call qualities covers only those qualities whose proper meaning does not enter into the definition of the objects.

Optically identifiable objects are, then, classes of occurrences, like the *sémèmes* which they name. That is why Greimas proposes naming them "visual figures" (the pertinent units) and then further distinguishes "visual signs," which will be singular occurrences, such as one drawing of a house or one photograph of a tree.<sup>4</sup> But within linguistic tradition the term "sign" is too strongly evocative of the pertinent unit for it to have any chance of being made to designate the contrary. It seems preferable to me not to adopt a special term and to speak simply of "recognizable visual objects" as opposed to "visual occurrences."

### About "Nomination"

One sees that the fundamental phenomenon of nomination is itself quite poorly named. In the word "nomination" the *sémème nom* corresponds to the English "name" and not to the English "noun." But it nevertheless designates a linguistic unit which is on the order of a word. Now it is only at the surface level that nomination proceeds by words. The real correspondences between the visible world and language are established at the level of pertinent traits, which are deeper and more invisible units. The word (*nom*) which designates the optical object only constitutes the emergent part of the system, a consequence that is manifest by the play of the pertinent traits and their internal organization. When an iconic item carries all the definitive traits required for us to recognize, for example, a bulb (electric light bulb), and when one has access to the corresponding *sémème* (*ampoule* = electrical accessory), this last access is carried to the lexeme where it contributes to an articulation of the signified (here "electric light bulb" in all its senses, but elsewhere "bulb" forms a word by itself). And this word, in turn, functions as a two-sided entity, which also has its own signifier and can therefore express itself. The viewer of the image explains to himself, "That's a light bulb." In the complete process of nomination, then, the word does play a role, but only at the endpoint.

The term "nomination" is not peculiar to linguistics or to modern semiology. It has come a long way, historically in languages (nominative case), and also from a whole philosophical tradition. It carries in itself, in a condensed state, a certain concept of the relationship between language and the world, a concept that has been critiqued since Saussure as what Gilbert Ryle terms "naïve realism." For him, there was a sort of list of objects, preexisting their naming, and the words came to "name" (nominate) these objects after the fact, one by one. As long as we limit ourselves to the surface level (that of the

word or even the lexeme) we are inevitably drawn toward faith in this view. The word, the lexeme (and on the other side of the problem, the visual object, once recognized) is not the end product, because the *découpage* of the world into objects (and of language into *sémèmes*) is a complex process of cultural production. At the heart of this process the central role has been broken down into pertinent traits: traits of visual identification on one side (Eco) and linguistic *sèmes* on the other (Greimas).

### Determination by Social Practice

This double *découpage* did not exist before social activity and the features of each culture. It is determined by them, and at the same time it implements them. We know that the Eskimo employ some ten different lexemes (and thus different *sémèmes*) for designating snow, according to whether it is crumbly, hardened, slippery, piled up and so forth (Schaff 1965). Each of these units consists of an undecomposable lexeme, while the languages of Western Europe are obligated, in order to designate the corresponding "objects," to form a nominal syntagme, which each time combines the appropriate adjective (e.g., powdery), with a noun that is invariably "snow" (*neige*, *Schnee*, *niève*). Thus our culture sees a single object with variable types, where the Eskimo see ten different objects. A perceptible trait like "crumbly" or "hardened" (with its corresponding *sème*), while pertinent to the Eskimo, is considered irrelevant in our languages, at least when the question is the "nomination" of snow.

This variation in lexical organization is obvious in relation to a difference in the perception of snow, which is more subtle and more finely distinguished among the Eskimo. Each society lexicalizes the distinctions which it perceives the most clearly, and in return, perceives with particular clarity the distinctions which it lexicalizes. It would be a fruitless quarrel that would initially seek to know whether it is language that informs perception or perception which informs language. In fact, the one and the other have been shaped by society.<sup>5</sup> In our cultures, the modes of work and production are such that snow plays a minor role, and careful attention to its different states would be without immediate utility. The Eskimo, who hunt and fish in largely snow-covered landscapes, and whose very survival depends on that, are obliged to know the diversities of the snow well: those which permit the hunt, those which represent a danger of sinking, those which announce a blizzard, and so on. A society lexicalizes *and* perceives the distinctions for which it has the greatest need.

## The Pertinent Traits of Perceptual Identification

Vision does not identify an object as a result of the totality of its perceptible appearance, or as a result of the surface of the paper, in the case of the same object being in the state of "representation" in a drawing or photograph, which is to say, the object relayed by codes of analogy. Thus it can be explained that schematic representations of objects in which the majority of the perceptible features have been deliberately suppressed are also recognizable (and sometimes more so) than many more faithful representations which are far more complete at the level of material expression (more exhaustive in respect to details of form, color, etc.): representations in which the degree of schematization is smaller and the *degree of iconicity* greater (Moles 1968). It is noteworthy that highly schematized images are very identifiable (the whole of the art of caricature lies therein). Visual recognition is based on certain perceptible traits of the object and its image (to the exclusion of others), only those which keep—and for the moment, materially isolate—the schema and the caricature. If they are sometimes more implied than detailed figurations, it is because they avoid the risk of drowning these traits in the midst of others, thus slowing the marking of guidelines. On the contrary, the image which shows great detail sometimes becomes the image-jumble (*l'image fouillée devient parfois l'image fouillis*).

## The Schematic Diagram

The traits which retain the schema—or at least the figurative schema, because there are also some others (e.g., diagrams)—correspond exactly to *pertinent traits of the code of recognition* so well described by Umberto Eco, who has cited diverse examples of them.<sup>6</sup> Others could be borrowed from caricature: arms raised above the head, a tall figure, and it is enough for us to recognize de Gaulle; bushy eyebrows, a round face, and it's President Pompidou. In certain comic drawings two protuberances on one side and two on the other are sufficient to represent the breasts and buttocks, so that we interpret it as "woman." (Needless to say, such a choice of pertinent traits owes itself to an ideology at the same time misogynous and maternalistic, so characteristic of the world in which we live.) The codes are the formal machines, but it is precisely as such that they have historical and social content; in this example, as in others, the opposition of form and content leads to an impasse.

So, *schématisation* largely overlaps *schématisation*. The latter is a socially specific activity which consists of producing materialized diagrams (schemas, in the precise sense). The former, on the contrary, is a mental, perceptual, and sociolinguistic principle of wide general bearing, which makes possible the comprehension of schemas as well as of detailed images with a high degree of iconicity and of spectacles from real life. Even

outside all schematization, this is because only certain sensible traits matter in identification; visual occurrences which differ in other traits can be perceived as multiple examples of the same object, and not as distinct objects. If several drawings have in common definite traits of the visual object "key" (e.g., a head and a shank, a certain type of serration), they can otherwise, and without disadvantage to the sociotaxonomic permanence of the item "key," differ very widely in size, color, diameter of the head, depth of indentations, and so on.

In ordinary perception, or in that of strongly figurative images, it is the social subject, the spectator, who fabricates the schema by mental subtraction of nonpertinent traits. In the case of *schématisation*, it is a specialist (designer or draftsman), a "transmitter," who performs the same subtraction in advance and materializes it. The difference is that the process of abstraction and classification—the "subtraction"—intervenes, in one case at the level of reception and in the other at the level of construction. In the former it is absent in the stimulus but reintroduced in the perceptual act; in the latter it is integrated into the artificially constructed stimulus.<sup>7</sup>

## Perceptual Exclusions and Inclusions

It is again the *schématisation*, and in a more general way the very existence of pertinent traits and occurrences, which is responsible for a rather striking structural particularity, common to both perceptual *découpage* and lexical *découpage*. Two "objects" can be contained in one another while otherwise continuing to stand for an autonomous and distinct item, so much so that one no longer knows whether or not they are of the same rank. In terms of set theory one could say that it is a matter of two classes which simultaneously maintain relations of exclusion and inclusion. Thus, for example, the *sémèmes* and the visual objects *automobile* and *wheel*: the wheel is a part of the automobile and can be mentioned in the entry "automobile" in a dictionary of iconic nomination, but the wheel is also an entirely separate unit of the same "rank" as the automobile: our dictionary would contain both entries, apart from each other and on an equal level.

This apparent peculiarity, which establishes itself in a general and permanent fashion, is the result of the fundamentally classificatory and "arbitrary" nature of nomination. When the object to which one makes reference is



the automobile (the automobile seen or spoken of), the wheel intervenes only as a trait for recognition, on the level of the steering wheel, for example. But the object to which one refers in other circumstances can be the wheel itself (for instance, in the case of a flat tire and its repair): it then is the thing which functions as a *recognized* object, or that to be recognized, and requires in its turn those traits of *recognition* (e.g., circular exterior form, marked by a "center" and radial structure).

In sum, a single material element can operate at two distinct levels of coding: as *sème* and as *sémème*, as "identificans" and as "identificatum" (or "identificandum"). Objects which must be recognized constantly serve in the recognition of other objects. According to the multiple and diverse exigencies of practice, perception and the lexicon reserve the right to regroup their basic traits in other ways, into "packets" which vary in content and size. Each packet, which barely seems to be stable, is frequently an object. Objects are always equal as *objects*, even if one is susceptible to being "lost" among the traits of another on occasion—and only on occasion—when the second remains an object and the first, ceasing for a moment to be, contents itself to participate in the découpage of the second. There never exist any objects, properly speaking, which might be included within others: what one finds are elements (semantic and perceptual) which the code brings into play at one time as objects and at others as parts of objects. In any case, this same code sovereignly arranges the list of objects, not only those items on it which are occasionally eclipsed.

### Language Perception: Their Double Relation, Intercodal and Metacodal

The preceding reflections show that the correspondence between vision and language establishes itself at two different levels: one among the *sémèmes* and optically identifiable objects, the other among the *sèmes* and pertinent traits of visual recognition. The full significance of this duality merits a slightly more thorough examination.

#### Transit by Signifieds

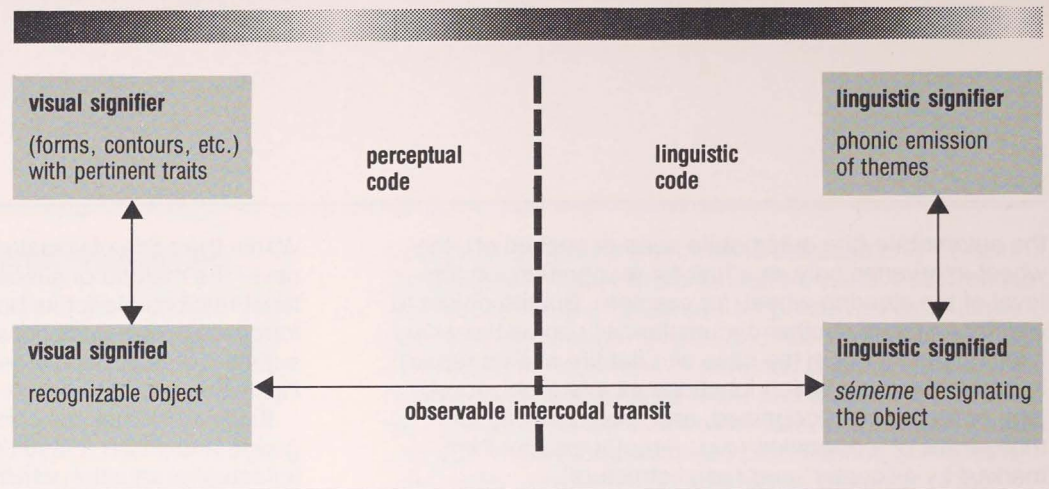
Insofar as the *sémèmes* correspond to optical objects (or vice versa), the intercodal transit—the reciprocal articulation of the linguistic code and the perceptual code—proceeds through the two signifieds. In language, the *sémème* is a specific unit at the level of a signified. In perceptual activity, the "object" is equally a signified: an already found signified once the object has been recognized, and a sought-after signified when the object is felt to be identifiable as such but has not yet been identified.

Within the code of visual recognition, the signifier is never the marked or suspected object, but the set of material responsible for its being marked or suspected: forms, contours, outlines, shadings. This is the visual substance itself, the material of expression in the sense of Hjelmslev.

If one considers the correspondences between language and vision a result of a social process of intellectual production which exists in an active fashion precisely to establish them, the transit by the signifieds represents the final, directly observable level, the final product of this set process. Thanks to pertinent traits of the iconic signifier, the subject identifies the object; it establishes the visual signified. From there, it passes to the corresponding *sémème* in its native language, the linguistic signified. This is the precise moment of nomination, of clearing the intercodal bridge. By the disposition of the *sémème*, the word or the lexeme which is attached to this *sémème* can be pronounced, producing the (phonic) signifier of the linguistic code. The loop is thus looped.

The intercodal bridge can also be crossed in another sense, from the phonic signifier to the perceptual marking of the corresponding object and then to optical traits; or, in the absence of all real or iconic "stimuli," to the mental evocation of the object; that is, again, of its pertinent optical traits. These two operations are so very common in daily life that one does not consciously think of them. Nevertheless, without them one would not be able to understand the following situations: if I say to a friend, "Pass me the pencil sharpener which is somewhere on the table," he finds it and gives it to me. Or, if someone tells me, "My sister is wearing sunglasses," I am capable of imagining a glasses-like object, even if my conversational partner's sister is absent and I know nothing whatever about the exact model of the glasses she is wearing.

When the perceptual signifier (traits of recognition) journeys to the linguistic signifier (phonic emission, itself either real or mental), this is nomination. When it goes from the linguistic signifier to the visual signifier, as in the examples given above, one is dealing with visualization, which is the inverse and inseparable correlate of nomination (that is why this last term, in a slightly larger sense, can conveniently designate the entire phenomenon independently of its orientation in each case). The point common to the two orientations is that the passage from the linguistic to the perceptual, or vice versa, lies at the level of the two respective signifieds, the *sémème* and the object.



As long as one considers it from this vantage point, which is not the deepest but which has its own reality, the connection between the visual lexicon and visual perception remains on the level of ordinary transcoding. As a defining trait of the latter, I propose retaining the achievement of the transit by the signifieds. Transcoding is a highly ordinary sociosemiological operation, whose most typical form is translation; that is, a subcase of transcoding where the two codes are two languages.

The transit by the signifieds is neither an empirical peculiarity nor an exceptional act. On the contrary, it rests on a permanent and fundamental given: if the varying codes in use distinguish among themselves—if there are several, obviously—it is through the material and the internal organization of their signifier (visual codes, auditory codes, etc.), or even by its organization alone when the material is identical (e.g., the plurality of languages), or, in any case, by the organization of their signifieds (Hjelmslev's "form of the contents") since it is the direct or indirect<sup>8</sup> correlate of the organization of the signifier. But it is not through the material of the signified ("material content"), which is common to all codes and which is always the "sense," the semantic fabric. The sense, also, constitutes the universal intercodal footbridge. One can switch from one code to another when two units of form of the signified, belonging respectively to each of the two codes (which are never, in fact, superimposable), nevertheless occupy an adjacent position in the material of the signified (or, as one says these days, "have very nearly the same sense"). This happens when the translator takes a word from the source language and looks for an equivalent word in the target language. In sum, there definitely exists a level of relationships between codes which always justifies saying that the passage is accomplished across the signifieds.

### Representation as Metalanguage

In many cases, and notably in those which occupy us here, this level of relationships is neither the only nor necessarily the most important one. Certain intercodal relations are really more than transcoding. The relationship between language and perception is very different than that between two languages (=translation), because in this case the two codes no longer have an identical semiological status and no longer occupy the same place within the general process of socialization.

Compared with all nonlinguistic codes, and with itself when necessary, language is in the position of a metalanguage: a universal, nonscientific metalanguage, a "major equivalent" exchangeable with all other codes, as is money against all other goods. There are also scientific metalanguages (formalized languages, mathematical notation, chemical notation), but it is still language which is used to introduce them, to preliminarily explicate them, and to define their field of validity. And within other domains, language itself, subject to a specific task which transforms it in terminology—that is to say, in theory—directly supplies the scientific metalanguage outside all specialized notation, or in simply taking one of them as an intermittent auxiliary title. This metalanguage consists then of a body of linguistic statements of fact; it can pass for the language of science itself. Thus the metalinguistic inclination of language, universal at the nonscientific level, is strongly reaffirmed at the scientific level. The two things go together, and the current social classifications are those of science. This is the problem of *pensée sauvage*, "the savage mind," so well posed by Lévi-Strauss (1962): all societies are societies of "savages," all people are indigenes of some culture.

