



8-1973

A Survey of American Critical Reaction to the Film Career of Clarence Brown

Deborah L. Oliver

University of Tennessee - Knoxville

Follow this and additional works at: https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes

 Part of the [Theatre and Performance Studies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Oliver, Deborah L., "A Survey of American Critical Reaction to the Film Career of Clarence Brown. "
Master's Thesis, University of Tennessee, 1973.
https://trace.tennessee.edu/utk_gradthes/2913

This Thesis is brought to you for free and open access by the Graduate School at TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. It has been accepted for inclusion in Masters Theses by an authorized administrator of TRACE: Tennessee Research and Creative Exchange. For more information, please contact trace@utk.edu.

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Deborah L. Oliver entitled "A Survey of American Critical Reaction to the Film Career of Clarence Brown." I have examined the final electronic copy of this thesis for form and content and recommend that it be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Theatre.

John L. Jellicorse, Major Professor

We have read this thesis and recommend its acceptance:

G. Allen Yeomans, Robert W. Glenn

Accepted for the Council:

Carolyn R. Hodges

Vice Provost and Dean of the Graduate School

(Original signatures are on file with official student records.)

July 31, 1973

To the Graduate Council:

I am submitting herewith a thesis written by Deborah L. Oliver entitled "A Survey of American Critical Reaction to the Film Career of Clarence Brown." I recommend that it be accepted for nine quarter hours of credit in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts, with a major in Speech and Theatre.

John Lee Jellicorse
Major Professor

We have read this thesis
and recommend its acceptance:

G. S. Lowance
Robert S. Ambler

Accepted for the Council:

Hilton A. Smith
Vice Chancellor for
Graduate Studies and Research

21

A SURVEY OF AMERICAN CRITICAL REACTION TO THE
FILM CAREER OF CLARENCE BROWN

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Council of
The University of Tennessee

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Deborah Lynn Oliver

August 1973

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The author gratefully acknowledges the able guidance of Dr. John L. Jellicorse, Dr. G. Allan Yeomans, Dr. Robert W. Glenn, and Dr. Robert S. Ambler.

Loving thanks are also extended to Mr. and Mrs. Wendell R. Oliver, Lisa, and Julie Oliver for their constant enthusiastic support.

ABSTRACT

This study is a survey of the critical reactions of American film critics and scholars to the cinema career of Clarence Brown. It is an initial step toward the illumination of Brown's contributions to film history.

Film critiques were gathered from sources contemporary to Brown's career as well as from modern-day sources. After a biographical sketch, the general critical reactions to Brown and his career are examined. Reviews of specific films are viewed in terms of the technical dimension of his film art, the dramatic dimension, the rhetorical dimension, and the historical dimension. After an appraisal of these critical evaluations, conclusions are drawn as to the accuracy of film criticism itself; Brown's outstanding achievements within the four dimensions of film art are discussed; and suggestions for further research are made.

Due to the limitations of film criticism, the study does not give a definitive evaluation of Clarence Brown's filmmaking. Specific accomplishments do stand out as significant to the development of the art of filmmaking, however. Generally, Brown seems most noted for his films' consistent financial successes and his ability to draw out exceptional performances from actors and actresses. The most significant aspects of his technical art, as reflected in film criticism, are his photography, talent for working with performers, and early use of location shooting. Within the dramatic dimension, Brown's outstanding contributions are his ability to adapt O'Neill's plays to the screen, talent in converting novels into films, skill in picturing sentimentality,

ability in re-creating time periods, and sensitivity in capturing the emotions of children. Critical reactions have also revealed that Brown's career was weakened by the poor screenplays that he was often assigned. Critics seldom dealt with the rhetorical and historical dimensions of film. Rhetorically, Brown's career is believed to be most noteworthy for his skill in subtly conveying the message of "Intruder in the Dust" (1949). Artistic license with historical facts and evasions of film censorship were characteristic methods by which Brown's films reflect the historical period in which they were made.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER		PAGE
I.	JUSTIFICATION	1
	Notes	4
II.	BIOGRAPHY	5
	Notes	19
III.	OVERVIEW OF CLARENCE BROWN'S STYLE AND REPUTATION AS VIEWED BY HIS CONTEMPORARIES AND BY MODERN FILM CRITICS	21
	Notes	32
IV.	TECHNICAL DIMENSION	35
	Photography	35
	Special Effects	39
	Outstanding Sequences	40
	Good and Bad Scenes	42
	Titles	46
	Tempo	47
	Filmic Quality	47
	Camera Movement	48
	Movement of People	50
	Location Shooting	50
	Techniques With Actors	51
	Soundtrack	54
	Color	55
	Notes	56

CHAPTER	PAGE
V. DRAMATIC DIMENSION	63
Notes	79
VI. RHETORICAL DIMENSION	85
Notes	90
VII. HISTORICAL DIMENSION	92
Notes	97
VIII. CONCLUSIONS	99
Note	106
BIBLIOGRAPHY	107
APPENDIX	123
VITA	126

CHAPTER I

JUSTIFICATION

Although the development of the motion picture is one of the few artistic movements that can be studied in its entirety, there is not yet a solid tradition of film scholarship. As Andrew Sarris, film historian and critic, argues in The American Cinema, there is a need to update film history.¹ Sarris is a leading advocate of the use of the auteur theory as the appropriate methodology for historical study of film. This theory recognizes the director as the author of a film. The director is believed to be the primary craftsman whose style and creativity give the movie its unique qualities. Auteur historians, therefore, study films by categorizing them by directors. This approach to film history is employed in this thesis. The director to be studied is Clarence Brown.

Clarence Brown made a significant contribution to film history, having directed 41 films, assisted in the direction of at least three others, produced and directed seven, and produced two. Although he worked for seven movie studios, the majority of his films were made for Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. During Brown's career, M-G-M became the largest, richest, and most productive studio. Because of its ability to pay high salaries, Metro boasted the best contract directors in the business, and Brown was considered their most inventive director.² During his long career, Brown directed many of the outstanding stars such as Rudolph Valentino, Marie Dressler, Greta Garbo, John Gilbert, Clark Gable, Joan

Crawford, James Stewart, Norma Shearer, Lionel Barrymore, Mickey Rooney, and many others. His career is marked as being one of the most successful during a time often called Hollywood's Golden Era.

Despite his obviously large contribution to film history, little is known of his work. Films Incorporated, in Rediscovering the American Cinema, classified him as an "unknown director." The book further points out, "Presently Clarence Brown is an ideal director for extensive rediscovery, research and analysis."³ Sarris classified him under the heading of "Subjects for Further Research." He clarified this categorization by stating, "These are the directors whose work must be more fully evaluated before any final determination of the American cinema is possible."⁴

The purpose of this study is to begin the research towards illuminating the contributions of Clarence Brown to film history. A close look at how film critics and scholars from his day to the present have evaluated Brown's work is a necessary initial step in documenting his career in the cinema.

There have been few previous scholarly studies of Clarence Brown. Two major articles have been written on Brown and his cinema career. The first, by Kevin Brownlow, appeared as a chapter in The Parade's Gone By.⁵ Harry Haun wrote an article on Brown which appeared in The Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine, July 2, 1972, and an expanded version of the article is being prepared for publication.⁶

In gathering research, the facilities of the University of Tennessee Library have been used extensively, including the papers of Clarence Brown donated to the Special Collections Section of the library.

The Louisiana State University Library, the University of Southwestern Louisiana Library, and the Houston Public Library have also been used in compiling references. Books on film and filmmakers as well as biographies and autobiographies of stars and movie craftsmen and executives have served as sources. Newspaper reviews, primarily from The New York Times and the New York Herald Tribune, have furnished criticisms of specific films. Periodicals such as Photoplay, Newsweek, Time, The Nation, The Commonweal, The New Republic, and others have also been used to gather movie reviews. The only sources largely unavailable were professional newspapers and periodicals. Many of these references were found in the Clarence Brown Collection, however. The sources that were used are felt to be relevant to the study because they are written for and reflect an analysis of the reactions of the mass audience, the same audience for which the movies were made. It was the reaction of the general public that most concerned filmmakers, particularly those such as Brown who worked under the profit structure of the studio system.

The study begins with a biographical sketch of Clarence Brown and a brief review of Brown's films. An overview of his style and reputation as viewed by his contemporaries and by modern-day film critics is given. The specific evaluations of Brown's films are organized according to the technical dimensions of his film art, the dramatic dimension, the rhetorical dimension, and the historical dimension. Finally, conclusions are advanced concerning the methods and accuracy of film criticism during Brown's career; critics' perceptions of the contribution Brown made to film history are discussed; and suggestions for further research are advanced.

Notes

¹Andrew Sarris, The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968 (New York: Dutton, 1968), p. 15.

²John Baxter, Hollywood in the Thirties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 17.

³James Leshy and William D. Routt, "Clarence Brown--An 'Unknown' Director," Rediscovering the American Cinema (n.p.: Films Incorporated, 1970), p. 14.

⁴Sarris, p. 227.

⁵Kevin Brownlow, "Clarence Brown," The Parade's Gone By (New York: Bonanza, 1968), pp. 137-153.

⁶Harry Haun, "The UT Grad Who Engineered Dreams," The Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine, 2 July 1972, pp. 5-8.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHY

Clarence Brown was born in Clinton, Massachusetts, on May 10, 1890. Both of his parents worked with cotton manufacturing; his father was a loom repairman and his mother, a weaver. The family moved from one town to another and finally settled in Knoxville, Tennessee, when Brown was 11 years old. After high school, Brown attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville; and in 1910 he received a double degree in mechanical and electrical engineering.

His father hoped that Clarence would go into cotton manufacturing, but Clarence's main interest was automobiles. Moline Auto Company hired him when he graduated. He later worked for the Stevens Duryea Company of Massachusetts. As a traveling expert mechanic, Brown met a dealer in Birmingham who had an agency for several important makes of cars. The dealer set him up in a subsidiary company, the Brown Motor Car Company, which sold Alco trucks, Stevens Duryeas, and Hudsons.

While working in Birmingham, Brown became interested in motion pictures. During 1913 and 1914, he began going to movies on his lunch hour. At that time, moving pictures in Birmingham were being shown in shooting galleries. Brown became especially interested in the products of Peerless Studios because he felt that they had a superior quality.

In 1915 Clarence Brown left the automobile industry for a career in the swiftly developing movie business. The stories as to how Brown got his first job in the cinema are conflicting. According to an early article in Vanity Fair and a more recent essay by Harry Haun, Brown

dropped all connections with the automobile agency and headed to Fort Lee, New Jersey, to meet Maurice Tourneur, the Peerless director whom Brown most admired.¹ Brown is reported by Kevin Brownlow to have stated that he went to New Jersey to see any one of the directors for Peerless: Frank Crane, Albert Capellani, Emile Chautard, or Maurice Tourneur.² Whether or not he went to Fort Lee specifically to see Maurice Tourneur, while there Brown overheard that Tourneur was looking for a new assistant director. After waiting all day, Brown approached Tourneur about the job. Although Tourneur was doubtful because of Brown's lack of experience, he gave him the job at 30 dollars a week.

There is still another story of how Brown broke into the film industry. This less romantic version is that Brown was on a business trip to New York when friends took him to New Jersey to watch a company make motion pictures. He was fascinated; and before the trip was over, he had landed the job as Maurice Tourneur's assistant.³

Regardless of how Brown first came to Fort Lee and the Peerless Studios, he did work as assistant to French director Maurice Tourneur for six years, interrupted only by a short term as an aviation instructor in World War I.

Brown learned the art of filmmaking from Tourneur, who as a director during the developing days of silent films made a significant contribution to American cinema.⁴ Tourneur was born in Paris in 1876. While still in France, he acquired a rich aesthetic background. He worked originally as an artist and studied under Rodin.⁵ He next became an actor, but as a result of a quarrel with the company head, he turned to acting in the French cinema and later took up direction for the Eclair

Company. In 1914 Eclair sent him to America to run their studios in Tucson. Since he was a pacifist and conscientious objector, Tourneur was happy to leave France at that time. Tourneur made his American directorial debut when World Film Company took over Eclair.⁶ "Mother," his first film, established him as a director with an original pictorial sense and as one of the first to take advantage of camera techniques and the use of shade and light.⁷ Tourneur came to be considered a master of the photographic art.⁸ By 1915, he was regarded as one of America's top directors due to the pictorial quality of his films and the clarity and speed of his narrative.⁹

Long before most others in the motion picture industry in America, Tourneur thought of the filmmaker as an artist. He is quoted as having said, "We are not mere photographers, we are artists. At least I hope so. We must put on the screen not literal reality, but an effect which will stimulate a mental and emotional reaction in the audience."¹⁰

Tourneur was against using the film for moralistic or propaganda purposes. He also did not believe in the star system because he felt there were no stars in real life, and he considered people neither very good nor very bad.¹¹ It is obvious from Brown's later career that these were two of Tourneur's teachings that did not stick with his student.

Tourneur's influence on the cinema was similar to the later influence of the German studios, but he was ever a Frenchman, and temperamentally he was much more idealistic than the German filmmakers. Tourneur wanted always to show lovely things on the screen, and he consistently got them--especially when Ben Carré designed his sets.

207
m
Eum
V
3
Maurice Tourneur's greatest limitation as a director was his tendency to think in terms of the theatre. He once said that he saw no value in sending a company to Central America to do a Central American drama. He felt the real artist could create the illusion of tropical America for the audience.¹³ Clarence Brown felt that Tourneur's main weakness was that he was cold. He often asked Brown to reshoot a scene so that it could gain warmth.¹⁴ Tourneur also did not like to shoot exteriors, and whenever possible, he would turn them over to Brown.¹⁵

After World War I, Tourneur's films lost some of their popularity due to the great prestige of D. W. Griffith and a new taste for snappy, sophisticated entertainment. The restrained and often dated manner of Tourneur's films made them seem slow to post-war audiences.¹⁶

Brown learned his art from working with Tourneur. He stated often that Maurice Tourneur was his God. He said of Tourneur, "I owe him everything I've got in the world. For me, he was the greatest man who ever lived. If it hadn't been for him, I'd still be fixing automobiles."¹⁷

Foremost among the skills Brown gained from Tourneur was the art of photography. Brown learned the use of a foreground to create depth; he learned the use of tinting and toning. The importance of editing and tempo also impressed Brown during his years as Tourneur's assistant. Originally, the director and cameraman did the editing of all films. Brown picked up the skill and became Tourneur's first editor and also wrote his titles. Perhaps Brown's most valuable experiences under

Tourneur were shooting his exteriors. While Tourneur shot in the studios, Brown would film the outside sequences. They worked with two units and would exchange casts.¹⁸

During the years with Maurice Tourneur, Clarence Brown gained competence as a filmmaker. In 1920 he directed his first film by himself. The story came from a San Bernadino newspaper article about a prisoner who painted drawings on his cell wall. Brown and John Gilbert wrote the script, and he shot it with an inexperienced crew. The picture was called "The Great Redeemer," and according to Brown, it proved successful and became the first of Metro's films to be screened on Broadway.¹⁹

Brown is credited as having co-directed two films with Tourneur in 1921, "Foolish Matrons" and "The Last of the Mohicans."²⁰ "Foolish Matrons" was a hit and called "Maurice Tourneur's latest and without doubt greatest picture."²¹ Although Tourneur was given credit for directing "The Last of the Mohicans," Brown directed practically the whole picture since, after two weeks of shooting, Tourneur was injured and confined to bed for three months.²² "The Last of the Mohicans" and Tourneur received great reviews.

There is an axiom among directors that assistant directors never become good directors. This did not prove true with Clarence Brown. When he left Maurice Tourneur, he went to work for Jules Brulatour. Under Brulatour, he made "Light in the Dark" (1922) with Hope Hampton and Lon Chaney. Brown's next picture was "Don't Marry for Money" (1923), made for Preferred. It featured House Peters and Rubye deRemer.

Brown then signed a contract with Universal and made five films, all hits. The first, "The Acquittal" (1923), was a mystery based on a play by Rita Weimer. "The Signal Tower" (1924) which followed, brought great praise from the critics. Brown adapted Kathleen Norris' story into a successful film, "Butterfly" (1924). Pauline Frederick starred in "Smouldering Fires" (1925), a film which later helped Brown to get a contract with Joe Schenck of United Artists. His final film at Universal, "The Goose Woman" (1925) with Louise Dresser, is still acclaimed today as an outstanding silent film.

United Artists gave Brown the opportunity to direct the great screen lover Rudolph Valentino in "The Eagle" (1925), one of Valentino's best performances. Brown's second film for United Artists, the comedy "Kiki" (1926), was a first for the star Norma Talmadge, who had not attempted comedy since her days with Vitagraph ten years earlier.²³

From United Artists, Brown signed with Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, where he was to stay for the rest of his cinema career and to become one of the top directors. It is fortunate for Brown and for M-G-M that Irving Thalberg did not hold a grudge. Earlier Thalberg had sworn that Brown would never work for M-G-M. It seems that Brown had bought the rights to "The Unholy Three," which Metro wanted. Brown sold it to them but at a huge profit.²⁴

Clarence Brown's first film for M-G-M was "Flesh and the Devil" (1926) with John Gilbert and Greta Garbo. This film sparked the beginning of two relationships--a long and profitable partnership between Garbo and her "Man Friday" Brown and a short and extremely publicized romance between Garbo and Gilbert. "The Trail of '98" (1928) was without

a doubt Brown's most difficult movie to shoot since it was done partially on location in the Rocky Mountains at an 11,600 feet elevation during the winter.

During 1929, three Clarence Brown films were released. The first, "A Woman of Affairs," was based on Michael Arlen's scandalous novel, The Green Hat, and it too exploited the Garbo-Gilbert romance by starring the two now somewhat disenchanted lovers. A second 1929 film, "Wonder of Woman," was almost complete when sound made its fast sweep through the film industry. Sound was quickly added to the last two reels of the picture. The last Brown movie of 1929, "Navy Blues," was a comedy starring William Haines.

As a sure sign of how highly Brown was respected at M-G-M, he was next assigned to direct Greta Garbo in her first talkie, "Anna Christie" (1930), based on Eugene O'Neill's play. Many great stars such as John Gilbert and Norma Talmadge had not survived their introductions to sound, and M-G-M was worried about a similar fate for Garbo, who not only had a very deep, throaty voice but also a thick Swedish accent. The property seemed just right for Garbo, especially since the character she would play was Swedish. With Brown's careful direction, "Anna Christie" was very successful, and the Swedish star made a smooth transition into sound. Later in 1930, Garbo and Brown were again teamed to make "Romance" with Gavin Gordon and Lewis Stone.

Still another Garbo picture, "Inspiration" (1931), this time co-starring Robert Montgomery, was directed by Brown the following year. In 1931 Brown also made a great contribution to the Hollywood legend in his choice of Clark Gable to play a gangster in the film "A Free Soul."

It was in this movie that Gable first came to the attention of the public and launched his image as a tough man who takes no nonsense from women. Clark Gable appeared in Brown's film, "Possessed," later the same year. This movie marked the beginning of another of Brown's successful partnerships with famous ladies of the screen, this one with Joan Crawford.

Joan Crawford and Robert Montgomery worked with Brown in 1932 on "Letty Lynton." Also that year, the director used his gift for picturing sentimentality in "Emma," a Marie Dressler film of an old servant's faithfulness to her employer's children. "The Son-Daughter" (1932), his following film with Helen Hayes and Ramon Novarro, was based around life among the Chinese in America.

Brown often directed Lionel Barrymore; in 1933 Barrymore appeared in both of his films. "Looking Forward" featured Barrymore and Lewis Stone in a story of an old British business rocked by the depression. "Night Flight" brought in still another Barrymore, John, along with an all-star cast of Clark Gable, Robert Montgomery, Helen Hayes, and Myrna Loy.

Nineteen thirty-four was the filmmaker's year with Joan Crawford. "Sadie McKee" starred Miss Crawford and Franchot Tone, whom she married both on and off the screen. The film "Chained" brought together Joan Crawford and Clark Gable again to form an unbeatable box office combination.

In 1935 Greta Garbo and Brown, under the production of David O. Selznick, made "Anna Karenina," adapted from Tolstoy's novel. Earlier Garbo had played the same part in a silent adaptation entitled, "Love," with John Gilbert. Garbo received great reviews for her performance, but

overall the movie was considered somewhat static. "Ah, Wilderness!," the following production in 1935, is agreed by most critics to be one of his best. Eugene O'Neill's play is adapted into a pleasingly sentimental story of American family life in the early nineteen hundreds.

Brown, in 1936, directed two star vehicle pictures. The first "Wife Versus Secretary" displayed the powerful combination of Clark Gable, Myrna Loy, and Jean Harlow and featured a story based around the eternal triangle. "The Gorgeous Hussy" (1936) starred Joan Crawford and was one of Brown's historical films. It centered around the life of Peggy Eaton, an innkeeper's daughter, who became unofficial first lady for Andrew Jackson.

"Conquest" (1937) was probably the director's most expensive production, costing more than three million dollars. Charles Boyer and Greta Garbo were Napoleon and his favorite mistress, Marie Walewski, in the spectacularly staged film.

"Of Human Hearts," made in 1938, returns Brown to one of his best themes, that of sentimental Americana. The film, featuring Walter Huston, James Stewart, and Beulah Bondi, vividly pictures frontier life in the Ohio Valley prior to the Civil War.

Clark Gable played a vaudeville dancer in Brown's 1939 picture "Idiot's Delight." It also starred Norma Shearer, who was gradually losing some of her popularity. She pushed for George Cukor to direct the film, but he was busy preparing to direct "Gone With the Wind."²⁵ That same year, M-G-M loaned Brown to Twentieth Century-Fox for the production of "The Rains Came" with Myrna Loy and Tyrone Power.

