



HUGO MÜNSTERBERG

THE FILM

A PSYCHOLOGICAL STUDY

THE SILENT PHOTOPLAY IN 1916

itself. The detail which is being watched has suddenly become the whole content of the performance, and everything which our mind wants to disregard has been suddenly banished from our sight and has disappeared. The events without have become obedient to the demands of our consciousness. In the language of the photoplay producers it is a "close-up." *The close-up has objectified in our world of perception our mental act of attention and by it has furnished art with a means which far transcends the power of any theater stage.*

The scheme of the close-up was introduced into the technique of the film play rather late, but it has quickly gained a secure position. The more elaborate the production, the more frequent and the more skillful the use of this new and artistic means. The melodrama can hardly be played without it, unless a most inartistic use of printed words is made. The close-up has to furnish the explanations. If a little locket is hung on the neck of the stolen or exchanged infant, it is not necessary to tell us in words that everything will hinge on this locket twenty years later when the girl is grown up. If the ornament at the child's throat is at once shown in a close-up where everything has disappeared and only its quaint form appears much enlarged on the screen, we fix it in our imagination and know that we must give our fullest attention to it, as it will play a decisive part in the next reel. The gentleman criminal who draws his handkerchief from his pocket and with it a little bit of paper which falls down on the rug unnoticed by him has no power to draw our attention to that incriminating scrap. The device hardly belongs in the theater because the audience would not notice it any more than would the scoundrel himself. It would not be able to draw the attention. But in the film it is a favorite trick. At the moment the bit of paper falls, we see it greatly enlarged on the rug, while everything else has faded away, and we read on it that it is a ticket from the railway station at which the great crime was committed. Our attention is focused on it and we know that it will be decisive for the development of the action.

A clerk buys a newspaper on the street, glances at it and is shocked. Suddenly we see that piece of news with our own eyes. The close-up magnifies the headlines of the paper so that they fill the whole screen. But it is not necessary that this focusing of the attention should refer to levers in the plot. Any subtle detail, any significant gesture which heightens the meaning of the action may enter into the center of our consciousness by monopolizing the stage for a few seconds. There is love in her smiling face, and yet we overlook it as they stand in a

crowded room. But suddenly, only for three seconds, all the others in the room have disappeared, the bodies of the lovers themselves have faded away, and only his look of longing and her smile of yielding reach out to us. The close-up has done what no theater could have offered by its own means, though we might have approached the effect in the theater performance if we had taken our opera glass and had directed it only to those two heads. But by doing so we should have emancipated ourselves from the offering of the stage picture, that is, the concentration and focusing were secured by us and not by the performance. In the photoplay it is the opposite.

Have we not reached by this analysis of the close-up a point very near to that to which the study of depth perception and movement perception was leading? We saw that the moving pictures give us the plastic world and the moving world, and that nevertheless the depth and the motion in it are not real, unlike the depth and motion of the stage. We find now that the reality of the action in the photoplay is still another respect lacks objective independence, because it yields to our subjective play of attention. Wherever our attention becomes focused on a special feature, the surrounding adjusts itself, eliminates everything in which we are not interested, and by the close-up heightens the vividness of that on which our mind is concentrated. It is as if that outer world were woven into our mind and were shaped not through its own laws but by the acts of our attention.

5. Memory and Imagination

WHEN we sit in a real theater and see the stage with its depth and watch the actors moving and turn our attention hither and thither, we feel that those impressions from behind the footlights have objective character, while the action of our attention is subjective. Those men and things come from without but the play of the attention starts from within. Yet our attention, as we have seen, does not really add anything to the impressions of the stage. It makes some more vivid and clear while others become vague or fade away, but through the attention alone no content enters our consciousness. Wherever

our attention may wander on the stage, whatever we experience comes to us through the channels of our senses. The spectator in the audience, however, does experience more than merely the light and sound sensations which fall on the eye and ear at that moment. He may be entirely fascinated by the actions on the stage and yet his mind may be overflowed with other ideas. Only one of their sources, but not the least important one, is the memory.