If language is the principal metalanguage, this is obviously so because no other code is situated so tightly in daily social communications as a certain (abstract, explicit) form of thought. This is not the only operation but is by nature the most apparent among the operations of metalanguage. Every semiologist has noted that language, through its relationship with other codes, occupies a nonsymmetrical and privileged position<sup>9</sup> in that it affects the quantitative extension of the material of the signified (the total field of "things that one can say"). Language can say, even if sometimes only with approximation, what all the other codes can say, while the inverse is not true. (There exists, for example, no degree of approximation, if it were imaginable, from which one could allow that a reed pipe tune or a set of colors is capable of "saying" even so simple a phrase as "The train arrived at Lyon three quarters of an hour late.") Each code "occupies" one part, and only one part, of the total semantic material, which is to say, of the ensemble of socially possible assertions, while language occupies them all. Between language and the nonlinguistic codes, the proportion of "translatability" equalizes itself rather badly, leaning largely to one side. The advantage of this semantic extension has a great deal to do with the social status of language as *universal commentator*.

One of the most notable consequences of this situation in everyday life (the flow of perception, deciphering the numerous images which offer themselves to view in modern cities, spontaneous conversations about them, etc.) is that language does much more than transcode vision. Translation is another signifier of the same rank (the "verbalizer," as it is sometimes called by audiovisual specialists). Language accompanies vision in permanence; it is the continuous gloss of it, it explains it, clarifies it, to the extent to which it accomplishes it, whether spoken aloud or by simple mnemonic evocation of the phonic signifier. To speak of the image is in reality to speak the image; not essentially a transcodage but a comprehension, a resocialization where the transcodage is only the occasion, the necessary occasion. Nomination completes the perception as much as it translates it; an insufficiently verbalizable perception is not fully a perception in the social sense of the word.

If I mentally dispose of a *sémème* (helicopter, for example) and then I am unable to draw the corresponding object on a piece of paper, it is not a matter of accidental clumsiness; I am someone who "does not know how to draw," and no one suspects that I do not know what a helicopter is. But if the helicopter is drawn on another piece of paper and I am not able to name it—or, in any case, to find the *sémème*, lacking the phonic signifier, as when one has the word "on the tip of the tongue"—the situation, turned around 180 degrees, becomes much more serious. I have not understood the drawing, I actually do not know what it is, I am incapable of making it exist (at least at the level of representation I am discussing in this study). Language is not only another code; it is the metacode.

### To Transcode/Metacode: Relations between the Two Operations

It is necessary then to distinguish the *metacodal relationship* (relationship of the metacode to its object-code) from the *intercodal* relationship, which unites two codes on the same level, when each can function on occasion as "interpreter" of the other, but the situation can always be reversed. In the metacodal relationship the transit by the signified (where the equality of the status of the two codes becomes explicit) is not the main point. We know, following Hjelmslev (1953:Chapter 22), that the signified of the metacode articulates itself across the total signifier/signified of the object-code. There it is another sort of transit, a dissymmetrical type, which engages, in the case of more than two signifieds, one signifier and one only (that of the object-code). As for the signifier of the metacode, it constitutes, in this "unhooked" structure that is so well known today, the part which "exceeds," that which speaks the object-code in its entirety. Thus, in an oral statement, the phonic emissions of the English language help me to describe the signifiers and the signifieds of the iconic code.

signified of object-code	signifier of object-code	
signified of metacode		signifier of metacode

The simple intercodal relationship can be represented in the following manner:

code X signifier	code X signified	
	code Y signified	code Y signifier

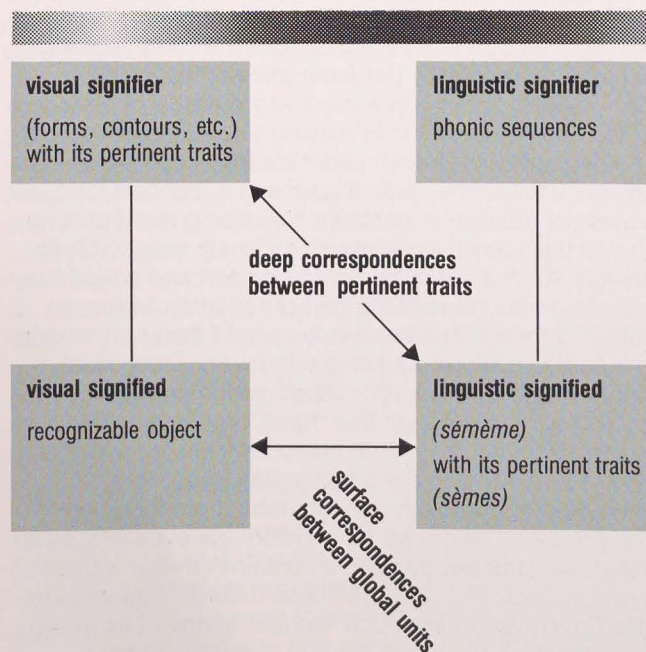
Only the signifieds ensure the contact between the two codes. The signifiers "exceed" both of them—each one can "translate" the other. The dissymmetry cancels itself.

These theoretical reflections find a striking illustration in the problem which occupies us. Evoking the cultural taxonomy of visible objects, Greimas (1968) considers that the pertinent traits of the iconic signifier ("traits of recognition" in Umberto Eco's terms) coincide with those of the linguistic signified—that is, with the *sèmes* of the *sémème*. This proposition seems to me of great importance. From a perspective of visual semiology I return to the linguistic analysis which Greimas made (1966:43–50) of the French word *tête* in one of its senses ("material object"). Permit me to simplify a little, in order to abbreviate the exposition. Greimas proposed four *sèmes* for this *sémème*: *extremity* (of a more immense object); *discontinuous extremity* (culturally felt to be distinct from the rest of what one would voluntarily call "the body"); *superlative extremity* (superior and/or anterior); and *spherical extremity* (or "swelling").

These are four pertinent traits of the linguistic signified. But there are also—and at this point the two things become confused—four pertinent traits of the iconic signifier. If in an ethnographic film we perceive an object which is unknown to us (a hunting weapon, for example, or a musical instrument), and if this object presents at its anterior extremity a distinct part with a rounded form, we would not hesitate to perceive it as being the "head," or *tête*, of this utensil which was previously impossible to identify. All that *our gaze would comprehend* would be that one of the parts of the object consists of a known object, a "head." The four *sèmes* would then correspond to four physical (optical) characteristics of the visual signifier, that is, the visible "spot" which on the screen forms the photograph of this "head." In the same way, we recognize a "house," which could be seen in an image or next to a walkway in the countryside, thanks to certain perceptual traits which are separable from the entirety. The silhouette which we have before our eyes evokes an object constructed by man. It contains several walls, has a roof, a door, and so forth. These different features are also the *sèmes* of the word "house" in one of its senses (edifice).

## The Return of the Signifier

It is thus confirmed that the articulation between the taxonomies of vision and the visual part of the lexicon, in the bosom of a single culture, establishes itself at two levels simultaneously. The first is between the respective signifieds (object and *sémème*), insofar as one considers this the ordinary intercodal relationship, simple "translation," the terminal list of surface correspondences. The second is between the pertinent traits of the signifier (on the side of the object-code) and those of the signified (on the side of the metacode) when one envisages the cultural classification of objects as an active operation of the metacodal type in which the main point plays itself against units "smaller" than the whole object and "smaller" than the whole *sémème*, at the outcome of concrete nomination. One conceives of this articulation as the historical production of nomination, a production in which language, the universal commentator, comes to state the law and its partitions, even though in the final analysis it would itself be, like the visible world, entirely informed by social forces. In the following table, I represent the double relationship of language and vision. One ascertains that the two sides of the object-code (signifier and signified) articulate themselves toward the signified of the metacode, and toward it only. The signifier of the metacode, formed from phonetic sequences which designate the perceptual units, bears no direct relation to the object-code. It can only "speak" globally, and from the exterior, through the intermediary of its own signified, the metacodal signified.



## From Objects to Actions

Until now I have spoken only of "objects." But visually recognizable "actions" exist as well. The problem of nomination thus moves from the noun toward the verb, at least for Western societies and languages, where the noun and the verb, the object and the action, are clearly distinct. Except for that point, the principle of analysis remains the same. Thus, in a film in which the images are blurred and difficult to read, it is sufficient for our purposes that certain optical traits are clearly marked in order to perceive that someone has *thrown* something. In this example, it seems to me that the pertinent traits of the perceptible action, and of the lexeme "to throw" in the corresponding sense, are two in number (a minimal deduction but set in a potentially larger paradigm).

- 1 Material object which *distances itself* from the body of the person (the opposite of "to catch," "to reach," etc., in which the object approaches the person).
- 2 *Muscular action* on the part of the person (the opposite of "to let fall," "to let escape," "to let loose," etc., where the object distances itself but the person is passive).

Clearly the analysis should be pushed further, moving closer and closer to the larger group of verbs of movement, and to the larger organization of the visual world (or at least the principal gestural units). For example, the two traits which I have noted as the most immediately striking presuppose two others by an implied relationship: the "material object," or at least an inert one, here the projectile, and its opposition to an "animate being," a person or animal, or even another material object conceived and perceived as "active" (a catapult can also throw something).

## Noises... Sound Objects

The perspective which is proposed here is equally applicable to the world of recognizable noises and the corresponding sector of the lexicon. This aspect of the problem is particularly important in the case of sound film (which in our age is all cinema), television, radio broadcasting, and so on. Even so, it has been studied much less until now, because our culture grants a strong preference to the visual and does not pay attention to the audio sphere, except when the subject is the sound of language; of the two, the "noise" is often left behind.<sup>10</sup>

How is it explainable that in the soundtrack of a film set in the countryside, or in the noisy confusion of a forest where we are walking, we would be capable of recognizing and isolating a lapping sound (*clapotis*), even if we did not know its origin, and even if we identify as "lapping," from one occasion to another, noises which are very different? One must admit that the "lapping" exists as an autonomous sound object, with pertinent traits of its acoustic signifier corresponding to those of the linguistic signifier, from the *sèmes* to the *sémème* "lapping." Four

appear rather quickly, resulting from the "nearest" commutations:

- 1 The noise is relatively *weak* (as opposed to an uproar, howl, din, crash, etc.).
- 2 It is *discontinuous*, which a distant hum, a whistling, or a background noise is not.
- 3 It is acoustically "*double*," or, in any case, not simple, as each of its emissions can be decomposed into two successive sounds /- -/...../- -...../- -/. (In this respect, the first two phonemes of the French linguistic signifier *c-lapotis* can be considered onomatopoeic). The commutation shows that the other identifiable noises do not have this character and that each of their emissions is "simple," as in "detonation," or even "blow" or "shock" in their auditory sense. It is the opposition between *floc* and *tac*, or, to give some English examples, "plop" and "plip."<sup>11</sup>
- 4 This noise is experienced as being *liquid*, or as being provoked by a liquid; the opposite of "rubbing" or "scraping" in their auditory *sémème*, which presents the trait "solid," or even "sizzling" and "hissing," with the trait "gaseous."

These four traits, and all those of the same genre which I have forgotten, are common to both auditory perception and language. There would be no point whatever in asking whether they define the "lapping" (*clapotis*) as characteristic sound or as the French word *clapotis*, since the noise and the word exist only by virtue of each other. Our four traits constitute a level of articulation where the two things coincide, under the metacodal statute of language.

### Ideological Reduction of the Sound Dimension

There is a difference, however, between the visual and the auditory in our cultural definition. When I recognize a "lamp" and can name it, the identification is terminated. All that could be added would be on the order of adjectives or determiners. On the contrary, if I distinctly hear a "lapping" or a "whistling," and if I can say that, I only have the feeling of making a first identification, a marking as yet incomplete. This impression disappears when I recognize that it is the lapping of a river or the whistling of the wind in the trees. The recognition of a sound leads directly to the question "What makes the noise?" There is something of a paradox there, since the *sémèmes* of the initial identification ("whistling," "sizzling," "rubbing," etc.) correspond to actual sound profiles, while those of the final identification (the wind, the river), which are not at all auditory, articulate the source of the noise and not the noise itself.

Within language as the metacode of noises, the most perfect identification is obviously that which simultaneously designates the sound and its source ("rumbling of thunder"). But if one of these two indicators must be suppressed, it is curious to note that it can be the sound-object which suffers the least damage in overall recogni-

tion. If I perceive a rumble, without further precision, there exists some mystery and a sense of suspense (horror films do not miss playing on this); the identification is only roughly sketched. If I perceive "thunder" without paying the least attention to its acoustical characteristics, the identification is sufficient.

One might perhaps reply that the example is tendentious because thunder is an object which is nothing other than sound (one cannot see it; lightning is what one sees). But the situation stays the same with objects which do not exhibit themselves through their noise. If I allude to the "throbbing of a machine," my conversational partner may consider that he does not know exactly what I am talking about and may ask, "What machine?" I have nevertheless been precise in the clarification of the noise, but remained vague on that of its source. It will suffice that I reverse my axes of precision by saying, "It's a jet airplane noise," in order for everyone to then be of the opinion that I have explained myself clearly, and to feel satisfied. From the moment when the sound source is recognized (jet airplane), the taxonomies of noise themselves (throbbing, whistling, etc.) can only be supplied, at least for our age and in our latitudes, as supplementary precisions, not felt to be indispensable, *basically* in the nature of adjectives, even when they express themselves linguistically as nouns. At the level of discourse, one is no longer entirely within nomination, but already is moving a little way into description.

Ideologically, the sound source is an *object*, the sound itself a *character*. Like all characters, it is attached to the object. Simply because the identification of the latter suffices to evoke the noise, the inverse is not necessarily true. "To comprehend" a perceptual given is not to grasp it exhaustively in all its aspects, but to be capable of classifying it, of putting it in a pigeonhole,<sup>12</sup> to designate the object of which it is one occurrence. Noises are also classified much more according to the objects which produce them than according to their own properties.

But this situation is not at all natural: from a logical point of view, the "throbbing" is an object, an acoustical object, on the same level that the tulip is an optical object. Language takes this into account elsewhere—or at least the lexicon does, failing discourse—since a great number of recognizable noises, reduced nevertheless to the level of characters, still correspond to nouns. It is a sort of compromise, which does not prevent auditory traits from participating more feebly than others in the dominant principle of recognition of objects. Furthermore, when one wishes to name the same concept as the sound-object, it is necessary, as I have just done and as the supporters of *musique concrète* often do, to add to the word "object" the attributive adjective "sound," when no precision at all is required for what should logically be called "visual object." We consider it evident that a flag is an object, but we hesitate about the ullulation of owls: this is an infraobject, only a sound-object.

### "Sur un substantialisme sauvage"

Thus there is deeply implanted in our culture (and doubtless in others, although not necessarily all of them) a sort of wild "substantialism," which distinguishes fairly strictly the first qualities that determine the list of objects (substances) and the second qualities that correspond to as many of the attributes as are susceptible to being linked to these objects. It is a conception reflected throughout the entire tradition of Western philosophy, starting with the notions of Descartes and Spinoza, which recaptures the preceding phrase. It is equally clear that this "world-view" has something to do with subject-predicate structure, particularly strong in Indo-European languages.

One can think that for us the first qualities are on the order of the visual and the tactile—tactile because touch is traditionally the very criterion of materiality;<sup>13</sup> visual because the guide marks necessary to daily life and to techniques of production emphasize naming by eye more than by any other sense (it is only in language that the auditory order, as if to compensate, finds "rehabilitation"). The subject is too immense to be approached usefully here. It is even now possible, however, to begin to encircle certain qualities which seem to be "second": thus for noises, evoked a moment ago, or the olfactory qualities (a perfume is hardly an object), or even such subdivisions on the visual order as color.<sup>14</sup>

In a clothing store, if two articles are of an identical cut but distinguished by color, one considers that it is "the same pullover (or the same pair of pants) in two shades." Culture feels the permanence of the object, language affirms it; only the attributes vary. But if two articles are of the same color and a different cut, no one would say or think that the boutique offers "the same color in two garments" (incorrect formula, and not by accident, in which the color will be in the position of grammatical subject). Rather, one will announce that these "two garments," this scarf and this skirt, for example, "are of the same color." The articulation restores the color to its place, that of the predicate; these are two distinct objects which have one attribute in common.

### The "Off-Screen Sound" in Cinema

The division of first and second qualities plays a large role in one of the classic problems of film theory, that of "off-screen sound." In a film, a sound is considered off-screen (literally, outside the screen) when it is actually the sound source which is off-screen. So, one defines the "off-screen voice" as that of a person who does not appear visually on the screen. One forgets that the sound itself is never "off"; either it is audible or it really does not exist. When it exists, it cannot be situated inside the rectangle or outside it, since the property of sound is to diffuse more or less throughout the total environmental space. The sound is simultaneously "on" the screen, in front of it, behind it, around it, and in the whole theater.<sup>15</sup>

On the contrary, when one says that a visual element of a film is off-screen, it really is. One can reestablish it by inference from what is visible within the limits of the rectangle, but one does not see it. A well-known example would be that of "the bait"; one predicts the presence of a person where one only perceives, on one side of the screen, the hand or the shoulder; all the rest is really out of the field of view.

