

CINEMA **1900|1906**  
AN ANALYTICAL STUDY  
BY THE NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE  
(LONDON)  
AND THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION  
OF FILM ARCHIVES

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compiler Roger Holman

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INTRODUCTION

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261  
281 The Symposium of 1900-1906 followed the International Federation of  
297 Film Archives 34th Annual Congress which was held at Brighton, England  
321 in the Spring of 1978. The presence of film archivists from all over  
the world makes the Federation's Annual Congress an ideal occasion for  
the study of specific aspects of world cinema which are not well  
documented or researched.

331 Originally, we intended to consider all films produced between 1900-1906  
and discuss the inter-relationship between fact and fiction. However,  
339 when we discovered how many fiction films had survived in members  
collections and how many would be available for screening in Brighton,  
we decided to limit our researches to this aspect of the period.

351 We made one further compromise. We could not afford the cost of importing  
all the 1900-1906 fiction films into Britain so we agreed to accept  
Eileen Bowser's (the Curator of the Museum of Modern Art Film Department)  
357 generous offer to organize the pre-selection of films already in the  
United States. Many of these were from the unique paper print collection  
held by the Library of Congress.

361 Eileen Bowser documents this work in her paper entitled PREPARATION FOR  
BRIGHTON - THE AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION.

363 In the end, her team recommended that 189 titles should be shown at  
Brighton. In addition we collected together 359 films from other Archives,  
and the long suffering projectionists at the Brighton Film Theatre screened  
all of them for a group of equally hardy researchers and historians  
between the 22nd and 26th May. Among this group were six experts who  
made their own choice of films from those screened and presented them at  
the actual Symposium which took place in the presence of all the FIAF  
members between May 29th and 31st. Verbatim transcripts of these  
interventions appear between pages 31 and 91.

We have not translated those which were delivered in French. Virtually  
all the films referred to appear in the Filmography in Volume 2.

The next section contains a random selection of papers submitted by  
both participants and non-participants on different aspects of the cinema  
between 1900 and 1906. Many of these are of American origin and  
resulted from the screenings organized by Eileen Bowser in New York.

I am pleased to say that work on this poorly documented aspect of world  
cinema did not stop in 1978. Since then Eileen Bowser has re-assembled  
her American group to look at the fiction films of 1907 and many of the  
Brighton and New York participants have continued with their researches,  
and published further articles. The list of these appears towards the  
end of Volume I. The final pages are occupied with a list of participants  
at the Symposium in Brighton. Everyone there to a greater or lesser  
extent contributed to the success of the Symposium and this publication.

I must, however, single out one name; it was André Gaudreault's enthusiasm which enables us to publish the Filmography in Volume 2. He, his friends in North America, and his colleagues at Laval University compiled this analytical filmography for all the 548 films shown in Brighton. It is neither a complete list of all fiction films shown between 1900 and 1906, or even of those extant, but it is one of the finest research tools that film historians could hope to have for this period. Inevitably there are omissions and inaccuracies, and I know I am speaking for André, when I ask everyone who utilises this Filmography to send any additional information or comments to him at Université Laval, Faculté des Lettres, Cité Universitaire, Québec 10e, Canada, G1K 7P4.

André Gaudreault and Barry Salt, one of the experts at the Symposium, provided all the frame enlargements - the abbreviation 'Illus' appears against any title in the alphabetical index of film titles for which an illustration is included. I must also thank André for the detailed guide for users which appears on page 12 and point out that everything in this volume appears in both English and French.

Now, just a few words about FIAF. The organization was set up in 1935 to serve the world community of film Archives. This now has 46 members and 23 observers. A small pamphlet on its work in French or English can be obtained from the Secretariat in Brussels: Coudenberg 70, 1000 Brussels, Belgium, as can a list of its publications which cover the whole field of film archiving. Finally, if you undertake further research into this period of film history please let the FIAF Secretariat know about it and if possible send them a copy of any published material. We hope, in time, to update this publication and would like to ensure that the new edition is as complete as possible.

David Francis

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PREPARATION FOR BRIGHTON - THE AMERICAN CONTRIBUTION

Eileen Bowser - U.S.A.

For five days in October 1977 and two days in January 1978, a small group of film historians met to view all the surviving fiction films in North America from the period 1900-1906.