Indeed the action of the memory brings to the mind of the audience ever so much which gives fuller meaning and ampler setting to every scene—yes, to every word and movement on the stage. To think of the most trivial case, at every point of the drama we must remember what happened in the previous scenes. The first act is no longer on the stage when we see the second. The second alone is now our sense impression. Yet this second act is in itself meaningless if it is not supported by the first. Hence the first must somehow be in our consciousness. At least in every important scene we must remember those situations of the preceding act which can throw light on the new developments. We see the young missionary in his adventures on his perilous journey and we remember how in the preceding act we saw him in his peaceful cottage surrounded by the love of his parents and sisters and how they mourned when he left them behind. The more exciting the dangers he passes through in the far distant land, the more strongly does our memory carry us back to the home scenes which we witnessed before. The theater cannot do more than suggest to our memory this looking backward. The young hero may call this reminiscence back to our consciousness by his speech and his prayer, and when he fights his way through the jungles of Africa and the savages attack him, the melodrama may put words into his mouth which force us to think fervently of those whom he has left behind. But, after all, it is our own material of memory ideas which supplies the picture. The theater cannot go further. The photoplay can. We see the jungle, we see the hero at the height of his danger; and suddenly there flashes upon the screen a picture of the past. For not more than two seconds does the idyllic New England scene slip into the exciting African events. When one deep breath is over we are stirred again by the event of the present. That home scene of the past flitted by just as a hasty thought of bygone days darts through the mind.

The modern photoartist makes use of this technical device in an abundance of forms. In his slang any going back to an earlier scene

is called a "cut-back." The cut-back may have many variations and serve many purposes. But the one which we face here is psychologically the most interesting. We have really an objectivation of our memory function. The case of the cut-back is there quite parallel to that of the close-up. In the one we recognize the mental act of attending, in the other we must recognize the mental act of remembering. *In both cases the act which in the ordinary theater would go on in our mind alone is here in the photography projected into the pictures themselves. It is as if reality has lost its own continuous connection and become shaped by the demands of our soul.* It is as if the outer world itself became molded in accordance with our fleeting turns of attention or with our passing memory ideas.

It is only another version of the same principle when the course of events is interrupted by forward glances. The mental function involved is that of expectation or, when the expectation is controlled by our feelings, we may class it under the mental function of imagination. The melodrama shows us how the young millionaire wastes his nights in a dissipated life, and when he drinks his blasphemous toast at a champagne feast with shameless women, we suddenly see on the screen the vision of twenty years later when the bartender of a most miserable saloon pushes the penniless tramp out into the gutter. The last act in the theater may bring us to such an ending, but there it can come only in the regular succession of events. That pitiful ending cannot be shown to us when life is still blooming and when a twenty years' downward course is still to be interpreted. There only our own imagination can anticipate how the mill of life may grind. In the photoplay our imagination is projected on the screen. With an uncanny contrast that ultimate picture of defeat breaks in where victory seems most glorious; and five seconds later the story of youth and rapture streams on. Again we see the course of the natural events remolded by the power of the mind. The theater can picture only how the real occurrences might follow one another; the photoplay can overcome the interval of the future as well as the interval of the past and slip the day twenty years hence between this minute and the next. In short, it can act as our imagination acts. It has the mobility of our ideas which are not controlled by the physical necessity of outer events but by the psychological laws for the association of ideas. In our mind past and future become intertwined with the present. The photoplay obeys the laws of the mind rather than those of the outer world.

But the play of memory and imagination can have a still richer significance in the art of the film. The screen may produce not only what we remember or imagine but what the persons in the play see in their own minds. The technique of the camera stage has successfully introduced a distinct form for this kind of picturing. If a person in the scene remembers the past, a past which may be entirely unknown to the spectator but which is living in the memory of the hero or heroine, then the former events are not thrown on the screen as an entirely new set of pictures, but they are connected with the present scene by a slow transition. He sits at the fireplace in his study and receives the letter with the news of her wedding. The close-up picture which shows us the enlargement of the engraved wedding announcement appears as an entirely new picture. The room suddenly disappears and the hand which holds the card flashes up. Again when we have read the card, it suddenly disappears and we are in the room again. But when he has dreamily stirred the fire and sits down and gazes into the flames, then the room seems to dissolve, the lines blur, the details fade away, and while the walls and the whole room slowly melt, with the same slow transition the flower garden blossoms out, the flower garden where he and she sat together under the lilac bush and he confessed to her his boyish love. And then the garden slowly vanishes and through the flowers we see once more the dim outlines of the room and they become sharper and sharper until we are in the midst of the study again and nothing is left of the vision of the past.