In 1940, biographical films of great men had come into vogue. Following M-G-M's production of "Young Tom Edison" with Mickey Rooney, Clarence Brown was put in charge of "Edison, the Man" with Spencer Tracy cast to play Edison. Although the first picture with Mickey Rooney was unsuccessful at the box office, Brown's film, as always, made money.²⁶

Brown tried his hand at comedy again in 1941 with "Come Live With Me," featuring James Stewart and Hedy Lamarr. This film is significant because it marked the beginning of his work as a producer. He both produced and directed "Come Live With Me" as he did six more of his movies. Brown also produced two other films, "The Secret Garden" (1949), which was directed by Fred W. Wilcox, and "Never Let Me Go" (1953), directed by Delmar Daves. Only two other directors of that period became producers, Sidney Franklin and King Vidor.²⁷

After "Come Live With Me," Brown teamed Clark Gable with Rosalind Russell in "They Met in Bombay" (1941), a somewhat illogical story with great money-making potential because of the two stars and the well-known director.

"The Human Comedy," written by William Saroyan and produced and directed by Brown in 1943, was one of M-G-M executive Louis Mayer's all-time favorite movies. Brown, in 1973, still considers it his own "favorite" film. It starred Mickey Rooney and a new child actor discovered by Brown, Jackie "Butch" Jenkins.

In 1942, M-G-M achieved considerable success with the pro-British film "Mrs. Miniver." In 1944 Brown was assigned to direct another film,

No he
wasn't

"The White Cliffs of Dover," designed to strengthen friendly relations with the British people. The stars were Irene Dunne and Alan Marshall.

"National Velvet" (1944) brought Brown back to the genre of stories built around the emotions of children, an area in which he showed considerable talent. It starred Mickey Rooney and a new child actress from England, Elizabeth Taylor. Based on the novel by Enid Bagnold, it tells the incredible story of a little girl whose obsession for horses, particularly one named The Pie, leads her to ride the winning horse in the Grand National Steeple Chase. Ann Revere, who played the girl's mother, won the Academy Award for Best Supporting Actress.

Brown's next film, "The Yearling" (1946), also dealt with the emotions of children. This adaptation of Marjorie Kinnan Rawlings' Pulitzer Prize-winning novel seemed an almost impossible task to the M-G-M studios. Victor Fleming began the picture in 1940 with Spencer Tracy and Anne Revere, but after three weeks gave up.²⁸ Fleming was replaced by King Vidor, but because of further production problems, the film was postponed and not resumed until it was assigned to Brown three years later.²⁹ Brown moved his company to the scrub country of Florida and with Gregory Peck, Jane Wyman, and Claude Jarman, Jr., a new child actor discovered by Brown, created a beautiful motion picture.

In 1947 Brown produced and directed "Song of Love" with Katharine Hepburn. Based on the life of composer Robert Schumann and his wife Clara, it was the only movie in which Brown worked extensively with music as an integral part of the narrative.

Nineteen forty-nine marked a change in Brown's style of filmmaking. "Intruder in the Dust," as produced and directed by Brown, greatly

resembled a documentary because of its realism. Based on the novel by William Faulkner, the film exposes racial hatred in the South. It was generously praised by critics, and Brown was given the British Academy Award for Best Director of 1949. Unfortunately, "Intruder in the Dust" came at the end of a long series of racial melodramas so few people realized its depth and integrity.³⁰ Moreover, the picture was poorly publicized and did not achieve financial success.³¹

Brown's following production, "To Please a Lady" (1950), brought him back to the star vehicle movie. He also produced this film starring Clark Gable and Barbara Stanwyck. Since the plot centered around car racing, Brown could once again call upon his early training with automobiles.

The following year, Brown produced and directed Paul Douglas in two pictures. The first, "Angels in the Outfield," showed Brown's talent with pure whimsy in a story based around the success achieved by the Pittsburgh Pirates with the help of a group of angels. It also starred Janet Leigh and Donna Corcoran, another child star discovered by Brown. "When in Rome" teamed Douglas and Van Johnson. The story centered around the two characters' trip to Rome during the Holy Season; Douglas played an escaped criminal, and Johnson, a priest.

In 1952 Brown directed one part of a six-part film, "It's a Big Country." The picture was an extremely sentimental look at life in the United States. It was speculated that studio boss Dore Shary came up with the idea for the picture to keep a group of contract actors busy.³²

Brown directed his last film in 1952. "Plymouth Adventure" was an historical story based on the pilgrims' trip to America, and it

starred Spencer Tracy. Larry Swindell, Tracy's biographer, felt that Brown retired after "Plymouth Adventure" with a feeling that he no longer belonged at M-G-M since most of the directors who started with Brown were dead or had moved elsewhere.³³ Brown claims, however, that he had told M-G-M seven years earlier, when he signed his last contract, that he would retire at the end of that contract.

Clarence Brown's career at M-G-M was marked by his relationship with dynamic executive Louis Mayer. Brown and Mayer were good friends, and Brown became Mayer's constant and devoted companion in later years. Norman Ziercold in The Moguls wrote, "For director Brown, Mayer could do no wrong. 'For me he was the second coming of Christ. I loved the man,' says Brown. After 26 years of close business association, the two men became intimate friends, confidants, traveling companions."³⁴

Brown also thought a great deal of the talents of the highly creative Irving Thalberg, who for years served as Mayer's second-in-command. Brown once stated that he could take an awful scene to Thalberg and, after 30 minutes, he would have worked it into the best scene in the picture.³⁵

There is little doubt that during his career, Clarence Brown did a great deal to strengthen Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer claimed the top contract directors, and Brown was one of their best. With the exception of "The Goose Woman," Brown's best films were created for M-G-M, including "Flesh and the Devil," "Anna Christie," "Romance," "Ah, Wilderness," "National Velvet," "The Yearling," and "Intruder in the Dust."³⁶

After his retirement, Clarence Brown gave up motion pictures entirely. He and his wife, the former Marian Ruth Spies, now live in a cottage on the El Dorado Country Club. Brown reported recently that he has seen two pictures since his retirement. He avoids seeing movies because "the old instincts start working and I want to go racing off and get back to work."³⁷

Notes

¹Jim Tully, "Clarence Brown: An Estimate of the Foremost Exponent of the Newer School of Screen Directors," Vanity Fair, 30 (April 1928), 79; Harry Haun, "The UT Grad Who Engineered Dreams," The Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine, 2 July 1972, p. 6.

²Kevin Brownlow, "Clarence Brown," The Parade's Gone By (New York: Bonanza, 1968), p. 140.

³"Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's The Yearling," n.p., n.d. (a souvenir program at the World Premier Engagement, Cathay Circle Theatre, Los Angeles, California), p. 12, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, F.

⁴Clair Johnston, in A Concise History of the Cinema, ed. Peter Cowie (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1971), p. 36.

⁵David Robinson, Hollywood in the Twenties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 90.

⁶Robinson, pp. 90-91.

⁷Johnston, p. 36.

⁸Tully, p. 79.

⁹Robinson, p. 91.

¹⁰Robinson, p. 91.

¹¹Edward Wagenknecht, The Movies in the Age of Innocence (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1962), p. 212.

¹²Wagenknecht, p. 212.

¹³Wagenknecht, p. 211.

¹⁴Brownlow, p. 153.

¹⁵Wagenknecht, p. 211.

¹⁶Robinson, p. 91.

¹⁷Brownlow, p. 138.

¹⁸Brownlow, pp. 140-141.

- ¹⁹Robinson, p. 108.
- ²⁰"Tourneur Film Great: Sets New Pace for Makers of Human Dreams," Daily Times, n.d., Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.
- ²²Brownlow, p. 142.
- ²³Jack Spears, Hollywood: The Golden Era (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 133.
- ²⁴John Baxter, Hollywood in the Thirties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 17.
- ²⁵Bosley Crowther, The Lion's Share (New York: Dutton, 1957), p. 271.
- ²⁶Larry Swindell, Spencer Tracy... A Biography [sic] (New York: World, 1969), p. 166.
- ²⁷Francis Marion, Off With Their Heads (New York: Macmillan, 1972), p. 320.
- ²⁸Haun, p. 8.
- ²⁹King Vidor, A Tree is a Tree (New York: Harcourt, 1953), pp. 246-250.
- ³⁰Pauline Kael, Kiss Kiss Bang Bang (Boston: Little, 1968), p. 284.
- ³¹Crowther, p. 292.
- ³²"The New Pictures: It's A Big Country," Time, 28 Jan. 1952, p. 98.
- ³³Swindell, p. 223.
- ³⁴Norman Ziercold, The Moguls (New York: Coward-McCaun, 1969), p. 302.
- ³⁵Philip French, The Movie Moguls (Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1969), p. 59.
- ³⁶Sarris, p. 228.

CHAPTER III

OVERVIEW OF CLARENCE BROWN'S STYLE AND REPUTATION

AS VIEWED BY HIS CONTEMPORARIES

AND BY MODERN FILM CRITICS

Film critics have been consistent in their general evaluation of Clarence Brown's career. Dwight Macdonald summarized Brown's reputation as a director when he referred to him as "high powered Clarence ('Never Made a Flop') Brown."¹ Many film critics and scholars, however, have taken a closer look at Brown's films and have seen more than just the financial success that characterized most of his pictures.

*silent +
to
6-2* Modern-day critics look back on Brown's career as notable because of his smooth transition from silent to sound films. Some directors such as Tod Browning could not transfer their skills to directing sound; others such as Monta Bell and Mal St. Clair descended to making minor comedies after sound was introduced. Besides Brown, the directors whose mastery carried over to sound films were Sidney Franklin, Rowland V. Lee, Allan Dwan, E. H. Griffith, Jack Conway, Sam Wood, Frank Tuttle, and Harry Beaumont.²

Brown's career was always dominated by the studio system of film production and the push toward money-making films. Early critics observed Brown's talent for producing pictures with box-office draw. In 1928 Jim Tully noted that Brown had the ability to combine box office with art. He pointed out that Brown's last eleven films had been well received by the general public as well as the discriminating critics.³

Hollywood Spectator in 1936 said of Brown, "Clarence Brown's directorial activities cover a wide range of story material, 'Anna Karenina,' 'Ah, Wilderness!,' 'Wife Versus Secretary,' and now 'The Gorgeous Hussy,' all far apart in theme and setting, yet possessing one important thing in common--the element of box-office success."⁴

Perhaps Brown's consistent financial success can be explained in part by his stress on audience appeal. During the 1946 premiere showing of "The Yearling," M-G-M publicized Brown as the director holding the record for pictures with outstanding audience appeal.⁵ Brown had a higher opinion of audiences than most of his contemporaries.⁶ He once said, "'If you can ever get the average man inside a theatre to see a high-class movie, he comes out satisfied.'"⁷ When watching one of his films at a preview, Brown was always very sensitive to audience reaction. He could read the audience by their actions. Whenever Brown heard a cough, he would listen more carefully; and if the cough spread to half a dozen people or more, he knew there was something wrong with the scene because it had lost the audience's interest.⁸

Another factor that contributed to the consistent financial success of his pictures was Brown's fame and popularity as a director. He was one of the comparatively few directors whose name itself had box-office strength.⁹ Considering the film criticism and comment of the time, this is a significant achievement. Film audiences and reviewers during Brown's career were much more concerned with the film's stars and story than they were with the directorial techniques.

Because of his box-office pull, as recognized by his contemporaries, Brown was a very successful director by the standards of the studio system.

A modern British film scholar, Paul Rotha, feels that Clarence Brown, along with directors King Vidor, Josef von Sternberg, Rex Ingram, and James Cruze, could have made much better films if they had not had to work under a studio and the subsequent domination of a production committee. Within Brown's work there are flashes of real cinematic art, but these are found in between long periods of "picture sense" as demanded by producers.¹⁰ Other modern American critics in looking back at Brown's cinema career note that he was always a successful "commercial" director, but that he was more. Brown added an artistic touch that brought his films above the average studio-dominated picture.¹¹

There is little doubt that money-minded executives like Louis Mayer put demands on Clarence Brown and all studio directors. Brown has commented on his constant fight with studio scheduling. Despite pressure from the front office, he would work until he got what he wanted; and because he always produced a good film, the bosses put up with him.¹²

Because Brown's career was studio-dominated, and directors shot the scripts they were assigned, his films vary greatly in structure and content.¹³ In planning filming assignments, studios often found directors who had special talents and took advantage of these assets. Along with George Cukor, Brown was singled out as a director with an outstanding ability to handle stars, and because of this, was assigned a number of stageplays to be adapted to the screen.¹⁴ This talent also caused his filmography to be filled with pictures designed as vehicles for the studio's currently reigning stars.

Brown's ability to work with actors was noted by the players themselves as well as by the studio executives. The stars Brown worked with felt great confidence in his ability. Toward the end of Brown's career, Movie Play asserted that the stars who knew Brown well, such as Gregory Peck, Clark Gable, Jane Wyman, Greer Garson, Walter Pidgeon, Barbara Stanwyck, Paul Douglas, Van Johnson, Mickey Rooney, and many others, would swear by his judgment and advice.¹⁵

Alexander Walker has been lavish in his praise of Brown's ability to work with great actors and actresses of his time. Walker states that Brown had an instinctive ability to design a scene so that it would bring the star's personality to the screen. He further states, "Brown's rapport with some of his stars seems to have been like that of a water diviner to the source of supply: a baffling but persuasive way of bringing forth what he senses in them."¹⁶

Brown always had a special way of bringing out the best in the great actresses of the screen. He soon came to be known as a woman's director because of his work at Universal where he directed Pauline Frederick in "Smouldering Fires" and Louise Dresser in "The Goose Woman."¹⁷ This reputation was substantiated by his work with Greta Garbo and later with Joan Crawford.

So remarkably effective was the partnership between Brown and Garbo that he was assigned to direct seven of her pictures, "Flesh and the Devil" (1926), "A Woman of Affairs" (1929), "Anna Christie" (1930), "Romance" (1930), "Inspiration" (1931), "Anna Karenina" (1935), and "Conquest" (1937). He soon became known as "Garbo's Man Friday."¹⁸ In 1935 an early film critic pointed out that Brown seemed to have an uncanny

understanding of how to handle Miss Garbo and how to transfer her art to the screen.¹⁹ In Brown's first film with Garbo, "Flesh and the Devil," he and cameraman William Daniels set the Garbo style that was to become her insignia. They photographed the Swedish star to emphasize her high arched eyebrows and high forehead. High key lighting was used to whiten Garbo's face and to force out her strong, almost masculine bone structure. Daniels eventually became known as Garbo's cameraman just as Brown was known as her director.²⁰

Brown directed Joan Crawford five times: in "Possessed" (1931), "Letty Lynton" (1932), "Sadie McKee" (1934), "Chained" (1934), and "The Gorgeous Hussy" (1936). Miss Crawford said of Clarence Brown, "Personally, I feel that when Clarence Brown is directing me there is no doubt of the best results. We are attuned in spirit. He knows exactly how I will react to any given situation, and makes all due allowances for my idiosyncracies. For instance, he knows that when I have worked myself up into a crying scene I can't stop blubbering for hours afterward, so he is understanding enough to schedule subsequent scenes in which I do not appear. She went on to comment that understandings like she had with Brown were vital to the human relationships in the art of filmmaking.²¹

Despite his reputation for directing women, Brown worked well with actors also. In "The Eagle" (1925), he brought out one of Valentino's greatest performances.²²

Brown directed Clark Gable more times than any other director.²³ His Gable pictures include "A Free Soul" (1931), "Possessed," "Night Flight" (1933), "Chained", "Wife Versus Secretary" (1936), "Idiot's Delight" (1939), "They Met in Bombay" (1941), and "To Please a Lady"

(1950). It has already been pointed out that it was Brown who first discovered Gable's unique screen personality.

It is surprising that in assessing Brown's reputation, no screen critic has mentioned his unique talent in bringing out the emotions of child actors such as Jackie "Butch" Jenkins in "The Human Comedy" (1943), Elizabeth Taylor in "National Velvet" (1944), and Claude Jarman, Jr., in "The Yearling" (1946). Film historians do give note to Brown's abilities in discovering fresh child talent. Donna Corcoran, who worked with Brown in "Angels in the Outfield" (1951) and went on to enhance many other pictures, was spotted by Brown in the M-G-M studios where her father was a maintenance director. On a whim, Brown tested her. After "Angels in the Outfield," Brown said of Donna, "I've never seen a beginning juvenile with more promise."²⁴ Butch Jenkins was the son of a New York stage actress, Doris Dudley. Brown discovered five-year-old Butch on the beach with his mother and used him in two of his movies, "The Human Comedy" and "National Velvet."²⁵ The story of how Brown found Claude Jarman, Jr., to play Jody in "The Yearling" is an interesting one. Brown knew the vital importance of just the right boy for the part; he searched the schools in seven major southern cities. In each school, he would get permission to visit the classrooms pretending to be a building inspector, so that he could observe the children. Claude Jarman, Jr., was found in a Nashville fifth grade class. For his role as Jody, Jarman won a special Academy Award as Outstanding Child Actor of 1946.²⁶ He later appeared in Brown's "Intruder in the Dust" and in films for John Ford and other directors.

Brown had no rigid policy for handling stars. He felt that each player had to be dealt with differently. Because Brown considered each player an artist, he felt that a director's position demanded tact and, at times, inspiration. He approached directing stars as a give-and-take situation requiring friendly cooperation with players from rehearsal to filming.²⁷ Brown once stated that he would never impose a performance on an actor. He always expected his stars to know what they were doing, including knowing the lines and scenes better than the director. Brown felt that good acting was especially necessary in silent films. The silent actors did not know what would be done until they were on the set; everything was transmitted by the director. Because Brown wanted to take advantage of everything the player knew, he would usually first rehearse the scene without direction so that he could get the actors' interpretations. If their interpretations differed from his, Brown felt a compromise should be reached in order to get the best scenes possible.²⁸ When he discussed a scene with an actor, Brown would take him to the side and speak to him in a low voice. While shooting, he would make few comments. Brown used a different technique with child actors. He would actually act out the scene for them and have them imitate him. In recent discussions, he revealed the way he directed Butch Jenkins in a scene in "The Human Comedy." The scene was an important one in which Butch comes to learn the meaning of fear. He is standing in front of a store window and is startled by a mechanical man. To get the startled reaction, Brown shot off a gun behind Butch.

Brown was concerned with more than performances. He also knew the importance of lighting, scene composition, and editing. A trademark

/ of Brown's pictures was always imaginative visual values. Brown felt he owed his photographic skill to Maurice Tourneur.²⁹

During the silent film era, Tully praised Brown's innovative photographic technique because he was one of the first directors to discard the repeated usage of close-ups. The close-up had been used a great deal by Griffith; and to Tully, at least, it seemed that Griffith and other directors felt that when in doubt, use a close-up.³⁰ This quality did not stay with Brown; his later films, particularly those designed as star vehicles, are filled with close-ups.

Clarence Brown's films exhibit depth of photography. Hollywood Spectator praised this quality and went on to explain Brown's technique for achieving depth. Brown realized that the screen is a pictorial art. He never shot his characters against a wall; by putting them in a foreground, a depth was created behind them.³¹ For greater depth, Brown would also usually have activity going on behind his actors. He knew that the screen's greatest advantage over the stage is that, on the screen, the area behind the actors widens until its rear limit is reached; and on the stage, the space narrows. In a movie theatre, every member of the audience has the same perspective; while in the play theatre, each has his own line of vision. As Brown moved his characters to the front of the picture, the picture value behind them widened, and this gave his audience a lot more to look at. Moving the characters away from the wall also helped enhance the beauty of Brown's leading ladies because it permitted back lighting.³²

During the thirties, Brown's most frequent cameraman was William Daniels. The Brown-Daniels team possessed a strong working understanding

that created great visual results. Cameramen of the 1930's were professionals, and few of their fellow workers could correct their work; subsequently, they left their mark on the films they made more so than most other film technicians.³³ One of the most notable of Brown's films shot by Daniels is "Flesh and the Devil."

An important part of Brown's photographic technique was lighting. Because of his emphasis on good lighting, he developed a special technique for shooting outdoor scenes. With "The Last of the Mohicans" (1921), he began to shoot exteriors only before ten a.m. and after three p.m. Between those times, he felt that the camera could not get depth since, on black and white film, depth can only be achieved with backlight or three-quarter light. A fill light was used to get a good photographic quality on the face. Thus, Brown began scheduling exterior shooting between four a.m. and ten a.m. and between three p.m. and six p.m. In color films, Brown could give up this demanding schedule because with color, the depth was always achieved since, as the scene went into infinity, the color got weaker even with flat lighting.³⁴

Editing and tempo also meant a great deal to Brown. He first began taking the trouble to seek the elusive art of effective tempo when he edited for Maurice Tourneur. Timing was important to him because of his engineering degrees and his precise work with measurements.³⁵ Very little editing was required in Brown's early silent films. The sequences of his stories always fit together, and his editors commented that so precise was his shooting of film that they could tell where to cut. Never was more than one thousand feet cut from a Brown silent picture.

Directors like Chaplin would shoot five hundred thousand feet of film to cut to eight thousand for a finished picture.³⁶

The final area of general critical comment is Brown's dramatic achievements, particularly the area of his story-telling technique. Early critics praised the smoothness of his story telling.³⁷ Tully said, "Brown has an intuitive sense of drama always under restraint. Before his cameras turn, he visualizes all scenes."³⁸ The smooth, effortless pace set by Brown's narrative is in part attributed to Brown's geographical planning of his sets. The rooms are perfectly furnished, and the doors and archways are wide enough to make entrances and exits easy. This facilitates a smoothness in the movements of characters and a grace in the physical action that carries the story.³⁹

Brown always believed the story to be the main essential of a movie.⁴⁰ In 1952 Brown stated his philosophy toward the screen story: "'The deeper meaning of a man's life and experience upon earth is proving to be good "screen," providing the story doesn't pull a long face.'" He went on to say that the basic theme of a good story is always the triumph of good over evil. He also believed that a successful story must have a serious message told with a light touch.⁴¹

Brown's stories are colored with romantic sentimentality. In 1939 Lewis Jacobs called Clarence Brown and Frank Borzage the "screen's leading romanticists."⁴² When Brown was making "To Please a Lady" in 1950, he said that he was glad to be returning to a romantic theme. He felt that one of the problems with contemporary film stories was that there was not enough love since the love story had always been the backbone of the motion picture industry.⁴³

Probably the most effective vein for Brown's sentimentality was the Americana theme as displayed in films such as "Ah, Wilderness!" and "Of Human Hearts." In Hollywood in the Thirties, John Baxter wrote, "Brown was the embodiment of canny 19th century rural America. His films reflect a passionate but controlled response to people and places; the suspicion and foresight which have made him today a rich man show themselves in his work. Like Whitman, he hears America singing; but does not choose to sing himself."⁴⁴

A final dramatic achievement was Brown's reality of settings. Brown always studied closely the locale of the picture he was going to direct. The setting for the 1926 film "Flesh and the Devil" was Germany. Prior to the film, Brown had never visited Germany, but his realistic sets were praised by Emil Jannings, a German actor.⁴⁵ In creating the setting for a picture, Brown had the M-G-M studios and apparatus at his disposal. In the pictures, "Ah, Wilderness!," "The Yearling," and "Intruder in the Dust," Brown achieved realism by shooting large portions of the films on location. Location shooting was very rare when these movies were made.