About 690 films were seen, and there may still remain as many as 100 films not seen (existing in the Library of Congress), but the number is difficult to determine precisely because of the difficulty of separating fiction from non-fiction in this period. The largest numbers of these films were from the production of Edison and Biograph. The others included one Vitagraph film, one Lubin film, several Seligs and Paley and Steiners, seventeen French films and about twenty-five British films, and one Italian film. Although seven full days were devoted to the project, it was not possible to see all the films as one group. Most of the time, we divided into three groups viewing films simultaneously in small projection rooms or on viewing tables, changing the constituents of each group frequently, to maintain communication of ideas and experiences. Several of the historians did see the whole group of films by working independently in the following weeks. At the end of the first week, we met briefly to discuss our findings, to decide which topic each would pursue, and to draw up a list of other topics that would be worth future study.

Enthusiasm for the experience was very high. The group decided to continue the team approach by exchanging outlines of papers, and to arrange a similar attack on the films of 1907 in the future. Only one year's production will be studied next time, because we found the period 1900-1906 too big to be handled in the thorough way we should have liked. We would have preferred to see all the films together as a group, with much more time for discussion. Our project was limited to the films available in the archives of North America, and we look forward to the results of our colleagues undertaking a similar project in Europe.

The films were lent by the International Museum of Photography at George Eastman House and the Department of Film of the Museum of Modern Art, but by far the largest number were supplied by the Motion Picture Section of the Library of Congress, from the Paper Print Collection of films submitted for copyright. Paul Spehr of the Library of Congress had the excellent idea of mounting these films on reels in their chronological order. This enabled us to see the repetition of ideas, sets, costumes and actors, as well as the developments or lack of them, as they occurred. Since the Biograph productions of 1896-1903 were submitted for copyright in groups during 1902 and 1903, Spehr disregarded the copyright dates for the Biograph films and determined chronological order from the production logs kept at The Museum of Modern Art. However, the Edison films were seen in order of copyright, the production dates not being so readily available (these records may exist in the uncatalogued documents of the Edison Museum in New Jersey). As far as we know at present, films made at the Edison studios were normally submitted for copyright within two or three weeks after production.

Several factors make this project less than satisfactory as a view of the period 1900-1906, even if we limit it to the American production. While fiction film was the object of the study, it has to be kept in mind that the non-fiction film (news events, actualities, travel films, etc.) was the mainstay of production in this period. During the first half of the period, there were many more non-fiction than fiction films produced, and during the second half the non-fiction film remained not much less than half of the production, until the very last part of the period. We did see some non-fiction films, but only a few. But the films seen by audiences of 1900-1906 must have included very large number of films shot in the open air, in real locations, and in the streets. At the same time, what they saw as fiction film was more often filmed on a stage with painted backdrops or sets, until the later part of the period, when the fiction film moved out-of-doors as well. As one of the papers reporting on this project will show, what we did see of the nonfiction film led us to think that many developments that led to the rise of the narrative came from the non-fiction film, and from efforts of the film-makers to recreate real events in fiction films.

Fiction is very difficult to define in this period. We did include the faked newsreels, such as the Edison Boer War films, as fiction. But how does one define the films which are essentially a recording of a vaudeville act? We included most of these as fiction films too, because of the impossibility of setting limits when almost all films (including the non-fiction) were made for showing within the vaudeville program, at least through 1904.

We also have to keep in mind that there were many hundreds (maybe thousands) of films produced that do not survive, particularly those which were not copyrighted. We saw very large proportions of the Edison and Biograph production, and only slight representation of the work of other companies in the United States. Thanks to the Biograph company having imported and copyrighted many British films, we saw at least a good sampling of British film of the 1903-1905 period. We saw few of the French films from Pathé Frères, which we know dominated the American market during 1904-1907. And while we saw some of the Méliès films, we did not examine those which exist in the Library of Congress. However, I think we are at least justified in concluding that the films we saw are rather typical of all production 1900-1906, and give us a good picture of what American films, at least, were like in those days.