The technique of manufacturing such gradual transitions from one picture into another and back again demands much patience and is more difficult than the sudden change, as two exactly corresponding sets of views have to be produced and finally combined. But this cumbersome method has been fully accepted in moving picture making and the effect indeed somewhat symbolizes the appearance and disappearance of a reminiscence.

This scheme naturally opens wide perspectives. The skillful photoplaywright can communicate to us long scenes and complicated developments of the past in the form of such retrospective pictures. The man who shot his best friend has not offered an explanation in the court trial which we witness. It remains a perfect secret to the town and a mystery to the spectator; and now as the jail door closes behind him the walls of the prison fuse and melt away and we witness the scene in the little cottage where his friend secretly met his wife

and how he broke in and how it all came about and how he rejected every excuse which would dishonor his home. The whole murder story becomes embedded in the reappearance of his memory ideas. The effect is much less artistic when the photoplay, as not seldom happens, uses this pattern as a mere substitute for words. In the picturization of a Gaboriau story the woman declines to tell before the court her life story which ended in a crime. She finally yields, she begins under oath to describe her whole past; and at the moment when she opens her mouth the courtroom disappears and fades into the scene in which the love adventure began. Then we pass through a long set of scenes which lead to the critical point, and at that moment we slide back into the courtroom and the woman finishes her confession. That is an external substitution of the pictures for the words, esthetically on a much lower level than the other case where the past was living only in the memory of the witness. Yet it is again an embodiment of past events which the genuine theater could offer to the ear but never to the eye.

Just as we can follow the reminiscences of the hero, we may share the fancies of his imagination. Once more the case is distinctly different from the one in which we, the spectators, had our imaginative ideas realized on the screen. Here we are passive witnesses to the wonders which are unveiled through the imagination of the persons in the play. We see the boy who is to enter the navy and who sleeps on shipboard the first night; the walls disappear and his imagination flutters from port to port. All he has seen in the pictures of foreign lands and has heard from his comrades becomes the background of his jubilant adventures. Now he stands in the rigging while the proud vessel sails into the harbor of Rio de Janeiro and now into Manila Bay; now he enjoys himself in Japanese ports and now by the shores of India; now he glides through the Suez Canal and now he returns to the skyscrapers of New York. Not more than one minute was needed for his world travel in beautiful fantastic pictures; and yet we lived through all the boy's hopes and ecstasies with him. If we had seen the young sailor in his hammock on the theater stage, he might have hinted to us whatever passed through his mind by a kind of monologue or by some enthusiastic speech to a friend. But then we should have seen before our inner eye only that which the names of foreign places awake in ourselves. We should not really have seen the wonders of the world through the eyes of his soul and with the glow of his hope. The drama would have given dead names to our ear; the

photoplay gives ravishing scenery to our eye and shows the fancy of the young fellow in the scene really living.

From here we see the perspective to the fantastic dreams which the camera can fixate. Whenever the theater introduces an imagined setting and the stage clouds sink over the sleeper and the angels fill the stage, the beauty of the verses must excuse the shortcomings of the visual appeal. The photoplay artist can gain his triumphs here. Even the vulgar effects become softened by this setting. The ragged tramp who climbs a tree and falls asleep in the shady branches and then lives through a reversed world in which he and his kind feast and glory and live in palaces and sail in yachts, and, when the boiler of the yacht explodes, falls from the tree to the ground, becomes a tolerable spectacle because all is merged in the unreal pictures. Or, to think of the other extreme, gigantic visions of mankind crushed by the Juggernaut of war and then blessed by the angel of peace may arise before our eyes with all their spiritual meaning.