The matter is clear: the language of technicians and studios, without their realizing it, applies a conceptualization to sound which only makes sense for the image. One pretends to speak of sound, but one in fact thinks of the visual image of the sound source.

This confusion finds itself obviously favored by a characteristic of noise which is physical and not social. The spatial anchorage of sound "givens" is much more vague and blurred than that of visual "givens." The two sensory orders do not have the same relationship to space. Sound is much more constrained, even when it indicates a general direction (but rarely an entirely precise placement, as it is the contrary of the rule for the visible). One understands that film technicians have based their classification on the less elusive of the two elements. (It must nevertheless be remembered that the phylogenetic choice of an acoustical material, the sound of a voice, for the signifiers of human language, probably derives from the same reasons: phonic communication is not interrupted by obscurity, by the night; one can speak to someone who is behind oneself, or is hidden by an obstacle, or is in an unknown place, etc. The relative weakness of the relation to space procures here multiple advantages of which the human race would lose the benefits should it choose a visual language.)

But to come back to off-screen sound in film, the physical "givens" do not suffice to explain the persistent confusion between the sound-object itself and the visual image of its source; from the most literal definition, the concept of off-screen sound lies in this confusion. There is something else behind it which is cultural and which we have already encountered: namely, the concept of sound as an attribute, as nonobject, and the tendency to neglect its proper characteristics for the benefit of those of the corresponding "substance," the visible object emitting the sound.

## Conclusion

In this study I have wanted to show that the perceptual object is a constructed unit, *socially constructed*, and in one sense a linguistic unit. Here we are already far from the "adverse spectacle" of the subject and the object, of this *there is*, cosmological as much as existential (at any rate transcendental) within which phenomenology wished to establish our presence to objects, and the presence of objects to us. I am not so sure that this "distancing" is so great only on certain axes and does not carry along a complete rupture of the horizon. Obviously I spoke of *sèmes*, of pertinent optical traits, and so on; that is, of elements which have the property of not having one single existence and which are, on the contrary—on the contrary or precisely?—the conditions for the possibility of real life, the structures of production which shape it and which lose themselves in it, which find in it the place of their manifestation and their negation simultaneously: the objective determinations of subjective sentiment. To concentrate interest on this inconspicuous stratum is to stray from the path of phenomenology. But the obvious stratum—apart from the fact that it has its own reality, authorizing possible studies or already having led to benefit—is equally the only one which *arranges* from the outset those studies which its movement will then distance itself from.

I have tried my best to comprehend why perception proceeds through objects. But I felt from the first, and still feel keenly, that it proceeds (and the phenomenologists do not say anything different) in effect as follows: in order that I try to analyze the "objects" which are so striking to the native (and from the start, in order that I be able to feel them), it was necessary that I myself be the native and that I be struck by the same things as he was. One knows that every psychoanalytic enterprise begins through a "phenomenology," following the term of the analysts themselves. That is not true in this domain. Each time that one wants to explain something, it is most advisable to begin by experiencing it.

## Translation Notes

\* This essay was originally published as *Le perçu et le nommé*, in *Pour une esthétique sans entrave*; Mélanges Mikel Dufrenne (Hommage collectif), Paris: Editions 10/18, 1975, pp. 345-377. It was then reprinted in Metz's collected papers, *Essais Sémiotiques*, Paris: Klincksieck, 1977, pp. 129-163. The present version modifies the original footnotes to separate references cited from actual footnotes relating to the text.

† Diegesis (French, *diégèse*) is a term coined by the French writer Étienne Souriau to indicate the denotative material of film. The concept is discussed in Metz 1968 (Eng. transl. 1974:97-98).

‡ Micheline is an autorail with tires invented by the Michelin Tire Company and used for the Paris Métro.

## Notes

- 1 I'm thinking of course of the famous Sapir-Whorf hypothesis and also of isolated attempts such as Sommerfelt's (1938) on the language and culture of the Aranta tribe of Australia.
- 2 President day sociolinguistics, situated after generative transformational linguistics, rightly tries to exceed the purely lexical stage. It also would like to exceed the Chomskyan distinction between "competence" and "performance," which rejects as pure performance important social variations in the usage of a single national language. On the intersection of these two perspectives and the idea of constructing proper *grammars* (syntactic and/or phonological) as for example Black English (English as spoken by Black Americans) or that of other sociolinguistic groups, cf. the work of Labov and the variationist school.
- 3 Is a *sémème* each "sense" of a lexeme (Greimas 1966: 43-45) or of a *paralexeme* (1966:38)? The *paralexeme* of Greimas corresponds closely to the *synthème* of Martinet (1968). Greimas does not propose a special term to commonly designate the lexeme and the *paralexeme*; Martinet calls this the "*thème*." I follow Martinet here, because his term is particularly useful to me. The perceptual object can correspond equally to either a lexeme or a *paralexeme* (*synthème*), but only on the side of the signified and only in a single sense. Here, the Greimasian term *sémème* is the only one available.
- 4 Greimas (1968) speaks of figures and "natural signs." The context shows that what he means by "natural" is "perceptual." (It is a bit like when linguists speak of "natural languages" as opposed to formalized languages or metalanguages, without a thought that these languages are also really natural.) In my text I prefer to avoid the word "natural."
- 5 The same idea is found in Schaff (1965). It is that language is an "instrument" because it contributes to the *découpage* of perceptual units, but it is also (like perception itself) a product, a product of social life.
- 6 In Eco (1970:16)—a French translation of part of Eco 1968—"We select the fundamental aspects of the perceived following the *codes of recognition*: when we are at the zoo and we see a zebra far away, the elements that we recognize immediately (and that our memory retains) are the stripes and not the silhouette which vaguely resembles that of a donkey or mule. (. . .) But suppose there exists an African community where the only known quadrupeds are the zebra and the hyena, and where horses, mules, and donkeys are unknown. In order to recognize the zebra it will not be necessary to perceive the stripes (. . .) and in order to draw a zebra it will be more important to emphasize the form of the snout and the length of the legs, in order to distinguish the quadruped represented from the hyena (who also has stripes; the stripes thus do not constitute a factor of differentiation.)"
- 7 In Metz (1971:207-209) I distinguished two exactly similar cases by taking up and more precisely specifying the traditional comparison between the cinematographic image and the ideogram. I noted that in the former case it is the spectator himself who "makes" the schema; in the latter it is already made, or at least, in certain of its forms, notably the pictogram and morphogram.
- 8 It is direct when each formal unit of the signified corresponds to a formal unit of the signifier; without either one or the other having followed proper internal articulations (codes of the "symbolic" type following Hjelmslev). It is indirect in the contrary case ("linguistic" codes in the larger sense, formed by "signs" and not by symbols) when the level of the signifier and the level of the signified each have their "figures" (units smaller than the sign) which are not isomorphic; thus the internal organization of the signified is not transferred from that of the signifier. They are nevertheless dependent (from which I derive my expression "indirect correlate") because the form of the signifier and that of the signified continue to coincide on the level of the sign, even if this entails diverging later on the level of the figures. In this conception, the symbol is a sign without figures (or the sign a symbol without figures). Proper languages are the best example of a system of the linguistic type, with figures: there is no bi-univocal correspondence between the phonemes or the phonic traits (figures of the signifier of a sign) and the *sèmes*, figures of the signified of the same sign

(Hjelmslev 1953). The Hjelmslevian distinction between symbolic systems and linguistic systems is better known by the name "symbolic systems/semiotic systems" or "symbolic systems/languages" (which figures elsewhere in my work).

- 9 See Benveniste (1969:130-131). Language is the only semiotic system that can be universally "interpreted." The same idea figures in the total work of Hjelmslev; see his paper "Structural Analysis of Language," appended in Hjelmslev 1953. Different codes other than languages are "restrained languages"; languages are "non-restrained languages."
- 10 A widely held view insists that the privileged position of phonic languages leads in our culture to an underdevelopment of visual richness. And this is not mistaken. But this is even more true of the sonic richness of "noises," which are very directly in competition with language by virtue of the fact that they also have an auditory signifier.
- 11 Onomatopoeia, which takes exception to the "arbitrariness" of linguistic signification, represents the case where a direct link exists between the signifier of the metacode (language) and the set of the object-code (perceptual code). On cases of this sort where there appears a "motivation" for the linguistic signifier, see the important work of Pierre Guiraud (1961, 1962, 1967).
- 12 In the field of semiology this idea has been developed in a particularly clear and demonstrative fashion by Luis Prieto (1966, especially chapter 2, "Le mécanisme de l'indication," pp. 15-27). Every indication is an indication of a class. A class only has meaning in relationship to a complementary class (or classes) in the presupposed universe of discourse.
- 13 I have already led up to this remark by an entirely different route in my "On the impression of reality in the cinema" in Metz 1968 (translated 1974).
- 14 It is not without reason that noncolor film, i.e., black and white film, was possible (culturally as a result of demand) for many years and that in large measure it still is. Smell film does not correspond to any strong and generalized expectation. Sound and talking film, ordinary film today, is almost always more filled with speech than sound, so much so that the noises found therein are poor and stereotyped. In fact, the only cinematographic elements which interest everyone, and not only a few specialists, are image and speech.
- 15 This is related to another characteristic fact of cinema today. The visual givens are only reproduced there by condition of certain perceptual distortions (the absence of binocular factors of relief, the presence of a screened rectangle which marks, on the contrary, the absence of real vision, and so forth). The auditory givens are reproduced on the conditions that the sound recording has been properly done, and does not suffer a single phenomenal deficit in relation to the corresponding noise in the real world. Nothing, in principle, distinguishes a gunshot heard in a film from a gunshot heard in the streets. "Sounds do not contain the image" as film theoretician Bela Balazs said. Even so, the sounds of cinema diffuse within the space as do the sounds of life, or very nearly so. This difference in perceptual status between that which one calls "reproduction" when dealing with the visual, and that which one gives the same name, when dealing with the audible, is discussed in my "Problèmes actuels de théorie du cinéma," pp. 57-58 in Metz 1973; also see Metz 1971:209-210.

## References

- Benveniste, Emile  
1969 *Sémiologie de la langue*. *Semiotica* 1(1):1-12 and 1(2):127-135.
- Eco, Umberto  
1968 *La struttura assente*. Milan: Bompiani.  
1970 *Sémiologie des messages visuels*. *Communications* 15:11-51.
- Greimas, A. J.  
1966 *Sémantique structurale*. Paris: Larousse.  
1968 *Conditions d'une sémiotique du monde naturel*. *Langages* 10:3-35.
- Guiraud, Pierre  
1961 *La stylistique*. 3d ed. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.  
1962 *Tric, Trac, Troc, Truc. . . : Etude morpho-sémantique de la racine T.K.* *Bulletin de la Société de Linguistique de Paris* 57:103-125.  
1967 *Structures étymologiques du lexique français*. Paris: Larousse.
- Hjelmslev, L.  
1953 *Prolegomena to a Theory of Language*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Original Danish, 1943. French translation, cited in the text, 1968.; *Prologomènes a une théorie du langage*. Paris: Editions de Minuit.)
- Lévi-Strauss, Claude  
1962 *La pensée sauvage*. Paris: Plon. (English translation, 1966: *The Savage Mind*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.)
- Martinet, André  
1967 *Syntaxe et syntème*. *La Linguistique* 2:1-14.
- Metz, Christian  
1968 *Essais sur la signification au cinéma, Tome I*. Paris: Klincksieck. (English translation, 1974: *Film Language: A Semiotics of the Cinema*. New York: Oxford University Press.)  
1971 *Langage et cinéma*. Paris: Larousse. (English translation, 1974: *Language and Cinema*. The Hague: Mouton.)  
1973 *Essais sur la signification au cinéma, Tome II*. Paris: Klincksieck.
- Moles, Abraham  
1968 *Théorie informationnelle du schéma*. *Schémas et schématisation* 1(1):22-29.
- Prieto, Luis  
1966 *Messages et signaux*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Schaff, Adam  
1965 *Langage et réalité*. *Diogenes* 51:153-175.
- Sommerfelt, Alf  
1938 *La langue et la société: caractères sociaux d'une langue de type archaïque*. Oslo: Publications de L'Institutet for Sammenlignende Kulturforskning.



# Nikola Tesla Radiated a Blue Light

Dusan Makavejev

## Applied Optimism

1

Mobil's series of TV commercials on the theme "The Spirit of America Is the Spirit of Achievement" (excellent both in concept and realization) is an example of the Applied Optimism in the best tradition of Steichen's *Family of Man*.

2

I am suspicious toward the subjects of Optimism, Health, and Patriotism.

Happy birthday.

But this hag is two hundred years old, and still so lively.

Eternal youth.

It's good you squeezed out those boils. The clean face is important. Scars are less ugly than those red-greenish carbuncles.

Here's mud in your eye.

The Chinese are said to count years backward: you always have the number of years *remaining* to you, not the number of years you have *spent*. At birth, you are seventy-five; afterward your years diminish. After seventy-five you show clear profit.

But, anyhow, they have no intention of asking for anyone's permission.

---

*Dusan Makavejev is a Yugoslavian filmmaker. Among the films he has directed are WR—Mysteries of the Organism (1971) and Sweet Movie (1975).*

---

This paper was originally read at the 1976 International Conference "The United States in the World," September 27 to October 1, in Washington, D.C., at the Smithsonian Institution.

3

The story about the elephant in the china shop. Who cares about china anymore? It's pure Buster Keaton, a merry chaos.

Ask children: do they want small porcelain figurines forever or a five-minute ride on the elephant's back?

The elephant who wanted to stamp out a mosquito eventually came out as that mouse who wanted to fuck a cow.

4

The Principle of Socialist Realism: speak about Positive Hero, Reflect Reality (but recognizing the elements of Future in it).

Comparing most popular Russian and American films we shall easily ascertain that Hollywood is much better at understanding and realizing the Principles of Socialist Realism.

5

Popeye the Sailor influenced me positively, and, already in my fourth decade, I still inordinately love spinach.

Among the animals I like mice best. In every mouse hides the Spirit of Mickey Mouse.

## Ambivalent Memories

1

I was five years old. My uncle Steva took me to the movies. Mickey, Goofy, Horatio, and Clarabelle and Company formed an orchestra. They started playing and then a terrible wind, a storm, came. They flew in all directions, still playing. That was irresistible.

The audience giggled and I was choking with laughter. Then horror began. Something was leaking down my leg, wet and warm, a puddle was spreading. Luckily, it was noisy in the cinema and people around me didn't notice anything.

Out of enthusiasm I have wet myself. Oh, shame!

Uncle Steva took me out in a hurry.

2

My mother is seventy-two and she still likes telling how I was as curly as Shirley Temple—forty years ago.

## 3

Around my eighth year, after seeing *Robin Hood*, I believed I was in love with Olivia de Havilland.

In fact, I wanted to be like Errol Flynn. That is to say, I wanted to be like Robin Hood.

Then *Young Tom Edison* came, and I wanted to publish my own newspaper, i.e., I wanted to be like Mickey Rooney, i.e., like Tom Edison, i.e., like Andy Hardy.

## 4

A novel entitled *Chicago* was coming out in the form of Tuesday and Friday booklets. In it, a mad scientist had invented a matter called *crystalopyr*, which reflected sun-rays in such a way that, on one side, everything turned into ice, while everything burned on the other. A *crystalopyr* plane was in production; the destruction of the world was in preparation.

## 5

A year later, at 6 a.m. on April 6, 1941, German incendiary bombs made the prophecy of *Chicago* come true and burned 30 percent of Belgrade. Twenty thousand inhabitants of Belgrade died on that day, before breakfast, as Fodor's guide puts it. The town was turned into congeries of dolls' houses—houses without fronts disclosed intact apartments, dining rooms with chandeliers, dentists' offices.

## 6

German occupation began. My school was taken to see *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs*. Snow White and the dwarfs spoke German. According to German custom, the film was dubbed in their language. We were offended.

## 7

Easter of '44 was a beautiful, sunny day. Humming came from the sky, the squadrons of Liberators sparkled. People waved at them, happy with the near-end of the war. Bombs started to thunder and raise dust. A maternity clinic in our neighborhood was hit. Babies were found in the tree-tops. There were thousands of dead civilians, but everybody was still glad to see the Allied planes.

## 8

The liberation came, Tito's partisans, and the Red Army. Roosevelt died. New peoples' power proclaimed three-day national mourning, cinemas were closed, there was no music in restaurants, for three days flags fluttered at half-mast. I wondered: have they buried him in his wheelchair?

## 9

People were overjoyed with American food packages (we had not seen chocolate for four years). However, one item caused consternation and general mockery—pork in the apple sauce. If you are really interested in "the absence of the U.S. influence," here it is: my people will *never* taste such muck as pork in the apple sauce.

## 10

What is the magic of chewing gum?