This paper is intended only to give some general impressions of the experience, and is by no means a scholarly analysis, which can come about only after a prolonged period of intensive study and reviewing. The film historians in our group are preparing papers on specific topics, and the films they need to illustrate them will be the first basis for selection of films to be shown at Brighton. Presumably, these will tend to be the unusual and outstanding films, not the ordinary ones. But what of all the films we saw that will not be seen by the Brighton participants? What were the ordinary films like in 1900-1906, and out of what context did the unusual films arise? We would like to try to give some idea of that here, and hope too to suggest some other areas for future study.

Our struggle is to see these films freshly, and not from the sole point of view of what happened after 1906. Ways of seeing were different in this period. Lacking any kind of film tradition, film-makers naturally were dependent on the non-film sources with which they were familiar for their material. Films made before 1907 had their own style and their own associations, their own concept of space and time, which are quite different in many ways from those we hold today.

We should try to keep in mind the context in which the films were shown. Until the rise of the nickelodeon theater in 1905-1906, films were chiefly shown as part of the vaudeville program, another one of the novelty acts in a medium that devoured talent and ideas nearly as voraciously as television does today. Vaudeville historians tell us that the period 1900-1906 was one in which the producers sought a respectable, middle-class audience. Previously, the vaudeville or variety hall had been the domain of a low-class, predominately male audience, a place where liquor was sold, and probably where prostitutes were not difficult to find. In the period under consideration here, vaudeville eliminated the sale of alcoholic beverages, added luxurious surroundings, cleaned up the material offered by the performers, and began to draw a family audience. The low-life atmosphere continued, however, in the burlesque show, which took over the place of the old vaudeville, and was the second-largest consumer of films. Films were seen in dime museums, freak shows, peep shows, travelling shows, and were carried about the country by itinerant showmen. But the vaudeville houses used the most films during the period, and continued to use them in large numbers even after the rapid rise of the nickelodeons and store-front cinemas. In turn, when competition got heavy among the nickelodeons, they turned back to include live vaudeville acts in the film program, a practice that lasted long past the period under consideration.

It isn't surprising, then, that the key word for the films we saw is "novelty". Like the live vaudeville acts with which the films were shown, a new idea or a gimmick was always in demand. The same sources which provided ideas for live vaudeville acts also inspired films; current events, popular songs, magic acts, transformations, living pictures, tableaux, cartoons, shadow-graphy (silhouette acts), melodramas, slide shows accompanied by lectures, and the comic "sketch". The films of 1900-1906 would provide a rich source of study for historians of vaudeville. Surely many of them represent a photographic record of live vaudeville acts. As Robert Allen (1) has argued convincingly, although films were often shown at the end of the program, as "chasers", they were not designed to drive out audiences, as has so often been repeated by historians, but were a very popular part of the vaudeville program. Because they were silent, they took the place of what were known as "dumb acts", placed at the beginning and end because arriving and departing audiences made it difficult to hear dialogue. On the other hand, it may be doubted that they were ever shown without some kind of musical accompaniment, and many of them seem specially designed to accompany popular songs.

Looking at the films today, it is very difficult to judge which ones were intended for the respectable vaudeville stage, and which ones would only be shown by the burlesque houses. On the whole, the period was a wide open one, full of vulgarity, sex and violence. The majority of the films were comedies

(except of course for the non-fiction films which dominated the period), employing crude slapstick humour. They were often cynical toward authority and moral systems. Infidelity was expected. Corruption was subject for a joke. Racial and professional stereotypes abounded. Practical jokes reigned supreme. Even as early as September 1900, a film was made showing a pie in a face (Biograph's FAMILY TROUBLES), which we assume had its origin in a live act. Sensational events of the day - murder, war and disaster - were sure to be recreated either as fake newsreels or fictional re-enactments. The films, at least, and we assume vaudeville too, did not portray that mythical era of pre-war innocence. There were, to be sure, a few sentimental and moralistic dramas, such as Biograph's THE DOWNWARD PATH and A CAREER IN CRIME, both made in 1900 and both probably inspired by slide lectures, and these were among the earliest of the multi-shot films leading toward the development of the narrative. These were rare, however. During the same time, Biograph appeared as the leading producer of erotic films, little films made with a wink or a leer, which were presumably destined for the burlesque houses and peep shows.