Brown's career, going from his first silent picture, "The Great Redeemer" in 1920, to his last film, "Plymouth Adventure" in 1952, was a very successful one. Although critics of his day and up until the present have had favorable general reactions to Brown's work, very little has been written about his 32 year filmmaking career.

Notes

¹Dwight Macdonald, Dwight Macdonald on Movies (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969), p. 93.

²Paul Rotha, The Film Till Now (Hamlyn House, England: Hamlyn, 1967), p. 493.

³Jim Tully, "Clarence Brown: An Estimate of the Foremost Exponent of the Newer School of Screen Direction," Vanity Fair, 30 (April 1928), 79.

⁴"How Clarence Brown Directs," Hollywood Spectator, 11 (Sept. 12, 1936), 10.

⁵"Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer's The Yearling," n.p., n.d. (a souvenir program at the World Premier Engagement, Cathay Circle Theatre, Los Angeles, California), p. 12, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, F.

⁶"New Picture: The Human Comedy," Time 22 March 1943, p. 56.

⁷"New Picture," p. 56.

⁸Kevin Brownlow, "Clarence Brown," The Parade's Gone By (New York: Bonanza, 1968), p. 152.

⁹"The Men Behind the Stars: Clarence Brown," Movie Play, 41 (July 1952), 41.

¹⁰Rotha, pp. 189, 197.

¹¹David Robinson, Hollywood in the Twenties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 108; John Baxter, Hollywood in the Thirties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 104; George Sadoul, Dictionary of Film Makers (Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972), p. 31.

¹²Brownlow, p. 152.

¹³Harry Haun, "The UT Grad Who Engineered Dreams," The Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine, 2 July 1972, p. 5.

¹⁴Gerald Mast, A Short History of the Movies (New York: Pegasus, 1971), p. 280.

¹⁵"The Men," p. 94.

¹⁶Alexander Walker, Stardom: The Hollywood Phenomenon (New York: Stein & Day, 1970), pp. 304, 147.

- ¹⁷Haun, p. 6.
- ¹⁸John Bainbridge, Garbo (New York: Holt, 1971), p. 260.
- ¹⁹Mildred Martin, Philadelphia Inquirer, quoted in "On the Current Screen," Literary Digest, 21 Sept. 1935, p. 21.
- ²⁰Baxter, pp. 17-18.
- ²¹Joan Crawford, "The Job of Keeping at the Top," Saturday Evening Post, 17 June 1933, p. 14.
- ²²Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968 (New York: New York Times and Arno, 1970), I, 282; "The Men," p. 94; Rotha, p. 198.
- ²³Haun, p. 7.
- ²⁴Marc Best, Those Endearing Young Charms (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1971), p. 45.
- ²⁵Best, p. 134.
- ²⁶Haun, p. 8.
- ²⁷"The Men," p. 41.
- ²⁸Brownlow, p. 151-152.
- ²⁹Brownlow, p. 138.
- ³⁰Tully, p. 79.
- ³¹"How Clarence," p. 10.
- ³²"How Clarence," p. 10.
- ³³Baxter, p. 12.
- ³⁴Brownlow, pp. 142, 144.
- ³⁵Brownlow, p. 141.
- ³⁶Tully, p. 79.
- ³⁷Tully, p. 79; "How Clarence," p. 10.
- ³⁸Tully, p. 79.
- ³⁹"How Clarence," p. 10.

⁴⁰Lewis Jacobs, The Rise of the American Film (New York: Harcourt, 1939), p. 492.

⁴¹Omar Garrison, "'Good-Over-Evil' Film Wins Favor," The Mirror, 16 Feb. 1952, p. 10.

⁴²Jacobs, p. 492.

⁴³Bob Thomas, "Clarence Brown, Specialist in Film Romance, Picks 'Greatest Lovers,'" (unidentified newspaper article), n.d., Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, D.

⁴⁴Baxter, pp. 20-21.

⁴⁵Tully, p. 79.

CHAPTER IV

TECHNICAL DIMENSION

In examining the technical dimension of Clarence Brown's film art, specific criticisms of each of his films have been used. These critical comments are arranged topically, and each topic is organized in the chronological order of the films.

Photography

The most consistently praised aspect of Brown's technical skill is his photography. He has stated that he owes this skill to Maurice Tourneur. More favorable comment is found on his early films than on the films later in his career, particularly those that served as star vehicles. In summarizing commentary on his photography, critical reactions to his camera technique, lighting, and trick effects will be noted.

It has been previously pointed out that Jim Tully praised Brown's camera placement in his silent films because of his effective rather than superfluous use of the close-up.¹ In Brown's first Garbo film, "Flesh and the Devil" (1926), he made exciting use of the close-up in establishing the sultry love scenes between Greta Garbo and John Gilbert.² Brown's third Garbo film, her first talkie, "Anna Christie" (1930), has been criticized for a preponderance of medium and medium-close shots. There were also many long shots and some close-ups as Brown cut from one actor to the other.³ As reported in Hollywood Spectator, a very innovative and difficult sustained close-up shot was achieved in "The

Gorgeous Hussy" (1936). Joan Crawford and Melvin Douglas had broken their engagement due to political differences; neither wants to look at the other, so they stand back to back. Cameraman George Folsey's composition cut the two characters off at the waist. In a continuous shot he picked up one character then the other. The focusing was very difficult because the camera shifted from face to face, and when one face is visible the back of the head of the other is seen. For each shift, a change of focus was required while the camera was in action, but neither player is ever out of focus. To the critic's knowledge, a shot of this kind had never been done before.⁴ On the other hand, Bosley Crowther was very critical of the "mawkish" visual element in "Song of Love" (1947). He disliked the continued use of close-ups, particularly of Katharine Hepburn, in order to get the most "tear-drenching effects."⁵

"Flesh and the Devil," photographed by William Daniels, was noted for its use of camera angles. The effective camera angles are different from either customary German or American methods.⁶ The film has been compared to German-made "Variety." Tully felt that, unlike those in "Variety," photographed by the outstanding German cameraman Karl Freund, the camera angles in "Flesh and the Devil" were used for dramatic results, not optical novelty.⁷ Brown's camera placement in "The Human Comedy" (1943) was judged to be very imaginative. The audience saw Ithaca, California, through the eyes of Ulysses, a five-year-old boy. To achieve this effect, cameraman Harry Stradling held his camera at the child's eye level.⁸ Another unique method of camera placement that was used in "To

"Please a Lady" (1950). In order to get the highly praised racing sequences, Brown attached the camera to race cars.⁹

Brown facilitated the production of two of his films by using more than one camera at a time. In "Anna Christie" two cameras were used for many of the scenes so that close-ups and medium shots could be taken at the same time.¹⁰ In another instance Brown helped Lionel Barrymore to win an Oscar in 1931 for his role in "A Free Soul" (1931). In his autobiography Barrymore credits the Oscar to Brown because of his shooting technique in Barrymore's last, very dramatic scene, the one that did the most to win him the Award. Barrymore was extremely worried about the difficulty of the required performance. The first time he did the scene, he was fantastic; after he finished, the actors and extras on the set cried "Bravo." Ordinarily a scene is shot several times to get various close-ups, medium shots, and long shots; and Barrymore feared he could not give as good a performance again. He did not have to; Brown had placed eight cameras on him during the first shooting so that all the necessary shots were taken at one time.¹¹

Lighting is a very essential consideration for a photographer. Many of Clarence Brown's films were singled out for the artistry of their lighting techniques. Brown used light to form some powerful and beautiful effects in his first film, "The Great Redeemer" (1920).¹² Cameraman Charles J. Van Enger created considerable atmosphere when he lit the prison scenes so that the bars would cast shadows.¹³ Van Enger along with Philip R. DuBois were the cameramen for "The Last of the Mohicans" (1921). In this film, lights and shadows were again skillfully arranged for exciting effects.¹⁴ A New York Times film reviewer complimented a lighting

achievement in "The Acquittal" (1923). For the first time in many pictures, the morning sun is realistically shown on the walls of the corridor. The reviewer said it made him think of breakfast.¹⁵ The lighting of "Anna Christie" helped betray the gloomy nature of O'Neill's play.¹⁶ In "The Gorgeous Hussy" Brown's back lighting helped to make Joan Crawford look more beautiful.¹⁷

The spectacularly staged production of "Conquest" (1937) was criticized in every area except screen artistry. Two special lighting techniques were used in this Garbo-Boyer film. A soft lighting gave Garbo a new femininity; however, this new image was not popular with her fans.¹⁸ Ernest Lindgren noted that an especially powerful symbolic lighting effect was created in one scene in which Garbo, playing Marie Walewski, comes to Charles Boyer, Napoleon, at night. He is giving instructions to his officers and does not notice her. The faces of the people in the room are only half lit and shadows are cast on the wall by candles in a low candelabra. On one wall is a map of Europe. As Napoleon paces back and forth, he throws up his hands to emphasize his words; at that instant, there is a shot of the map of Europe, and across it lies Napoleon's grasping shadow.¹⁹

In the early years of filmmaking, critics and audiences were especially impressed by trick photographic techniques. Guy Price, reviewing "The Great Reedemer" (1920) for the Los Angeles Evening Herald, was excited by the reality of the trick photography such as double exposures and subjective shots.²⁰

Special Effects

Brown's films were often commended for their outstanding special effects. Critics noted Brown's treatment of the weather on three occasions. In "The Last of the Mohicans," he used smokepots to create the illusion of sunrays striking through the mist. For a rainstorm in the forest, a fire engine and hose were used. Clouds normally would not show up on old ortho film, but Brown used filters to pick them up.²¹ The only thing most critics commented favorably on in "The Rains Came" (1939) was the weather effects. Brown captured "a magnificent sequence of earthquakes and flood that is equal to the best Hollywood-made catastrophes."²² "The Plymouth Adventure" (1951) also contained an outstandingly pictured storm at sea.²³

Another commended effect was photographed by cameraman Ben Reynolds in "The Signal Tower" (1924). A beautiful scene was achieved by a five a.m. shooting of a locomotive climbing up a gradient with the sun coming up and the train's steam floating among the trees.²⁴ "Flesh and the Devil" contains a montage effect that showed Gilbert's anxiousness to return home to see Garbo after three years away. The scene begins with Gilbert on horseback; the beating of the hoofs are synchronized with Garbo's character's name, "Felicitas." Short cuts of the title are shown over the picture. Gilbert then travels by a steamer, and the pistons seem to say, "Felicitas." Garbo's face is brought in with a double exposure. Gilbert next takes a train, and the audience sees him become more excited about seeing her. As the method of transportation becomes faster so do the cuts.²⁵ The duel scene in "Flesh and the Devil" was made more effective by a special effect imitated from

German technique. It was staged in silhouettes.²⁶ The two men walk apart out of the picture; there is a puff of smoke; the scene dissolves to a hat shop where Garbo is trying on a mourning hat; she has a slight smile on her face so that the audience knows her lover had killed her husband.²⁷ Another unique technique was used in "Night Flight" (1933). Although William Froy, film reviewer for The Nation, felt that the photography of "Night Flight" was generally unenterprising, he liked the way that the electric bulbs on the manager's desk dissolve into shots of the fliers over mountains or sea.²⁸ In "Anna Karenina" (1935) Brown made Frederic March's first glance of Greta Garbo very exciting by having Garbo come through the steam blowing from the train that she is leaving.²⁹ Variety complimented a montage created for "The Rains Came."³⁰ Cameraman Robert Surtes created the effect of sharply realistic detail in the greatly praised film, "Intruder in the Dust" (1949).³¹ This effect helped to make the film appear much like a documentary.

Outstanding Sequences

Critics have also pointed out several excellent shooting sequences within Brown's films. The Fort William Henry massacre episode in "The Last of the Mohicans" was thrilling to the audiences of the twenties. Another of the outstanding sequences in the film revolved around the heroine's pursuit by the bad Indian, Mague, and her eventual fall to her death from a cliff.³² The near train crash in "The Signal Tower" was well pictured, but it lacked reality because miniature train cars were used. When they fall over the cliff, they do not smash or buckle into each other as would real cars.³³ The thrilling flight scenes, showing

airplanes flying through fog and being blown out to sea during a storm, made Mordaunt Hall term "Night Flight," "probably the most authentic flying story that has come to the screen."³⁴ Elmer Dwyer and Charles Marshall were hired by producer David O. Selznick especially to do the aerial photography. Although Frank S. Nugent did not give "Conquest" a good overall review, he did comment on the photographic splendor of such scenes as the cossack raid on the Walewski estate, the ball at the Ponialowski palace, the rendezvous in the Finckenstein castle, the view of the retreat from Moscow, and the supper in the Hapsburg palace.³⁵ An early critic praised a sequence in "Ah, Wilderness!" (1935) for its brilliant direction. Lindon, the heartbroken son, is out later than he should be, and a nervous family waits up for him. There is no real action and the episode is one of the longest in the picture, but it never loses audience interest.³⁶ The exciting racing sequence in "National Velvet" (1944) was compared in excellence to those in the extremely expensive, successful production of "Ben Hur" (1927).³⁷ On the other hand, James Agee criticized Brown's direction of the race. He felt the race should have been shot subjectively, through the little girl's eyes as she rode. He also pointed out the unrealistic portrayal of the jockeys, who played none of their usual professional tricks. Agee also criticized Brown because in order to show the girl's weakness in comparison to the professional riders, he made the jockeys look more like professional football players.³⁸

The bear hunt scenes in "The Yearling" (1946) were praised because they captured a real warmth of nature and exhibited expert shooting and editing.³⁹ "Intruder in the Dust" impressed audiences with the scenes

of the crowd gathering to await the lynching. Martin Quigley, Jr., and Richard Gertner described them as "one of the most horrible, as well as the most gripping, sequences that has ever been recorded in an 'entertainment' motion picture."⁴⁰ As the townspeople gather, a loudspeaker plays jazz; children eat ice cream; and a group of men play cards. In "To Please a Lady," Brown's numerous racing sequences achieve a thrilling, documentary effect.⁴¹ Cameraman Paul C. Vogel shot backgrounds of actual baseball games in the Pittsburgh Pirates stadium to give realism to "Angels in the Outfield" (1951).⁴² Newsweek praised "When in Rome's" (1951) detailed tour of Rome during the holy year, but said that this photographic sequence, shot by William Daniels, was the only worthwhile thing in the film.⁴³

Good and Bad Scenes

In viewing Clarence Brown's films, it is interesting to know which scenes critics have pointed out as exceptionally good and those which they have labeled as bad. Brown's first film, "The Great Redeemer," centered around the religious conversion of a criminal because of a life-like drawing of the crucifixion on a cell wall. The scene of this miraculous event was praised as faultless by one critic.⁴⁴ Another felt it was good until it was weakened by all of the prison keepers rushing in to see the vision.⁴⁵ "The Goose Woman" (1925) contained a well-developed scene in which the woman's son is being administered the third degree. Instead of directly showing the investigators' brutality, the cruelty is shown by concentrating on small details that played on the victim's nerves. One detective persistently cracks peanuts; one files his nails;

another clinks coins; and all the while, there is a constant dripping of water in the sink.⁴⁶

The comedy, "Kiki" (1926), although not generally well received by critics, did contain several scenes which critics thought were very funny. Norma Talmadge, as a clumsy chorus girl, falls off the stage and into a bass drum and then climbs back on stage to take a bow, much to the disapproval of the star, whose act is ruined. In another delightful episode, Kiki, despite a very tempting situation, manages to keep her virtue.⁴⁷ The totally inept dancing girl brings laughs again when she gets out of line in the chorus and is constantly kicked by the other dancers and later when she drinks a little too much champagne.⁴⁸ Another comic scene in "Kiki" in which she pretends to have a cataleptic fit, was labeled "tiresome and ludicrous."⁴⁹

An effective scene in "Flesh and the Devil" changed the ritual of communion into a sensual act. As she drinks, Garbo turns the communion cup around so her lips can touch the same side as her lover's. Brown thus defeated the censors by disguising a sensual act.⁵⁰ "Flesh and the Devil" is continually noted for its powerful love scenes. Brown himself felt that they were the best he ever filmed.⁵¹ The Garbo-Gilbert scenes were especially significant to the audiences of 1926 because they were among the first played horizontally and because the audiences believed the lovers' ardor to be real due to all the publicity about the two stars' romance. Harriette Underhill said she had never seen "seduction so perfectly done."⁵² The love scene in Brown's next Garbo-Gilbert movie, "A Woman of Affairs" (1929), disappointed the audience that were thrilled by those in the earlier picture. Garbo and Gilbert had lost

some of the fire and passion, perhaps, because the off-camera love affair was dying.⁵³ "A Woman of Affairs" contains another scene identified as memorable. Garbo comes out of her hospital room to find a bouquet of flowers sent by Gilbert. She sees only the flowers; everything else is out of focus. She embraces the flowers and strokes her cheek upon them in a very sensual way. This episode adds sadness to her unfulfilled love.⁵⁴

Exceptional scenes were also noted in Clarence Brown's sound pictures. His first full sound film, the comedy "Navy Blues" (1930), was noted for a scene in which Karl Dane demolishes a cabaret from which the main character, William Haines, had been thrown out. The outstanding scene in "A Free Soul" happened by accident. Irving Thalberg saw the film's rushes and feared Clark Gable, a supporting actor, would steal the show from the stars, especially his wife, Norma Shearer. He had Brown put in an episode to draw audience sympathy away from Gable.⁵⁵ In the scene, Gable slaps Norma Shearer's face and throws her into a chair. The audience reaction was fantastic: not just because Gable had mistreated a woman but because she was a desirable woman and he, a very exciting man.⁵⁶ Gable's tough, manly image was established; and although he had a supporting role, he was the hit of the picture. "A Free Soul" also contained a scene criticized as unimaginative by Mordaunt Hall. During the courtroom action, Brown made sure the audience knew that the character, Eddie, has a whiskey bottle in his pocket and that he pours some out to stimulate Lionel Barrymore. Nobody in the courtroom was supposed to notice this, but the audience is given a chance to see it.⁵⁷

Two scenes in "Anna Karenina" were sharply criticized by Robert Giroux. He felt the mazurka dance scene, in which there is an emotional mixup between the central characters, could have been effective if handled by a "first-rate director," but in Brown's hands it was confusing and ineffective. Giroux thought that the worst scene was in Venice when Garbo and Frederick March stand on a balcony, gaze at a fake moon, and vow love.⁵⁸

"Ah, Wilderness!" contains a delightful commencement day scene with graduates displaying their talents for proud friends and relatives. Critics praised Brown for his addition of amusing details like the boy reciting Poe's "The Bells" as his voice cracks and the girl playing the piccolo with several false notes.⁵⁹ Ernest Lindgren calls attention to two exceptional scenes appearing in "The Gorgeous Hussy"; both feature Lionel Barrymore as Andrew Jackson. In the first he addresses Congress concerning the issue of states' rights, and in the second he furiously defends Joan Crawford to his cabinet.⁶⁰ "Of Human Hearts" (1938) contains a violent scene which skillfully displays the culmination of the growing uneasiness between an ambitious son, James Stewart, and a stern father, Walter Huston. Stewart defies his father and punches him; but after realizing what he has done, he stops and lets Huston beat him mercilessly.⁶¹ Brown's next film "Idiot's Delight" (1939) had an enjoyable comedy scene in which Clark Gable, as an assistant to a vaudeville mind reader, tries to conceal that she is drunk.⁶² Another scene in the movie also produced good results. According to one reviewer, after an anti-war speech by Burgess Meredith, who played a pacifist who is about to be shot, a New York audience reacted very favorably.⁶³

Hermine Rich Isaacs felt that the outstanding scene in "The Human Comedy" is one mentioned previously in which Butch Jenkins, as Ulysses, learns the meaning of fear due to a scare by a mechanical man.⁶⁴ The library scene which captures the awe of books, the action when the three soldiers pick up two girls, and the episode in which Homer takes his family the telegram notifying them of his brother's death are all also praised as superb.⁶⁵ In the same picture, James Agee felt that Brown neglected an opportunity for an outstanding scene. When the child runs to see the trains and waves to a singing Negro, Brown could have made more of this by shooting the action subjectively through the child's eyes.⁶⁶ Once again Agee, along with the reviewer for Time, felt that Brown blundered a scene in "National Velvet." The adolescent love scene was poorly done, and only a hint was given of the subtle love between the characters played by Elizabeth Taylor and Mickey Rooney.⁶⁷ The scene in "The Yearling" in which the deer must be killed was praised as being "extraordinarily moving, thanks to the restrained hand of director Clarence Brown."⁶⁸ The best scene in Brown's final picture, "Plymouth Adventure," was thought to be the one of the signing of the Mayflower Pact.⁶⁹

Titles

Titles were a "necessary evil" in silent movies; therefore, an important technical skill was the ability to write effective titles. A New York reviewer commented that "The Great Redeemer's" titles had "a genuine literary flavor."⁷⁰ "Last of the Mohicans" was felt to have too many titles.⁷¹ The Parisian atmosphere of "Kiki" was dulled by "breezy"