## 11

For months on end we ate powdered eggs (there were barrels and barrels of them). Everybody called this food "Truman's balls" (in our language we have the same word for "balls" and "eggs").

## 12

Twenty years later, Belgrade youth weekly *Mladost* conducted polls trying to find out who were the heroes of the contemporary young. At the top of the list: Che Guevara and John F. Kennedy.

## 13

Late sixties. The policy of open frontiers. With a Yugoslav passport you can travel to over fifty countries—without a visa.

The foreign influences become more complex every day.

Young playboy and criminal Milan Milošević (one of the legion of adventurers who went into the world after running around American crews making films in Belgrade) was found dead in the bathroom of Mickey Rooney's Hollywood house.

In a nice casket his body reaches Belgrade airport, expenses paid by Alain Delon. It is met by dozens of hysterical teen-age girls.

Milošević's mother tells all about her son, in a weekly magazine series.

Among other things, she produces a morbid detail: a few months later ("around Christmas," says Mom), Delon sent to his friend's mother a plastic bag with Milan's intestines, taken out during the embalming.

14

I live in Belgrade, at the corner of Lenin Boulevard and John F. Kennedy Street.

My mother-in-law lives in Charlie Chaplin Street.

15

Late sixties. Godard uses the following metaphors: "Walt Disney and blood," "the children of Marx and Coca-Cola."

16

In my last film, *Sweet Movie*, lovers make love in sugar; it ends in murder. Blood mixes with sugar (during the shooting we called this scene "the jam session"). I had in mind a scene from Resnais' *Hiroshima, Mon Amour* with lovers plastered with sand; the effect was very sensual—and unpleasant. I strived to make it pleasant.

Has this scene also been fathered by a need to "surpass" (or interpret) the ambivalence of the image-concept "Disney-blood"?

## "Drang Nach Westen" and Dangers of Linear Thinking

1

"To catch up and overtake America"—Stalin. In early and innocent days of my school activism, we read in Stalin what a communist should be.

He should display, says Uncle Joe, the combination of Bolshevik persistence and American practicality.

2

America served as a model to both Russian futurists and Lenin.

3

"To catch up and overtake America" is a fatal slogan. We already know from the ancient Greeks that even a rabbit cannot overtake a turtle. I know that many of my American friends do not enjoy having to run so much. I guess they were told as children: "Run so that nobody can overtake us."

4

I like Instant Coffee and Instant Soup.

When Instant Death was introduced, in 1945, as applied in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, I caught myself, a thirteen-year-old boy, in a dilemma: I liked it very much, although I knew it wasn't nice that I liked it. Then everybody got Instant Excuse: Instant Death has brought Instant End of War.

Instant Beginning and Instant End.

5

The production of Absolute Happiness comes next. It is curious that this concept (the guided creation of generations of completely happy human beings) did not appear in Pavlov-oriented Soviet psychology, but at Harvard, with B. F. Skinner.

6

Where does it come from, this striving of America to make other nations happy—against their will?

7

The last three big wars were conducted by the USA in Asia: Japan, Korea, Vietnam. Did the first really bring the absolute victory? Did the second really secure status quo? Why does America—with so much pain and confusion—refuse to recognize traces of the American Revolution and the Declaration of Independence in the establishment of the national identities of Vietnam and Cuba?

8

For years humiliated and offended, heretics and dreamers, the hungry and those who "think differently" thronged to the West, to America. From the East Coast to the Rockies and beyond, there was always—more West. After World War II, this *Drang Nach Westen* has brought the Americans to the Far East.

9

We are scared by the discovery that the Far Westerners are identical with the Far Easterners and that they reject, "against their best interests," our concepts of time, history, nature, and civilization as well as our sado-masochistic-Christian concept of life, the best (and only) in the world.

10

Czech humorist Jaroslav Hašek has somewhere a group of people meeting every day in a beerhouse.

There, in the beerhouse, they found "The Party of the Moderate Progress within the Law."

The Americans could be considered members of the Party of Immoderate Progress outside Any Law.

## The Factory of Universal Dreams

1

Hollywood.

The national pride of Yugoslavs: Slavko Vorkapich, Karl Malden, Peter Bogdanovich.

2

Another contribution of our national genius to Hollywood: *Vampir*, the only Serbian word that has entered all the languages of the world.

Vampire (F, fr, G vampir, of Slav origin; akin to Serb *vampir* vampire, Russ *upyr*) 1: a bloodsucking ghost or reanimated body of a dead person believed to come from a grave and wander about by night sucking the blood of persons asleep and causing their death.

*Webster's Third New International Dictionary*

3

A real vampire: the biggest living WW II war criminal Andrija Artuković, the creator of the well-known extermination camp Jasenovac (Croatia, Yugoslavia), personally responsible for the execution of 500,000 Serbians, Jews, and Gypsies, lives, scot-free, in Los Angeles.

4

On the occasion of America's 200th birthday, David Robinson writes about the American Cinema as the Universal Dream.

5

In fact, the everyday life of America in its paradisaical aspects of Freedom and Affluence, in its infernal aspects of Freedom of Sin, Greed, and Lust, with its bursting of all dams preventing Orgy of Desires—represents the wide open playground of the Universal Dream. All practical operations (economic, social, cultural, and private) are performed in the oil of the Universal Dream, providing everything with damping and acceleration.

6

A fascinating situation: a TV commentator blows out his brains on camera. After this, I cannot watch TV news in America without hoping, in some dark corner of my soul, that maybe now this commentator I am seeing and hearing . . .

7

In America there is no shame of desires. Since a half century ago, Europe has scientifically ascertained the immorality of desires, but it still retains the repression of desires. Legitimacy of desires in America makes it possible to use them as fuel.

## Energy

1

Does America know certain secrets of mobilizing human energies which are unfathomable to the "rest of the world?"

Discontinuity?

2

A self-mocking Serbian story from World War I. At the time of the Saloniki front, a child is drowning in the harbor of Saloniki.

A crowd watches from the shore.

Suddenly, a heroic Serbian soldier is in the water; he saves the child and reaps the applause of the spectators.

Afterward, on the shore, someone overhears him swearing: "If I get my hands on the motherfucker who pushed me in!"

## 3

Has not the whole of America come into being by a sort of voluntary "Who-Pushed-Me-In" technique? Millions swam across the ocean and, once on the other shore, went on living as best as they could.

They were applauded from the ancient shore.

To bring oneself to the point of no return.

## 4

Starting from zero.

The national income of Bangladesh is 70 dollars a year per inhabitant; of Yugoslavia, 1,060; of the USA 7,020.

But still everybody behaves as if starting from zero. Although the American "zero" is—7,020.

## 5

The childhood dream of Nikola Tesla, in a deep province of the Austro-Hungarian Empire (today: Lika, Croatia, Yugoslavia) was to go to America and install a gigantic wheel at Niagara Falls which would produce unheard quantities of energy.

In 1884, Nikola Tesla (twenty-eight) comes out from the Immigration Office in Castle Garden, Manhattan, with four cents in his pocket. He works as an electrician, digs holes for two dollars a day, founds Tesla Electric Company, and creates the polyphase system of alternating current.

At the same time Edison and John Pierpont Morgan work steadfastly on the development of the direct current system. Edison's direct current has a maximum reach of one mile from the power station.

According to some stories, Edison and Morgan go around New York killing chickens with the alternating current in order to prove how dangerous it is. In 1888, with a million dollar check, George Westinghouse buys forty patents from Tesla—the complete system. Using the alternating current system, Tesla illuminates, on Westinghouse's behalf, the whole 1893 World Columbian Exposition in Chicago. Westinghouse obtains the contract to build the Niagara power station. In 1896, Buffalo is illuminated by the alternating current coming from Niagara, 22 miles away.

Soon the whole of America is covered with pylons—the cheap energy can be obtained, like water, out of the wall, in every house.

Tesla's ultimate dreams were of the wireless transmission of electric energy, a system of interplanetary communication, and radio contact with the cosmos. In 1899, in Colorado Springs, he lighted two hundred bulbs, without use of wires, from a distance of 25 miles. He also produced manmade lightning flashes.

It was a poor eighty-year-old man who, in the early forties, fed pigeons every day in front of New York's Plaza Hotel and led a lonely life with a female pigeon at the Waldorf Astoria.

Seventy years earlier, he was a young man who had visions and nightmares, who had attacks of nausea at the sight of a peach, went berserk at the sight of pearls, and became ecstatic when faced with even, smooth surfaces or sparkling crystals, who could not work with numbers not divisible by three.

He claimed that in the moments of heightened creativity he was radiating a blue light.

## 6

In 1968 *Life* magazine published a cover photo of an astronaut on the Moon. Gary Burnstein (Ph.D. in Psychology, a passionate researcher of Nikola Tesla and Wilhelm Reich) draws my attention to the blue halo around the astronaut in the atmosphereless moonscape.

The experts convinced themselves that this blue halo was caused by some fault in the negative.

## 7

As far back as 1934, Reich explained to Erik Erikson that all living creatures radiate a blue light. Erikson did not believe him. Reich invited Erikson—it was in Denmark, during the summer vacation—to observe with him couples making love on the beach, in darkness. He asserted that the blue radiation, which becomes more intense during the sexual act, can be observed by the naked eye. From then on, Erikson considered Reich mad.

Many others considered Reich mad at the time of his death in Lewisburg prison, Pennsylvania, in 1956.

## 8

In the early fifties Reich was trying to draw public attention to poisonous masses of static air, hovering over cities like black clouds. A few years after his death, people started talking about the struggle against the pollution of the atmosphere and about black masses of static air.

## 9

It is quite superfluous to speak about freedom in America in old European terms of freedom as democracy.

In regard to the freedom of information, "free circulation of men and ideas," legal security of the individual, America is a few shades freer than the most progressive European democracies. This freedom, however, represents just a tiny part of American freedom, if we speak of Freedom understood as the radiation and chain reaction of Human Energy.

The old Europe expends enormous energies defending itself from the "abuses of freedom": public disorder, "chaos," "bad taste," "immorality," "nonsense," "stupidity."

The public and private life of the people in the European democracies is cut by series of meshes of invisible censorship.

In order to comprehend the energy of American creativity one cannot just stand and stare dumbfounded at the Brooklyn Bridge, as did Mayakovsky, who wrote an ode to the Brooklyn Bridge as a marvel of modern technology. America is the Brooklyn Bridge *plus* the London Bridge transferred and installed in the Arizona desert.

## 10

The freedom of physical and spiritual risk should be measured on the frontiers where that risk turns into failure, self-destruction, madness, nonsense, game. These are the Open Frontiers of America.

## 11

If the elegance and functionality of the Hoover Dam are America's response to the perfection of Mona Lisa's smile, let us talk then about the end of Western Civilization.

The monstrous beauty and uselessness of San Simeon represent the moment in which the stupidity of shameless richness explodes into a new formula, according to which it is allowed to turn everything upside down in order to start from scratch.

The secret of the fascinating and "inhuman" qualities of Manhattan, which are stubbornly conserved and regenerated, consists in the chaos which *stubbornly refuses to be ordered* and thereby keeps open all roads toward the permanent creation of new beginnings.

The freedom of risk is paid in blood and enjoyment of life, which is nothing but a healthy nonsense.

## 12

Perhaps we are dealing with machinery that has a built-in acceleration mechanism, while someone forgot to install a brake?

That remains to be seen.

## 13

During the past two hundred years greedy pioneer America brought over from black Africa a multimillion Gulag of unpaid slaves. Now, at the center of the beginning of America's new identity, there is a living reservoir of beautiful and dangerous black energy which will bring new beginnings. Or new ends.

Like so many other centers, radiating still invisible blue rays.

## Discovery of Man on the Moon

## 1

It was the night between August 20 and 21, 1969, on the open Atlantic.

Bojana and I were on our way back from America to Europe, on the Italian ocean liner *Rafaele*.

Two days earlier, apart from the sea, there was nothing around us. I was waiting for the Azores to appear, on account of Mayakovsky.

The Azores duly appeared and stately sailed past us, on their way to America.

"And life will pass by, like the Azores did."

It seemed as if we were sailing through the lines of the Great Vladimir. He did not sail out of this life like a tame, lazy island; he blew out his brain with a revolver bullet. But that's another story.

That evening in the ship's cinema we saw Toshiro Mifune and Lee Marvin in Boorman's *Hell in the Pacific*. It was strange, it was a good prelude to what was going to happen to us that night.

In the middle of the ocean—a ship, a cinema in the ship, in the cinema—an ocean, but not this ocean, the *other* ocean, at the Antipodes.

Nobody slept that night.

All the ship's drawing rooms were full of people, in semidarkness and silence. Everybody was watching Armstrong and Aldrin, the first steps of the men on the Moon.

It all came in poetically smudged video-images, like Norman MacLaren's *Pas de deux*. Our compatriots, the earthlings, did not walk, it was more like hopping and floating in the no-atmosphere of the Moon, it was more like that time when we were fish than when we ventured on our first steps, being one year old.

It was very solemn, that TV watching, and it went on for hours. This was not watching but *being present*, accompanied by the awareness that at the same moment hundreds of millions of other men, maybe even a billion of them, were doing the same thing.

In that act of mass baptism, we were becoming, all together, compatriots-earthlings, soaked in highly primitive emotion, the feeling that we, the men of Earth, have set out on a new journey. Sitting by a TV set on that night meant the approval of that risk, acceptance of all new worries and perils, readiness to be surprised: we are off, come what may.

State and national frontiers were ajar, slackened. All together, we were following the Earth Team, not the American Team. (The term "Race with Russians" retains a sense only in the dumb linear logic of people still believing that the earth is flat, still seeing the world from "here" to "there." What "race" is possible, once you start *in all directions*?)

Later, the coming out of the astronauts from the spacecraft and walking-floating in Space showed even more obviously—with that so prominent umbilical cord—that we were faced with a *dramatization of the act of birth*, that the whole fantastic-science-fiction theater performance was, in fact, a *celebration of human birth*.

In that way the *discovery of man* was performed on the Moon.

## 2

The ship was sailing silently over the ocean, there were people in the drawing rooms in the ship, TV sets in the drawing rooms, and the Moon on TV screens. I was coming into these drawing rooms full of silent people, and I was going out to watch the Moon from the deck.

Jules Verne:

We have descended twenty thousand leagues under the sea and we have stepped on the moon. We went to the center of the Earth and we have entered the human brain.

## 3

Far, far away, Jules Verne floated in the dark sky, disguised as the Moon, and very lonely.

# Presidentes Municipales

Richard Tichich

---

There have been many portrait series which display a consistent expression of the photographer, for example, the work of Julia Margaret Cameron, Richard Avedon, Karsh, and Judy Dater. In this type of series the subjects play a secondary role to the creative style and presentation of the photographer.

The history of photography also reveals an endless rendering of the human subject. Once techniques were sufficiently sophisticated, nine out of ten daguerreotypes featured a person. Sometime these photographs were only faint shadows with no special "artistic" treatment, but their surfaces captured the spirit of the subject. For the most part, our ancestors have become nameless faces photographed by anonymous photographers. But when we consider the portrait in a series, the hand of the artist is eventually revealed. As individual images, E. J. Bellocq's photographs of the ladies of New Orleans allow us to enter gently into the elegant houses and from a safe distance become detached voyeurs. We are free to look as long as we wish, we can freely take whatever we want, but we can never ask any questions. The photographs are silent and all the information must come out of our own experience, our own prejudices. As with a Rorschach test, we eventually see only ourselves reflected in the surface of the photograph. With an extended series such as Bellocq's we can begin to know as much about the artist as we do about his subjects.

It was my intention to conceptually construct the most neutral position possible when photographing the *Presidentes*. The idea of doing a portrait series of the mayors of Mexican cities came to me suddenly. There was no reflection on historical precedent or the feasibility of the project. Through the concerned efforts of Tita Valencia, Cultural Coordinator of the University of Mexico in San Antonio, Texas, I was awarded a grant to travel and to photograph in Mexico. I made no official application or proposal. Up until the last minute it was uncertain whether the money would actually be made available. Ms. Valencia's motivation was very idealistic: the artist, through his or her art, can function as a cultural ambassador if given the freedom to interact with another culture. I was free to photograph anything I wished. Her original concept was to have a photographer work with children because it was the closing of the International Year of the Child. I didn't like that idea. I'm not sure why, but I was certain that to work comfortably in a strange country and to produce a substantial series of photographs in a short time, my concept would have to be as narrow as possible. It would have to be a project that defined its own boundaries. I was totally unfamiliar with the political structure of the country and curious about the people who ran the cities of Mexico. In the face of limited knowledge of the history of Mexico a certain myth seemed to

surround the political leaders. When I first began telling people about the scope of the project, they all seemed interested in seeing the final outcome. Tita Valencia was both apprehensive and pessimistic about the idea. Given that I didn't speak Spanish and had no experience with the culture, she felt that it was an impossible project.