Even the whole play may find its frame in a setting which offers a five-reel performance as one great imaginative dream. In the pretty play, *When Broadway was a Trail*, the hero and heroine stand on the Metropolitan Tower and bend over its railing. They see the turmoil of New York of the present day and ships passing the Statue of Liberty. He begins to tell her of the past when in the seventeenth century Broadway was a trail; and suddenly the time which his imagination awakens is with us. Through two hours we follow the happenings of three hundred years ago. From New Amsterdam it leads to the New England shores, all the early colonial life shows us its intimate charm, and when the hero has found his way back over the Broadway trail, we awake and see the last gestures with which the young narrator shows to the girl Broadway buildings of today.

Memory looks toward the past, expectation and imagination toward the future. But in the midst of the perception of our surroundings our mind turns not only to that which has happened before and which may happen later; it is interested in happenings at the same time in other places. The theater can show us only the events at one spot. Our mind craves more. Life does not move forward on one single pathway. The whole manifoldness of parallel currents with their endless interconnections is the true substance of our understanding. It may be the task of a particular art to force all into one steady development between the walls of one room, but every letter

and every telephone call to the room remind us even then that other developments with other settings are proceeding in the same instant. The soul longs for this whole interplay, and the richer it is in contrasts, the more satisfaction may be drawn from our simultaneous presence in many quarters. The photoplay alone gives us our chance for such omnipresence. We see the banker, who had told his young wife that he has a directors' meeting, at a late hour in a cabaret feasting with a stenographer from his office. She had promised her poor old parents to be home early. We see the gorgeous roof garden and the tango dances, but our dramatic interest is divided among the frivolous pair, the jealous young woman in the suburban cottage, and the anxious old people in the attic. Our mind wavers among the three scenes. The photoplay shows one after another. Yet it can hardly be said that we think of them as successive. It is as if we were really at all three places at once. We see the joyous dance which is of central dramatic interest for twenty seconds, then for three seconds the wife in her luxurious boudoir looking at the dial of the clock, for three seconds again the grieved parents eagerly listening for any sound on the stairs, and anew for twenty seconds the turbulent festival. The frenzy reaches a climax, and in that moment we are suddenly again with his unhappy wife; it is only a flash, and the next instant we see the tears of the girl's poor mother. The three scenes proceed almost as if no one were interrupted at all. It is as if we saw one through another, as if three tones blended into one chord.

There is no limit to the number of threads which may be interwoven. A complex intrigue may demand coöperation at half a dozen spots, and we look now into one, now into another, and never have the impression that they come one after another. The temporal element has disappeared, the one action irradiates in all directions. Of course, this can easily be exaggerated, and the result must be a certain restlessness. If the scene changes too often and no movement is carried on without a break, the play may irritate us by its nervous jerking from place to place. Near the end of the Theda Bara edition of *Carmen* the scene changes one hundred and seventy times in ten minutes, an average of a little more than three seconds for each scene. We follow Don José and Carmen and the toreador in ever new phases of the dramatic action and are constantly carried back to Don José's home village where his mother waits for him. There indeed the dramatic tension has an element of nervousness, in contrast to the

Geraldine Farrar version of *Carmen* which allows a more unbroken development of the single action.

But whether it is used with artistic reserve or with a certain dangerous exaggeration, in any case its psychological meaning is obvious. It demonstrates to us in a new form the same principle which the perception of depth and of movement, the acts of attention and of memory and of imagination have shown. *The objective world is molded by the interests of the mind. Events which are far distant from one another so that we could not be physically present at all of them at the same time are fusing in our field of vision, just as they are brought together in our own consciousness.* Psychologists are still debating whether the mind can ever devote itself to several groups of ideas at the same time. Some claim that any so-called division of attention is really a rapid alteration. Yet in any case subjectively we experience it as an actual division. Our mind is split and can be here and there apparently in one mental act. This inner division, this awareness of contrasting situations, this interchange of diverging experiences in the soul, can never be embodied except in the photoplay.