The trick films were popular at first, up to the end of 1903. According to the reminiscences of Billy Bitzer (2) of Biograph, after mastering the mechanical difficulties of the camera, the next thought was of the possibilities of trickery, in masking part of the lens, rewinding the film, superimposing images, matte shots, stop motion, reverse motion, etc. He said, "I guess all beginners were intrigued with these possibilities ... They were an art, a mystifying art, some so cleverly done that viewers were unable to figure how it was done." He explained that Biograph felt itself to be under a handicap because double exposures could not be made in the Biograph camera: perforations were cut into the film during its exposure in the camera, and this made rewinding impractical. The Méliès trick films began to appear in the vaudeville houses in October 1902, but by this time the interest of the American producers had begun to fall off. Trick films cannot be said to have dominated the production. The earliest use of stop-motion we know of was Edison's THE EXECUTION OF MARY QUEEN OF SCOTS in 1895, and stop-motion continued to be the chief device used in the trick films we saw. They were not as elaborate in production values as most of the Méliès films. Magic acts and transformations were common to the vaudeville stage, with the aid of lighting, trick sets, wires and black curtains. Among the 1900 films, there were THE PRINCE OF DARKNESS, A TERRIBLE NIGHT, MYSTIC SWING, SHERLOCK HOLMES BAFFLED, and THE TEMPTATION OF ST. ANTHONY, this an erotic film in which "naked" women wearing what we now call body stockings were transformed into skeletons; magicians performed in THE MAGICIAN, paintings came to life in AN ARTIST'S DREAM, and food transformed into its animal origins (ANIMATED LUNCHEON). Among the 1901 films, people were flattened into dummies by accidents, in 5 MINUTES TO TRAIN TIME, Biograph, and THE TRAMP'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE, Edison, or had their heads brutally removed in A QUICK RECOVERY, Biograph. Biograph had a much-abused dummy that survived a long use in trick films and fights (rough-house fights were also very popular among vaudeville acts), such as WHO PAYS FOR THE DRINKS, 1903, NEVER TOUCHED HIM, 1903, OFF HIS BEAT, 1903, and THE WAY TO SELL CORSETS, 1904.

Statistics are a bit shaky here, since they depend on the number of films which survived and also on some of the dates still being uncertain, but among the films viewed, about 26% of the 1900 production were trick films; about 20% of the 1901 films; about 21% of the 1902 films (but here the number of Biograph

films copyrighted in 1902 for which we don't yet have production dates may have slightly increased this percentage incorrectly); and about 10% of the 1903 films. After 1903, there were only four or five trick films a year, at least among the American films. Camera tricks continued to be used, not as the raison d'etre of the film, but as one of the tools of the medium.

The explosion film was a kind of sub-genre, and the most common one, of the trick films, involving a stopping of the camera after the explosion to rearrange the sets and costumes. Explosions were also popular among the live vaudeville acts. For the most part, stoves exploded when the wrong element - kerosene, dynamite, gas - was introduced. Two examples, HOW BRIDGET BUILT THE FIRE, Edison, June 1900, and THE FINISH OF BRIDGET MCKEEN, Biograph's two-shot explosion film of March 1901, which ended with a shot of a tombstone bearing the doggerel, "Here lie the Remains of Bridget McKeen, Who Started a Fire with Kerosene", led us to suspect that these films had a common source in a popular song or children's rhyme. The same is probably true for the many films which showed dogs and cats being ground up for sausage by the butcher's machine (some of them trick films, some of them not): children at camp today still learn a cruel song in which this happens. Many explosions were caused by the accidental detonation of fire-works. Two of the more interesting fire-works explosion films were made by Biograph immediately following, rather than in advance of the national holiday, which leads us to suppose that they were inspired by real events rather than with a showman's sense of what is topical. These were ALGY'S GLORIOUS FOURTH OF JULY in 1902 and A PIPE STORY OF THE FOURTH in 1902, both of them expanding the explosion film into several made by Biograph in which, instead of setting off smoke effects, the explosion was curiously scratched onto the emulsion of the film itself; example, THEY FOUND THE LEAK, in May 1902. In THE POET'S REVENGE, Edison, 1902, the poet blows up the stove of the publisher who rejected his manuscript; in A NIGGER IN THE WOODPILE, Biograph, 1904, white men load a stick of wood with dynamite to play a cruel trick on the poor black men who steal it and use it in their stove. A very common variety of explosion films were those in which the camera blows up in the face of the subject: THE OLD MAID HAVING HER PICTURE TAKEN, Edison, March 1901; FUN IN A PHOTOGRAPH GALLERY, Biograph, July 1902; THE CAMERA FIEND, Biograph, September 1903; WILLIE'S CAMERA, Biograph, July 1903. The photographer's studio was a frequent comedy subject in this period, even outside of the explosion film.