American titles.⁷² It was thought that poor use was made of titles in "The Trail of '98" (1928) since they warned the audience in advance of how thrilling the action was going to be.⁷³

Tempo

Despite Brown's pride in his editing for effective tempo, few critics have commented favorably on his films' pacing, and some have called his films, or parts of them, static and slow. "The Last of the Mohicans" was labeled a static film despite its photographic excellence.⁷⁴ "Romance" (1930) lacked excitement partially because it was so slowly paced.⁷⁵ Many scenes in "A Free Soul" were thought long and dull with too much dialogue.⁷⁶ "Sadie McKee" (1934) was noted as containing numerous static interludes.⁷⁷ Variety stated that it was disappointed in "Of Human Hearts" partly because it was slow in pace.⁷⁸ Perhaps because of the excitement of the first part of the film, the scenes at the end of "The Rains Came" seemed static and overly long.⁷⁹ Bosley Crowther pointed out that "The Human Comedy" also contained long dull stretches.⁸⁰ A critic felt that Brown's fast pace in "To Please a Lady" greatly increased the film's excitement, however.⁸¹

Filmic Quality

For a film to achieve a truly filmic quality, the camera must tell the story completely. "The Yearling" was the only picture for which a critic complimented Brown on his ability to tell the story in a way so that the camera revealed most of it.⁸²

Camera Movement

Another important part of Brown's technical skill was camera movement. During most of Brown's career, there were no moving camera lenses, so a mobile camera was very important. Perhaps due to his training in engineering and his early work with mechanics, Brown created several special mechanical devices to move his camera. "The Last of the Mohicans" featured an exciting scene of Indians chasing white girls. In order for the camera to follow the running girls, Brown put it on a perambulator built from a Ford axle with Ford wheels, a platform, and a handle to pull it.⁸³ A very elaborate moving shot was achieved in "The Eagle" (1925) and a similar one in "Anna Karenina." The camera made a long truck down a banquet table. It began with a character eating at one end and traveled along the middle of the table for sixty feet. At that time, no equipment existed to achieve this effect, so Brown made two perambulators and put them on either side of the table. To attach the camera, he constructed a bridge with sidebeams for rigidity, then dropped a crossbeam where the camera was fastened so that the bottom could travel along the top of the table. As the camera went down the table, prop boys would pull the candelabras in place just before they came into the view of the camera.⁸⁴ The most praised scene in "The Trail of '98" is the one of the gold-hunters climbing up the snowy Chilkoot Pass. A special device had to be made to film this sequence. In order for the camera to follow the action up the mountain, a track was built parallel to the route. Three cameras with three different lenses were lashed to specially made sleds. A power windlass, controlled by signals from the cameras, was placed at the top

of the mountain. The cameras were thus able to follow the people up and to stop and go back for close-ups of incidents happening on the way up.⁸⁵

In three of his pictures, critics noted that Brown did not make effective use of camera movement. Creighton Peet commented that "Anna Christie" was merely photographs of several stage sets.⁸⁶ A. R. Fulton agreed that the film had not been dealt with cinematically; it was just the reproduction of the play. The scenes, especially the interiors, were shot as they would have been on stage. The camera shot from only one side for each interior scene except those in the barroom. This created a "forth-wall perspective," which influenced the acting. During the scenes in the cabin, the cabin table becomes a focal point, and actors move around it. There are no changes in camera angle to lessen the stage-like quality.⁸⁷ This lack of movement could have been caused partly by the poorly developed equipment used in the early days of sound film. Before a noiseless camera was invented, cameras often had to be either enclosed in a box or padded to keep them from making noise; they were, therefore, almost immobile. Moreover, equipment for effectively moving the microphone was slow to develop. Two later sound films, "A Free Soul" and "The Human Comedy," were also criticized for being "motionless motion pictures," however.⁸⁸

Camera movement was used effectively for the last shot in "Song of Love." Variety noted the movement of the camera from a close-up of Katherine Hepburn at the piano to an extremely long shot of an entire auditorium.⁸⁹

Movement of People

"Intruder in the Dust" contains a scene which utilizes motion so well that it was used as an example of how the movement of people and things in a scene can be expressive. The episode takes place in Lucas' jail cell as the white lawyer questions him concerning the events surrounding a white man's murder for which Lucas is accused. The questions continually interrupt Lucas' story. As the lawyer paces in the cell, he blocks the camera's view of the Negro. This movement accentuates that the audience is getting an interrupted and incomplete view of the man and his story.⁹⁰

Location Shooting

A technical achievement unique to film is location shooting for reality. It has already been stated that Brown often shot his films, or large portions of his films, on location when this practice was rare in Hollywood. This often brought him praise from film reviewers. The outstanding sequence of the Alaskan gold-hunters' climb up the Chilkoot Pass in "The Trail of '98" could not have been shot in a studio-reproduced setting. Brown took his company to the Great Divide about 60 miles outside of Denver. Some of the old prospectors thought the scene was really taken in Alaska. "Ah, Wilderness!" was partially filmed in the small town of Grafton, Massachusetts, which helped to bring raves from the critics for the film's authenticity of setting. The set for much of Brown's "The Yearling" was a 300,000 acre tract in Florida. From this, Brown chose 38 key locations over a 55 mile radius, spreading from Silver Springs to the heart of the scrub country. Although this made shooting

difficult, it helped the film to capture the mood, beauty, and spirit of the story.⁹¹ At the time when he made "Intruder in the Dust," Brown set a new record at M-G-M for almost 100 percent shooting outside the studio. The film company was taken completely to Oxford, Mississippi, home of William Faulkner, the author of the novel, Intruder in the Dust. The realism, for which the movie was so greatly praised, was further captured by including the townspeople of Oxford as extras in the group scenes. In "To Please a Lady," Brown actually photographed the thrilling racing sequences at a number of race tracks across the country rather than reproduce the setting artificially as he did for the horse races in "National Velvet." For "When in Rome," M-G-M sent the production company to Rome.

Techniques With Actors

The technical art Clarence Brown was most noted for was his ability to draw out an actor's finest performance. Reviewers of many of his films have credited Brown for the outstanding acting in the pictures. The direction of "Foolish Matrons" (1921), which Brown co-directed with Maurice Tourneur, was complimented for its ability to get very natural performances from the actors.

Early in his career, Brown earned the reputation as a woman's director, and he did have a great talent for working with actresses. In "Smouldering Fires" (1925), Pauline Frederick regained some of her enthusiasm for her work. She felt that her last few previous pictures were below her standards, but under Brown, she achieved an excellent performance.⁹² David Robinson commented on Louise Dresser in the picture,

"The Goose Woman," by stating, "Dresser's memorable performance was certainly the result of Brown's talent for handling actresses."⁹³

Brown was most known for his great ability to handle the temperamental Swedish star, Greta Garbo. Robinson said of Brown's direction in "Flesh and the Devil," "Brown was a genius for moments that brought out Garbo's extreme sensuousness."⁹⁴ Because of his ability to work with Garbo, Brown was given the important job of directing her first talking picture, "Anna Christie." The making of the film was much simpler than had been anticipated by anxious M-G-M executives, who feared Garbo would lose her popularity when she spoke. Brown saw to it that Garbo thoroughly rehearsed all of her scenes. The promotion campaign centered around the advertising slogan, "Garbo Talks!" The picture was successful, and Garbo's first speaking line, "A viskey for me kid--an' don't be stingy," *miz quick* became a world-wide popular expression.⁹⁵

In her review of "Anna Karenina," Eileen Creelman of the New York Sun stated that Garbo had been miscast for years, but with this film, she was back in her element. The critic further declared, "'Clarence Brown may be responsible for the Swedish star's return to enchantment. It was he who directed her in "Romance," "Flesh and the Devil," "Anna Christie," and other of her better screen plays. After four years professionally apart, years in which Miss Garbo wandered through such dreary films as clammy "Queen Christina," the director-star team is reunited. For Miss Garbo's sake it may be hoped this combination will last. . . .'"⁹⁶

Brown also worked well with Marie Dressler. Screenwriter Francis Marion convinced Brown to cast Miss Dressler as the drunken ex-mistress of Garbo's father in "Anna Christie." Photoplay called her performance

the best work of her career.⁹⁷ Mordaunt Hall felt that Marie Dressler's work under Brown in "Emma" (1932) was possibly her best characterization.⁹⁸

Joan Crawford has already been quoted as having said that she felt sure of good results when she worked with Brown. A look at critical comment about her Brown films shows that she was right. "Possessed" (1931) was called her best work since "Paid."⁹⁹ "Letty Lynton" (1932) was also said to be Crawford at her very best.¹⁰⁰ One critic asserted that "The Gorgeous Hussy" was the best picture Joan Crawford had ever made.¹⁰¹ Another felt it was her best performance yet.¹⁰² Every actor in "The Yearling" got good reviews, but Pauline Kael felt that Brown got a surprisingly good portrayal from Jane Wyman.¹⁰³

Brown's reputation as a woman's director was misleading since he was often commended for the performances he drew out of male stars. Pare Lorentz's review of "A Woman of Affairs" states that Brown seemed to bring to life a previously mediocre performer, Douglas Fairbanks, Jr.¹⁰⁴ It has been already stated that Brown directed Valentino to one of his finest portrayals in "The Eagle." Under Brown's direction, Valentino's grace and rhythmic sense, which he gained as a professional ballroom dancer, were captured on the screen.¹⁰⁵ "A Free Soul" brought out Gable's special appeal, and "To Please a Lady," 19 years later, returned Gable to the rugged character that so typified his screen personality.¹⁰⁶ In "The Human Comedy" Brown was credited with having directed Mickey Rooney to one of his finest performances.¹⁰⁷

Brown's ability to bring the most out of child actors was noted for almost all of his films which featured a juvenile. The real star of "The Human Comedy" was Jackie "Butch" Jenkins. Undoubtedly, it took a

great deal of patience to bring such a real characterization out of a five-year-old boy, who, according to Brown, never really knew he was in a movie. Brown's sensitive handling of the 13-year-old actress, Elizabeth Taylor, captured a great performance. One critic, in 1968, wrote that "National Velvet" was still Miss Taylor's best picture.¹⁰⁸ Brown also got great results from both boy performers in "The Yearling."¹⁰⁹ Donn Gift played Fodderwing, a minor role; and Claude Jarman, Jr., sensitively captured the character of Jody. Variety's film critic praised the performance of Donna Corcoran in "Angels in the Outfield." She was advertised as "another Shirley Temple" and the reviewer felt that she lived up to the publicity.¹¹⁰

Soundtrack

The soundtrack can add a great deal to a film. Working with music director, Herbert Stohart, Brown used sound to make Garbo's suicide scene in "Anna Karenina" more effective. As Anna stares down at the wheels of the train and as they slowly increase in speed, the music gets louder and more discordant. The audience knows Anna must kill herself to stop the noise in her head.¹¹¹ The music in "Song of Love" was an integral part of the story. The music dubbed in was played by Artur Rubinstein. Critics had both positive and negative reactions to Brown's musical adaptation. Philip Hartung and Bosley Crowther praised the excellence of the musical recording.¹¹² James Agee wrote, "Liberties are also taken with the music; even so short a piece as Brahms' G-minor Rhapsody is haggled to bits."¹¹³ No music was used after the credits were given in "Intruder in the Dust." Instead only realistic sound

Page 54
known
mms

advanced the atmosphere of the film. Numerous critics were generous in their praise of the realism of the soundtrack. The Southern California Motion Picture Council stated, "Sound is freely and expertly used in the clanging [sic] of the jail's iron door, the unseen footsteps, the creaking of a rocking chair, the chug of the car on a lonely road and the night birds are but a few that contributed to the dramatic effect, but are never overdone."¹¹⁴ A good touch was added to "Angels in the Outfield" by the "braying, indecipherable soundtrack" representing Paul Douglas' profanity.¹¹⁵

Color

Few of Brown's movies were filmed in color. The color for "National Velvet" was felt to be too bright and showy for interior shots but very effective for the beautiful shots of the countryside and racetrack. The bright colors seemed to fit with the film's "holiday mood."¹¹⁶ The colors in "The Yearling" seemed glossed up so that the landscape was too gorgeous. The sky was unnaturally blue and the greenery too colorful.¹¹⁷

Critical comment of Clarence Brown's films has been viewed in terms of his technical skills, specifically his photography, special effects, outstanding sequences, good and bad scenes, titles, tempo, filmic quality, camera movement, movement of people, location shooting, techniques with actors, soundtracks, and use of color.

Notes

¹Jim Tully, "Clarence Brown: An Estimate of the Foremost Exponent of the Newer School of Screen Directors," Vanity Fair, 30 (April 1928), 79.

²Paul Rotha, The Film Till Now (Hamlyn House, England: Hamlyn, 1967), p. 198.

³A. R. Fulton, Motion Pictures (Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1960), p. 169.

⁴"How Clarence Brown Directs," Hollywood Spectator, 11 (Sept. 12, 1936), 10.

⁵The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968 (New York: New York Times and Arno, 1970), III, 2207.

⁶Rotha, p. 198.

⁷Tully, p. 79.

⁸Hermine Rich Isaacs, "Beauty and the Beast of Berlin: The Films in Review," Theatre Arts, 27 (May 1943), 284.

⁹"Grossers Without Milestones," Saturday Review, 11 Nov. 1950, p. 28.

¹⁰Bob Thomas, Thalberg: Life and Legend (Garden City: Doubleday, 1969), pp. 150-151.

¹¹Lionel Barrymore, We Barrymores (New York: Appleton, 1951), pp. 242-243.

¹²"The Screen: Rivoli 'The Great Redeemer,'" Evening Post, 26 Oct. 1920, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

¹³Evening Mail, 26 Oct. 1920, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

¹⁴"The Screen," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 87.

¹⁵"The Screen: A Murder Mystery," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 174.

¹⁶John Baxter, Hollywood in the Thirties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 18.

- 17 "How Clarence," p. 10.
- 18 Baxter, p. 19.
- 19 Ernest Lindgren, The Art of the Film (New York: Macmillan, 1948), p. 131.
- 20 Guy Price, "The Theaters," Los Angeles Evening Herald, 16 Aug. 1920, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.
- 21 Kevin Brownlow, "Clarence Brown," The Parade's Gone By (New York: Bonanza, 1968), p. 143.
- 22 The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 1633-1634.
- 23 "Plymouth Adventure," Newsweek, 1 Dec. 1952, p. 83; Robert Kass, "Film and TV," The Catholic World, 176 (Dec. 1952), 223.
- 24 Brownlow, p. 144.
- 25 Brownlow, p. 146.
- 26 Arthur Knight, The Liveliest Art (New York: Macmillan, 1957), pp. 122-123.
- 27 Brownlow, p. 146.
- 28 William Troy, "Films: Night Flight," Nation, 25 Oct, 1933, p. 492.
- 29 "The New Picture: Anna Karenina," Time 9 Sept. 1935, p. 47.
- 30 "The Rains Came," Variety, 13 Sept. 1939, p. 12, col. 1.
- 31 Bosley Crowther, "'Intruder in the Dust,' M-G-M's Drama of Lynching in the South at Mayfair," The New York Times Directory of the Film (New York: Arno and Random, 1971), p. 103.
- 32 Joe Franklin, Classics of the Silent Screen (New York: Citadel Press, 1959), p. 42.
- 33 "The Screen: The Switchman's Dilemma," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 204.
- 34 Mordaunt Hall, "John and Lionel Barrymore, Helen Hayes and Others in a Pictorial Adaptation of Night Flight," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 987.
- 35 Frank S. Nugent, The New York Times Film Reviews 1912-1968, II, 1440.

- 36"Some of the New Pictures: Metro Again Scores Heavily," Hollywood Spectator, 10 (Nov. 10, 1935), 6.
- 37"All Velvet," Newsweek, 18 Dec. 1944, p. 80.
- 38James Agee, Agee on Film (New York: Grosset, 1969), I, 134.
- 39Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg, Hollywood in the Forties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 138.
- 40Martin Quigley, Jr., and Richard Gertner, Films in America 1929-1969 (New York: Golden Press, 1970), p. 182.
- 41"To Please a Lady," Newsweek, 6 Nov. 1950, p. 94; "Grossers," p. 28.
- 42"Angels in the Outfield," Variety, 29 Aug. 1951, p. 6, cols. 2-3.
- 43"When in Rome," Newsweek, 28 April 1952, p. 98.
- 44"The Screen," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 81.
- 45"The Screen: Rivoli."
- 46"The Goose Woman," (unidentified newspaper clipping), 1 Aug. 1925, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H; Richard Watts, Jr., "Card Dempster Also Shines in Poppy Film; Louise Dresser and Director Make 'The Goose Woman' Hit," New York Herald Tribune, 4 Aug. 1925, p. 10, col. 3.
- 47Jack Spears, Hollywood: The Golden Era (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1971), p. 133.
- 48Harriette Underhill, "On the Screen," New York Herald Tribune, 5 April, 1926, p. 12, cols. 2-3.
- 49Spears, p. 133.
- 50Alexander Walker, Stardom (New York, Stein & Day, 1970), p. 148.
- 51John Bainbridge, Garbo (New York: Holt, 1971), p. 115.
- 52Harriette Underhill, "On the Screen: 'Flesh and the Devil' Portrays Love and Tragedy; 'Blonde or Brunett' Laughs at It," New York Herald Tribune, 10 Jan. 1927, p. 20, cols. 1-2.
- 53Walker, p. 181.

⁵⁴Walker, p. 181; David Robinson, Hollywood in the Twenties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), pp. 147-148.

⁵⁵Rene Jordon, Clark Gable (New York: Pyramid, 1973), p. 30.

⁵⁶Walker, pp. 304-305.

⁵⁷Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen: Infatuation and Love," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 729.

⁵⁸Robert Giroux, "Films: Taxidermy on the Screen," Nation, 2 Oct. 1935, p. 391.

⁵⁹Richard Watts, Jr., "On the Screen: 'Ah, Wilderness!'--Center," New York Herald Tribune, 25 Dec. 1935, p. 13, col. 1.

⁶⁰Lindgren, p. 131.

⁶¹Baxter, p. 20.

⁶²"Idiot's Delight," Time, 13 Feb. 1939, p. 29.

⁶³Howard Barnes, "On the Screen: 'Idiot's Delight'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 3 Feb. 1939, p. 10, cols. 1-2.

⁶⁴Isaacs, p. 284.

⁶⁵Philip Hartung, "Home is Where You Hang Your Hat," Commonweal, 10 March 1943, p. 543.

⁶⁶James Agee, "Films," Nation, 20 March 1943, p. 427.

⁶⁷James Agee, Agee, p. 133; "The New Pictures: National Velvet," Time, 25 Dec. 1944, p. 44.

⁶⁸Quigley, p. 155.

⁶⁹Philip T. Hartung, "The Screen: Pilgrim's Progress," Commonweal, 5 Oct. 1952, p. 224.

⁷⁰Evening Mail.

⁷¹"The Screen," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1969, I, 87.

⁷²Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen: The Parisian Waif," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 306.

⁷³Richard Watts, Jr., "The Trail of '98--Astor," New York Herald Tribune, 21 March 1928, p. 14, cols. 1-2.

⁷⁴Robinson, p. 109.

⁷⁵Richard Watts, Jr., "On the Screen: Greta Garbo in 'Romance'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 23 Aug. 1930, p. 6, cols. 1-2.

⁷⁶Creighton Peet, "The Movies: 'A Free Soul,'" Outlook and Independent, 3 June 1931, p. 154.

⁷⁷"Love, Drink and Death," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 1062.

⁷⁸"Of Human Hearts," Variety, 9 Feb. 1938, p. 14, col. 5.

⁷⁹"When 'The Rains Came.'" Newsweek, 18 Sept. 1939, pp. 37-38.

⁸⁰Bosley Crowther, "William Saroyan's First Picture, 'The Human Comedy,' With Mickey Rooney and Frank Morgan, Opens at the Astor." The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 1922.

⁸¹Film Daily quoted in Gabe Essoe, The Films of Clark Gable (New York: Citadel Press, 1970), p. 221.

⁸²Philip T. Hartung, "Nature is Beautiful--and Cruel," Commonweal, 24, Jan. 1947, p. 375.

⁸³Brownlow, p.143.

⁸⁴Brownlow, p. 145.

⁸⁵Brownlow, p. 149.

⁸⁶Creighton Peet, "The Movies: Anna Christie," Outlook and Independent, 26 Feb. 1930, p. 355.

⁸⁷Fulton, pp. 161-162, 169.

⁸⁸Creighton Peet, "The Movies: A Free Soul," p. 154; Philip Hartung, "Home," p. 543.

⁸⁹"Song of Love," Variety, 23 July 1947, p. 10, col. 1.

⁹⁰Dorothy B. Jones, "The Language of Our Time," Allen Rividen and Laura Kerr, eds., (Garden City: Doubleday, 1962), 336.

⁹¹"This is the Year of 'The Yearling,'" Lion's Roar, 5 (Aug. 1946), 2.

⁹²Muriel Elwood, Pauline Frederick (Chicago: A. Kroch, 1940), p. 121.

⁹³Robinson, p. 109.

⁹⁴Robinson, p. 109.