In retrospect I had two previous experiences that seem to have led me to this idea. The first is that, living in Galveston, Texas, with a population of 70,000, I had known the last three mayors of the city. Not one was a professional politician. The office is part-time and non-paying. Most cities seem to try to elect someone from the community who has exhibited a willingness to work unselfishly for the good of the community and who will approach problems more with common sense than with exceptional learning. I am not afraid to work with anyone who approaches problem solving with these credentials. I suspected that the elected officials of the Mexican cities would have the same qualities as any other leaders.

The second experience is my knowledge of the career of Paul Gittings, the Houston, Texas, photographer. Years ago I happened to read his autobiography, and in it he detailed his business and artistic philosophy. In particular, to establish his portrait business Gittings would arrange to photograph the political leaders of a city such as Houston, then exhibit the work in the most traveled of galleries, the local airport. The politicians loved the idea, and there was usually ample time for the traveler to view the work. Gittings's aesthetic approach gives the portraits a uniform look and says much more about the talents of the photographer than about the individuals being photographed. With this merchandising concept, other members of the community were willing to pay to join the elite club and be photographed according to the same aesthetic.

When I worked with the Mexican politicians, my approach was to neutralize as much as possible my own aesthetic input. In my case there was no need to sell the portraits or rely on merchandising the aesthetic treatment. My goal was merely to present the individual in his or her own surroundings. I did not want to idealize the major politicians with dramatic lighting and artificial settings, then use a totally different aesthetic when dealing with a small farming community. I wanted to standardize each sitting to allow for all the photographs to be compared with one another on an equal basis. When possible, I wanted to photograph the individual in his or her normal place of power—usually sitting at a desk. Unless the spirit of Benito Juarez objected, I utilized the same approach for each photograph. I felt free to violate the two primary rules of executive portraiture: first, never to shoot a businessman at his desk, and second, never to center the individual in the frame. With this obvious method of standardization I felt that the surrounding environment would provide as much information as would the individuals. I went to Mexico to fill in the blanks. On entering an office, I could readily see that the *Presidente* at his desk and what immediately surrounded it did all the

---

*Richard Tichich is Director of The Galveston Arts Center on the Strand, Galveston, Texas, and an independent documentary photographer.*



work. My role was that of a technician working to complete the one concept rather than make each photograph a single creative experience.

If anything, the major pictorial thrust of the series came through the selection of the cities to be photographed. Logistically, my approach was to select the largest cities in Mexico and to address a cover letter to the Presidente asking permission to take his portrait. Half of the Presidentes responded, and the typical reply was that they would be more than willing to participate and merely to contact them to arrange the sitting when I arrived. With the series in mind I felt it was extremely important to photograph the Presidente of Mexico City. The series would be incomplete if I obtained a small farming community without a photograph of the mayor of the largest city in the country to provide the necessary contrast. When crossing the border I still had not heard from Mexico City. I had 10 weeks to complete the shooting. Knowing that I wanted to photograph the largest cities in the country, I designed an itinerary by filling in the lines between these cities.

The first town I visited was Sabines Hidalgo, and any apprehensions I had about the feasibility of the project were immediately dispelled. The Presidente owned an auto parts store, and the sheriff was a mechanic who spoke English and had worked in Detroit. In the photograph, the Presidente is actually on the phone with the mayor of Cienega De Flores arranging the second portrait for that day. On my first day in Mexico I finished two portraits and knew that the series would be possible. The Mexican politicians seemed as interested in participating in the project as the people in the States in viewing the series. The response "*Si como no*" became a familiar one to my request. Throughout the trip it didn't seem as if I were traveling a lot. The next city was only about 5 miles away, and I had the option to stop whenever I wished; in every city there was a leader.

The title "mayor" does not conveniently translate into Spanish. My concept of the mayor of a city is the primary elected official. In the larger towns this title is Presidente Municipal; in the smaller, the elected official is the Agente Municipal, Sheriff, or Comisario. It is sometimes difficult to locate an inexpensive hotel, but to find the mayor of the city the search can start with asking the first person you meet. Everyone knows the Presidente and where his office is. There were times when, after I asked a policeman the location of the mayor's office, he would provide a police escort. In a smaller town an assistant rode off on a bicycle and brought the mayor back from lunch. I welcomed their cooperation, and they were honored to be included in the series.

The mayor of Mexico City presented the biggest challenge. As it turned out, arranging the portrait session was as easy as walking into his office and, through a series of intermediaries, merely asking for permission. I always carried a letter of introduction from Tita Valencia describing the scope of the project. Unless someone spoke English the mayors were unable to ask very detailed questions. In Mexico City the shooting session lasted not more

than 5 minutes. I was given an appointed time and asked to return. In the Presidente's office I arranged the camera and adjusted the lights. The presidente came into the room, greeted everyone, sat down and smiled as if he were addressing a classroom, and the photograph was taken. When work was completed, he immediately left. This brief encounter was a contrast to the session with the Presidente of Ciudad Victoria. Here the Presidente arranged a 2-hour lunch and a personal tour of the city. Most of the Presidentes did not seem to realize that my sole mission in Mexico was to take their portrait. They were all proud of their cities and were quick to point out the more traditional photographic opportunities.

There certainly is a difference in scope between community problems in Mexico City and in the small farming community I later used. The officials of one large city were skeptical of the feasibility of arranging the portraits. The mayor's executive secretary seemed unwilling to disrupt the mayor's schedule and said that the smaller cities would certainly cooperate because their Presidentes had nothing to do, but it would not be possible to arrange portrait sessions with the officials of the larger cities. His advice came quite late in the project, and, in fact, I had not been turned down by any city. Once I mentioned that I had already completed the Presidente of Mexico City, he seemed to adjust his ideas, and within 5 minutes I was lighting the mayor's office.

Each photograph has its own narrative, each Presidente ruled with his or her own sense of command. None seemed out of place. Their executive presence made my meetings with them comfortable experiences. I was surprised at their willingness to allocate time for a project they knew little about. To me they seemed to exhibit a natural sensitivity to working with someone who has an idea.

Mexican culture is revealed in many ways. Experiencing the Indian ruins, open markets, and cathedrals builds a fascinating mystique. The mixture of European and Indian cultures paints the country as brightly as the murals which cover the Presidentes' offices. The opportunity to gain access to those offices allowed me and, I hope, the viewer of the series to get a new view of the country.

I am now working on the second half of the portrait series and plan to photograph the mayors of Texas. The combined effort will demonstrate the visual differences between the cultures. I am interested in exploring the differences between the large and small towns in Texas as well as drawing cultural comparisons between the two countries.

The photographs of the Presidentes can tell their own stories, and within the series each can contrast itself with the others. I don't believe I should add anything to the photographs now. It's too late to add silver back to the image or to ask the Presidente to adjust his position. I think it best to remove this narrative from the photographs and allow the viewer to look inside the image for all the information. This text is merely a footnote to the photographs.

**Figure 1**

Cesar Santos Santos  
 Presidente Municipal  
 Monterrey, N.L.  
 Population: 2,000,000  
 Occupation: Lawyer

**Figure 2**

Jose Castillo Pombo  
 Presidente Municipal  
 Cuernavaca, Moralez  
 Population: 256,000  
 Occupation: Lawyer





**Figure 3**  
Jesus Martinez Alvarez  
Presidente Municipal  
Oaxaca de Juarez, Oax  
Population: 100,000  
Occupation: Lawyer

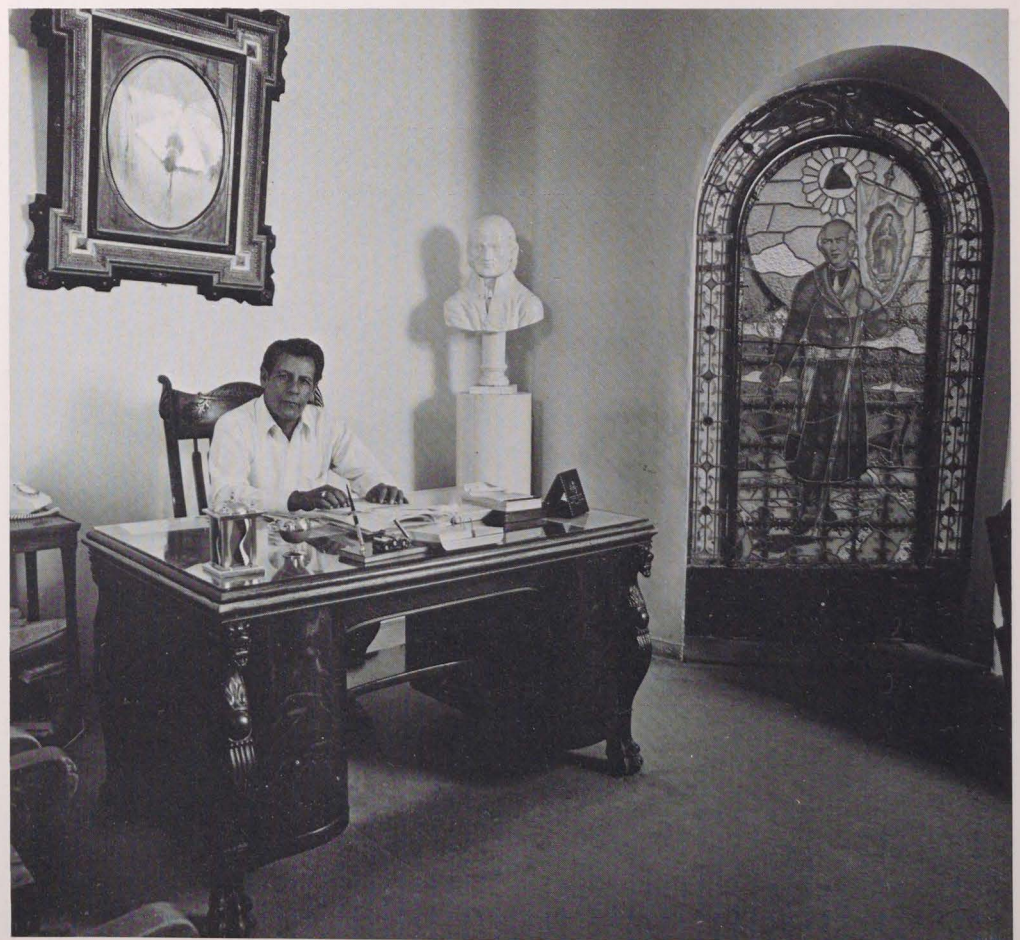


**Figure 4**  
Magdalena Vasquez  
de Huicochea  
Presidenta Municipal  
Chilpancingo, Gro.  
Population: 100,000  
Occupation: Elementary  
school teacher

**Figure 5**  
 Homero Ibarra Montemayor  
 Presidente Municipal  
 Sabinas Hidalgo, N.L.  
 Population: 32,000  
 Occupation: Owns an auto  
 parts store



**Figure 6**  
 Jose Garcia Cruz  
 Presidente Municipal  
 Dolores Hidalgo, Gro.  
 Population: 25,000  
 Occupation:  
 Juiz Del Jigatio Civil





**Figure 7**  
Ecliserio Rosas Martinez  
Presidente Municipal  
Villa De Tehuitzingo,  
Puebla  
Population: 20,000  
Occupation: Farmer

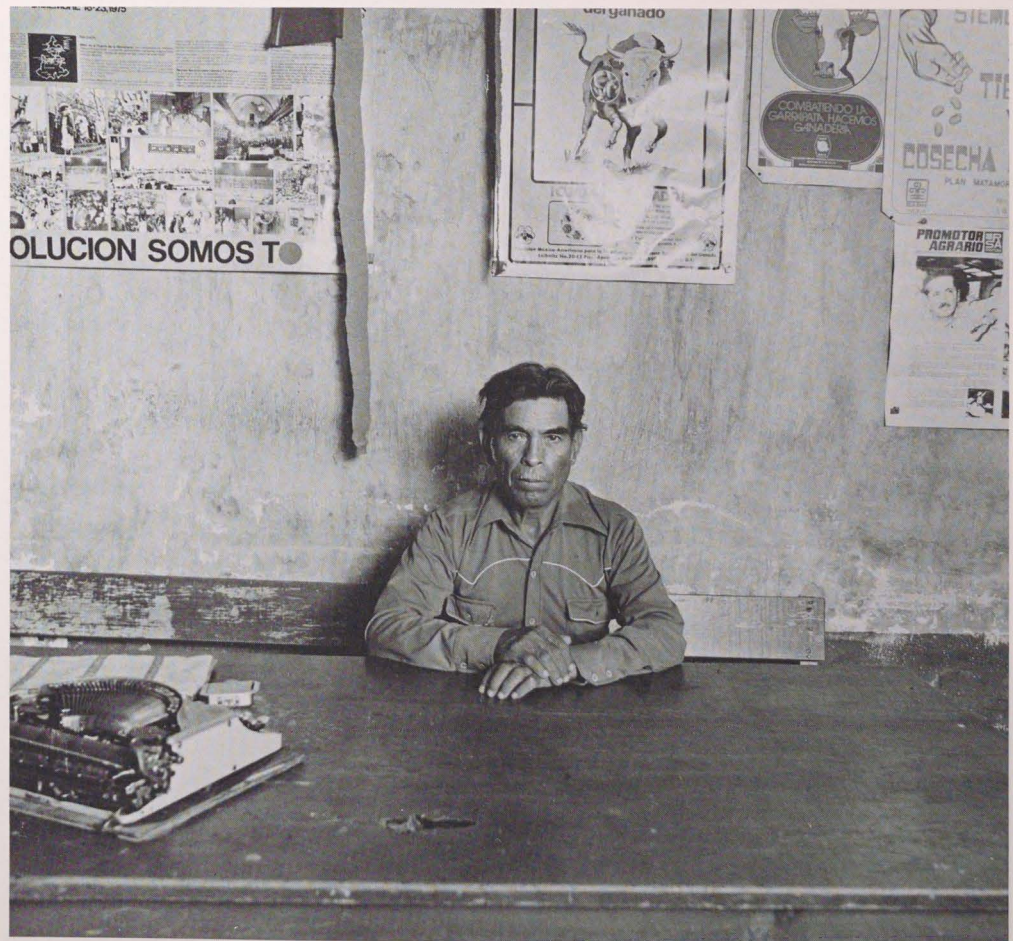


**Figure 8**  
Humberto Arendono Herrea  
Presidente Municipal  
Nochixtpan, Oaxaca  
Population: 10,000  
Occupation: Pharmacist

**Figure 9**  
 Panfilo Sanchez Moralez  
 Presidente Municipal  
 Chila De Las Flores, Puebla  
 Population: 9,000  
 Occupation: Shoe salesman



**Figure 10**  
 Salomon Arroya Vasquez  
 Comisario  
 Xuchiapa, Puebla  
 Population: 2,800  
 Occupation: Farmer





**Figure 11**  
Mariano Chavez Garcia  
Sheriff  
Plan De Los Amates, Gro.  
Population: 1,300  
Occupation: Brick mason



**Figure 12**  
Rogelio Aleman Garcia  
Comisario  
Lomas Chapultepec, Gro.  
Population: 300  
Occupation: Farmer

# Media Events: The Sense of Occasion<sup>1</sup>

Elihu Katz

Critics of broadcasting argue that it has robbed society of the sense of occasion. People used to dress up to go out, the critics say, and now they stay in to watch television only half-dressed and half-awake. The arts that brought people together—whether popular or highbrow—were associated with time and place and community, marking the passing of seasons, the boundaries between sacred and secular, and the structure of society. Now television provides culture nonstop, with nothing more than station breaks and commercials to frame an experience in time, and only the living room and the family to frame it spatially and socially. The dim awareness that everybody else is viewing the same programs surely does something to hold society together, but the sense of occasion—especially that of communal occasion—has been dulled. This is not a judgment on the quality of television programs, it must be emphasized, but on their ubiquity.

Like all generalizations about the atomizing, secularizing, and tranquilizing effects of broadcasting, this one too deserves more careful formulation. It is unlikely, first of all, that the media alone are to blame for the decline of the folk arts; all the pressures of modernization have had a share.<sup>2</sup> Moreover, the professional performing arts seem to be flourishing; some people do go out.<sup>3</sup> And as for occasions, the media are often at their best on holidays, such as Independence Day or Christmas, when high standards of performance are combined with a sense of festivity and a nostalgia for tradition.<sup>4</sup>

There is another sense, too, in which the media break the sun-never-sets pattern which they themselves have created. This history of broadcasting is punctuated with a series of programs which are so memorable that they captivated the attention of a nation or of the world. People dressed up to see them, and invited their friends to join them in listening or viewing. The tenth anniversary of the moon landing brings this *genre* of broadcasting to mind. Generically, the broadcasts are known as media events—though that is an ambiguous and overworked term. I call them the “high holidays” of the media. Each of them, for a brief moment, restored the sense of occasion to a society or to the world, and some of them may have had lasting effects.

