

"The Movie, a Synthetic Art"

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THE MOVIE has become, not only one of the greatest forms of entertainment, but also, one of the greatest media for artistic expression known today. It is a specific form of art, called by some, a synthetic art. A good movie is built up as the result of the collaboration of numerous creative groups, all of which must function expertly. It appeals to people of all ages and types, and functions with varying degrees of effectiveness in the transmission of artistic ideas, portrayal of human emotions, and general information. Literally, it has become a universal language.

The movie is the consummation of the work of many creative artists. Painting has composition, color, and line; sculpture has form; music has the play and interplay of sound; the novel has the word; the dance has movement and rhythm, but the movie has all of these. To produce a movie there must be: the camera man, the sound recordist, the composer of the musical score, the art director, the actors, and the director. Each has his own technique, the perfection of which becomes an important part in the development of a truly good moving picture.

Although relatively young, the movie industry has developed, since 1895, into a world-wide institution. G. M. Mayer, of the movies, has said: "The motion picture is the only art which all the people of the world today commonly enjoy." It has become a medium of communication by which the peoples of the world can speak to one another in the universal language of pictures. The moving, talking images on the screen bring all the immediacy and vitality of life itself to those who see them. People from all nations can come into each other's presence and understand the same reality together. Whether they are seeking relaxation, entertainment, culture, or information on world affairs, they will be able to find it in selected movies.

The movie is the successor to the older media of pageant, dance, drama, and opera. History has been revitalized on the screen, and great books have been relived. "Ben Hur," "Tale of Two Cities," and "Hamlet" have become real to thousands, who otherwise would have known them only as books on the library shelves. Great voices have been heard, and musical masterpieces enjoyed by countless numbers who never would have had the opportunity of hearing great music. Melchior, Tibbett, Iturbi, Rubinstein, Pinza, Heifetz, Paderewski, and many others have shared their talent with the world via the movie screen. Likewise, great names of the stage have become a part of the cultural life of the movie "goer." The great Barrymores, Jane Cowl, Cornelia Otis Skinner, Tallulah Bankhead, and Helen Hayes have brought real drama to the movie screen. The beauty of the dance is not to be omitted, for the movies have presented excellent productions, such as, "Red Shoes" and "The Great Waltz." Likewise, movies have profoundly influenced human relationships. Occasionally, there is an outstanding picture expressing a universal emotion that rises above the prejudices of a special group and reaches the heart of everyone. "Going My Way," "Gone with the Wind," "The Song of Bernadette," and "The Yearling" have been favorites of all who have seen them. Such pictures have been regarded as means through which an individual understands himself, his social role, and the values of his group.

Educationally, the movie has been generally accepted as one of the most effective means of transmitting information. During the recent years of international strife the screen has been used to crystallize national thinking and to spread propaganda. Whether it be subtly through a play, or directly by news reels, it is effective. By the moving picture the general public can be kept informed on all vital issues of the day.

Generally speaking, no other art makes a broader appeal to mankind than the movie, because it is many arts in one. No other medium of expression can reproduce life for so many people in so many places as the movie. It is a dynamic force in dissemination of cultural, social, and educational values among all peoples, and it may prove to be a milestone on the pathway of international understanding.