- ⁹⁵Bosley Crowther, The Lion's Share (New York: Dutton, 1957), p. 173.
- ⁹⁶Quoted in Michael Conway, Dion McGregor, and Mark Ricci, comp., The Films of Greta Garbo (New York: Bonanza Books, n.d.), p. 132.
- ⁹⁷"The Shadow Stage," Photoplay, 38 (March 1930), 54.
- ⁹⁸Mordaunt Hall, "Miss Dressler at her Best," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 800.
- ⁹⁹"The Shadow Stage," Photoplay, 42 (July 1932), 11.
- ¹⁰⁰"The Shadow Stage," Photoplay, 41 (Jan. 1932), 46.
- ¹⁰¹"Glamorous Heroine of History: Joan Crawford Comes to Maturity in 'The Gorgeous Hussy,'" Literary Digest, 12 Sept. 1936, p. 17.
- ¹⁰²"How Clarence," p. 10.
- ¹⁰³Pauline Kael, Kiss Kiss Bang Bang (Boston: Little, Brown, 1968), p. 285.
- ¹⁰⁴Quoted in Conway, p. 73.
- ¹⁰⁵Robinson, p. 109.
- ¹⁰⁶Variety quoted in Essoe, p. 221.
- ¹⁰⁷Philip Hartung, "Home" p. 543.
- ¹⁰⁸Quoted in Quigley, p. 245.
- ¹⁰⁹Kael, p. 285.
- ¹¹⁰"Angels in the Outfield," Variety, 29 Aug. 1931, p. 6, cols. 2-3.
- ¹¹¹Giroux, p. 391.
- ¹¹²Philip T. Hartung, "Great Men Remind Us," Commonweal, 24 Oct. 1947, p. 42; Bosley Crowther, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 2207.
- ¹¹³Agee, "Films," p. 511.
- ¹¹⁴Quoted in inter-office communication to Wesley Miller from Barrett C. Kiesling, "Subject: Critics re 'Intruder' Sound," Dec. 28 1949, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 16, Sev. IV, A.

¹¹⁵"The New Pictures: Angels in the Outfield," Time, 1 Oct. 1951, p. 102.

¹¹⁶Philip T. Hartung, "Crazy Over Horses," Commonweal, 29 Dec. 1944, p. 276.

¹¹⁷"New Pictures: The Yearling," Time, 13 Jan. 1947, p. 97.

CHAPTER V

DRAMATIC DIMENSION

Because Clarence Brown's films vary so greatly in plot and structure, critics have noted the use of a large number of dramatic techniques. The dramatic dimension of Brown's films will be examined in terms of his adaptations of literature, story-telling techniques, recreation of locations and time periods, ability to portray human emotions, screenplays, work with comedies, and effectiveness in casting.

As previously indicated, Brown was repeatedly assigned the adaptation of plays because of his ability to work with actors. The silent film, "Kiki" (1926), was based on a play by David Belasco. According to one reviewer, the movie version would have been better had the play been modernized.¹ Brown filmed two of Eugene O'Neill's plays. The first, "Anna Christie" (1930), was chosen with great care to be Garbo's first sound film. The play's transfer to the screen was entirely successful. According to Richard Skinner, much of the original dialogue was repeated in the screen play, and the movie improved the story because the film could create a more authentic atmosphere of the sea.² Because the obvious superiority of the first act came through, Richard Watts, Jr., thought that Brown's picture revealed that O'Neill's play was not the masterpiece it was so long felt to be.³

Stark Young wrote that "Romance" (1930), another Garbo film, could not compare with the original play which starred Doris Keane; the life and beauty of the play had been lost.⁴ Brown's next Garbo picture, "Inspiration" (1931), was also criticized as being a poor adaptation of

Alphonse Daudett's "Sapho."⁵ "Ah, Wilderness!" (1935) was taken from another O'Neill play and was thought to be a better adaptation than "Anna Christie."⁶ The Hollywood Spectator felt that the movie version was one hundred times more effective than the stage play.⁷ Although the film did follow the spirit of the play, critics noted that emphasis was shifted from the father's part to that of the son, and Wallace Beery's part was greatly enlarged.⁸

Robert Sherwood was hired to do the screenplay of his Pulitzer Prize-winning play, "Idiot's Delight." One critic noted that, for the movie, Sherwood had added two sequences. The film begins differently from the play. In an opening prologue, the two main characters meet in Omaha and have a one-night affair. Also, as was done for other Brown films, a happy ending was added for audience appeal.⁹ As will be discussed later, many critics felt that the 1934 movie lost much of the anti-war satire contained in the original work.

A large number of Clarence Brown's pictures were adaptations of novels. Brown had a talent for achieving a real rapport with a novelist's work. Although the story line was altered, "The Last of the Mohicans" (1921) was praised as a great translation of James Fenimore Cooper's novel. Joe Franklin stated that he thought it to be the best screen treatment of any of Cooper's stories.¹⁰ "Flesh and the Devil" (1926) was based on The Undying Past by Hermann Suderman. Franklin felt that the story gave the film a great potential; but because the plot was so ideally suited for Greta Garbo, it was too greatly changed as a vehicle for her to achieve its potential.¹¹ Garbo's "A Woman of Affairs" (1929) was taken from Michael Arlen's infamous novel, The Green Hat. It is

curious that censors demanded that the name be changed, yet allowed a much more provocative title to take its place. Other aspects of the original story had to be altered due to censorship. Richard Watts wrote that, despite the changes, the film was true to the book in "manner, plot outline, background and characterization."¹² Variety stated that the screen version was vague and sterile in comparison to the original. The only thing that suggested the eroticness of the novel was Garbo's acting.¹³ According to William Troy, in adapting Antoine de St. Exupéry's novel, Night Flight, Brown had an excellent opportunity to produce an exciting picture. Action, so basic to the film medium, was the subject and theme of the book. Unfortunately, although Brown caught the simpler elements of the original, he lost the book's theme in his emphasis on the sentimental love of the aviators' wives.¹⁴

Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina was adapted to the screen several times. Brown's 1935 film was the third and, according to the critics, the best American version yet to appear.¹⁵ Due to censorship problems, the screen writers had to leave out the story of Anna's illegitimate child. Also to avoid losing audience interest by switching from one story to another, the story of Kitty and Levin was greatly reduced to emphasize the romance between Anna and Vronsky. Little original writing was used in the adaptation except in the scenes between Anna and her son.¹⁶ Newsweek's film reviewer felt that the screenplay's close attention to the novel had a bad effect because, while the novel went from one dramatic scene to another, the movie moved slowly between brief sketches.¹⁷

James Cunningham commented that another Garbo vehicle, "Conquest" (1937), was expertly dramatized from the book Pani Walesoka by Wacław Gasiński and a subsequent dramatization by Helen Jerome.¹⁸ Another reviewer observed that the author of The Rains Came, Louis Bromfield, had written that the 1939 movie of the same name was a faithful reproduction of his book.¹⁹ A New York Times critic felt, however, that the film was only a "skeleton" of the original in its emphasis on the romantic aspect and its complete disregard for the social comment of the novel.²⁰ Still another film critic said that the novel was well treated, but that basically it was not suited to adaptation into dramatic terms.²¹

Most reviewers praised Brown for faithfully capturing William Saroyan's best seller, The Human Comedy. These critics did not seem aware of the fact that the novel was written after the screenplay. Due to delays in producing the film, the novel came out before the movie. James Agee said that many of the faults and most of the good points in the 1943 film were Saroyan's.²² Other reviewers stated that Brown had never attained the enthusiasm or humor of the novel.²³

In 1944 Brown adapted Enid Bagnold's novel, National Velvet, to the screen. In the movie version, Brown closely re-created the events of the story and kept a great deal of its charm.²⁴ The ever-critical James Agee strongly asserted that the filmmaker attained only the book's most superficial meanings and that even those were poorly handled. He stated that Brown did not understand the real value of Bagnold's story.²⁵

Newsweek called "The Yearling" (1946), based on Marjorie Kinnan Rawling's book, a "technically perfect dramatization of the novel."²⁶

The same writer criticized the adaptation for its neglect of the earthy realism in the book, however. The characters were pictured as much cleaner and more attractive than those in the novel, and the countryside was shown to be twice as beautiful as any part of the actual country.²⁷

Clarence Brown was largely responsible for M-G-M purchasing the screen rights to William Faulkner's Intruder in the Dust.²⁸ Margaret Hinxman commented on the adaptation in this way, "Rarely can I remember such a faithful interpretation of an author's work. Faithful in the purest sense, in that it adheres to the spirit of the original even if, for the sake of simplicity, some story points have had to be sacrificed."²⁹ Dorothy Jones in an article published in The Quarterly of Film Radio and Television dealt extensively with the effectiveness of the transfer of Faulkner's novel to the film medium. She states that literary critics had found three outstanding things in the novel: the picture of the relationships between black and white people in the South, the characterization of Lucas Beauchamp, and the underlying truths about human equality. She felt that "Intruder in the Dust" (1949) captured all of these things and did so in a manner that re-created the spirit of the book. Jones went on to note a contradiction within the novel that was not pictured in the motion picture. Faulkner was a Southern nationalist; and in the book, through the character of the lawyer, Faulkner expressed the Southern nationalist viewpoint that the South must be left alone to solve its own racial problems. The contradiction is seen because the story appeals for human equality but does not really show that the Southern people must solve the problem. Brown's film

omitted the Southern nationalist theme. The article further documents changes in the story made by the filmmaker; however, it is noted that the changes were in keeping with the theme of the novel. The last difference between the novel and the film was that the novel told the story subjectively through the high school boy, Chick, while the movie took an objective view. The film, thus, could not interpret the character of Chick as completely as the book had.³⁰

"The White Cliffs of Dover" (1944) was based on Alice Duer Miller's poem of the same name. Photoplay praised the movie's story as truly worthy of the emotions, charm, and dignity of the poem. It was termed, "A poem come to life."³¹

Probably the dramatic devices that most added to the popularity of Clarence Brown's movies were his story-telling techniques. With a career as varied as Brown's, film critics had the opportunity to pick out many dramatic devices by which he enriched his narration.

Suspense has always excited movie fans. Brown made only three mysteries. The first, "The Acquittal" (1923), drew this comment from Harriette Underhill: ". . . no one can say that Clarence Brown, the director, has not done everything in his power to keep up the suspense in this mystery play."³² The mystery element was also felt to be well developed in another silent film, "The Goose Woman" (1925).³³ Harrison Carrol, who thought that "Intruder in the Dust" would contend for an academy award, remarked on the high level of suspense created in that picture.³⁴ Brown kept the audience on edge in "Anna Christie," but in a different sort of way. Much publicity surrounded Garbo's first speaking

role. Everyone was anxious to see if, and how, she would adapt to sound pictures. Brown created suspense when he did not have Garbo speak until the second reel.³⁵

The screenplay, "Edison, the Man" (1940), was not filled with the kind of action that usually made a film exciting, but critics complimented Brown's ingenuity for building up dramatic tension around the problems faced by the inventor, particularly the events that lead up to the phonograph and the struggle to produce the first electric bulb.³⁶

In contrast to his use of suspense, Brown often tried to charm audiences with a very sentimental style of story telling. The results were felt to be both good and bad. His sentimentality first received criticism for the overly melodramatic presentation of "A Free Soul" (1931).³⁷ The following year "Emma" was labeled sentimental and slightly implausible.³⁸ The 1933 film, "Looking Forward," contained nothing really dramatic; a reviewer noted that it relied on sentiment and tradition to give the plot interest.³⁹ In "Ah, Wilderness!" Brown used just the right amount of sentimentality, and it paid off in raves from critics. Andre Sennwald said, "'Ah, Wilderness!' explores a vein of bittersweet nostalgia without losing its sense of humor."⁴⁰ In contrast, "Of Human Hearts" (1938) was felt to border on the maudlin at times.⁴¹ Some reviewers wrote that "The Human Comedy" lost its effectiveness because of too much sentimentality. Bosley Crowther summed up the reactions to the picture when he said, "For here, cheek by jowl and overlapping, are set some most charming bits of fine motion picture expression and some most maudlin gobs of cinematic goo."⁴² "The White Cliffs of Dover" also

has been looked upon as effective by some and as overly sentimental by others. Crowther was very critical of "Song of Love" because he felt Brown overdid the stress on the sentimental suffering of the characters.⁴³

Brown has been called a romantic. Three films, "Night Flight," "Idiot's Delight," and "The Rains Came," all adaptations, were criticized because Brown deviated from the original themes and emphases of the stories to concentrate on romantic elements usually between the leading characters. This can be related, of course, to Brown's stated philosophy that the love story is basic to all films.

For three of his films, Brown was commended for getting away from an excess of sentimentality and for telling his story in a more straightforward way. Mordaunt Hall felt "The Goose Woman" showed Brown's ability to tell a story in "a modulated but effective tone."⁴⁴ A particular scene in "The Gorgeous Hussy" (1936) was praised because Brown allowed the spectators to put in their own drama. When the two main characters end their romance, other directors would probably have had the woman burst into tears; but instead Brown had her ask for a glass of sherry, comment that it was bitter, then walk quietly away. The sequence gained strength because the deep emotions were underplayed.⁴⁵ John Mason Brown was very impressed with Brown's style of story telling in "The Yearling" (1946). He commented, "Somehow the film manages to be commendably unsentimental in its approach to what could easily have sunk into a quagmire of sentimentality."⁴⁶

Among Brown's films, only "Intruder in the Dust" was recognized for authenticity in the unfolding of the story. Pauline Kael stated

that if the film had been made in Europe, critics would have called it "subtle, sensitive, neorealistic." Brown, however, was known more for his ability to handle stars than for his sensitivity--thus, the film did not receive the acclaim it deserved.⁴⁷

Brown used fantasy as an approach to story telling in only one film, "Angels in the Outfield" (1951). Because of the praise critics gave to his technique with the fanciful story, it is probable that, had Brown not retired the following year, M-G-M would have assigned him more fantasies to direct.

Another dramatic device used by Brown was comic relief, particularly in his earlier films. The first film noted for its scenes effectively using humorous relief was "The Goose Woman."⁴⁸ According to David Robinson, the light, satirical humor used in the romance, "The Eagle" (1925), helped make it one of the best of all the Valentino pictures.⁴⁹ Watts stated that the early scenes in "Trail of '98" (1928) were threatened by Brown's use of comic relief, even though the reviewer recognized some necessity in the lessening of the tension of the drama.⁵⁰ The sound film, "Anna Karenina," also contained an early scene singled out for its humorous relief. The critic described it as containing an "alcoholic variation of follow the leader."⁵¹ The plot of "Sadie McKee" was effectively lightened by the comedy of Edward Arnold's drunk scenes and the humorous characterizations of Jean Dixon and Zelda Sears.⁵²

Two more dramatic devices were commented upon, symbolization and foreshadowing. Mordaunt Hall pointed out Brown's symbolic use of Garbo's hair styles in "Inspiration." As she became more stable due to her love

for Robert Montgomery, Garbo's hair style went from very fluffy to more demure.⁵³ The symbolization in "The Yearling" corresponded to that of the novel. John M. Brown noted that the fawn, Flag, is a symbol of youth. Just as the fawn must die, so must the boy's youth die in time. Both Jody and Flag are yearlings; Flag loses his life, and Jody, his childhood.⁵⁴

In a memo concerning "Anna Karenina," producer David O. Selznick commented on the use of foreshadowing early in the picture to hint at Anna's doom so that the tragedy would not overwhelm the audience.⁵⁵ A critic stated that the attempt at foreshadowing failed. The audiences did not respond as expected to the prophecies of doom given by Garbo, Frederic March, and Fredi Bartholomew.⁵⁶

Brown's location shooting to achieve authentic settings has been discussed as part of his technical art. In the studio the director attempted to create the illusion of reality through sets, properties, and costumes. Because of its theatrical origins and parallels, this skill can be considered as part of the filmmaker's dramatic dimension. For the setting in the first part of "The Goose Woman," Brown actually bought an old cottage and moved it to the backlot of Universal. He had to search California and New Mexico to find enough geese for the set and even made radio announcements seeking geese.⁵⁷ The scenes of the main character in the poverty and squalor of the cottage were praised for their naturalism.⁵⁸ Mordaunt Hall lauded "The Eagle," Brown's next film, for its authentic scenery and costumes.⁵⁹ The authenticity of the German background of "Flesh and the Devil" has already been mentioned. Stark Young pointed out that the costumes in "Romance" were poorly

designed since they lacked stays in an era of stays and waists.⁶⁰ The Parisian setting of "Inspiration" was criticized as appearing fake.⁶¹ On the other hand, the Chinese atmosphere of "The Son-Daughter" (1933) was felt to be enhanced by believable costumes and settings.⁶² Nobert Lusk observed that in "Anna Karenina" Brown made use of detailed costumes and settings to achieve an excellent reproduction of St. Petersburg society in the 1870's.⁶³ Brown was also praised for his reproduction of Washington in 1823 for "The Gorgeous Hussy."⁶⁴

There were two different opinions concerning the sets for "The Human Comedy." Manny Farber commented that the outdoor shots were dead due to the painted backdrops and an unrealistic lack of people in the street scenes and the telegraph office.⁶⁵ Bosley Crowther, however, said that Brown had given the film "textural firmness" by shooting in a natural small town setting.⁶⁶ In his final film, "Plymouth Adventure," Brown and his production company were congratulated for re-creating the details of life aboard the tiny ship.⁶⁷ Their work helped to win the film an Oscar for special effects.

Clarence Brown's talent for re-creating a time period through sets, costumes, mannerisms, and other details was also recognized. "The Great Redeemer" (1920) was acclaimed for its realistic picture of the old, "untamed West."⁶⁸ Although Marguerite Tazelaar was critical of the sentimentality in "Of Human Hearts," she did say this of Brown's direction: "... but it is his authentic reproduction, in atmosphere, setting, customs and pace, of life in a tiny, remote Ohio village nearly a century ago that captures the imagination with a constant emotional appeal."⁶⁹ "Ah, Wilderness!" has already been shown to have achieved realism through

location shooting. But Brown did more to successfully capture the feeling of America in the early nineteen hundreds. According to numerous critics, the film vividly reflected the time period in costumes, mannerisms, speech, architecture, and home life.⁷⁰

Still another of Brown's dramatic achievements was his ability to communicate real human emotions. "Flesh and the Devil" showed strong feelings of honor, loyalty, and love. Mordaunt Hall wrote that Brown carefully analyzed the feelings of the characters and depicted their thoughts on the screen.⁷¹ Creighton Peet reacted strongly to the emotional motivation of "Possessed" (1931). He felt the emotions were cheap and base and that the movie was in bad taste.⁷² According to Watts, in "Night Flight" Brown never achieved a clear conceptualization of the stirring emotions that drove the flyers on despite the dangers.⁷³ "The Yearling," on the other hand, was felt to have displayed emotions in an effectively restrained manner. The audience felt the pain and struggle of frontier life and the humor as well as the strength of the people.⁷⁴ Louella Parsons noted that one of Brown's best accomplishments was the way he made the audience feel the racial hatred in the South by the simplicity of the drama in "Intruder in the Dust."⁷⁵

Brown's capturing of the delicate feelings of human relationships was also noted in reviews of two of his films. One critic praised the great ability shown in his depiction of the renewing relationship between the girl and her father in "Anna Christie."⁷⁶ Philip T. Hartung stated that the relationship between the three main characters in "The Yearling" was shown with a depth that the screen seldom achieves.⁷⁷ Another reviewer wrote, "In 'The Yearling' the male understanding between Pa

Baxter and Jody is subtly and skillfully established without mawkishness."⁷⁸

Brown's talents for capturing the feelings of children were also appreciated by film critics. Butch Jenkins' characterization was described this way: "His is an unfailing motion picture portrait, a happy collaboration between Saroyan, a remarkable youngster Jack Jenkins (Doris Dudley's son Butch) and a sympathetic and imaginative director Clarence Brown."⁷⁹ Butch's character was very real and brought great warmth to the movie. Bosley Crowther praised Brown for his ability to capture the enchantment of childhood in two films, "National Velvet" and "The Yearling."⁸⁰ Both pictures centered around a child's love for an animal.

Clarence Brown's movies often lost some of their dramatic effectiveness because of faults within the stories. Many of the screenplays, particularly those designed as star vehicles, lacked credibility; and some were plainly illogical. Among the film stories criticized as dramatically poor were "Inspiration," "A Free Soul," "Chained" (1934), "Wife Versus Secretary" (1936), "They Met in Bombay" (1941), "To Please a Lady" (1950), "Angels in the Outfield" (1951), and "When in Rome" (1951). Watts made an interesting comment about the Gable-Crawford vehicle, "Possessed:" ". . . the film has the shrewd audience virtue of providing a story which seems fabricated episode by episode for the purpose of stimulating the patrons, rather than written as a dramatic whole by a playwright bothered by absurd ideas about artistic integrity."⁸¹ "Edison, the Man" came during a cycle of films on the lives

of great men; the story was criticized for lacking originality in that it fit into the same formula used by every other biographical film.⁸²

"Song of Love" (1947) and "Intruder in the Dust" both contained unrealistic incidents within the context of the story. In the former, there is a scene in which Brahms takes Clara Schumann aside and leaves the concert where his first symphony is being performed. A reviewer thought this to be extremely unbelievable since a composer would never have behaved as the character did, but would have been listening carefully to the concert and making sure no one made a sound.⁸³ The lack of credibility in "Intruder in the Dust" was found by a critic who questioned why an old woman and a boy would go to dig up a body to establish if the Negro's gun fired the fatal shot. He charged that they could not have judged whether or not the bullet belonged to the Negro's gun even if they had found the body.⁸⁴

Brown's screenplays sometimes did not establish proper psychological motivation for characters' actions and attitudes. Hall stated that Clarence Brown's "Letty Lynton" (1932) lacked the necessary attention to the psychology of the characters and the plausibility of their actions.⁸⁵ Likewise, Joan Crawford's martyred attitude in "Sadie McKee" (1934) was thought not to be well motivated by events in the story.⁸⁶ Another critic asserted that the main element missing in the plot of "Conquest" was a logical explanation for the overly fast transition of Garbo's hate for Boyer into love.⁸⁷

In at least three instances, Brown films were weakened because of poor endings. Brown, himself, was unhappy with the ending of "Flesh and the Devil." He wanted to end the film with Garbo's death and the

reunion of the two men whose friendship she had torn apart; but M-G-M demanded a happy ending, and Brown added a sequence in which Gilbert begins courting a new girl.⁸⁸ Frank S. Nugent and many others have been unsatisfied with the ending of "Of Human Hearts."⁸⁹ The ending of the film, "Looking Forward" (1933), was designed to solve the problems presented in the story, but instead, as pointed out by one reviewer, optimistically evaded the real situation.⁹⁰

Only three of Brown's films were recognized as comedies by film critics. From their reactions, it would be difficult to say that Brown achieved success within the genre. Louella Parsons liked the silent comedy, "Kiki," but Jack Spears called it "an ill-advised and disastrous attempt at comedy."⁹¹ "Navy Blues" (1930) also received a poor reception from reviewers. Brown's picture "Come and Live With Me" (1941) failed to be amusing. One critic felt the cause to be that the director and writer sought too much in trying to bring in sentimental emotion and philosophy in a story that was basically a farce.⁹²

The final point of Brown's dramatic technique to be examined is his ability in effectively casting his films. According to the auteur theory, the director is felt to be responsible for all parts of the film and its development. With regards to casting, however, it is necessary to point out the studio's great control over this element of production. Brown worked predominantly with artists under contract with M-G-M; he was allowed to cast particular actors in his films with the studio's permission. Sometimes the stars Brown would like to have cast in his pictures were working on other films and thus unavailable. He was also given scripts with actors already assigned to the roles. Brown was

credited with good overall casting for the films, "Anna Christie," "Ah, Wilderness!," "The Human Comedy," "Intruder in the Dust," and "Angels in the Outfield." A New York Times critic felt that poor casting was done for the Indians in "The Last of the Mohicans." When the Indians were pictured in close-up, the story lost some of its authenticity because Wallace Beery and Albert Roscoe did not look like Indians; and the Indians in the crowd scenes looked more like Africans.⁹³ A similar problem was singled out for the casting of "The Son-Daughter"; but this time the film's believability was put at a disadvantage because the actors' faces, although made up to look Chinese, were too familiar to carry the illusion, even with makeup. In "The Rains Came," Brown was criticized for miscasting Tyrone Power, George Brent, and Myrna Loy into roles they did not fit.⁹⁴

For two other pictures, it was charged that Brown weakened the movie by miscasting a single role. Critics felt Greta Garbo was poorly chosen for the Italian soprano in "Romance"; not only did she have a deep voice, but her thick Swedish accent could never pass for Italian.⁹⁵ In his following film, "Inspiration," Brown was accused of miscasting Robert Montgomery opposite Greta Garbo. Hall stated that he never believed that Garbo could be in love with Montgomery; a more experienced actor was needed to make the story believable.⁹⁶

Notes

¹Jack Spears, Hollywood: The Golden Era (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1971), p. 133.