---

*Elihu Katz is Professor and Director of the Communications Institute at the Hebrew University, Jerusalem, and Professor at the Annenberg School of Communications at the University of Southern California.*

I should like to recall these events, and to discuss them in this paper. They include the moon landings; the visit of Sadat to Jerusalem; the weekend of mourning following the assassination of Kennedy; the coronation of Elizabeth II; the presidential debates of 1960 and 1976; and certain sporting events.<sup>5</sup> Each nation will have its own list, although the number of such events is remarkably small. Occasionally, we get a glimpse of the potential of such an event which is denied us: the visit of Pope John Paul II to Poland, for example, or the Moscow Olympics.

## Media Events Defined

There are a number of defining characteristics that are associated with these events. First of all, they are broadcast *live*. They are before our eyes as they are happening, and thus the unique attribute of broadcasting, as distinct from those of the other media, is brought into full play. The cameras and the microphones are on the spot and transport us simultaneously to where the event is taking place.

Second, we are talking about events which are typically *not* initiated by the media. Somebody else has organized them—the Space Agency, or a political leader, or the Olympic committee. To be sure, they are organized with media coverage *in mind*, but unlike Boorstin's pseudo-event,<sup>6</sup> it is likely that these events would take place even if the cameras were not there. There may be certain exceptions to this: the Eurovision contest, for example, in which all Europe joins in the judging of popular songs. Such events might not happen at all if the media do not organize them, but they are borderline cases. The paradigmatic media event is one organized outside the media but which may well be transformed in the process of transmission.

The element of high drama or high ritual is essential: the process must be emotion-laden or symbol-laden, and the outcome be rife with consequence. Most fireside chats, like most parades or football games or political conventions, do not qualify in this sense. Although they may be broadcast live and may be organized by major political or social agencies, they lack the electrifying element which attracts a mass audience to something especially moving. Indeed, the essential characteristic of media events may be the communal insistence that one abandon one's other roles and commitments in favor of viewing TV. “Stop everything and join us in the making of history” is the compelling theme of these events. Viewing is obligatory; nothing is more important.

That means, of course, that the events must be pre-planned. They are neither spontaneous nor unexpected. Part of the drama, of course, may be that the outcome is unknown, but the event itself is expected and well advertised. Typically, the media do the advertising, just as the 1984 Olympics in Los Angeles (and, until the boycott, the Moscow Olympics of 1980) are already being advertised. Sadat came to Jerusalem on very short notice, but there



was enough time to electrify the world with the news of his coming. His decision to come was news; his arrival was a media event. Kennedy's assassination was news; his funeral was a media event.

These events are framed in time and space. They do not, for example, include the Vietnam War, whatever one thinks of the role of the media in bringing its horror into the living rooms of the world. They do not include the films of the Khomeini revolution.<sup>7</sup> They do not include the broadcasting of Parliament, except on those very rare occasions when the fate of the nation is being debated. The Watergate Hearings, in which a president was faced with impeachment proceedings, or the un-American Activities Committee of Senator Joseph McCarthy, or the trial of Adolph Eichman may qualify. The event must be focused enough to sustain the attention of the audience—which can sometimes be held for days in a row—and circumscribed enough to permit a small number of television cameras to encompass it.

Finally, one must note the centrality of personality. Each event has a hero—an individual, two individuals, or a team. The Salt II talks, even if they had been offered to television, would have been accepted very reluctantly, for they dealt in abstractions rather than personalities. This is not to deny television's ability to dramatize and personalize even abstract issues, when called upon to do so.

These, then, appear to be the necessary conditions: (1) live transmission, (2) of a preplanned event, (3) framed in time and space, (4) featuring a heroic personality or group, (5) having high dramatic or ritual significance, and (6) the force of a social norm which makes viewing mandatory. These conditions may not be sufficient to ensure the success of the event in sustaining the attention of a mass audience or in accomplishing its political or ritual purpose. But they are basic ingredients.

## High Holidays

Events, of course, are central to individuals, families, and communities: birthdays, anniversaries, holidays. They are central, too, to the profession of journalism. Indeed, the daily newspaper or the evening newscast is a collation of essentially discrete events or happenings, and it is by no means certain—as we shall note below—that this is the best way to report what is going on in the world. It is like waiting for a hurricane to report the weather, or waiting for Mother's Day to decide how one feels about mother.

Western journalism differs from Eastern journalism in its emphasis on negative events, on things that go wrong. If the opening of a factory is news in Eastern Europe, it is the closing of a factory that is news in the West. Free-world journalism is about conflict: nation against nation, man against man, man against nature. A news event, typically, is the story of some conflict. The conflict may be institutionalized, as in parliaments or sports, or it may be spontaneous, as in a terrorist attack or an earthquake. Such stories, more than any other, define the news.

Media events, however, appear to differ. Rather than reporting conflict, they appear to celebrate the *resolution* or *overcoming* of conflict, or if they deal with conflict, it is conflict of the most institutionalized sort. Consider, for example, the moon landings or Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, or—even if we only had a glimpse of the real thing—the visit of John Paul II to Poland. All these celebrate the attempt to overcome conflict. Similarly, the mourning after Kennedy's death was a period of reuniting of the nation and reduction of tension. Even the Olympics, the presidential debates, or events such as the Eurovision song contest are in the nature of a gathering together of rivals to watch a ritual conflict, rather than a story of bitter hostility.

Thus, media events appear to differ from news events in that they are more concerned with the bringing together of rivals, that is, with the process of reconciliation. Moreover, if one analyzes the rhetoric of media events one will find, I believe, a *reverence* which is wholly atypical of everyday journalism. In his daily rounds, the reporter, typically, is cynical: he distances himself from the event. The presenter of a media event, however, often takes a *priestly* role, acting as a master of ceremonies. He whispers as Mr. Sadat takes his place on the rostrum of the Knesset, or pronounces respectfully "the Egyptian national anthem" as the music begins. And then he is silent. There is no chatter or commentary while the ceremony is taking place. The narrator or commentator considers himself—and is often considered by participants—a member of the wedding, a celebrant.

Moreover, there are often no commercials. Even *Holocaust* was screened with commercials. But not during the speeches of Sadat and Begin in Jerusalem, and not for the whole of the weekend of mourning after John Kennedy's assassination.

It is in this sense, too, that it is useful to think of these media events as "high holidays." They have a sacred air, a reverential character which differs both from the everyday world of public affairs and from the minor holidays of everyday conflict or everyday merriment. It is as if they are trying to tell us something about the nobility of man and the unity of society.

## Typology of Media Events

It is clear, of course, that there are different kinds of events grouped together here, and it is worth trying to sort them out. Three distinct forms seem discernible.

The most noble type is what might be called the *heroic mission*. It includes the astronauts, Sadat, John Paul II, perhaps Nixon's visit to China. It is the story of a hero defying natural law—entering the enemy's camp unarmed, flying beyond the atmosphere of the earth—on a mission of exploration or reconciliation in the name of humanity. Of course, history is full of such exploits. What is new is our ability to follow the *process* of these heroic deeds, step by step, before anyone can know what the outcome will be.

A second type of media event is the *occasion of state*. But it is only under particular circumstances that such occasions will be treated as media events. When the occasion marks the beginning or end of an era, such as the funeral of Churchill, or when it opens a well of uncertainty, as in the funeral of Kennedy and the anxiety over the succession, the nation or the world will participate, transfixed, in the ceremony. Similarly, when the Israel-Egypt peace treaty was signed at the White House, there was a sense of a new beginning, and indeed many observers likened it to a wedding. Michael Arlen has likened all such events to parades, even including such secular and minor events as the Hollywood Academy Awards.

The third type of event is the more familiar *contest*, but only when the confrontation has important symbolic meaning. Thus, the Kennedy-Nixon or Ford-Carter debates, or the World Cup, or the Eurovision song contest are events of this sort. Traditional rivalries are enacted before audiences of hundreds of millions, but these rivalries are subject to shared and enforceable rules, and the sense of what there is in common typically outweighs the partisanship.

## Dramatic Elements

Classifying media events in this way reveals the dramatic elements which inhere in them. There appear to be three such elements. First of all, there is the question of "programmedness": how much do we know in advance about the choreography of the event. The moon landing, in this sense, was highly programmed; the timetable of the Sadat visit was much less clear.

But even where we know exactly what is supposed to happen, there is a question of whether things will work out as planned. Thus the risk that the program might abort is a second element of drama: Will they make it to the moon? Will moonmen attack them? Will they infect the earth's atmosphere? Will they return safely? And similarly: Is Sadat really on the plane or is it a Trojan horse?

Will he leave Israel alive? Will there be a coup in Egypt before his return?

Even where we know the program, and the chances of aborting are small, there is a mystery in the actions of great men, even at their funerals, which enthrall us. Will somebody arise to attack the Queen on her coronation? Will the Pope be stricken by a heart attack? Is the body still in the coffin?<sup>8</sup>

## The Live Documentary: Dilemmas of Telling the Story

Media events are live, including state funerals, and face the problem of how to tell a story while it is happening. The director must choose among various pictures, the narrator must decide what actions to remark upon, the commentators and instant-analysts must provide a context. The media must face up to a paradox which might be called "the live documentary."

Several major problems face the producers of such programs, and each of them is implicit in what has been said in these pages so far.

First of all, there is the problem of the choice of the event itself. Journalism, as was noted, deals in events but it is occupationally blind to the fact that historians do not. History, in recent times, has abandoned events as inadequate explanations. Thus, the impulse of the journalist is to see history in Sadat's visit to Jerusalem, while the impulse of the historian is to look to the plight of the Egyptian economy or to the hopelessness of another war with Israel, and so on. Historians would not assign the onset of World War I to the assassination of Archduke Ferdinand in Sarajevo. Sophisticated journalists, surely, are aware of this dilemma, and it must influence them, aware or not, in the narration of the media event. Is it merely ritual or really critical? Of course, ritual and the emotional response of an expectant world is more than enough justification for a media event. But how often should one use the word "historic?"

A second problem of the producer of media events is to cope with the tension between the journalist and priestly roles. The occasion, ostensibly, requires priestliness; there is something of an unwritten pact between the organizers of the event and media producers. The media are there to "celebrate" the event. But what if something goes wrong? Or, to take a more complicated example, what if there is something dissonant going on offstage which a journalist might be expected to cover?

An example of this dilemma could be seen in the coverage of the signing of the peace treaty between Israel and Egypt. Not far from the White House, there was a meeting of people protesting the signing of the treaty. The loudspeakers from the rally could be heard clearly as background against the voices of the participants and the broadcasters. The journalist role obviously called for an interruption of the ceremony and the dispatching of a

camera to the demonstration; the priestly role, however, implied a commitment to the integrity of the ceremony. *The Washington Post* suggests that two of the American networks indeed interrupted the ceremony to cover the demonstration while one of them did not. This difficult choice, incidentally, confronted the Western sportscasters present at the Moscow Olympics as well: should they keep their cameras fixed on the scheduled events, or report unprogrammed observations, even political ones, as well? It is obvious, from this discussion, why totalitarian countries are so wary of media events except for those over which they have complete control. It is no coincidence that, even if John Paul II was shown live in Poland, we saw so little of the crowds who cheered him.

One can also be used to influence the outcome of the event: this, of course, is the aim of the participants. NASA could justify the cost of its space program by showing man's first step on the moon live; Sadat wanted to mobilize American public opinion. Sometimes it is more cunning than that, as when journalists thought they were misbriefed on the progress of President Carter's visit to Jerusalem in order to bring pressure on Israel, or at least, to enhance the drama of Carter's ultimate success.

Being used, of course, is a two-way street. The media have much to gain from the magic of their own presentation of far-away events. Legitimacy, power, glory devolve to the media in the performance of their role, and sometimes—not always—this credit outweighs the income foregone from the commercial sponsorship of the programs that have been canceled.<sup>9</sup> All the world is there to see the close association of the stars of the fourth estate with heroics and with majesty.

But the most difficult problem of all is what story to tell: how can one tell a story without knowing how it is going to progress and how it is going to end? Part of the anxiety over this problem is reflected in the search for criteria of what is to be judged as success and what to consider failure: the search for such criteria is evident in the days prior to the Sadat visit or in the days before any important presidential primary. But more interesting is the fact that one *cannot* tell a story without a "hypothesis" or a "model" to guide the story in the telling. The narrators need not necessarily have an explicit model in mind, but there is good reason to believe that they—and their listeners and viewers—must have recourse to such models. Academic analysis of journalistic coverage of the death of John XXIII, for example, reveals the latent conflict between the Pope and the angel of death, in one version, and between the doctors and death in another.<sup>10</sup> If our typology of the subgenres of media events is correct, it is reasonable to suppose that the narrator draws on the heroic mission, the state occasion (or parade), and the contest in formulating his script and in placing his cameras. But beyond journalism, there are deeper sources for the telling of such stories. There is a fountain of folktales and sacred texts which narrators share with their audiences. The story of *Mission: Impossible*, which underlies the report-

ing of the moon landing of the astronauts and the meeting of Sadat and Begin, exists not only in the iconography of television, and not only in science fiction, but in mythology and perhaps in scripture. Such puzzles are attracting increasing attention in the scholarly community.

## Effects of the Media

The problems just recounted reflect the effect of media events on the media and anticipate the kinds of effects which the media may have on the events themselves and on the vast audiences which attend them. Some research has been done on certain media events, and more research—including our own—is now in progress. For the moment, most of what there is to say is speculative.

As for the events themselves, it is evident, first of all, that they are shaped in part by the media. In totalitarian societies, perhaps, it may be possible to keep the camera focused squarely on the dias, without zooming in, or searching for reaction shots, or showing the behavior of the audience. The technology of the media is such, however, that this is probably impossible to control absolutely, and this is so, *a fortiori*, in free societies. Media treatment of the event begins long before the official starting time, and while focusing attention and excitement on what is about to happen, also provides a context in terms of which the event will be presented and explained. The media edit the event even as it is being transmitted, and however reverent, show dimensions of the event which were unanticipated by the organizers and concealed from persons present. As the Langs established in their early study of MacArthur's return to the United States, the television viewer saw a story which built slowly to the climax of an emotional welcome at City Hall, while the onlooker at the street corner saw only a motorcade flashing by.<sup>11</sup> Similarly, the millions of Americans watching Sadat's arrival in Jerusalem had seen and read days of preparatory messages, and just before the touchdown heard a commentator explain parallels in the careers of the two men and speculate about their "chemistry." One could see Sadat, from closeup, reacting to the playing of the Egyptian national anthem on Israeli soil, and be instructed in the symbolism of an El Al stairway being locked to the door of an airplane of the Arab Republic of Egypt.

It is equally well known that the presence of cameras makes a difference. This is as evident in the decorum of parliaments or of national political conventions as it was in the orchestration of angry enthusiasm from pro-Khomeini demonstrators in the streets of Tehran.

The live broadcast of an event shapes the event in the making and in the telling, and arouses emotion. This much is certain. But what difference does *that* make?

First of all, as has been argued from the outset, it creates a sense of occasion. People sense not only themselves but each other, and the unity of society, nation,

world. They identify with heroes, and celebrate them and their achievements.

Thus, the media event provides a focus for the expression of emotion. It provided a focus for grief, as Schramm shows in his study of the weekend of mourning after Kennedy's assassination. It provided a focus for euphoria, as in the Sadat-Begin talks; or for the expression of wonder, as in the moon landing; or of loyalty, as in a contest. The emotionality of the media event is probably its central effect.

But there are also cognitive effects. Sadat's statements changed Israel's image of Egypt's intentions. While they did not succeed in changing attitudes toward the idea of a Palestinian state, there was a dramatic shift in the perception of Egypt. Sadat's image in the United States improved even more dramatically than in Israel.<sup>12</sup>

The channeling of aroused emotions and changed opinions may well have political effects. There is reason to believe, for example, that the mobilization of public support liberated Sadat and Begin—at least for a time—from the constraints of their own bureaucracies and political parties; they were freer men. They may even have sensed that their constituencies had suddenly grown now that they were actors on the stage of the world.

Such speculation suggests that the broadcasting of events may make the events themselves not only different but more important. Perhaps historians will take more notice of the realm of the symbolic when the symbolic and the real become so interlaced. But there are dangers as well. The media transmit failure as well as success. They note error immediately, as when Gerald Ford was pinned to his mistaken statement about relations among countries in the Eastern bloc. They may exacerbate conflict, if the priestly role is abandoned to commentary and instant analysis. Abba Eban suggests that the danger of "open diplomacy" is that each side sees only what it is losing and may despair of the bargain before it is made.<sup>14</sup> There is the danger that public opinion may become so inflamed that leadership may lose control, as was feared, apparently, when Willy Brandt visited East Berlin and when John Paul II visited Poland.