An interesting side light falls on this relation between the mind and the pictured scenes, if we turn to a mental process which is quite nearly related to those which we have considered, namely, suggestion. It is similar in that a suggested idea which awakes in our consciousness is built up from the same material as the memory ideas or the imaginative ideas. The play of associations controls the suggestions, as it does the reminiscences and fancies. Yet in an essential point it is quite different. All the other associative ideas find merely their starting point in those outer impressions. We see a landscape on the stage or on the screen or in life and this visual perception is the cue which stirs up in our memory or imagination any fitting ideas. The choice of them, however, is completely controlled by our own interest and attitude and by our previous experiences. Those memories and fancies are therefore felt as our subjective supplements. We do not believe in their objective reality. A suggestion, on the other hand, is forced on us. The outer perception is not only a starting point but a controlling influence. The associated idea is not felt as our creation but as something to which we have to submit. The extreme case is, of course, that of the hypnotizer whose word awakens in the mind of the hypnotized person ideas which he cannot resist. He must accept them as real, he must believe that the dreary room is a beautiful garden in which he picks flowers.

The spellbound audience in a theater or in a picture house is certainly in a state of heightened suggestibility and is ready to receive suggestions. One great and fundamental suggestion is working in both cases, inasmuch as the drama as well as the photoplay suggests to the mind of the spectator that this is more than mere play, that it is life which we witness. But if we go further and ask for the application of suggestions in the detailed action, we cannot overlook the fact that the theater is extremely limited in its means. A series of events on the stage may strongly force on the mind the prediction of something which must follow, but inasmuch as the stage has to do with real physical beings who must behave according to the laws of nature, it cannot avoid offering us the actual events for which we were waiting. To be sure, even on the stage the hero may talk, the revolver in his hand, until it is fully suggested to us that the suicidal shot will end his life in the next instant; and yet just then the curtain may fall, and only the suggestion of his death may work in our mind. But this is evidently a very exceptional case as a fall of the curtain means the ending of the scene. In the act itself every series of events must come to its natural ending. If two men begin to fight on the stage, nothing remains to be suggested; we must simply witness the fight. And if two lovers embrace each other, we have to see their caresses.

The photoplay can not only "cut back" in the service of memories, but it can cut off in the service of suggestion. Even if the police did not demand that actual crimes and suicides should never be shown on the screen, for mere artistic reasons it would be wiser to leave the climax to the suggestion to which the whole scene has led. There is no need of bringing the series of pictures to its logical end, because they are pictures only and not the real objects. At any instant the man may disappear from the scene, and no automobile can race over the ground so rapidly that it cannot be stopped just as it is to crash into the rushing express train. The horseback rider jumps into the abyss; we see him fall, and yet at the moment when he crashes to the ground we are already in the midst of a far distant scene. Again and again with doubtful taste the sensuality of the nickel audiences has been stirred up by suggestive pictures of a girl undressing, and when in the intimate chamber the last garment was touched, the spectators were suddenly in the marketplace among crowds of people or in a sailing vessel on the river. The whole technique of the rapid changes of scenes which we have recognized as so characteristic of

the photoplay involves at every end point elements of suggestion which to a certain degree link the separate scenes as the afterimages link the separate pictures.

6. Emotions

To picture emotions must be the central aim of the photoplay. In the drama words of wisdom may be spoken and we may listen to the conversations with interest even if they have only intellectual and not emotional character. But the actor whom we see on the screen can hold our attention only by what he is doing and his actions gain meaning and unity for us through the feelings and emotions which control them. More than in the drama the persons in the photoplay are to us first of all subjects of emotional experiences. Their joy and pain, their hope and fear, their love and hate, their gratitude and envy, their sympathy and malice, give meaning and value to the play. What are the chances of the photoartist to bring these feelings to a convincing expression?

No doubt, an emotion which is deprived of its discharge by words has lost a strong element, and yet gestures, actions, and facial play are so interwoven with the psychical process of an intense emotion that every shade can find its characteristic delivery. The face alone with its tensions around the mouth, with its play of the eye, with its cast of the forehead, and even with the motions of the nostrils and the setting of the jaw, may bring numberless shades into the feeling tone. Here again the close-up can strongly heighten the impression. It is at the climax of emotion on the stage that the theatergoer likes to use his opera glass in order not to overlook the subtle excitement of the lips and the passion of the eyeballs and the ghastly pupil and the quivering cheeks. The enlargement by the close-up on the screen brings this emotional action of the face to sharpest relief. Or it may show us enlarged a play of the hands in which anger and rage or tender love or jealousy speak in unmistakable language. In humorous scenes even the flirting of amorous feet may in the close-up tell the story of their possessors' hearts. Nevertheless there are narrow limits.