²Richard Dana Skinner, "Greta Garbo in Anna Christie," Commonweal, 26 March 1930, p. 591.

³Richard Watts, Jr., "On the Screen: Greta Garbo in 'Anna Christie'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 15 March 1930, p. 10, col. 4.

⁴Stark Young, "Romance and Romance," New Republic, 17 Sept. 1930, p. 128.

⁵Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen: A Conception of 'Sapho,'" The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968 (New York: New York Times and Arno, 1970), I, 696-697.

⁶John Baxter, Hollywood in the Thirties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 19.

⁷"Some of the New Pictures: Metro Again Scores Heavily," Hollywood Spectator, 10 (Nov. 23, 1935), 6.

⁸Andre Sennwald, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 1236.

⁹"Idiot's Delight," Variety, 25 Jan. 1939, p. 10, col. 2.

¹⁰Joe Franklin, Classics of the Silent Screen (New York: Citadel Press, 1959), p. 42.

¹¹Franklin, p. 87.

¹²Richard Watts, Jr., "On the Screen: 'A Woman of Affairs'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 21 Jan. 1929, p. 11, col. 2.

¹³Variety quoted in Michael Conway, Dion McGregor, and Mark Ricci, comp., The Films of Greta Garbo (New York: Bonanza, n.d.), p. 73.

¹⁴William Troy, "Films: 'Night Flight,'" Nation, 25 Oct. 1933, pp. 492-493.

¹⁵"Anna Karenina," Time, 9 Sept. 1935, p. 46.

¹⁶David O. Selznick, Memo From David O. Selznick, ed. Ruby Behlmer (New York: Viking, 1972), pp. 78-80.

¹⁷"Tolstoy: 'Anna Karenina' Gets Voice but Little New Life," Newsweek, 31 Aug. 1935, p. 26.

¹⁸James Cunningham, "Conquest," Commonweal, 12 Nov. 1937, p. 78.

¹⁹"When 'The Rains Came,'" Newsweek, 18 Sept. 1939, p. 37.

²⁰The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 1633-1634.

²¹Howard Barnes, "On the Screen: 'The Rains Came'--Roxy," New York Herald Tribune, 9 Sept. 1939, p. 8, col. 1.

²²James Agee, "Films," Nation, 20 March 1943, p. 426.

²³"New Pictures: The Human Comedy," Time, 22 March 1943, p. 56; Manny Farber, "The Too Beautiful People," New Republic, 15 March 1943, p. 346.

²⁴"All Velvet," Newsweek, 18 Dec. 1944, p. 80.

²⁵James Agee, Agee on Film (New York: Grosset, 1969), I, 133.

²⁶"Eight-Year-Old Yearling," Newsweek, 27 Jan. 1947, p. 89.

²⁷"Eight Year Old," p. 90.

²⁸Dorothy B. Jones, "William Faulkner: Novel into Film," Quarterly of Film Radio and Television, 8 (Fall 1953), 52.

²⁹Margaret Hinxman, "Film," Men and Books (Feb. 1950), p. 114, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.

³⁰Jones, pp. 51-71.

³¹Sara Hamilton, "The Shadow Stage," Photoplay, 25 (June 1944), 10.

³²Harriette Underhill, "On the Screen: 'The Acquittal' Exciting," New York Herald Tribune, 12 Dec. 1923, p. 14, col. 5.

³³"The Goose Woman," Film Daily, 26 July 1925, p. 5, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.

³⁴Harrison Carroll, "'Intruder in the Dust' Is Great, Brilliant Picture," Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express, 12 Nov. 1949, p. C 2, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.

³⁵Harry Haun, "The UT Grad Who Engineered Dreams," The Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine, 2 July 1972, p. 7.

³⁶"The Wizardry of Edison: Tracy Takes Up Story of Life Where Rooney Left Off," Newsweek, 27 May 1940, p. 48.

³⁷Marguerite Tazelaar, "On the Screen: 'A Free Soul'--Astor," New York Herald Tribune, 3 June 1931, p. 19, col. 3.

³⁸Mordaunt Hall, "Miss Dressler at Her Best," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 800.

³⁹Mordaunt Hall, "Lionel Barrymore, Lewis Stone and Benita Hume in a Film Version of a Play by C. L. Anthony," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II 934.

⁴⁰Andre Sennwald, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 1236.

⁴¹Marguerite Tazelaar, "On the Screen: 'Of Human Hearts'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 18 Feb. 1938, p. 15, cols. 1-2.

⁴²Bosley Crowther, "William Saroyan's First Picture, 'The Human Comedy,' With Mickey Rooney and Frank Morgan, Opens at the Astor," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 1922.

⁴³Bosley Crowther, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 2207.

⁴⁴"The Screen: An Echo of Murder," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 268.

⁴⁵"How Clarence Brown Directs," Hollywood Spectator, 11 (Sept. 12, 1936), 11.

⁴⁶John Mason Brown, "Seeing Things: Those Short Happy Years," Saturday Review, 22 Feb. 1947, p. 22.

⁴⁷Pauline Kael, Kiss Kiss Bang Bang (Boston: Little, 1968), pp. 284-285.

⁴⁸"The Goose Woman," (unidentified newspaper clipping), 1 Aug. 1925, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

⁴⁹David Robinson, Hollywood in the Twenties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 109.

⁵⁰Richard Watts, Jr., "'The Trail of '98'--Astor," New York Herald Tribune, 21 March 1928, p. 14, cols. 1-2.

⁵¹Andre Sennwald, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 1203.

⁵²"The Shadow Stage," Photoplay, 46 (July 1934), 54.

⁵³Hall, "The Screen: A Conception," pp. 696-697.

⁵⁴Brown, pp. 22-23.

⁵⁵Selznick, p. 80.

⁵⁶"Tolstoy," p. 26.

⁵⁷Kevin Brownlow, "Clarence Brown," The Parade's Gone By (New York: Bonanza, 1968), p. 144.

⁵⁸Robinson, p. 109.

⁵⁹Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 283.

⁶⁰Young, p. 127.

⁶¹Hall, "The Screen: A Conception," pp. 696-697.

⁶²Mordaunt Hall, "A Chinese Tragedy," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968 II, 895.

⁶³Robert Lusk, Picture Play, quoted in Conway, p. 132.

⁶⁴Howard Barnes, "On the Screen: 'The Gorgeous Hussy'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 5 Sept. 1936, p. 6, cols. 1-2.

⁶⁵Faber, p. 347.

⁶⁶Crowther, "William Saroyan's," p. 1922.

⁶⁷Janet Graves, "Let's Go to the Movies," Photoplay, 43 (Jan. 1953), 21; Bosley Crowther, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, IV, 2651.

⁶⁸Guy Price, "The Theatres," Los Angeles Evening Herald, 16 Aug. 1920, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

⁶⁹Tazelaar, "On the Screen: 'Of Human,'" p. 15.

⁷⁰"Some of the New," p. 6.

⁷¹Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen: The Undying Past," The New York Times Film Reviews 1912-1968, I, 346.

⁷²Creighton Peet, "The New Movies: 'Possessed,'" Outlook and Independent, 2 Dec. 1931, p. 439.

⁷³Richard Watts, Jr., "On the Screen: 'Night Flight'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 7 Oct. 1933, p. 8, col. 1.

⁷⁴Bosley Crowther, The New York Times Directory of the Film (New York: Arno and Random, 1971), p. 96.

⁷⁵Louella O. Parsons, "Intruder Holds Suspense," Los Angeles Examiner, 12 Nov. 1949, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.

⁷⁶Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen: Miss Garbo's First Talker," The New York Times Directory of the Film, p. 34.

⁷⁷Philip T. Hartung, "Nature Is Beautiful--and Cruel," Commonweal, 24 Jan. 1947, p. 375.

⁷⁸Brown, p. 24.

⁷⁹Hermine Rich Isaacs, "Beauty and the Beast of Berlin: Films in Review," Theatre Arts, 27 (May 1943), 284.

⁸⁰Bosley Crowther, "National Velvet," Color Film, With Rooney and Elizabeth Taylor, at Music Hall--'Tall in Saddle' Comes to Palace," The New York Times Directory of the Film, p. 85; Bosley Crowther, The New York Times Directory of the Film, p. 96.

⁸¹Richard Watts, Jr., "On the Screen: 'Possessed'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 28 Nov. 1931, p. 10, col. 1.

⁸²Paul T. Hartung, "Enni--Or Spring is in the Air," Commonweal, 31 May 1940, p. 130.

⁸³Hermine Rich Isaacs, "The Small Moralists: The Film in Review," Theatre Arts, 52 (Nov. 1947), 52.

⁸⁴Carroll, p. G 2.

⁸⁵Joan Crawford and Robert Montgomery in an Adaptation of a Novel by Marie Belloc Loundes, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 823.

⁸⁶Marguerite Tazelaar, "On the Screen: 'Sadie McKee'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 18 May 1934, p. 17, col. 1.

⁸⁷Frank S. Nugent, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 1440.

⁸⁸Alexander Walker, Stardom (New York: Stein & Day, 1970), p. 149.

⁸⁹Frank S. Nugent, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, II, 1473.

⁹⁰Richard Watts, Jr., "On the Screen: 'Looking Forward'--Capitol and Love's Metropolitan," New York Herald Tribune, 1 May 1933, p. 10, col. 1.

⁹¹Louella O. Parsons, "Film Noted Stage Comedy Wins Plaudits," Los Angeles Examiner, Sec. I, p. 12, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, I; Spears, p. 133.

⁹²The New York Times Film Reviews 1912-1968, III, 1774.

⁹³"The Screen," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 87.

⁹⁴The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 1633.

⁹⁵Hall, "The Screen: A Conception," pp. 696-697.

⁹⁶Mordaunt Hall, "The Screen: In Old Manhattan," The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, I, 651.

CHAPTER VI

RHETORICAL DIMENSION

It is difficult to assess the purposes of Clarence Brown's films. Critics have commented on the obvious rhetorical intentions of his films on only a few occasions. Louis Mayer, who strongly influenced Brown's career, felt that all movies should have a moral. On April 26, 1924, during the dedication ceremonies of the newly merged Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, Mayer is quoted as having said, "I hope . . . that it is given me to live up to this great trust. It has been my argument and practice that each picture should teach a lesson, should have a reason for existence."¹ Apparently, movie reviewers were not interested in film as a persuasive medium, however, because only four of Brown's pictures were singled out as bearing a message.

"Idiot's Delight" (1939) was based on Robert Sherwood's Pulitzer Prize-winning anti-war play of the same name. Critics and audiences expected the film to be a condemnation of war. Some critics felt that the film had a significant message. Others asserted that in an effort not to alienate European audiences, Brown had taken the real sting out of the original play. Philip T. Hartung called "Idiot's Delight" a "strong and bitter condemnation of a civilization tottering on the verge of war."² Another reviewer felt that, although some of the force of the play's message was lost by a shift of emphasis to the Shearer-Gable romance, the picture still carried a contemporary message by its look at the next world war and at munitions makers and military regimes.³ Otis Ferguson stated that portions of the screenplay still contained

real feeling, but that the mood was forced and cheap. The film seemed to show "the coming of war staged by Maurice Chevalier."⁴ Time magazine was most critical in its statement that the film had nothing to tell audiences.⁵

Robert Giroux felt that "Anna Karenina" (1935) did manage to capture the social criticisms of Tolstoy's novel, but that these issues had lost their meaning and relevance for contemporary audiences.⁶ Another critic was curious as to why the out-dated novel was revived at all.⁷

As previously noted, "The White Cliffs of Dover" (1944) followed M-G-M's "Mrs. Miniver" (1942) in its pro-British sentiments during the war years. The authors of The Films of World War II felt that Brown's movie could not equal the earlier film. The poem from which it was adapted was too flimsy a basis and caused the picture to bog down with the sentimentality of the story.⁸ Eileen Creelman felt that Brown's direction tempered the message so that the film never became excessively patriotic toward the British.⁹ Newsweek said the "hands across the sea" moral was weakened because audiences were expected to identify with the English aristocracy, not with the more ordinary Englishmen.¹⁰

A great contrast in Brown's style of putting across a message can be seen in the two films, "The Human Comedy" (1943) and "Intruder in the Dust" (1949). "The Human Comedy," made during World War II, glorified life at home. The movie was important because it was designed to lift the morale of the home front.¹¹ The message was essentially that people are basically good but that everyone must meet sorrow aided only by faith and love.¹² Most critics felt Brown's message was hampered by the overly

sentimental tone of the film. Bosley Crowther stated that the dignity of the film's ideas was lost when the characters gave long sermons backed up by "tear-jerking" music or with halos of light around the character's head.¹³ On the other extreme, the effectiveness of the rhetorical purpose of "Intruder in the Dust" was sharpened by the subtlety of its presentation. It is surprising that more critics did not make extensive comments about the rhetorical value of the picture. The reason for this was probably because, at that time, the message was not unique. "Intruder in the Dust" came at the end of a cycle of films condemning racial prejudice. Critics did recognize, however, the superiority of Brown's persuasive style over those employed in the previous pictures. Several critics commented that Brown's film did not preach tolerance, like the other movies, but pointed up racial problems in the South more subtly.¹⁴ In contrast, a film critic for Variety felt that the screenplay shied away from an analysis of racial problems. He also commented that the deep South setting of the picture lessened the impact of the social issues.¹⁵

V. J. Jerome in The Negro in Hollywood Films was very critical of the message of "Intruder in the Dust." Writing from the black perspective, he said that the movie did more to harm and weaken the Negro movement.¹⁶ Jerome asserted that the movie created the false picture that the Southern Negro can depend on justice within the legal system. He felt the film contained many unrealistic situations which lessened any rhetorical significance the picture could claim. Examples of the lack of realism were given as the patience of the lynch mob which finally disperses peacefully, the absence of the Ku Klux Klan, the

attitude of the Southern police who await proof of the Negro's innocence, and the assurance that the white lawyer will take the case. Further, the whole idea that a high school boy and an old woman could free the Negro despite the anti-black bias in the Southern legal system was unrealistic. Despite that the main black character is one that favorably reflects on the Negro people, Jerome pointed out that this image lost its persuasive power because Lucas was shown to be a man who did not mix with fellow-Negroes. Consequently, Lucas' character stood out as being unique from other Negroes. Jerome is also critical because at the end of the picture, the problems of the Negroes, particularly the threat of lynching, are related entirely to the white men's consciences. An implication is thus made that it is not a Negro problem.¹⁷

Due to the domination of filmmaking by the money-making values of the studio system, it is assumed that these rhetorical purposes, as singled out by critics, were secondary in nature. The primary purpose of Clarence Brown's films was to make money by providing successful mass entertainment, and the consistency with which he produced financially successful films has already been noted. Even before many of his films became widely distributed, reviewers speculated that they would have great financial success. Because of the attraction of the start in the casts, critics prophesized the box-office success of such films as "A Free Soul" (1931), "Possessed" (1931), "Night Flight" (1933). "Sadie McKee" (1934), "Chained" (1934), "Wife Versus Secretary (1936), "Idiot's Delight" (1939), and "To Please a Lady" (1950). A Newsweek reviewer asserted that "Angels in the Outfield" (1951) could not fail at the box office since it

was released at the time of the World Series.¹⁸ "When in Rome" (1951) was Brown's only film for which a reviewer doubted box-office success. The story and stars were both thought to be weak.¹⁹

Notes

¹Bosley Crowther, The Lion's Share (New York: Dutton, 1957), p. 82.

²Philip T. Hartung, "Hollywood's Delight," Commonweal, 17 Feb. 1939, p. 470.

³Howard Barnes, "On the Screen: 'Idiot's Delight'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 3 Feb. 1939, p. 10, cols. 1-2.

⁴Otis Ferguson, "It's Criminal," New Republic, 22 Feb. 1939, p. 74.

⁵"Idiot's Delight," Time, 13 Feb. 1939, p. 29.

⁶Robert Giroux, "Films: Taxidermy of the Screen," Nation, 2 Oct. 1935, p. 391.

⁷Elsie Finn, Philadelphia Record quoted in "On the Current Screen," Literary Digest, 21 Sept. 1935, p. 21.

⁸Joe Morella, Edward Z. Epstein, and John Griggs. The Films of World War II (Secaucus, N. J.: Citadel Press, 1973), p. 190.

⁹Eileen Creelman, "Irene Dunne in a Film Version of Alice Duer Miller's 'The White Cliffs of Dover,'" The New York Sun, p. 24, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 16, Sec. IV, E.

¹⁰"One Lion to Another," Newsweek, 29 May 1944, p. 70.

¹¹Morella, p. 106.

¹²Bosley Crowther, "William Saroyan's First Picture, 'The Human Comedy,' With Mickey Rooney and Frank Morgan Opens at the Astor," The New York Times Film Review 1913-1968 (New York: New York Times and Arno Press, 1970), II, 1922.

¹³Crowther, p. 1922.

¹⁴Martin Quigley, Jr., and Richard Gertner, Films in America 1929-1969 (New York: Golden Press, 1970), p. 182; "Intruder in the Dust," Showmen's Trade Review, 15 Oct. 1949, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.

¹⁵"Intruder in the Dust," Variety, 12 Oct. 1949, p. 6, col. 1.

¹⁶V. J. Jerome, The Negro in Hollywood Films (New York: Masses & Mainstream, 1950), pp. 48-49.

¹⁷Jerome, pp. 36-42.

¹⁸"Angels in the Outfield," Newsweek, 17 Sept. 1951, pp. 90-91.

¹⁹"Film Preview: When in Rome," Variety, 28 Feb. 1959, p. 3.

CHAPTER VII

HISTORICAL DIMENSION

The historical dimension of film art is the way in which movies are a product of and reflect the time period in which they were made. Modern film criticism lacks any analysis of Clarence Brown's films as they reflect the 1920's through the early 1950's. Nevertheless, it is felt that two areas of critical comment are appropriate to a discussion of the historical dimension of Brown's filmmaking. The first is his transfer of historical episodes to the screen, and the second is the effect of censorship on his pictures.

Brown made several films based on actual historical situations; four of these dealt with the lives of famous people. The way he consistently distorted historical facts for more romanticized plots mirrors the tastes of audiences during the time the films were released. Movie fans seemed to enjoy history as a background for a film story, but they were much more interested in a good, romantic story than they were in historical accuracy. Furthermore, many film critics also saw little wrong in the misrepresentation of historical facts.

"The Trail of '98" (1928) was based around the story of the Klondike Gold Rush. The plot was fictional, but Brown was very accurate in his picturing of the conditions faced by the early gold-hunters. As previously mentioned, after seeing the film, some of the old sourdoughs thought it had really been shot in Alaska.¹

Brown's next historical picture, "The Gorgeous Hussy" (1936), was based on the life of Peggy O'Neill Timberlake Eaton, the unofficial first

lady during much of Andrew Jackson's term as President. Mrs. Eaton had an infamous reputation in Washington, and Harry Haun felt that the movie "scrubbed up a scandalous black-mark on Andrew Jackson's administration."² The distorted historical facts in the film did not concern reviewer James Cunningham or the critic for The Literary Digest.³ The Literary Digest stated, "Fact and fiction have been expertly meshed to make the story of impetuous Peggy Eaton a cinema romance of impressive stature."⁴ The Hollywood Spectator noted the inaccuracies of fact but still felt that the movie had value as a historical record. The professional periodical further justified the film by arguing that it had side-stepped history to become more entertaining.⁵ In contrast, Frank S. Nugent would not forgive Brown's perversion of fact for the sake of entertainment. He questioned why filmmakers would take an exciting character from history and reduce her to a "faded stereotype which might pass for anyone." Nugent further stated, "We refuse to acknowledge 'The Gorgeous Hussy' as fact, and as cinematized fiction it is merely passable."⁶

"Conquest" (1937), told the story of Napoleon and his favorite mistress, the former Polish countess, Marie Walewski. A critic for Variety asserted that few liberties had been taken with historical facts.⁷ Brown was praised for reconstructing the time period so accurately so as to give audiences a greater understanding of it.⁸

Brown's 1940 film, "Edison, the Man," romanticized the facts of Edison's life. Some film reviewers did not even note any historical inaccuracies. One critic's only complaint was that Edison's life was too dull to make into a good movie.⁹ Two film sources, one contemporary with

the picture and one, modern, commented on the relative factual soundness of the film.¹⁰ Bosley Crowther, however, was very critical of the film because important details were distorted and others fabricated.