The explosion film genre was well enough established to be the subject for a nice joke in a film made at the very end of 1903, called SAVED!, in which a man carrying an umbrella is blown up, but instead of being dishevelled or even dismembered, he descends calmly unscathed in a second shot, in another location, using his umbrella as a parachute.

Some of the most charming trick films were the Edison fantasies using a horizontally split screen to show people travelling at unreal speeds over the real skyscrapers of New York, in TWENTIETH CENTURY TRAMP in 1902, and the well-known THE DREAM OF A RAREBIT FIEND in 1906; or through the New York subway system, in CITY HALL TO HARLEM IN FIFTEEN SECONDS in 1904. It is interesting to note that THE DREAM OF A RAREBIT FIEND was made at the end of the trick-film period in American cinema, not at the beginning, as one

might think from the film histories. Biograph also made two quite unusual trick films. Among the Biographs copyrighted in 1903 for which we don't yet have production dates, was ANIMATED PICTURE STUDIO. A female dancer is filmed (we see the camera itself being used), under the lascivious eyes of a bystander; the film is developed in a dark room at the back of the set, and then shown on a screen in the middle of the set. The screen is knocked over, and the miniature figures of the dancer and the bystander are shown separated from the screen, on the floor, the man attempting to make love to the woman. In June, 1905, a similar idea was used in THE PIPE DREAM, showing a close view of a young lady who lights a cigarette, blows a puff of smoke into her hand, where a miniature man appears, kneels, and stretches out his arms to her before disappearing in her next puff of smoke. These were the only examples we found of this "nanism", which would be exploited many years later in such fantasy films as WOLF'S CLOTHING, 1928, DR. CYCLOPS, 1940, and THE INCREDIBLE SHRINKING MAN, 1957.

THE PIPE DREAM leads naturally to a discussion of another popular genre of the period, the close view. We use this term here to cover closeups, semi-closeups, or even a 3/4 shot of the people who are the subjects of these films, at a time when other films observed a stage distance from the subject. Today, we are fascinated by early examples of the close view because of the part it was to play in the development of narrative techniques, but keeping in mind our intention to look at these films with a fresh eye, we realise that the chief interest of such films, especially the one-shot films, was the ability to see facial expressions, and so we call these the "facial expression" genre. They must have offered a genuine novelty in the vaudeville program, because live performers could only come to a limited point in approaching the audience. Certain vaudeville performers, however, were noted for their skill at facial expressions. One of them, Gilbert Sarony, a celebrated female impersonator, mugs for the camera in THE OLD MAID IN THE HORSECAR, an Edison film of 1901. Other typical examples of the genre are A DULL RAZOR and THE KISS, both Edison films made in 1900 (reminding us that Edison's MAY IRWIN - JOHN C. RICE KISS was a sensation of 1896; TWO OLD CRONIES and ART STUDIES, both Biograph films made in 1900, the joke of the latter film being that two old men visibly enjoy the contents of a book which we are not able to see; BURLESQUE SUICIDE, Edison, 1902, in which a man teases us by pretending to be about to commit suicide and then laughs at us for expecting it; Biograph's 1903 film, CAT'S CRADLE, a provocative kissing film; and Biograph's A WELSH RABBIT, 1903, a trick film in which Kathryn Osterman demonstrates the cooking of the dish, only to have a live rabbit hop out. There are enough such films that it cannot be considered at all unusual to place the camera very close to its subject in this period, even though most films were shot at stage distance.

