

Movies in our Classrooms

By Cosme S. Quinto

ABOUT a century after Magellan came to the Philippines, Comenius published a volume called *Orbis Pictus* which incidentally became the first specimen of an illustrated printed book. Heretofore manuscripts were decorated with artistic designs mainly for ornamental purposes. But much later *Orbis Pictus* became associated with audio-visual education by modern educational writers and philosophers.

The earliest forms of audio-visual materials in education were said to be the tools and implements of the primitive man, and these were naturally the forerunners of modern audio-visual devices. Some archeologists have imagined that the cavemen played hand-shadow silhouettes on the walls of his cave so that filmstrips and slides must have existed many thousands of years ago in their crudest forms.

The most recent development of audio-visual education in the Philippines, however, is the use of motion pictures as a means of teaching children in the classrooms. The efficacy of learning by watching films is so apparent that today many schools in the country are equipped with projectors and movie screens. At least some people have started looking forward to a near future when going to school and going to the movies are the same thing. According to not a few teachers, teaching a lesson by means of films is interesting to children because of its being a novelty among other instructional media.

Thomas Alva Edison was the pioneer in using movies as a device in audio-visual education, since he was the inventor of the movie camera that now produces many educational films. It is apparent that Edison was aware of the information that more sensory nerve fibers come to the brain from the eyes than from any other receptor when he made known that his invention was a mass-educational device. Edison's educational insight is further manifested by his claim that of all the five human senses sight is the most versatile in acquiring information from the world about us.

The dream of a tool for "painless education" in the form of motion pictures is, however, still remote from realization. Besides, psychologists scorn the idea of minimizing efforts in learning because researches have shown that the brighter the learner is, and the harder he is made to work, the better he learns—from books just as from movies. Actually, learning from motion pictures is not a passive experience and

it is evident that physical and mental exertion takes place when watching films; otherwise such a learning situation is a veritable vacuum.

One reason why learning from the movies is preferred by many educators is the fact that sight and sound stimuli create the response in the individual, making the impression more defined by the dual reaction of his eyes and ears. This learning process is an example of the principle of "multi-sensory activity" which advocates the use of more than one of the five senses to make learning more permanent. It follows that a blind man is very much more difficult to teach, limiting learning through audio-visual factors alone.

Literature is one of the subjects now being taught efficiently through movies in some schools and on account of the fact that it takes one to read a novel two or more days but it can be shown for only one or two hours on the screen it is claimed that the motion picture is also a time-saving educational device. By some obvious psychological effects, the motion picture may tend to reduce opportunities for greater use of the imagination, but to children with less imaginative capacities it is a perfect aid to comprehension. However, except for some few occasions where it is physically impossible to reproduce certain scenes and actions on film, the movie is a complete narration of any story or novel. And one reason why the movie is increasingly being employed in literature classes is that it brings to near reality the fantastic side of fiction.

Such lessons in civics as politeness, courtesy, honesty, and industry could very well be dramatized in a movie which may easily and effectively be used to develop desirable attitudes in children. Since by nature children are great mimics, it is believed that they are influenced in more instances by factors that they see than by what they are told, so that the movies in this case become a very suitable tool for inculcating in the young the virtues mentioned. The fact that even adults are likely to pattern their outlook on life after their favorite movies makes it easy to believe that school children's discipline is no problem if good movies are shown to them.

About the most amazing feature of the movie as an instructional device in the classroom is its capability to show in almost actual happening such phenomena as the life history of the butterfly. A film

called "The Monarch Butterfly" tells in detailed action the story of a butterfly from parent to egg to caterpillar to parent again. Willian A. Anderson, an American educator, made 14 trips within a period of 18 months to make the picture. It is not so much the thrill of seeing the picture on the screen as knowing how all the minute motions were recorded on film, considering that the butterfly squirts out an egg so fast that there is no time left to focus a camera.

The BSEE curriculum in the Philippine Normal College includes audio-visual education which, aside from its other phases of study, gives training in the different methods of film projection, like opaque projection, micro-projection, and overhead projection. Students of Education 8 (Audio-Visual Education) believe that the knowledge and skills they get in their course is enough to land them a job as movie technicians. Their apparent deficiency in our modern movie technology, however, lies in the fact that they are not given instruction in how to operate the movie novelties such as the cinemascope, stereophonic sound, and viŝta-vision, which for financial reasons have not yet found their way into the classrooms.

Among the new features that motion pictures in the schools may bring about to our educational system is the creation of what may be called a board of censors to process all films for use in the classrooms. Likewise, the system of our present library management may be made to include classification and carding of films. Already some of the so-called progressive schools in the Philippines have remodeled their classrooms to show films.

Currently, the Curriculum Division, Bureau of Public Schools, has as one of its services the showing of educational films to teachers and pupils who make arrangement with Dr. Oseas del Rosario, in charge of the Audio-Visual Center. With the end in view of propagating the use of motion pictures for instruction, the Bureau's Audio-Visual Center also lends educational films for showing in the public schools on

condition that no fees should be charged from pupils seeing them. It may be mentioned that the Center is one of the most essential facilities of the Bureau of Public Schools notwithstanding the short space of time it has been existing. The benefit it has been giving the schools which is evaluated in terms of improved instruction cannot be gainsaid.

Financing the school movie program in the Philippines is a big problem which the school administrators should approach with ingenuity and resourcefulness. Comparatively, the production of school movies is expensive, not to mention the fact that, unlike Hollywood movies, school-produced films are not for commercial purposes. In the United States, according to a school movie catalog, a reel of educational film is listed at from \$50 to \$100 depending on color effects. One sound projector costs \$300, which means that movie as a means of teaching children in the classroom is a large investment.

Lack of technicians and experts in the making of educational films is another roadblock in the school movie program. In line with the policies and objectives of the community school program, improvement of Philippine rural life should be outstanding among the themes and features of Philippine school movies which Filipino experts could very well accomplish with maximum effects. Our local educators will thus find new lines of specialization, such as script writing, film editing, acting, and directing.

With the present trend of technological revolution, conjectures are that TV sets will find their way into the classrooms after the movies have become outmoded. In fact TV could be a remedy for the immense costs of producing educational films for the schools since only one projection center is needed for several TV receiving sets installed in each classroom. It is not hard to imagine the future teacher and her pupils dialing a movie into the classroom TV screen to start the day's recitation.

"Public Relations: Pro and Con"

By Carlos G. Beltran

PUBLIC relations has become a byword in our present day community schools, a dynamic force that denotes all the influences that bring about group interaction and crystalize its deliberations into a tangible reality. The endeavor to win the sympathy, interest, and goodwill of the community or to align its forces in gaining support of or in upholding certain ethical principles rests on a sound public relations.

The success of our educational program depends on the relationship among all elements in the community viewed in the light of their needs and problems, traditions, mores and idiosyncracies and interpreted in terms of the common weal.

Public relations, just as any other principle or concept has its two sides which run counter to each other and which have equally opposite forces of re-