Crowther said that "the question arises as to whether this creation is intended to be a reliable portrait of the great inventor or just another who looks something like him."¹¹ Among Clarence Brown's papers, donated to the University of Tennessee, there is a letter to Brown from Julia C. Lieb, daughter of Dr. John W. Lieb, a close associate of Edison. The letter concerns the historical accuracy of "Edison, the Man." Miss Lieb stated that it was her father, not Edison, who pulled the switch which lighted New York City and that Edison was in J. P. Morgan's office at the time. Also, the switch was high on the wall, not on a bench near the window as pictured in the movie. She felt that the film was not up to M-G-M's standards, and that because of its disregard of history, it did not honor Edison.¹²

Brown's next historical biography, "Song of Love" (1947), was based on the lives of composer Robert Schumann and his wife, Clara, and their association with Johannes Brahms. Philip T. Hartung wrote that the film was a successful biography despite some factual inaccuracies.¹³ Likewise, Time magazine commented that the film sought to be faithful to the truth "in spirit if not in fact."¹⁴ Other critics noted the inaccuracies in fact as well as in the characterization of Brahms. Donald Kirby commented that admirers of music would really be surprised to know that Brahms was in love with Clara Schumann and had proposed to her after her husband's death.¹⁵ Crowther once again pointed to the distortion concerning the Schumann's romance. He also resented

Brahms being reduced to a "'good-old Charley' type," who drew his inspiration from the Schumanns' love for him. Furthermore, according to Crowther, the movie mistakenly asserted that Schumann's favorite song was "Traumerei."¹⁶

"The Plymouth Adventure" (1952) told the story of the Pilgrims' voyage to the new world. It was not severely criticized for historical inaccuracies as were many of the films. It must be noted, however, that this picture was not a biography, but was based on an important historical incident. The necessary romance and excitement could be written into the lives of characters hardly known to history so that no noticeable distortions of fact were necessary. Bosley Crowther, who was so critical of the factual misrepresentations of the two previous films, felt that "The Plymouth Adventure" added to the classroom image of history. He later qualified this statement by remarking that to a serious student of history, the film would seem excessively forward with the facts but that it would not alter the concepts of history found in the textbooks.¹⁷

Brown's films also reflected the censorship codes of the period in which he directed. Censorship, for most of Brown's career, was regulated by The Motion Picture Producers and Distributors of America founded in 1922 and commonly known as The Hays Office since it was headed at its inception by former Postmaster General William Hayes. In 1930 another step was taken in the adoption of a detailed Production Code to be administered by the Hays Office. The code did not gain real power until the Association passed a "Resolution for Uniform Interpretation," which had provisions for enforcement. The Production Code of

1930 lasted until 1956, four years after Brown's retirement.¹⁸

Critics' reactions to the necessary censorship of the adaptation of Michael Arlen's The Green Hat into the movie "A Woman of Affairs" (1929) have already been noted. Also mentioned were the necessary deletions from Leo Tolstoy's Anna Karenina in the making of the film of the same name in 1935. Film reviewers seemed to delight in incidents in which Brown got around the restrictive production codes. A critic's praise for the disguise of a sensual act within a communion scene in "Flesh and the Devil" (1926) has already been pointed out. Richard Watts, Jr., wrote that "Letty Lynton's" main "claim to fame" was the way it overlooked the usual production principle of The Hays Office that anyone who commits a crime must be punished. Joan Crawford, playing Letty, poisons her ex-lover but is found innocent of the crime because Robert Montgomery perjures himself and swears that she was with him at the time of the murder. In addition, the film did not show any moral disapproval or punishment for her action.¹⁹ Brown's evasion of the censors in "Come Live With Me" (1941) was called a "neat trick." Hedy Lamarr marries James Stewart just so she can stay in the United States; when she finally succumbs to him, Brown made the scene passable by barely lighting it with what appeared to be fire flies.²⁰

Clarence Brown's cinema career has, of yet, not been dealt with sufficiently in terms of its historical dimension. Critical comment about the accuracy of his interpretation of history and the effects of censorship are felt to reflect the time period in which Brown worked and, thus, give a little insight into the historical dimension of his filmmaking.

Notes

¹Kevin Brownlow, "Clarence Brown," The Parade's Gone By (New York: Bonanza, 1968), p. 149.

²Harry Haun, "The UT Grad Who Engineered Dreams," The Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine, 2 July 1972, p. 7.

³James P. Cunningham, "The Gorgeous Hussy," Commonweal, 18 Sept. 1936, p. 487; "Glamorous Heroine of History: Joan Crawford Comes to Maturity in 'The Gorgeous Hussy,'" Literary Digest, 12 Sept. 1936, p. 17.

⁴"Glamorous Heroine," p. 17.

⁵"How Clarence Brown Directs," Hollywood Spectator, 11 (Sept. 12, 1936), 10.

⁶Frank S. Nugent, "Democratic Unconvention in 'The Gorgeous Hussy' at the Capitol--' A Son Comes Home,' at the Rialto," The New York Times Film Reviews 1912-1968 (New York: New York Times and Arno, 1970), II, 1316.

⁷"Conquest," Variety, 27 Oct. 1937, p. 18, col. 1.

⁸Howard Barnes, "On the Screen: 'Conquest'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 5 Nov. 1937, p. 19, col. 1.

⁹"The Shadow Stage," Photoplay, 65 (Aug. 1940), 75.

¹⁰"The Wizardry of Edison: Tracy Takes Up Story of Life Where Rooney Left Off," Newsweek, 27 May 1940, p. 48; Charles Higham and Joel Greenberg, Hollywood in the Forties (New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968), p. 107.

¹¹Bosley Crowther, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 1713.

¹²Letter from Julia C. Lieb to Clarence Brown, May 17, 1940, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 16, Sec. IV, A.

¹³Philip T. Hartung, "Great Men Remind Us," Commonweal, 24 Oct. 1947, p. 42.

¹⁴"The New Picture: Song of Love," Time, 13 Oct. 1947, p. 105.

¹⁵Quoted in Homer Dickens, The Films of Katharine Hepburn (New York: Citadel Press, 1971), p. 137.

¹⁶Bosley Crowther, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 2207.

¹⁷Bosley Crowther, The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, IV, 2651.

¹⁸Kenneth Macgowan, Behind the Screen (New York: Dell, 1965), pp. 352-356.

¹⁹Richard Watts, Jr., "On the Screen: 'Letty Lynton'--Capitol," New York Herald Tribune, 30 April 1932, p. 10, col. 1.

²⁰The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968, III, 1774.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSIONS

In concluding this study of American critical reactions to the cinema career of Clarence Brown, an evaluation of the film criticisms used will first be advanced, an evaluation of Brown's significant contributions to film history as reflected in the criticism will be given, and topics for further research will be suggested.

Before evaluating the film criticisms of Brown's contemporaries, it is necessary to clarify the position of early film criticism. Stanley Kauffman in American Film Criticism: From Beginning to "Citizen Kane" notes that, before 1958 when Agee on Film was published, film criticism was not an admired art.¹ Filmmaking, itself, was not highly thought of at the time. Movies were considered more a mass medium than an art form. Writers who studied and reviewed films were, therefore, not highly thought of as were drama critics.

Overall the criticisms written by Brown's contemporaries never really dealt with the techniques unique to filmmaking. Reviewers seemed more oriented toward methods of dramatic criticism. Indeed, the critiques of Clarence Brown's films found in contemporary newspapers and periodicals were more reviews than they were criticisms. The bulk of a review was usually a plot summary. Whenever a well known play or novel was adapted to the screen, critics showed concern for the quality of the adaptation. Their remarks, however, usually centered around Brown's ability to catch the substance of the plot and meaning rather than the cinematic techniques

used in the transfer of the story to the screen. The reviews also focused largely on the acting quality, particularly when well known stars were in the picture. Some of the critics who reviewed Brown's films did not mention the quality of direction at all; and often when the direction was analyzed, it was in very general terms and appeared at the end of the article, more or less as an afterthought. Directorial techniques were almost always related to the unfolding of the plot or to the quality of the performances, two main interests of most critics. It should be noted that the critiques of Brown's films were written before the auteur theory became popular. After its introduction, film scholars began placing more emphasis on the director's unique part in the making of the film.

In general, the most complete and thorough reviews were found in nonprofessional periodicals such as The Nation, The New Republic, Time, and others rather than in newspapers or professional magazines such as Photoplay. This could be caused by the discretion the contemporary magazines could use in choosing the films for review. Newspapers and professional periodicals usually reviewed all the movies that came from major studios whether they invited exciting criticism or not.

The comments on Brown's work found in books on film were almost always written long after the film was made. The authors were looking back on Brown's career. Books differ from the newspapers and magazines in their emphasis; in the books the films are usually mentioned in terms of outstanding technical achievements. These accomplishments were usually placed in an historical perspective reflecting the developments of the time period in which they were made. The criticisms found in

books usually did not deal with an entire film as did contemporary criticisms found in newspapers and periodicals.

By far, the picture most frequently mentioned by the authors of books on film history and the art of filmmaking was "Flesh and the Devil" (1926). Others mentioned often were "The Goose Woman" (1925), "Anna Christie" (1930), "A Free Soul" (1931), "Ah, Wilderness!" (1935), "National Velvet" (1945), and "Intruder in the Dust" (1949).

Viewing all the film criticisms together, some of Clarence Brown's achievements stand out as most significant. These achievements, as reflected by Brown's contemporaries and modern film scholars, help to form an understanding of Brown's contribution to film history. Due to the limitations of the critical technique, however, it cannot be said that the criticisms reveal a definitive analysis of his contributions.

General comments on Clarence Brown and his career show that he was most noted for and is most remembered for his films' consistent financial successes and his ability to work with great actors and actresses. Brown's name is most often associated with the tremendous screen personality, Greta Garbo, and with his outstanding work with other well known actresses.

Within the technical dimension, critics most often praised his photography. Photographic beauty and excellence of lighting, particularly in his silent films, stand out as one of Brown's most significant achievements, an achievement which advanced the art of filmmaking. His talent for working with performers is consistently emphasized in terms of his specific technical contributions. Brown seems to have influenced filmmaking significantly by his early use of location shooting

for reality in sound films. The well praised results achieved from such films as "Ah, Wilderness!" and "Intruder in the Dust" perhaps influenced more and more directors to take their companies out of the studio and into a real setting.

Because of the contemporary film critic's bias toward the dramatic dimension of filmmaking, it is easier to draw conclusions about Brown's contributions in this area. Although studio executives recognized Brown's excellence in adapting stage plays to the screen, looking back, Brown seems to have contributed to the techniques of converting materials written for the theatre only with O'Neill's plays. He did set an excellent example, however, in his transfer of novels to the medium of film. Brown will always be remembered as one of the movie industry's greatest sentimentalists. He successfully expressed his sentimentality in romantic as well as Americana themes. Brown's use of comic relief seems also to be especially noteworthy in a summary of his overall contribution. Early in his career, he stated the philosophy that a story should always be told with a light touch, and this belief seemed to stay with him throughout his 32 years of filmmaking. Brown also set an example with his ability to accurately re-create a time period in history. Another talent that particularly stands out is Brown's rare sensitivity in capturing the emotions of children. Although he did not direct a large number of pictures which dealt with children's feelings, movies like "National Velvet" (1945) and "The Yearling" (1946) revealed a talent worth remembering.

Critical reactions within the dramatic dimension also expose a factor that is believed to have weakened the overall effectiveness of

Clarence Brown's cinema career. He was often assigned poor screenplays. These movies were usually designed as vehicles for the studio's leading stars. They consistently grossed large sums of money, but they did so because of the stars' attractions, not because of their dramatic or artistic excellence. When working with leading actors and actresses, a director often had to sacrifice overall good filmic techniques for the sake of making the performers look good. The profits served the purpose of the studio executives who assigned Brown the shooting scripts, but Brown's talents were unfulfilled with such meaningless movies as "They Met in Bombay" (1941). Because these star vehicle films came toward the end of his career, it is possible that they could extensively damage Brown's reputation. They are also easily accessible while such films as "The Goose Woman" (1925), "Smouldering Fires" (1925), "The Trail of '98" (1928), and other early, outstanding pictures are difficult to locate and acquire.

Critics did not deal much with the rhetorical dimension of filmmaking. From their reactions, it can be asserted that Brown's main contribution to the art of persuasion through film would be his direction of "Intruder in the Dust." The subtlety with which he presented the condemnation of racial hatred set a successful example and broke away from the heavy-handed "preaching" that had been found in previous films dealing with Negro problems.

Criticisms of Brown's works have done little to assess his contributions within the historical dimension. Certainly, Brown's consistent distortion of historical fact as brought out by some reviewers and ignored by others does much to reveal the taste of audiences for

romance rather than accuracy. Also, film critics' favorable reactions toward the times when Brown sneaked sensual scenes past the censors reveal that the censorship codes were not well respected.

Much further study must be done in order to evaluate fully Clarence Brown's career. Scholarly techniques within many disciplines could contribute to the study. Suggestions for further research will be herein confined to the field of communication. During the preparation of this study, it was possible to view several of Clarence Brown's films, including the six films screened during the 1973 Clarence Brown Film Festival at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville, Tennessee. It became strikingly apparent that film reviews and later analyses provide very incomplete insights to the technical, dramatic, rhetorical, and historical dimensions of the filmmaker's art. Consequently, further study should rely on the films themselves rather than on writings about the films.

In terms of the technical aspects of filmmaking, interesting studies could be done on Brown's photography. Innovative techniques within his silent films need to be discussed. By viewing all of his films, a student of Brown could trace through the consistently used shooting styles. An interesting comparison could be made between the photography in Brown's silent films, which was praised for a restrained use of close-ups, and the photography of later star vehicle pictures, which were filled with close-ups. Studies which closely reveal how Brown worked with actors and actresses and with children would also be helpful.

Within the dramatic dimension, more complete analysis of Brown's various story-telling techniques, especially his use of sentimentality,

is needed. It would be interesting to know how large a part Brown took in the writing of his screenplays and which of his film scripts he requested and which he was assigned. A study of Brown's filmic techniques for revealing emotions would be valuable. Especially interesting would be a study of his devices for expressing the emotions of children.

The rhetorical dimension offers many interesting possibilities for further study. An analysis of the consistency with which Brown's films sought to communicate a significant message is needed. Conclusions could be reached about Brown's various styles of communication. A study of the persuasive content of Brown's films during World War II would be particularly interesting.

Most work needs to be done within the historical dimension. Brown's films should be compared with others produced during the same time period. Further, the films could be analyzed in terms of how they reflect the feelings and culture of their era. By interviewing Brown's professional peers such as directors, actors, and technicians, a greater understanding could be obtained of Brown's reputation and status during his career.

It is hoped that this thesis will offer a starting point for further studies of the film career of Clarence Brown.

Note

¹Stanley Kauffmann, ed., "Preview," American Film Criticism: From the Beginnings to "Citizen Kane" (New York: Liveright, 1972), pp. x-xi.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Books

- Agee, James. Agee on Film. Vol. 1. New York: Grosset, 1969.
- Bainbridge, John. Garbo. New York: Holt, 1971.
- Bardèche, Maurice, and Robert Bransillach. The History of Motion Pictures. New York: Norton and Museum of Modern Art, 1938.
- Barrymore, Lionel. We Barrymores. New York: Appleton, 1951.
- Baxter, John. Hollywood in the Thirties. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968.
- Best, Marc. Those Endearing Young Charms: Child Performers of the Screen. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1971.
- Blum, Daniel, comp. Daniel Blum's Screen World. Vol. I. New York: Greenberg, 1952.
- _____, comp. Daniel Blum's Screen World. Vol. III. New York: Greenberg, 1952.
- _____, comp. Daniel Blum's Screen World. Vol. V. New York: Greenberg, 1954.
- Brownlow, Kevin. The Parade's Gone By. New York: Bonanza, 1968.
- Conway, Michael, Dion McGregor, and Mark Ricci, comp. The Films of Greta Garbo. New York: Bonanza, n.d.
- Cook, Alistair, ed. Garbo and the Night Watchmen: A Selection Made in 1932 from the Writings of British and American Film Critics. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.
- Cowie, Peter, ed. A Concise History of the Cinema. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1971.
- _____. Seventy Years of Cinema. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1969.
- Crowther, Bosley. The Lion's Share: The Story of an Entertainment Empire. New York: Dutton, 1957.
- Dickens, Homer. The Films of Katharine Hepburn. New York: Citadel Press, 1971.
- Elwood, Muriel. Pauline Frederick: On and Off the Stage. Chicago: A. Kroch, 1940.

Essoe, Gabe. The Films of Clark Gable. New York: Citadel Press, 1970.

The Film Index: A Bibliography, Vol. I: The Film as Art. New York: Museum of Modern Art Film Library and H. W. Wilson, 1941.

Franklin, Joe. Classics of the Silent Screen. New York: Citadel Press, 1959.

French, Philip. The Movie Moguls: An Informal History of the Hollywood Tycoons. Chicago: Henry Regnery, 1969.

Fulton, A. R. Motion Pictures: The Development of an Art from Silent Films to the Age of Television. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1960.

Goodman, Ezra. The Fifty-Year Decline and Fall of Hollywood. New York: Simon, 1961.

Griffith, Richard, and Arthur Mayer. The Movies: The Sixty-Four Year Story of the World of Hollywood and its Effects on America, from Pre-Nickelodeon Days to the Present. New York: Simon, 1957.

Halliwell, Leslie. The Filmgoer's Companion. New York: Hill, 1965.

Higham, Charles, and Joel Greenberg. Hollywood in the Forties. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968.

Houston, Penelope. Contemporary Cinema. Baltimore: Penguin, 1963.

Jacobs, Lewis. The Rise of the American Film: A Critical History. New York: Harcourt, 1939.

Jerome, V. J. The Negro in Hollywood Films. New York: Masses & Mainstream, 1950.

Jordon, Rene. Clark Gable. New York: Pyramid, 1973.

Kael, Pauline. Kiss Kiss Bang Bang. Boston: Little, 1968.

Kauffman, Stanley, ed. American Film Criticism: From the Beginning to "Citizen Kane". New York: Liveright, 1972.

Knight, Arthur. The Liveliest Art: A Panoramic History of the Movies. New York: Macmillan, 1957.

Lindgren, Ernest. The Art of the Film: An Introduction to Film Appreciation. New York: Macmillan, 1948.

- Macdonald, Dwight. Dwight Macdonald on Movies. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1969.
- Macgowan, Kenneth. Behind the Screen: The History and Techniques of the Motion Picture. New York: Dell, 1965.
- Marion, Francis. Off With Their Heads: A Serio-Comic Tale of Hollywood. New York: Macmillan, 1972.
- Mast, Gerald. A Short History of the Movies. New York: Pegasus, 1971.
- Miller, Naud D. , ed. Winchester's Screen Encyclopedia. London: Winchester, n.d.
- Morella, Joe, Edward Z. Epstein, and John Griggs. The Films of World War II. Secaucus, N. J.: Citadel Press, 1973.
- The New York Times Directory of the Film. New York: Arno and Random, 1971.
- The New York Times Film Reviews 1913-1968. Vols. I-IV, VI. New York: New York Times and Arno, 1970.
- Quigley, Martin, Jr., and Richard Gertner. Films in America 1929-1969. New York: Golden Press, 1970.
- Quirk, Lawrence J. The Films of Frederic March. New York: Citadel Press, 1971.
- _____. The Films of Joan Crawford. New York: Citadel Press, 1968.
- Rivkin, Allen, and Laura Kerr, eds. Hello Hollywood. Garden City: Doubleday, 1962.
- Robinson, David. Hollywood in the Twenties. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1968.
- Rotha, Paul. The Film Till Now. Hamlyn House, England: Hamlyn, 1967.
- Sadoul, George. Dictionary of Film Makers. Trans. Peter Morris. Berkeley: Univ. of California Press, 1972.
- Sarris, Andrew. The American Cinema: Directors and Directions 1929-1968. New York: Dutton, 1968.
- Selznick, David. Memo from David O. Selznick. Ed. Ruby Behlmer, New York: Viking, 1972.
- Spears, Jack. Hollywood: The Golden Era. New York: A. S. Barnes, 1971.

Swindell, Larry. Spencer Tracy... A Biography [sic]. New York: World, 1969.

Thomas, Bob. Selznick. Garden City: Doubleday, 1970.

_____. Thalberg: Life and Legend. Garden City: Doubleday, 1969.

Vidor, King. A Tree is a Tree. New York: Harcourt, 1953.

Wald, Jerry, and Richard Macaulay, eds. The Best Pictures 1939-1940: and the Year Book of Motion Pictures in America. New York: Dodd, 1940.

Wagenknecht, Edward. The Movies in the Age of Innocence. Norman: Univ. of Oklahoma Press, 1962.

Walker, Alexander. Stardom: The Hollywood Phenomenon. New York: Stein and Day, 1970.

Weaver, John T., comp. Twenty Years of Silents 1908-1928. New York: Scarecrow, 1971.

Williams, Chester. Gable. New York: Fleet Press, 1968.

Wolfenstein, Martha, and Nathan Leites. Movies: A Psychological Study. New York: Hafner, 1971.

Ziercold, Norman. The Moguls. New York: Coward-McCann, 1969.

Newspapers

"Angels in the Outfield." Film Daily, 27 Aug. 1951. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, E.

"Angels in the Outfield." Variety, 29 Aug. 1951, p. 6.