A minor sub-genre of the facial expression film was the one which we came to call the "fly film" genre. In such films, enormous insects prove an annoyance to people, sometimes even carrying them off into the air. Biograph made a speciality of it. In 1900, they made THE TROUBLESOME FLY, A JERSEY SKEETER, and SHOO FLY, and in 1903, they joined the fly film to the erotic genre with a film shorter than its title, POOR GIRL, IT WAS A HOT NIGHT AND THE MOSQUITOS WERE THICK. It shows only a girl's bare feet and legs being disturbed by a huge bug. In fact, Biograph's erotic films often required a closer positioning of the camera, designed to involve the spectator as voyeur

(TEASING, 1905), or to permit young women to look suggestively at the camera.  
(THE WINE OPENER, 1905)

A rather startling development in facial expression films appeared in a film Bitzer photographed in September 1903, HOOLIGAN IN JAIL. The tramp character Happy Hooligan is seen sitting in a jail cell, and the jailer brings him his dinner. In order that the spectator may share Hooligan's delight in eating it, the camera moves up in a slow and continuous dolly shot to a close view. Photographer A.E. Weed used this idea again for a pair of Biograph films made in January 1904, A SUBJECT FOR THE ROGUE'S GALLERY and PHOTOGRAPHING A FEMALE CROOK. These were the only use of dolly shots that we found. However, at about this time, Porter began to cut directly into close views. The earliest example we found of inserting a closeup in the midst of long shots was his famous THE LIFE OF AN AMERICAN FIREMAN, but the purpose was not, of course, to show facial expressions or to give a closer view of a long shot, but merely to make it possible to see clearly that a hand pulled a fire alarm. That film appeared at the very beginning of 1903. In August of this year, Porter made RUBE AND MANDY AT CONEY ISLAND, a long film, about sixteen shots, not really a narrative, in which a pair of country bumpkins enjoy the delights of the entertainment park. At the end of the film, Rube and Mandy stop at a refreshment stand, and the final shot is a close view, showing their facial expressions as they enjoy eating hot dogs. This remains to be the most common use of close views for the whole period. In Biograph's CAUGHT IN THE UNDERTOW, copyrighted November 1902, which may be an actuality, not a narrative, there is a move to a closer view at the end. In Porter's celebrated THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY at the end of 1903, exhibitors were given the choice as to whether they wanted to use the close view at the beginning or the end. More often, the films which followed use the close view as a kind of establishing shot, or introduction of the character, or emblematic shot which gave the theme of the film, at the beginning. It does not belong to the narrative as such, since it does not match the shot which follows. Examples of this are in HOW A FRENCH NOBLEMAN GOT A WIFE THROUGH THE NEW YORK HERALD PERSONAL COLUMNS, Edison, 1904; (RAID ON A COINER'S DEN), a British film copyrighted under this title in the United States in June 1904; THE FIRE-BUG, Biograph, 1905 (but this film also has a cut from long view to a closer view of a gun battle at the end); THE PAYMASTER, Biograph, 1906. There are many of these from 1904 on. The introduction shot of Edison's STOLEN BY GYPSIES, July 1905, appears to have an additional purpose. By showing a close view of the baby at the beginning, the film-maker lets the audience know that there is a birthmark on his shoulder, which plays a part in the plot to follow.

However, there were some earlier indications of the role of the close view within the narrative. In Biograph's THE STORY THE BIOGRAPH TOLD, November 1903, a mischievous office boy films the flirtations of the boss and his "typewriter", and later the film turns up in the vaudeville house attended by the boss and his wife. The film is shown from the reverse angle of the boy who filmed it, from behind the subjects, in a close view. While this has the effect of a close view inserted in the narrative, it stems from a literal interpretation of what the boy had seen earlier. THE WIDOW AND THE ONLY MAN, made by Biograph in August 1904, cuts from long view to close view and back to long view again, to show us a lady enjoying the flowers she has received, but not precisely matched in the action. However, in

October 1904, Biograph made THE LOST CHILD, which intercuts a close shot into a long shot that seems very well-matched. Edison's THE STRENUOUS LIFE, OR ANTI-RACE SUICIDE, December 1904, intercuts a close shot into a long shot of a father and the nurse weighing a new-born baby on the scales, which enables us to see the scales and enjoy the baby's charms, but it seems to contain a repeat of the action of the long shot. In Palay and Steiner's TRAVELS OF A LOST TRUNK, April 1905, a close view is intercut as part of the narrative, as well as in two Biographs of 1906, THE SILVER WEDDING and THE LONE HIGHWAYMAN. In THE SILVER WEDDING, especially, a close view of the thieves stealing the wedding gifts, cut into a long shot, appears very well-integrated into the action. All these examples will need closer analysis before we can understand just how film-makers of the day intended to use the close view, but it does seem evident that the way in which it is used grew out of the concept of the early novelty, the facial expression film, and perhaps did not after all move very far from this during 1900-1906.