There is the danger that the media—cooperating with the principal actors—may so dramatize an event as to increase its likelihood of failure. Consider Carter's much publicized retirement to Camp David to discover remedies for the American economy where the promise implicit therein is that he will succeed in doing so. Consider the pressure on the Camp David negotiations on the Middle East, however secret, with the media waiting in the wings for the negotiators to emerge.

But most of all consider the danger of blurring political and ceremonial processes. Walter Benjamin (1978) wrote that communism is the making of aesthetics into politics while fascism is the making of politics into aesthetics. With all the positive functions of media events, examples of media being impressed into the service of aestheticizing politics are still fresh in our minds. Common sense is sometimes more important than even the sense of occasion.

## Notes

- 1 This paper grows out of a project generously supported by the John and Mary R. Markle Foundation. It was read at the Second World Encounter on Communication, in Acapulco, July 1979. I wish to thank Pierre Motyl and Daniel Dayan, my two closest associates on the "Media Events" project, for contributing to the ideas that went into the paper.
- 2 This point is discussed, and relevant writing reviewed, in Thelma McCormack (1969).
- 3 Audiences for the arts are discussed in Baumol and Bowen (1966) and in Dimaggio and Useem (1978).
- 4 The theme of nostalgia is treated by Fred Davis (1979). Also see Faris (1963).
- 5 Especially K. Lang and G. Lang (1968); Wilbur Schramm (1965); James Halloran et al. (1970); Michael Real (1977); Kraus (1962); Briggs (1979). See also Michael Arlen (1979).
- 6 This is the sense of Daniel Boorstin (1972).
- 7 A perceptive account of the communications strategies associated with the rise of Khomeini is Tehranian (1979).
- 8 This was rumored after Lincoln's funeral. See Lewis (1929).
- 9 The internal controversy over whether to cancel scheduled (and commercial) programs in favor of a critical congressional hearing is discussed by Friendly (1967).
- 10 This is the account of Jules Gritti (1966).
- 11 See the early paper, "The Unique Perspective of Television," expanded by Kurt and Gladys Lang (1968).
- 12 Findings from the Continuing Survey of the Israel Institute of Applied Social Research and the Communications Institute of the Hebrew University.
- 13 Thus, near the close of Sadat's grand day in Jerusalem and during a break in the private discussions of Sadat and Begin, Walter Cronkite asked the two men how they proposed to solve the problem of Palestinian representation in the autonomy talks, and Barbara Walters asked about the status of Jerusalem. These provocative questions—which were circumvented in the public events—were posed to show that reality was fraught with unsolved difficulty. That journalists focus on conflict, even on such ceremonial situations, was remarked by Professor Hilde Himmelweit in commenting on an early version of some of the ideas in this paper.
- 14 In a public lecture at the Institute of Advanced Study, Princeton. See Eban (1978).

## References

- Arlen, Michael  
1979 The Big Parade. *The New Yorker*, April 30, 1979:122-124
- Baumol, W. J., and W. G. Bowen  
1966 *Performing Arts: The Economic Dilemma*. New York: Twentieth Century Fund.
- Benjamin, Walter  
1978 *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. In *Mass Media and Society*. James Curran, Michael Gurevitch and Janet Woolcott, eds. Beverly Hills: Sage.

- 
- Boorstin, Daniel  
1972 *The Image: A Guide to Pseudo Events in America*. New York: Atheneum.
  - Briggs, Asa  
1979 *The History of Broadcasting in the United Kingdom, Vol. 4, Television's Coronation*. New York: Oxford University Press.
  - Davis, Fred  
1979 *Yearning for Yesterday: The Sociology of Nostalgia*. New York: Free Press.
  - Dimaggio, Paul, and Michael Useem  
1978 *Social Class and Arts Consumption. Theory and Society 5*:
  - Eban, Abba  
1978 *The New Diplomacy*. Public Lecture at Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton University. November 14, 1978.
  - Faris, J. C.  
1968 "Occasions" and "Non-Occasions." *In Rules and Meanings*. Mary Douglas, ed. Pp. 45-59. Harmondsworth; Penguin.
  - Friendly, Fred  
1967 *Due to Circumstances beyond Our Control*. New York: Random House.
  - Gritti, Jules  
1966 *Les derniers jours d'un grand homme: Jean XXIII*. *Communications 5*:94-100.
  - Halloran, J. D., Philip Elliott, and Graham Murdock  
1970 *Demonstrations and Communication*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
  - Kraus, Sidney  
1962 *The Great Debates*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
  - Lang, Kurt, and Gladys E. Lang  
1968 *Politics and Television*. Chicago: Quadrangle Books.
  - Lewis, Lloyd  
1929 *Myths after Lincoln*. New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company.
  - McCormack, Thelma  
1969 *Folk Culture and the Mass Media*. *European Journal of Sociology 10*:220-237.
  - Schramm, Wilbur  
1965 *Communication in Crisis. In The Kennedy Assassination and the American Public*. Bradley Greenberg and Edwin B. Parker, eds. Pp. 1-25. Stanford: Stanford University Press.
  - Tehranian, Majid  
1979 *Iran: Communication, Alienation, Revolution*. *Intermedia 7*:6-12.

## Reviews and Discussion

**Paul Bouissac.** *Circus and Culture: A Semiotic Approach.* Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1976.

**Reviewed by Jean Alter**  
University of Pennsylvania

Is circus a form of communication? Does it offer a message on top of entertainment? Is it a language? Does it use one or several semiotic codes which are decoded by the audience? Is it possible to insert the circus, as a system of signs, in the larger network of signs which define our culture? Paul Bouissac answers all these questions with a resounding YES, then expands his answer in an extraordinary collection of essays, which despite some disparity, manage to add up to an integrated whole. In fact, they are arranged like individual circus acts in the circus program: each deals with a different area—acrobats, “comedy horse,” jugglers and magicians, lions and tigers, wild horses, clowns—but all have a common message, to wit: circus must be approached semiotically. And just as circus acts form a harmonious and stable pattern, so the various approaches used by Bouissac under the umbrella of semiotics complement each other quite convincingly.

The entire book must then be judged on two levels. Does it tell us something interesting and/or new about the circus? And does it expand our appreciation of semiotics as a tool for the analysis of cultural phenomena which, like the circus, stress a public performance? There is little doubt about the first question. Bouissac's essays have been hailed as the first significant breakthrough in what used to be only a descriptive and historical/anecdotal account of circuses, and this general admiration is well deserved. Bouissac had the experience of running a circus himself, as many others had; he has been trained in linguistics, anthropology, and structuralism, as have many others; but the combination is indeed unique. The average semiotician, when he leaves the safe academic fields with which he is familiar, must deal with secondhand material and, however brilliant his presentation, always risks being countered on factual grounds. In Bouissac's case, theory and praxis go together. As a result, no one, after reading his book, will see circus with the same eyes as before. Of course, if one liked the “magic” and the “wonder” of the big top, the enlightenment provided by Bouissac will result in a feeling of loss. But the passing of the world of make-believe is more than compensated for by an initiation to semiotic processes underpinning the illusions. An adult can now return to the circus in a spirit of eager exploration: to check on Bouissac, and perhaps to add to his findings.

Since circus is a form of communication, Bouissac's preferred model is linguistic. In any circus act, and in complete programs, he detects the operation of the

“double articulation,” i.e., the use of a finite number of signs in a way that generates an infinite number of meanings. In that sense, circus is (or has) a language with multimedia signs of a visual, auditive, and even olfactory nature. Separately, they have no fixed meaning, but their various combinations produce specific messages. For example, the same acrobatic feat performed by an artist dressed in a “brightly colored leotard” will classify him as a superman and evoke “anxiety and admiration,” ultimately referring to “survival through biological superiority,” whereas performed by an artist “dressed as a tramp,” it will provoke “laughter” and refer to “survival through chance” (p. 19). Furthermore, like the Russian folktales studied by Propp, circus acts and programs have a grammar: a stable succession of stages—from the identification of the performer, through a series of tests, to public acknowledgment of his triumph—a pattern which may be (purposely) disturbed but eventually goes back to its expected progression. Within this pattern, however, performers (and/or circus owners/managers) present individual *speech acts* which, says Bouissac, are never the same except by rare intentionality (p. 23). They address a message to the audience, and the fact that it is appreciated, and hence understood, “presupposes that the receiver shares with the sender a knowledge of a system of rules” (p. 14), i.e., a general circus *code*, made up of various *subcodes* corresponding to types of circus signs: linguistic, behavioral, musical, technical, along with those involving costumes, lighting, accessories, and so on.

While this general model raises a theoretical question (see below), its application to concrete types of acts yields unquestionably seminal results, though not always of equal interest or equal faithfulness to the model. Thus the analysis of acrobatic acts applies mainly to cybernetic concepts leading to a kinematic representation of transformations. Bouissac follows Ashby on stable equilibrium, instability, and disturbance, and ends with formulas accounting for ways in which an acrobat creates and corrects/controls a disturbance in his state of equilibrium: a technical notation of a rather obvious slow-motion description of the act. At this point semiotics intervene to qualify the technical behaviors as *signifiers* which (with other surrounding signifiers) relate to *signified* aptitudes for survival. Hence, as mentioned above, the real acrobat refers to biological superiority and the clown to biological inferiority. All this seems correct, but hardly new: we always knew that we laughed at clowns because they appeared inferior (and often flat on the ground) and admired acrobats because they appeared superior (way up there). No need for a semiotic approach here.

The essay on the performing horse is more revealing and controversial. Bouissac says the act contains two separate communications, each with its own code: one between the trainer and the horse, the other between the two performers and the audience. One may ask: does animal training, based on the principle of a "conditioned reflex" (p. 56), qualify as communication, and does the stimulus, with its one-to-one automatic response, qualify as a sign? Or even as a "signal"? Can one speak of communication without some semiotic intentionality and/or consciousness on both sides? If I have conditioned the horse to nod when my hand moves slightly toward its ear, do I view my gesture as a *sign* which the horse understands because we share a semiotic *code*, or as a triggering step in a mechanical sequence comparable to turning the key to start a car? A well-trained horse has no choice but to give the expected response, but interhuman communication always entails a degree of uncertainty as to a correct understanding and, *a fortiori*, the resulting response. Of course, one may argue that this uncertainty (this choice) only means that we have not learned our codes well enough, that, in a perfect society, all communication would be conditioned. Perhaps. I suspect that the study of communication, and its very notion, would then disappear. Bouissac's description of the conditioning which goes into the horse act is fascinating, but really belongs neither with communication nor with cultural semiotics (though perhaps with natural semiotics, which study relations between, say, volcano smoke and eruption, or thermometer reading and fever). On the other hand, if that conditioning were to be assimilated to the conditioning of an acrobat or a juggler, and the horse viewed as a prop over which the trainer has control, Bouissac's analysis of the act as communication between the performer and the audience would still retain all its startling pertinence: we could still receive the message that man's superiority over animals can be reversed, especially when the horse appears to be more intelligent than the trainer; and we could still laugh at the latter while admiring his skill.

Not all acts however refer to biological differences. Jugglers and magicians, according to Bouissac, subvert the Western belief in the manual production of goods, since prestidigitation evokes a production without any real work, and juggling represents work without any real production. This is why, Bouissac says, magicians produce items related to economic activity (weaving, gardening, animal breeding: handkerchiefs, flowers, rabbits) and jugglers juggle useless objects or objects associated with the leisure class (cigar boxes, bowling pins, billiard balls). In turn, the "cat act" (lions, tigers) is compared to a text where the "heroes" are modified by names, costumes, behavior patterns, and the "villains" by their species, size, props. The text is narratively segmented by ritual bows of the tamer, and articulated by a poetic structure, which, in its "realistic" style, works with metonymy—i.e., danger by contiguity (as when a lion is

forced to jump through an ignited hoop)—and reaches "poetry" by the means of metaphors—i.e., anthropomorphic similes (as when a lioness kisses the tamer). In still another essay, treatment of animals in zoos and circuses is differentiated as referring respectively to a mythical and ritual attitude; by stressing the ritual uniqueness through repetition, circus is said to restore the continuity of life. The wild-horses act, through the iconization of animals, expresses on the contrary various semantic tensions between social and antisocial behavior, freedom and servitude, order and transgression . . . and so on. The arguments vary, but all point to a deep connection between the message of the act and the contextual culture.

The vitality and success of the circus, according to Bouissac, do not lie in any "passive enjoyment" but in these culturally determined and shared messages. This conclusion takes us back to the theoretical question raised by Bouissac's model. Indeed, most of his demonstrations are quite convincing, but rely almost exclusively on what I shall call "secondary" circus signs (costumes, music, gestures, lights, props), which accompany the "primary" sign (technical behavior). Clowns are an exception to this rule, but then Bouissac himself views the clowning act as quite exceptional. In most other cases, the message is conveyed by the secondary signs. When a dog pushes a baby carriage, *he* is indeed humanized and serves to "restore a biological continuity denied by the contextual culture" (p. 121), perhaps evoking laughter. But the "primary" interest of the trick lies in the technical behavior: a type of walk that dogs normally cannot perform (the humanlike erect position is only serendipitous). The question is: what about the "primary" sign, if indeed it is a sign? Is the technical behavior a form of communication? Does it convey a message? Or does it satisfy only a single need, being consumed in the process? Let us compare the enjoyment of a circus act with the enjoyment of a gourmet meal served in a restaurant reputed for its cuisine. Now, like the circus, gourmet meals also have a "double articulation" at work in individual types of dishes and the total meal: they too follow a traditional sequence (appetizers, fish, meat, etc.) and bring variations to each type of dish (there are no two identical Dover soles). Furthermore, they also have secondary messages aimed at the cultural context (from ethnic values up to patriotic allusions and down to low comedy, as with the "cas-soulet"). And then there are the right and wrong wines, with all their literature. In that sense, gourmet meals may and should be viewed as a form of communication to be studied semiotically (we are applying for a grant). But, in the primary sense, the gourmet meal remains an experience for the mouth, the eye, and the nose, appreciated for its own sake and not for its messages. More specifically, it is appreciated for its "quality," which means a culinary performance whereby (skill/art overcoming difficulty) the meal offers a positive difference from the normal meal. Normality and appreciation of the difference are cultur-

ally determined, but the desire for the performance, and its appreciation, appear to be universal. In fact, aren't the same desire and appreciation at work when we pay to applaud an acrobat, a juggler, or a lion tamer, who (art/skill overcoming difficulty) performs acts beyond our normal powers? In semiotic terms, any such performance, and all of them, may still be considered a sign, but autotelic, almost totally collapsed on itself, drawing attention to its signifier—i.e., what we see, hear, or taste. The signified only specifies that the particular signifier is indeed a performance—i.e., positively different in degree from normality. And the referent is that performance—i.e., the sign, i.e., mainly the signifier. Any other referential messages will come from the outside and through secondary signs. But then, isn't the primary sign at the center of circus? By means of costumes, varied messages can be grafted on the acrobatic act, which starts with the performance; without the performance, there would be no circus, only theater or pantomime. And again: does one communicate a performance?

The questions raised by the circus prompt interest in other types of public "shows" which value performances and hence draw attention to the signifier. One could attempt to order them within that perspective. In theater, for example, despite some stress on the performance—quality of acting, beauty of a face or figure, harmony or extravaganza of sets—the referential function of secondary signs dominates to the point that they are generally viewed as primary, and priority is given to the text. A one-person act, on the other hand, although it may use referential material, is mainly appreciated for the performance—not for the content of jokes but for the manner of their telling. The circus operates like a many-people show: it stresses the performance but also conveys messages. Bouissac's book shows that these are subtle and concerted, and powerfully grounded in our culture. I am not sure, however, whether they really account for the success of the circus, or whether they play second fiddle to the sheer enjoyment of the performance.

---

**Michael Greenhalgh and Vincent Megaw, eds.** *Art in Society: Studies in Style, Culture, and Aesthetics*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1978, xiii + 350 pp. (cloth).

**Reviewed by Marie Jeanne (Monni) Adams**  
Harvard University

---

As befits a publication on art this is a handsome book, with an attractive print layout, sprinkled with photographs, drawings, and graphs, firmly bound, and appropriately heavy but compact in the hand. How it weighs in as a contribution to the subject cannot be stated as a simple sum of its parts, for a few brilliant sections outweigh the whole.

The title sweeps across a wide intellectual horizon, but in fact the twenty-two essays stay neatly within the bounds of art studied by anthropologists; that is, they concentrate on small-scale societies, living, dead, or dying. The contributions stem from a symposium on art and society, sponsored by the editors, held at Leicester University in early 1975, with the addition of three papers, all but one drawn from British backgrounds.

Few anthropologists focus their primary effort on visual art in the same way they might on ritual or oral tradition, and fewer art historians concentrate on the art of exotic peoples. The result is that ethnoart is a bit of everybody's business, and the inevitable resulting miscellany shows up clearly in this kind of book, which lacks a specific theme or regional focus and includes a philosopher, art historians, archaeologists, social anthropologists, museum ethnographers, and practicing artists who are teachers or collectors.