"'Angels in the Outfield' Grand Baseball Comedy." The Hollywood Reporter, 27 Aug. 1951. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, E.

"Artistic and Splendidly Entertaining Spiritual Drama." Wid's Daily, 29 Aug. 1920. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

"Atmosphere, Human Touches, Tempo and Big Climax Makes This Hit." Wid's Weekly, 8 March 1924. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

Barnes, Howard. "On the Screen: 'Conquest'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 5 Nov. 1937, p. 19.

_____. "On the Screen: 'Idiot's Delight'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 3 Feb. 1939, p. 10.

_____. "On the Screen: 'The Gorgeous Hussy'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 5 Sept. 1936, p. 6.

_____. "On the Screen: 'The Rains Came'--Roxy." New York Herald Tribune, 9 Sept. 1939, p. 8.

"Brown Sets MGM Record with 'Dust.'" The Hollywood Reporter, n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.

"Bucs Win Pennant--In Movie--With Angel's Help." The Pittsburg Press, 7 Sept. 1951. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, E.

Carroll, Harrison. "'Intruder in the Dust' Is Great, Brilliant Picture." Los Angeles Evening Herald and Express, 12 Nov. 1949, p. C2. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.

"Conquest." Variety, 27 Oct. 1937, p. 18.

Creelman, Eileen. "Irene Dunne in a Film Version of Alice Duer Miller's 'The White Cliffs of Dover.'" The New York Sun, n.d., p. 24. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 16, Sec. IV, E.

Dupre, Irma Frances. "'Last of Mohicans' Fine Achievement." Exhibitors Herald, 4 Dec. 1920. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

Ellison, Ralph. "The Shadow and the Act." Reporter, 6 Dec. 1949, pp. 17-19.

Evening Mail, 26 Oct. 1920. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

"Film Preview: When in Rome." Variety, 28 Feb. 1952, p. 3.

Garrison, Omar. "'Good-Over-Evil' Film Wins Favor." The Mirror, 16 Feb. 1952, p. 10.

"'The Goose Woman.'" Film Daily, 16 July 1925, p. 5.

- "The Goose Woman" (unidentified newspaper clipping) 1 Aug. 1925.
Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.
- "'Great Redeemer' Vivid Photoplay on Rivoli Screen." Evening World, 26 Oct. 1920. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.
- Haun, Harry. "The UT Grad Who Engineered Dreams." The Nashville Tennessean Sunday Magazine, 2 July 1972, pp. 5-8.
- "Idiot's Delight." Variety, 25 Jan. 1939, p. 10.
- Illustrated News, 21 Dec. 1924. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.
- "Intruder in the Dust." Film Daily, 11 Oct. 1949. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.
- "Intruder in the Dust." Motion Picture Herald, 15 Oct. 1949. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.
- "Intruder in the Dust." Showmen's Trade Review, 15 Oct. 1949. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.
- "'Intruder in Dust' Bows in Oxford, Locale of Filming." Showmen's Trade Review, 15 Oct. 1949. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.
- "'Intruder,' Lynching Story, is Dynamic Screen Fare." The Hollywood Reporter, 11 Oct. 1949. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.
- "Intruder in the Dust." Variety, 12 Oct. 1949, p. 6.
- Kennedy, Tom. "Butterfly." Motion Picture News, n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee, Box 17, Sec. V, I.
- "The Last of the Mohicans." Screen Reports, 4 Dec. 1920, p. 17.
- "'The Last of the Mohicans' Full of Thrills." Wid's Daily, 28 Nov. 1920. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

- Lawrence, Florence. "'Smouldering Fires' Scores at Premiere." Los Angeles Examiner, 4 Jan 1925. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, I.
- Lee, Laura. "Van Johnson, Paul Douglas Star in 'When in Rome' at Midtown." The Evening Bulletin, 19 April 1952. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, C.
- Martin, Mildred. "'When in Rome' Opens on Screen at Midtown." The Philadelphia Inquirer, 19 April 1952, p. 8.
- "Of Human Hearts." Variety, 9 Feb. 1938, p. 14.
- Parsons, Louella O. "Film Noted Stage Comedy Wins Plaudits." Los Angeles Examiner, n.d., p. 12. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, I.
- _____. "Intruder Holds Suspense." Los Angeles Examiner, 12 Nov. 1949. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, G.
- _____. New York American, 24 July 1924, Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.
- Price, Guy. "The Theatres." Los Angeles Evening Herald, 16 Aug. 1920. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.
- "The Rains Came." Variety, 13 Sept. 1939, p. 12.
- "'Rome' Warm and Amusing; 'Rodeo' Colorful Picture: Brown's Production Highly Impressive." The Hollywood Reporter, 28 Feb. 1952, pp. 3-4.
- "Song of Love." Variety, 23 July 1947, p. 10.
- "The Screen: Rivoli 'The Great Redeemer.'" Evening Post, 26 Oct 1920. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.
- Talley, Alma. "'Smouldering Fires'--90%." Movie Weekly, 2 May 1925. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, I.
- Tazelaar, Marguerite. "On the Screen: 'A Free Soul'--Astor." New York Herald Tribune, 3 June 1931, p. 19.

_____. "On the Screen: 'Of Human Hearts'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 18 Feb. 1938, p. 15.

_____. "On the Screen: 'Sadie McKee'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 18 May 1934, p. 11.

Thomas, Bob. "Clarence Brown, Specialist in Film Romance, Picks 'Greatest Lovers.'" (unidentified newspaper clipping), n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, B.

"Tourneur Film Great: Sets New Pace for Makers of Human Dramas." Daily Times, n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

Underhill, Harriette. "On the Screen." New York Herald Tribune, 2 April 1926, p. 12.

_____. "On the Screen." New York Herald Tribune, 12 Dec. 1923, p. 13.

_____. "On the Screen." New York Herald Tribune, 3 Jan. 1921, p. 8.

_____. "On the Screen: 'Flesh and the Devil' Portrays Love as a Tragedy; 'Blonde or Brunette' Laughs at It." New York Herald Tribune, 10 Jan. 1927, p. 20.

_____. "On the Screen: Prodigal Son Pictured in 'The Devil's Guard' and 'The Great Redeemer.'" New York Herald Tribune, 25 Oct. 1920, p. 8.

_____. "On the Screen: 'The Eagle' Starring Valentino, a Classic; 'Rose of the World,' Full of Interest." New York Herald Tribune, 9 Nov. 1925, p. 12.

_____. "On the Screen: 'The Signal Tower,' at Strand, Called Gripping Melodrama With Human Appeal." New York Herald Tribune, 21 July 1924, p. 6.

"Universal Production Unfolds Human Story." Los Angeles Herald, 9 Oct. 1924. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, I.

"Valentino Film to Feature Egyptian Program Saturday." (unidentified newspaper clipping), n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

Watts, Richard, Jr. "On the Screen: 'A Woman of Affairs'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 21 Jan. 1920, p. 11.

- _____. "On the Screen: 'Ah, Wilderness!'--Center." New York Herald Tribune, 25 Dec. 1935, p. 13.
- _____. "On the Screen: Card Dempster Also Shines in 'Poppy' Film; Louise Dresser and Director Make 'The Goose Woman' Hit." New York Herald Tribune, 4 Dec. 1925, p. 10.
- _____. "On the Screen: 'Chained'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 1 Sept. 1934, p. 6.
- _____. "On the Screen: 'Emma'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 6 June 1932, p. 10.
- _____. "On the Screen: Greta Garbo in 'Anna Christie'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 15 March 1930, p. 10.
- _____. "On the Screen: Greta Garbo in 'Romance'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 23 Aug. 1930, p. 6.
- _____. "On the Screen: 'Letty Lynton'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 30 April 1932, p. 10.
- _____. "On the Screen: 'Looking Forward'--Capitol and Love's Metropolitan." New York Herald Tribune, 1 May 1933, p. 10.
- _____. "On the Screen: 'Navy Blues'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 11 Jan. 1930, p. 11.
- _____. "On the Screen: 'Night Flight'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 7 Oct. 1933, p. 8.
- _____. "On the Screen: 'Possessed'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 28 Nov. 1931, p. 10.
- _____. "On the Screen: 'Wife Versus Secretary'--Capitol." New York Herald Tribune, 29 Feb. 1936, p. 10.
- _____. "'The Trail of '98'--Astor." New York Herald Tribune, 21 March 1928, p. 14.
- "What's New in the Movies: 'The Last of the Mohicans' at the Stand, and Rivoli Celebrating Third Anniversary." The Evening Mail, n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.
- "When in Rome." Film Daily, 6 March 1952. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, C.

"When in Rome." Motion Picture Herald, 1 Jan. 1952. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, C.

"When in Rome." Variety, 5 March 1952, p. 6.

"The Yearling." Variety, 27 Nov. 1946, p. 16.

Periodicals

Agee, James. "Films." Nation, 20 March 1943, pp. 426-427.

_____. "Films." Nation, 8 Nov. 1947, p. 511.

"Ah, Wilderness!." Time, 9 Dec. 1935, p. 44.

"All Velvet." Newsweek, 18 Dec. 1944, p. 80.

"Angels in the Outfield." Newsweek, 17 Sept. 1951, pp. 91-92.

"Angels in the Outfield." Variety, 29 Aug. 1951, p. 6.

"Anna Karenina." Photoplay, 48 (Sept. 1934), 96.

"Anna Karenina." Time, 9 Sept. 1935, pp. 46-47.

Brown, John Mason. "Seeing Things: Those Short Happy Years." Saturday Review, 22 Feb. 1947, pp. 22-24.

"Chained." Photoplay, 47 (Jan. 1935), 10.

Cohen, Octavus Roy. "This is the Year of 'The Yearling.'" Collier's, n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, F.

"Come Live With Me." Photoplay, 19 (July 1941), 18.

Crawford, Joan. "The Job of Keeping at the Top." Saturday Evening Post, 17 June 1933, pp. 14-15, 75-76.

"Crooked Road to Honor." Newsweek, 7 July 1941, pp. 80-81.

Cunningham, James. "Conquest." Commonweal, 12 Nov. 1937, p. 78.

_____. "The Gorgeous Hussy." Commonweal, 18 Sept. 1936, p. 487.

"Edison, the Man." Time, 10 June 1940, pp. 100-101.

"Eight-Year-Old Yearling." Newsweek, 27 Jan. 1947, pp. 89-90.

"Emma." Photoplay, 41 (May 1932), 8.

Farber, Manny. "Crazy Over Horses." New Republic, 5 Feb. 1945, p. 175.

_____. "The Unholy Three." New Republic, 26 June 1944, p. 850.

_____. "The Too Beautiful People." New Republic, 15 March 1943, pp. 346-347.

Ferguson, Otis. "It's Criminal." New Republic, 22 Feb. 1939, p. 74.

Fonte, John. "This is the Year of the Yearling." Woman's Home Journal n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, F.

Gilmore, Cecil. "This is the Year of 'The Yearling.'" McCalls Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, F.

Giroux, Robert. "Films: Taxidermy on the Screen." Nation, 2 Oct. 1935, p. 391.

"Glamorous Heroine of History: Joan Crawford Comes to Maturity in 'The Gorgeous Hussy.'" Literary Digest, 12 Sept. 1936, p. 17.

"The Goose Woman." Photoplay, 29 (March 1926), 8.

"The Gorgeous Hussy." Time, 7 Sept. 1936, p. 19.

Graves, Janet. "Let's Go to the Movies." Photoplay, 43 (Jan. 1953), 21.

"Grossers Without Milestones." Saturday Review, 11 Nov. 1950, p. 28.

Hamilton, Sara. "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 25 (June 1944), 19.

Hartung, Paul T. "Clouds Over Woman." Commonweal, 22 Sept. 1939, p. 500.

_____. "Crazy Over Horses." Commonweal, 29 Dec. 1944, p. 276.

_____. "Enni--Or Spring Is in the Air." Commonweal, 31 May 1940, p. 130.

_____. "Great Men Remind Us." Commonweal, 24 Oct. 1947, p. 42.

_____. "Hollywood's Delight." Commonweal, 17 Feb. 1939, p. 470.

_____. "Home is Where You Hang Your Hat." Commonweal, 19 March 1943, pp. 543-544.

- _____. "Nature is Beautiful--and Cruel." Commonweal, 24 Jan. 1947, pp. 375-376.
- _____. "The Screen." Commonweal, 26 Oct. 1951, p. 64.
- _____. "The Screen: 'Heaven Lies About Us in Our Infancy.'" Commonweal, 11 July 1941, p. 278.
- _____. "The Screen: Pilgrim's Progress." Commonweal, 5 Oct. 1952, p. 224.
- Hinxman, Margaret. "Films." Men and Book (Feb. 1950), 114. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, D.
- "How Clarence Brown Directs." Hollywood Spectator, 11 (Sept. 12, 1936), 10-11.
- "Idiot's Delight." Time, 13 Feb. 1939, p. 29.
- "'Idiot's Delight': the Film Doesn't Name Names, but It Still Carries Anti-War Punch." Newsweek, 6 Feb. 1939, pp. 24-25.
- Isaacs, Hermine Rich. "Beauty and the Beast of Berlin: The Films in Review." Theatre Arts, 27 (May 1943), 282-285, 287-288.
- _____. "A Picture of Our Lives: The Films in Review." Theatre Arts, 40 (Jan. 1947), 40-41.
- _____. "The Small Moralist: The Films in Review." Theatre Arts, 52 (Nov. 1947), 52.
- Jones, Dorothy. "William Faulkner: Novel into Film." Quarterly Film Radio and Television, 8 (Fall 1953), 51-71.
- Kantor, MacKinlay. "'Dear Greg': an Open Letter to his Friend Gregory Peck From Famed Author MacKinlay Kantor." Cosmopolitan, n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, F.
- Kass, Robert. "Film and TV." Catholic World, 174 (Jan. 1952), 305.
- _____. "Film and TV." Catholic World, 174 (Oct. 1951), 65.
- _____. "Film and TV." Catholic World, 176 (Dec. 1952), 223.
- "Kiki." Photoplay, 30 (Sept. 1936), 16.
- "The Last of the Mohicans." Life, n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, H.

- "Letty Lynton." Photoplay, 42 (July 1932), 11.
- "Looking Forward." Photoplay, 44 (Aug. 1933), 14.
- "A Marriage by Purchase." Newsweek, 3 Feb. 1941, p. 59.
- "The Man Behind the Stars: Clarence Brown." Movie Play (July 1952), pp. 40-41, 94-95. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee, Box 17, Sec. V, B.
- "National Velvet." Photoplay, 27 (June 1945), 126.
- "Never Let Me Go." Newsweek, 29 June 1953, p. 90.
- "New Picture: The Human Comedy." Time, 22 March, 1943, p. 56.
- "New Picture: The Yearling." Time, 13 Jan. 1947, p. 97.
- "The New Pictures: Angels in the Outfield." Time, 1 Oct. 1951, p. 102.
- "The New Pictures: It's a Big Country." Time, 28 Jan. 1952, pp. 96, 98.
- "The New Pictures: National Velvet." Time, 25 Dec. 1944, p. 44.
- "The New Pictures: Plymouth Adventure." Time, 24 Nov. 1952, p. 108.
- "The New Pictures: Song of Love." Time, 13 Oct. 1947, pp. 105-106.
- "The New Pictures: The White Cliffs of Dover." Time, 29 May 1944, pp. 94-95.
- "The New Pictures: They Met in Bombay." Time, 21 June 1941, p. 74.
- "Night Flight." Photoplay, 45 (Dec. 1933), 14.
- "Of Human Hearts." Time, 21 Feb. 1938, pp. 56-57.
- "On the Current Screen." Literary Digest, 21 Sept. 1935, p. 21.
- "One Lion to Another." Newsweek, 29 May 1944, pp. 70, 72.
- Peet, Creighton. "The Movies: A Free Soul." Outlook and Independent, 3 June 1931, p. 154.
- _____. "The Movies: Anna Christie." Outlook and Independent, 26 Feb. 1930, p. 355.
- _____. "The Movies: Inspiration." Outlook and Independent, 25 Feb. 1931, p. 312.

- _____. "The New Movies: 'Possessed.'" Outlook and Independent, 2 Dec. 1931, p. 439.
- "Plymouth Adventure." Newsweek, 1 Dec. 1952, p. 83.
- Porter, Amy. "Growth of the Yearling." Collier's, 29 Sept. 1945, pp. 74-75, 77.
- "The Rains Came." Time, 18 Sept. 1939, pp. 50-51.
- Rodger, Sara Elizabeth. "This is the Year of 'The Yearling.'" American Magazine, n.d. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, F.
- "Romance." Commonweal, 3 Sept. 1930, p. 446.
- "Romance." Photoplay, 38 (Oct. 1930), 12.
- "Saroyan, Rooney & Butch." Newsweek, 15 March 1943, pp. 78, 80.
- "Screen: MGM and Barrymore are Faithful to Eugene O'Neill." Newsweek, 14 Dec. 1935, p. 38.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 38 (Jan. 1930), 53.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 39 (Feb. 1931), 54.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 41 (Jan. 1932), 46.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 44 (June 1933), 60.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 46 (July 1934), 54.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 46 (Nov. 1934), 57.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 49 (April 1936), 119.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 52 (Jan. 1938), 47.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 54 (Aug. 1940), 75.
- "The Shadow Stage." Photoplay, 22 (May 1943), 22.
- "Some of the New Pictures: Metro Again Scores Heavily." Hollywood Spectator, 10 (Nov. 13, 1935), 6.
- "The Son-Daughter." Photoplay, 44 (June 1933), 18.
- "They Met in Bombay." Photoplay, 19 (Oct. 1941), 111.

- "This is the Year of 'The Yearling.'" Lion's Roar, 5 (Aug. 1946), 2.
- "To Please a Lady." Newsweek, 6 Nov. 1950, p. 94.
- "To Please a Lady." Photoplay, 39 (Feb. 1951), 12.
- "Tolstoy: 'Anna Karenina' Gets a Voice but Little New Life." Newsweek, 31 Aug. 1935, p. 26.
- Troy, William. "Films: 'Night Flight.'" Nation, 25 Oct. 1933, pp. 492-493.
- Tully, Jim. "Clarence Brown: An Estimate of the Foremost Exponent of the Newer School of Screen Directors." Vanity Fair, 30 (April 1928), 79, 106.
- "When in Rome." Newsweek, 28 April 1952, p. 98.
- "When 'The Rains Came.'" Newsweek, 18 Sept. 1939, pp. 37-38.
- Wildes, Newlin. "This is the Year of 'The Yearling.'" Ladies Home Journal, (March 1947). Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 17, Sec. V, F.
- "The Wizardry of Edison: Tracy Takes Up Story Where Rooney Left Off." Newsweek, 27 May 1940, p. 48.
- "Wonder of Woman." Photoplay, 36 (Oct. 1929), 55.
- Young, Stark. "Romance and Romance." New Republic, 17 Sept. 1930, pp. 127-128.

Correspondence

- Inter-office communication. To Wesley Miller From Barrett C. Kiesling. "Subject: Critics re 'Intruder' Sound." Dec. 28, 1949. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 16, Sec. IV, A.
- Letter from Julia C. Lieb to Clarence Brown, May 17, 1940. Clarence Brown Collection, Special Collections Section of the Univ. of Tennessee Library, Box 16, Sec. IV, A.

APPENDIX

APPENDIX

THE FILMS OF CLARENCE BROWN

- 1920 "The Great Redeemer"
- 1921 "Foolish Matrons" (co-directed with Maurice Tourneur)
"The Last of the Mohicans" (co-directed with Maurice Tourneur)
- 1922 "The Light in the Dark"
- 1923 "Don't Marry for Money"
"The Acquittal"
- 1924 "The Signal Tower"
"Butterfly"
- 1925 "Smouldering Fires"
"The Eagle"
"The Goose Woman"
- 1926 "Kiki"
"Flesh and the Devil"
- 1928 "Trail of '98"
- 1929 "A Woman of Affairs"
"Wonder of Women"
"Navy Blues"
- 1930 "Anna Christie"
"Romance"
- 1931 "Inspiration"
"A Free Soul"
"Possessed"
- 1932 "Emma"
"Letty Lynton"
"The Son-Daughter"
- 1933 "Looking Forward"
"Night Flight"
- 1934 "Sadie McKee"
"Chained"
- 1935 "Anna Karenina"
"Ah, Wilderness!"

- 1936 "Wife Versus Secretary"
"The Gorgeous Hussy"
- 1937 "Conquest"
- 1938 "Of Human Hearts"
- 1939 "Idiot's Delight"
"The Rains Came"
- 1940 "Edison, the Man"
- 1941 "Come Live With Me"
"They Met in Bombay"
- 1943 "The Human Comedy"
- 1944 "The White Cliffs of Dover"
"National Velvet"
- 1946 "The Yearling"
- 1947 "Song of Love"
- 1949 "Intruder in the Dust"
"Secret Garden" (produced by Brown and directed by Fred M. Wilcox)
- 1950 "To Please a Lady"
- 1951 "Angels in the Outfield"
"When in Rome"
- 1952 "It's a Big Country" (directed one part of the six-part film)
"Plymouth Adventure"
- 1953 "Never Let Me go" (produced by Brown and directed by Delmar Daves)

VITA

Deborah Lynn Oliver was born in Lafayette, Louisiana. She attended public schools in that city and graduated from Lafayette High School in 1967. That same year, she entered the University of Southwestern Louisiana in Lafayette and in 1971 received a Bachelor of Arts Degree in Speech Education. In 1971 she accepted a teaching assistantship in the Department of Speech and Theatre at the University of Tennessee in Knoxville, Tennessee, and that fall began work toward a Master's Degree. She returned to Lafayette in August, 1972, and received a temporary teaching appointment from the Speech Department at the University of Southwestern Louisiana. During the summer of 1973, she completed her graduate work at the University of Tennessee and received a Master of Arts Degree in Speech and Theatre in August, 1973.

After completing the degree, she will return to Lafayette, where she is employed by the Lafayette Parish School Board to teach speech and dramatics at Lafayette High School.