Almost all the fiction films of the period were comedies, which was also the most popular genre of the vaudeville act. A very large number of them consisted of practical jokes, usually played by mischievous boys. Probably all of the slapstick jokes of the golden age of the slapstick comedy short were worked out in these sketches. Titles such as MAUDE'S NAUGHTY LITTLE BROTHER, A WRINGING GOOD JOKE, GRANDMA AND THE BAD BOYS, A JOKE ON GRANDMA, THE BAD BOY'S JOKE, indicate their genre. The victims of these jokes are lovers, cops, cooks, tramps, Chinese laundrymen, grocery store proprietors. In LOVE IN A HAMMOCK, Edison 1901, and THE HOOP AND THE LOVERS, Biograph 1904, loving couples are turned out of hammocks on the ground by bad boys. In THE TRAMP'S UNEXPECTED SKATE, Edison, 1901, and HOOLIGAN'S ROLLER SKATES, Biograph, 1903, the boys fasten skates on the sleeping tramp, Happy Hooligan. Biograph's Foxy Grandpa series in 1902, based on the musical success of that year, were trysts in the mischievous boys genre, in which Grandpa outwits every attempt at a practical joke. Even the later multi-shot films continued to use the well-established genre: the hero of Biograph's THE VILLAGE CUT-UP in 1906 is a practical joker, and in THE NIGHT OF THE PARTY, made a few days later, a young boy and his sister play jokes on the adults.

As we have already noted, there were pies in the face (FAMILY TROUBLES, September 1900, Biograph; LADY BOUNTIFUL VISITS THE MURPHYS ON WASHDAY, August 1903, Biograph; THE COAL STRIKE, December 1905, Biograph); coal dust placed in the closed umbrellas of unsuspecting victims, or in their top hats (A BLACK STORM, 1900, Biograph; A BOARDING SCHOOL PRANK, 1903, Biograph; LET UNCLE REUBEN SHOW YOU HOW, 1904, Biograph); coal is delivered on top of an illicit lover (LOVERS, COAL BOX AND FIREPLACE, October 1901, Edison, and UNLUCKY LOVERS, May 1901, Biograph); there are numerous Murphy bed jokes (in SHUT UP!, Biograph, August 1902, a man gets rid of his jabbering wife by enclosing her in the bed which swings up into the wall); flour is dropped on people's heads (A BLESSING FROM ABOVE, Biograph, January 1904; A TRICK ON THE COP, Biograph, February 1904; DINAH'S DEFEAT, Biograph, February 1904 - an example of the popular racial joke, since Dinah is black until the flour is thrown on her).

Another large group of comedies depended on the humour of couples interrupted in illicit love. This could be adulterous love, the love of cooks, nursery

maids and cops, or young love not approved by parents. If one judged by these films, everyone was doing it. The earliest Biographs and Edisons we saw depended on this stereotype. In I HAD TO LEAVE A HAPPY HOME FOR YOU, Biograph, January 1900, the husband who kissed the maid is caught by his wife because his shaving soap remains on the girl's face. The titles of the Edison films of January 1900, WHY JONES DISCHARGED HIS CLERK and WHY MRS. JONES GOT A DIVORCE, or Biograph's film of the same month, HOW WOULD YOU LIKE TO BE THE ICEMAN!, are indicative of their contents. There are so many of these, it is difficult to know whether Biograph's early multiple-shot films, DIVORCE and THE UNFAITHFUL WIFE, in July 1903, are intended as comedies or serious melodramas. The same might be true of A SEARCH FOR EVIDENCE, made in the same month, an elaborate multiple-shot film, in which a woman looks through the keyholes of hotel rooms, seeing several different scenes, until she finds the room in which her husband is carrying on an illicit affair. This genre is related to the little erotic films which were made in great numbers by Biograph, especially but as another report from the Brighton project historians will describe them in detail, we will not try to enumerate their delights here. We would only like to note that the market for these usually one-shot films was big enough that Biograph continued to make them right through 1905 and 1906, at a time when Edison was making only longer and more ambitious films.