Many emotional symptoms like blushing or growing pale would be lost in the mere photographic rendering, and, above all, these and many other signs of feeling are not under voluntary control. The photoactors may carefully go through the movements and imitate the contractions and relaxations of the muscles, and yet may be unable to produce those processes which are most essential for the true life emotion, namely those in the glands, blood vessels, and involuntary muscles.

Certainly the going through the motions will shade consciousness sufficiently so that some of these involuntary and instinctive responses may set in. The actor really experiences something of the inner excitement which he imitates and with the excitement the automatic reactions appear. Yet only a few can actually shed tears, however much they move the muscles of the face into the semblance of crying. The pupil of the eye is somewhat more obedient, as the involuntary muscles of the iris respond to the cue which a strong imagination can give, and the mimic presentation of terror or astonishment or hatred may actually lead to the enlargement or contraction of the pupil, which the close-up may show. Yet there remains too much which mere art cannot render and which life alone produces, because the consciousness of the unreality of the situation works as a psychological inhibition on the automatic instinctive responses. The actor may artificially tremble, or breathe heavily, but the strong pulsation of the carotid artery or the moistness of the skin from perspiration will not come with an imitated emotion. Of course, that is true of the actor on the stage, too. But the content of the words and the modulation of the voice can help so much that the shortcomings of the visual impression are forgotten.

To the actor of the moving pictures, on the other hand, the temptation offers itself to overcome the deficiency by a heightening of the gestures and of the facial play, with the result that the emotional expression becomes exaggerated. No friend of the photoplay can deny that much of the photoart suffers from this almost unavoidable tendency. The quick marchlike rhythm of the drama of the reel favors this artificial overdoing, too. The rapid alternation of the scenes often seems to demand a jumping from one emotional climax to another, or rather the appearance of such extreme expressions where the content of the play hardly suggests such heights and depths of emotion. The soft lights are lost and the mental eye becomes adjusted to glaring flashes. This undeniable defect is felt

with the American actors still more than with the European, especially with the French and Italian ones with whom excited gestures and highly accentuated expressions of the face are natural. A New England temperament forced into Neapolitan expressions of hatred or jealousy or adoration too easily appears a caricature. It is not by chance that so many strong actors of the stage are such more or less decided failures on the screen. They have been dragged into an art which is foreign to them, and their achievement has not seldom remained far below that of the specializing photoactor. The habitual reliance on the magic of the voice deprives them of the natural means of expression when they are to render emotions without words. They give too little or too much; they are not expressive, or they become grotesque.

Of course, the photoartist profits from one advantage. He is not obliged to find the most expressive gesture in one decisive moment of the stage performance. He can not only rehearse, but he can repeat the scene before the camera until exactly the right inspiration comes, and the manager who takes the close-up visage may discard many a poor pose before he strikes that one expression in which the whole content of the feeling of the scene is concentrated. In one other respect the producer of the photoplay has a technical advantage. More easily than the stage manager of the real theater he can choose actors whose natural build and physiognomy fit the rôle and predispose them for the desired expression. The drama depends upon professional actors; the photoplay can pick players among any group of people for specific rôles. They need no art of speaking and no training in delivery. The artificial make-up of the stage actors in order to give them special character is therefore less needed for the screen. The expression of the faces and the gestures must gain through such natural fitness of the man for the particular rôle. If the photoplay needs a brutal boxer in a mining camp, the producer will not, like the stage manager, try to transform a clean, neat, professional actor into a vulgar brute, but he will sift the Bowery until he has found some creature who looks as if he came from that mining camp and who has at least the prizefighter's cauliflower ear which results from the smashing of the ear cartilage. If he needs the fat bartender with his smug smile, or the humble Jewish peddler, or the Italian organ grinder, he does not rely on wigs and paint; he finds them all ready-made on the East Side. With the right body and countenance the emotion is distinctly more credible. The emotional

expression in the photoplays is therefore often more natural in the small rôles which the outsiders play than in the chief parts of the professionals who feel that they must outdo nature.