The resulting range of viewpoints and topics may give this book, as the cover claims, a wide appeal, but their juxtaposition and the ensuing seesawing quality can induce vertigo even in a tolerant reader. The extremes in levels of expression and research caliber that characterize this compendium are illustrated by the first two selections. Philosopher of aesthetics Richard Wollheim offers a worthy if obscurely abstract admonition that gleams with fashionable terms as he dismisses the taxonomic or distinctive feature approach in favor of the "generative," for the proper analysis of art works. This is followed by the trivial statements of Michael Cardew, the potter who served as a craft development teacher in Nigeria, to the effect that preliterate art is comparable to the art of children and that "others" do not have our habit of conceptual thinking. The entire first section, with nine essays on appreciation and aesthetics—none longer than five pages—resembles a slightly awry Hungarian cake with several dark tasty layers interspersed with light, airy ones. The remaining longer articles are loosely grouped under two headings: Methodology and Stylistic Analysis (six pieces) and Some Ethnographic Samples



(seven articles). It will be more revealing of the book's qualities and generally useful to the reader to review the contents in relation to the specific topics currently in favor by those who study art in anthropology (see Silver 1979).

Four essays in this book stand out for their insights into another culture and for a disciplined method and message that can inspire and guide future studies. The first three, by Vastokas, Kaeppler, and McLeod, can be grouped as the search for cognitive order. Scholars of European art assume that an art object is ordered and that a conceptual schema lies at the genesis of a work of art; they proceed to discuss fine points of that order, such as the precise relationship of twelve apostles on a painted ceiling, or the invisible diagonal organizing a Michelangelo scene, or the horizontal composition of an impressionist landscape. In ethnographic art, however, compositional devices are not readily grasped by our viewers, so that, beginning with Boas in the early twentieth century, ethnographers have accepted the burden of *demonstrating* the presence of structure or composition. The further step of linking these compositional orders to organizing principles in other fields of social activity was taken but slowly in the mid-twentieth century, the major efforts having been made by Panofsky and Lévi-Strauss.

As early as 1970, Fernandez (1977), in an analysis of the Fang of Gabon, compared the structure of an African village layout and the popular game board and figural sculpture of the Fang with the conceptions villagers held of the zones of their surroundings and the shape of their past. My own field work in Indonesia yielded such a study (1973), in which I found a structural homology between the tripartite compositional layout in East Sumba men's textiles, the structure of the village and the imagined cosmos, and the concepts regarding relationships among marriage and trading groups. So, for Kaeppler or Vastokas to find corresponding forms in artistic efforts and in social order or cultural dynamics is not new. However, their studies are exemplary.

Vastokas concentrates on demonstrating the special character and the primacy of tripartite and quadripartite divisions in Northwest Coast architecture, admirably indicating her evidence in objects and ritual action and demonstrating at each step the theoretical influences on her own thinking. (However, I would qualify her enthusiasm for Arnheim's visual thinking.) In conclusion, she reduces this complex analysis to a single theme: a tension or ambiguous movement in the works of art that in her view expresses latent cognitive-cultural tensions characterizing the economy, social organization, and religion. This sounds too much like "totalism," the earlier tendency to sum up a style and a civilization in one phrase. The interpretive stress on tensions, stemming from the work of Lévi-Strauss and Victor Turner, is a healthy reaction to many earlier studies that found harmony and stability the quintessence of art-and-society. In most art and society there is an interplay of stability and tension; we need to get beyond this level of generality.

The lasting value of this essay lies in the sophisticated analysis of certain features of Northwest Coast art style.

Using "ethnoscience structuralism" and an elegant compression of style, Kaeppler focuses on a specific structure in vocal music which is given explicit formulation by Pacific Tongans as melody, drone, and decoration. She finds similarly structured sequences in work patterns and designs of bark cloth, in social domains of ranking, political relationships, and, exhibited on a grand scale, in major communal ritual. She also makes the interesting proposal that these forms yield an aesthetic experience because at some level the people comprehend the underlying structure. Because of the clarity and freshness of insight cutting across various domains of activity and because of my own interest in work patterns (1971, 1977), I find this essay exceptionally stimulating and an excellent model for studies elsewhere.

The third essay differs in its investigatory focus. Instead of accounting for what is presented to the eye, McLeod, Keeper of the Department of Ethnography at the London Museum of Man, in an interesting turnabout offers an explanation—that is, a principle—that accounts for the *absence* of certain motifs, mainly domestic creatures, in Asante figurative goldweights earlier used as units to weigh gold dust in exchange transactions on the former Gold Coast, West Africa. He points to the significant dichotomy between village and bush that is basic to Asante ritual, proverbs, and myths, and then suggests that domestic animals are representative of the category "village," and as such they are kept out of the money system because money functions to blur or equalize categories. This is an excellent example of how anthropological theories deriving from Lévi-Strauss, Leach, and Douglas about cognitive orders can clarify problems in ethnoart.

The fourth essay I have singled out, Wilkinson's "Carving a Social Message," deals with visual art forms as signs in a social system, perhaps the most familiar approach to art in society by anthropologists. Wilkinson, who taught literature on Tabar Island, part of New Ireland in Papua New Guinea, studied their Malanggan ritual carvings and shows that particular combinations of motifs belong to certain owners and identify both kin and status groupings. The understanding of Malanggan sculpture, the most complex carving in Melanesia, has been plagued by lack of thorough documentation, first on the level of what is represented, and further, on what any item means. This article, richly informative on these points, is clear evidence that Wilkinson's work deserves fuller publication.

Gathercole, who works in the museum at Cambridge University, also would see art in the frame of social sign. Deploring the lack of information on early collections, he recommends that we look at the motifs repeated on many Maori objects, not only as general reminders of the ideological continuum of gods, ancestors, and human life, but also as signs of ethnic identity which increased in

elaboration during the nineteenth century as acculturative pressures mounted on the Maori people.

Based on the work of the Stratherns (1971) on the body decoration of the Mt. Hageners of Papua New Guinea, Layton constructs a chart of the Hageners' sensory signs to show how they combine to communicate status positions and wearers' intentions. His essay also reflects the current fashion for elements of communication theory. He would distinguish art from visual communication by the features of symbolism and redundancy, a reductive position that is further weakened by the distortion required for the concept of redundancy when applied to art.

Faris, who provided such a splendid analysis of Nuba body painting (1972), based on his field work in the Sudan, East Africa, spins an argument that represents another current influencing the analysis of art; that is, a Marxist emphasis on mode of production, the underlying thesis being that the significant social relationships which must be symbolized for purposes of maintenance, celebration, socialization, and mystification stem from productive activities. According to Faris, if people control their means of production, art will celebrate human productive activity, as indeed was the situation he found among the Nuba. Where producers lack control, such circumstances need to be justified, and symbols will be used for mystification in order to legitimize the exploitation. With these theorems, Faris proposes to tell why certain people use ancestor figures and to account for the expressive character of some West African masks. He claims that the Dogon create ancestor figures as part of the mystique of the clan, which, having no kin or material basis, is an ideological construct to favor the elders; the Dan produce masks of cool arrogance because they have a politically powerful Poro society, while lesser local men's societies have to employ frightening masks. These explanations were prepared before 1975, and it is hoped that in the interval, besides correcting other errors in his article, Faris has had a chance to reread Harley (1950) to learn that the forceful Poro society (among the Mano) makes much use of frightening masks, and that there is no true Poro among the Dan (*ibid.*:42)—a point reiterated in several publications by field workers Himmelheber and Fischer. What evidence there is about Dogon human figure sculpture does not limit them, for example, to *clan* rituals, temples, or groups. With several Africanists at hand, the editors must be faulted for permitting these hypothetical arguments based on misinformation to be cast in permanently accessible form. More attention needs to be given to art in relation to power structures, in spite of this miscarried effort.

Two essays cater to the increasing interest in the situation of the living artist. Nettleship offers a fine descriptive account of the social context of women's weaving arts, which are no longer functional, among the Atayal of Taiwan. His concern with creativity, presented in a vague and groping manner, leads to the following points: the

weaver, influenced by aesthetic or nonaesthetic values, can make selections at various points in the work process and, to assess their innovation, these decision points deserve close study. Gerbrands, known for his publications on the Asmat artist, continues his search for the master artist, this time among the Kilenge of New Britain, and provides some interesting anecdotes about a wood-carver's relations with his big-man patron and the efforts of his apprentice.

A modest experiment in cross-cultural aesthetics is reported by Nelson Graburn, who is best known for his studies of Eskimo art in a changing commercial context. He asked museum audiences at Berkeley to respond to two commercial forms of art-crafts: wooden implements of the Cree Indians and the soapstone figures of the Canadian Arctic Eskimos. Judgments of the works were markedly affected by preconceptions about Indians and about Eskimo culture. The neat, clean wood carvings did not fit respondents' notions of authentic Indian objects, and their negative reactions were frequently cast in terms of guilt about commercialization. Eskimo stone imagery, however, fulfilled their ideas of art as evocative and illustrative of the Eskimos' imagined way of life and struggle with nature. Strangely enough, in this case political regrets did not come to mind.

Another issue in cross-cultural aesthetics—more commonly called artistic influence—concerns the possible effects of African art on the artists of Paris in the early twentieth century. It is patently absurd, as Donne points out, to discuss the influence of African art on the Cubists on the basis of pieces and even styles that the artists of the time did not and could not know. Donne gives a sample of the kind of detective work required to identify which actual pieces came to the notice of artists of that time.

Greenhalgh, one of the editors, takes up a rarely discussed problem in cross-cultural aesthetics: why Europeans in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries were indifferent to influences from Pre-Columbian art. Not surprisingly, he reasons that the Graeco-Roman framework of Renaissance Europe precluded recognition of the alien style as aesthetic experience. In an erudite sketch of scholarly work of the time, Greenhalgh shows that the tendency to see alien art works as something which can explain religion or society had already begun in the sixteenth century.

However changed our aesthetic appreciation may be, archaeologists continue to use art as a revealing artifact. Two essays in this book give a glimpse of archaeologists at work on style analysis. Roaf seeks differences in hands among a row of similar figures at Persepolis, and Frankel looks for similarities in pottery designs to determine contacts and trade routes in 2nd millennium B.C. Cyprus. Using familiar assumptions in style studies, both men argue, in brief contributions, for more precise, credible results by use of mathematical methods, couched in a variety of charts and diagrams, than were possible by precomputer assessment.

Korn, an art historian, fulfills Wollheim's directive not to rely on distinctive features by offering a computerized formal analysis of an extensive array of design units she has derived from the colorful Abelam paintings collected some 20 years ago by Anthony Forge. Most of her article is taken up with arguing against the use of linguistic models for art analysis, in favor of a comprehensive count of visual regularities.

Art as a qualitative experience is difficult to deal with in social science terms, although a few anthropologists have attempted it. Here Swinton and Herman, who are artists and connoisseurs, carry out this mission in a style of personal conviction.

Most speculative of all investigations into art is the study of its origins, a topic rarely addressed by art historians. In tune with the recent emphasis on the biological contribution to human behavior, several scholars are finding a promising source of designs in the dancing flickers of light, called phosphenes, that appear in interior vision. This view is represented by Reichel-Dolmatoff's favorable comparison of the drawings of drug-experienced visions among a small group of Amazonian Indians with the fifteen phosphenes standardized in a study of European subjects.

In summary, we find that most topics in ethnoart are touched upon in these essays: the search for cognitive order, art as social signs, the artist and the social matrix of production, cross-cultural aesthetics, and qualitative experience. The notable exception is an example of psychological or psychoanalytical study. The best work belongs to those in search of cognitive order. A new note appears in a number of the essays that is worth special comment; that is, an awareness of negative results or a cautionary attitude. We should not hold to a unitary view of the Eskimo aesthetic when Swinton states that, among the Eskimos he knows in the Baker Lake area, carvings are admired for the very reasons they are disdained in Grabum's reports on Arctic Quebec. Wollheim's admonition against the use of distinctive feature analysis, Greenhalgh's consideration of a lack of diffusion, Donne on the need of proof for claims of artistic influence, Vastokas's and Korn's warnings against the use of linguistic models, and most vivid of all, Thurston Shaw's well-reasoned challenge to established theories on the chronology of Benin bronzes—all these introduce critical notes that were absent from the positive propositions presented in two earlier anthologies on ethnoart (Jopling 1971; Otten 1971). On this point, *Art in Society* represents an advance in sophistication about methods that is worthy of wide attention.

## References

- Adams, M. J.  
1971 Work Patterns and Symbolic Structures. *Southeast Asia Quarterly* 1(4):321-334.
- 1973 Structural Aspects of a Village Art, East Sumba, Indonesia. *American Anthropologist* 75(1):265-279.
- 1977 Style in Southeast Asian Materials Processing; Some Implications for Ritual and Art. *In* *Material Culture*. Heather Lechtman and Robert Merrill, eds. St. Paul: West.
- Faris, James C.  
1972 *Nuba Personal Art*. Toronto: University of Toronto.
- Fernandez, James  
1977 *Fang Architectonics*. Philadelphia: ISHI.
- Harley, George  
1950 *Masks as Agents of Social Control in Northeast Liberia*. Cambridge, Mass.: Peabody Museum of Archeology and Ethnology.
- Jopling, Carol, ed.  
1971 *Art and Aesthetics in Primitive Societies*. New York: Dutton.
- Otten, Charlotte  
1971 *Anthropology and Art*. Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History.
- Silver, Harry  
1979 *Ethnoart*. *Annual Review of Anthropology* 8:267-307.
- Strathern, Andrew and Marilyn  
1971 *Self-Decoration in Mount Hagen*. Toronto: University of Toronto.

---

**Nahumck.** Introduction to Dance Literacy: Perception and Notation of Dance Patterns.

---

**To the Editors**

In the Spring 1980 issue of *Studies*, Diane C. Freedman reviews the book *Introduction to Dance Literacy: Perception and Notation of Dance Patterns*, by Nadia Chilkovsky Nahumck. In so doing, she takes Dr. Nahumck to task on several points, notably on the question of what is meant by "literacy" in dance. As a pragmatic practitioner of Labanotation and an ardent advocate of dance literacy, I find myself disturbed by high-level quibbling. Nahumck's book is a welcome step forward in dance literacy by its very attempt to make people aware of this valuable end product in the use of notation. It is a tool through which a greater understanding of and access to information in dance is made possible.

In reading the book I too questioned at whom the book was aimed: if for those already knowing Labanotation, then the basic explanations were superfluous; if for those knowing none, then insufficient. But the general focus of the book was in the right direction, and it should arouse enthusiastic support as an important step forward—who else has written such a book? Nahumck is breaking new ground. Perhaps the book needed more working through; such books can well use trial periods before publication to gather general reactions and eliminate the inevitable typographical errors. There is so much that is commendable in the book, however, that seems to have been given scant treatment in Ms. Freedman's review.

I question whether it is necessary to experience movement sequences physically in order to become dance literate. My husband reads Russian yet cannot speak it, and his is not an unusual case; others read foreign-language publications without speaking the language fluently. Would they be called illiterate in that language? In dance there may be full understanding of the content without the physical ability to bring the movement to life. Must one be able to act to understand Shakespeare's plays?

Notation is not yet an integral part of the study of dance. A few have made a start, but there is still a long way to go before we achieve anything comparable to the use of music notation in the study of music. Nahumck has contributed a book which I see as an important step in the right direction. It is her fate to be a pioneer, to break new ground, and hence risk much criticism. It is possible that others who follow may produce better books, building on her groundwork. I would like to see a review which gathers together the positive elements in the book, providing incentive to others to produce similar works.

Dr. Ann Hutchinson Guest  
The Language of Dance Centre,  
London

---

**Reviewer's Reply**

My review of Nahumck's book was directed at an audience of scholars interested in visual communication. This relatively new field is composed of participants from many disciplines; communication among members of such a diversified group is dependent on conceptual clarity. Scholarship must be evaluative if our understanding is to advance.

Guest is unhappy with my criticism of what she considers a pioneering effort. Yet to leave the inadequacies of basic works unnoted would be a disservice, since the function of such works should be to provide the most solid possible basis for further development of the field. I do not consider insistence on conceptual clarity to be "high-level quibbling."

Guest's response is based on the undefended assumption that language and movement are precisely analogous, an assumption with which I disagree for reasons elaborated on in my review. I did not mean to imply that one must be able to duplicate dance movements to understand them. But competence in a symbolic system based on movement depends on a kinesthetic sensitivity. One way to develop this sensitivity is through study of the Laban system.

I share with Guest and Nahumck the desire to promote future research in this field. But I believe that our cause is best served by careful scrutiny and evaluation of all contributions.

Diane C. Freedman