But our whole consideration so far has been onesided and narrow. We have asked only about the means by which the photoactor expresses his emotion, and we were naturally confined to the analysis of his bodily reactions. But while the human individual in our surroundings has hardly any other means than the bodily expressions to show his emotions and moods, the photoplaywright is certainly not bound by these limits. Yet even in life the emotional tone may radiate beyond the body. A person expresses his mourning by his black clothes and his joy by gay attire, or he may make the piano or violin ring forth in happiness or moan in sadness. Even his whole room or house may be penetrated by his spirit of welcoming cordiality or his emotional setting of forbidding harshness. The feeling of the soul emanates into the surroundings and the impressions which we get of our neighbor's emotional attitude may be derived from this external frame of the personality as much as from the gestures and the face.

This effect of the surrounding surely can and must be much heightened in the artistic theater play. All the stage settings of the scene ought to be in harmony with the fundamental emotions of the play, and many an act owes its success to the unity of emotional impression which results from the perfect painting of the background; it reverberates to the passions of the mind. From the highest artistic color and form effects of the stage in the Reinhardt style down to the cheapest melodrama with soft blue lights and tender music for the closing scene, the stage arrangements tell the story of the intimate emotion. But just this additional expression of the feeling through the medium of the surrounding scene, through background and setting, through lines and forms and movements, is very much more at the disposal of the photoartist. He alone can change the background and all the surroundings of the acting person from instant to instant. He is not bound to one setting, he has no technical difficulty in altering the whole scene with every smile and every frown. To be sure, the theater can give us changing sunshine and thunderclouds too. But it must go on at the slow pace and with the clumsiness with which the events in nature pass. The photoplay can flit from one to the other. Not more than one sixteenth of a second is needed to carry us from one corner of the globe to the other, from a jubilant setting to a

with the emotion of solemnity, and yet he awakens in us the emotion of humor. We answer by our ridicule. We see the scoundrel who in the melodramatic photoplay is filled with fiendish malice, and yet we do not respond by imitating his emotion; we feel moral indignation toward his personality. We see the laughing, rejoicing child who, while he picks the berries from the edge of the precipice, is not aware that he must fall down if the hero does not snatch him back at the last moment. Of course, we feel the child's joy with him. Otherwise we should not even understand his behaviour, but we feel more strongly the fear and the horror of which the child himself does not know anything. The photoplaywrights have so far hardly ventured to project this second class of emotion, which the spectator superadds to the events, into the show on the screen. Only tentative suggestions can be found. The enthusiasm or the disapproval or indignation of the spectator is sometimes released in the lights and shades and in the setting of the landscape. There are still rich possibilities along this line. The photoplay has hardly come to its own with regard to these secondary emotions. Here it has not emancipated itself sufficiently from the model of the stage. Those emotions arise, of course, in the audience of a theater too, but the dramatic stage cannot embody them. In the opera the orchestra may symbolize them. For the photoplay, which is not bound to the physical succession of events but gives us only the pictorial reflection, there is an unlimited field for the expression of these attitudes in ourselves.

But the wide expansion of this field and of the whole manifoldness of emotional possibilities in the moving pictures is not sufficiently characterized as long as we think only of the optical representation in the actual outer world. The camera men of the moving pictures have photographed the happenings of the world and all its wonders, have gone to the bottom of the sea and up to the clouds; they have surprised the beasts in the jungles and in the Arctic ice; they have dwelt with the lowest races and have captured the greatest men of our time: and they are always haunted by the fear that the supply of new sensations may be exhausted. Curiously enough, they have so far ignored the fact that an inexhaustible wealth of new impressions is at their disposal, which has hardly been touched as yet. There is a material and a formal side to the pictures which we see in their rapid succession. The material side is controlled by the content of what is shown to us. But the formal side depends upon the outer conditions under which this content is exhibited. Even with ordinary photo-

graphs we are accustomed to discriminate between those in which every detail is very sharp and others, often much more artistic, in which everything looks somewhat misty and blurring and in which sharp outlines are avoided. We have this formal aspect, of course, still more prominently if we see the same landscape or the same person painted by a dozen different artists. Each one has his own style. Or, to point to another elementary factor, the same series of moving pictures may be given to us with a very slow or with a rapid turning of the crank. It is the same street scene, and yet in the one case everyone on the street seems leisurely to saunter along, while in the other case there is a general rush and hurry. Nothing is changed but the temporal form; and in going over from the sharp image to the blurring one, nothing is changed but a certain spatial form: the content remains the same.

As soon as we give any interest to this formal aspect of the presentation, we must recognize that the photoplaywright has here possibilities to which nothing corresponds in the world of the stage. Take the case that we want to produce an effect of trembling. We might use the pictures as the camera has taken them, sixteen in a second. But in reproducing them on the screen we change their order. After giving the first four pictures we go back to picture 3, then give 4, 5, 6, and return to 5, then 6, 7, 8, and go back to 7, and so on. Any other rhythm, of course, is equally possible. The effect is one which never occurs in nature and which could not be produced on the stage. The events for a moment go backward. A certain vibration goes through the world like the tremolo of the orchestra. Or we demand from our camera a still more complex service. We put the camera itself on a slightly rocking support and then every point must move in strange curves and every motion takes an uncanny whirling character. The content still remains the same as under normal conditions, but the changes in the formal presentation give to the mind of the spectator unusual sensations which produce a new shading of the emotional background.

Of course, impressions which come to our eye at first awaken only sensations, and a sensation is not an emotion. But it is well known that in the view of modern physiological psychology our consciousness of the emotion itself is shaped and marked by the sensations which arise from our bodily organs. As soon as such abnormal visual impressions stream into our consciousness, our whole background of fusing bodily sensations becomes altered and new emotions seem to

take hold of us. If we see on the screen a man hypnotized in the doctor's office, the patient himself may lie there with closed eyes, nothing in his features expressing his emotional setting and nothing radiating to us. But if now only the doctor and the patient remain unchanged and steady, while everything in the whole room begins at first to tremble and then to wave and to change its form more and more rapidly so that a feeling of dizziness comes over us and an uncanny, ghastly unnaturalness overcomes the whole surrounding of the hypnotized person, we ourselves become seized by the strange emotion. It is not worth while to go into further illustrations here, as this possibility of the camera work still belongs entirely to the future. It could not be otherwise as we remember that the whole moving picture play arose from the slavish imitation of the drama and began only slowly to find its own artistic methods. But there is no doubt that the formal changes of the pictorial presentation will be legion as soon as the photoartists give their attention to this neglected aspect.

The value of these formal changes for the expression of the emotions may become remarkable. The characteristic features of many an attitude and feeling which cannot be expressed without words today will then be aroused in the mind of the spectator through the subtle art of the camera.

 II

THE ESTHETICS OF THE PHOTOPLAY

7. The Purpose of Art

WE have analyzed the mental functions which are most powerful in the audience of the photoplay. We studied the mere act of perceiving the pictures on the screen, of perceiving their apparently plastic character, their depth, and their apparent movements. We turned then to those psychical acts by which we respond to the perceived impressions. In the foreground stood the act of attention, but then we followed the play of associations, of memory, of imagination, of suggestion, and, most important of all, we traced the distribution of interest. Finally we spoke of the feelings and emotions with which we accompany the play. Certainly all this does not exhaust the mental reactions which arise in our mind when we witness a drama of the film. We have not spoken, for instance, of the action which the plot of the story or its social background may start in our soul. The suffering of the poor, the injustice by which the weak may be forced into the path of crime, and a hundred other social motives may be impressed on us by the photoplay; thoughts about human society, about laws and reforms, about human differences and human fates, may fill our mind. Yet this is not one of the characteristic functions of the moving pictures. It is a side effect which may set in just as it may result from reading the newspapers or from hearing of practical affairs in life. But in all our discussions we have also left out another mental process, namely, esthetic emotion. We did speak about the