A number of comedies showed a cynical acceptance of corruption. In HOW THEY ROB MEN IN CHICAGO, Biograph, April 1900, a man is mugged, and when the cop arrives, he lifts whatever the thief has left to the victim; in A LEGAL HOLDUP, Biograph, June 1901, a cop robs the tramp sleeping on a bench. In THE DANGER OF DINING IN PRIVATE DINING ROOMS, Biograph, June 1903, a waiter drugs and robs his customers. In Edison's HOW THEY DO THINGS ON THE BOWERY, October 1902, a woman picks up a country "rube", and in league with a waiter, drugs him and robs him; when the cops arrive, they toss the victim out in the street. Edison's THE KLEPTOMANIAC, in 1905, is presumably intended seriously, not as comedy, but it too shows with ironic contrast the difference in justice meted out to the rich woman kleptomaniac and the poor woman thief.

There were a few novelties that might be thought of as attempts to be artistic (if we consider, as I think we should, that the idea of the art of the film as we know it did not yet exist at all). These seem to express the spirit of the tableau, or "living pictures", of the vaudeville program. Edison's CONGRESS OF NATIONS, 1900, was a trick film, in which people wearing the costumes of different nations are made to magically appear, and there is then a dissolve to a second shot showing the American flag, the spirit of Columbia, John Bull, etc. This appears to be a topical film, which makes a political statement: China is not wanted among the nations. At the end of 1900, Armitage of Biograph produced a series of superimpositions (the same as those sold in dissolving slide sets) which thriftily united two or more older films: A NYMPH OF THE WAVES (a dancer superimposed on real ocean scenes), NEPTUNE'S DAUGHTERS (a ship, ghosts, and a group of dancers), THE GHOST TRAIN (combination of a negative version of the EMPIRE STATE EXPRESS and a moon scene); and ROCK OF AGES (ocean waves, a cross, and a young lady in flowing robes). Edison's elaborate production of JACK AND THE BEANSTALK, appearing in June 1902, with dissolves between each shot, should also probably be considered as part of this "artistic" impulse. In January 1904, Bitzer

photographed THE FOUR SEASONS, a silhouette film in four shots, symbolizing the seasons of the year. There were other silhouette films made at Biograph, which had their stage forerunners in shadowgraphy, but these do not exactly show an artistic tendency of the type we are discussing here, they are erotic films, women undressing behind window blinds, etc. The artistic motivation appears to underly some of the Edison novelties of 1905, such as THE SEVEN AGES, which has seven episodes, titled "Infancy", "Playmates", "Schoolmates", "Lovers", "Soldier", "Judge", "Second Childhood", and "What Age?" (the last shows an old maid holding a cat). The chief novelty of this film, however, consists in beginning nearly every episode with a long shot and cutting to a close view, to show the participants kissing. It also includes a highly "artistic" side-lit fireplace effect. It is difficult to understand how Billy Bitzer allowed so much fuss to be made over his lighting effects achieved under D.W. Griffith at a later period, when he had himself already photographed quite remarkable examples long before. The interior of the mill in THE PAYMASTER, which he photographed in June 1906, has very dramatic and effective side-lighting effects.

THE PAYMASTER even has an art-decorated title. Original main titles and intertitles were found in most of the films of 1905 and 1906. It is not easy to draw any conclusions about the use of intertitles during the period under consideration, because we do not know if the lack of them means only that they do not exist in the surviving prints. The copyright records demonstrate that titles were assigned to each shot of the early multi-shot films, and frequently each shot was copyrighted separately under its title, but whether these were printed into titles on the film or supplied by a narrator, we do not yet know. All the films with intertitles on them followed the practice of using titles strictly as announcements of the shot or scene to follow, and never cut into mid-shot. The earliest films we found in the group examined which did have original intertitles on the prints appeared in August 1904, in THE WIDOW AND THE ONLY MAN, from Biograph, and THE EUROPEAN REST CURE, from Edison, in September 1904. In November 1904, Edison's THE EX-CONVICT actually had a dialogue title ("That man saved my life!"), but it appeared at the beginning of the shot and long before the appearance of the child who spoke it.

Inserts (letters, telegrams, advertisements) made their appearance about this time. In Edison's THE MESSENGER BOY'S MISTAKE, October 1903, an insert is cut directly into the middle of this one-shot film. In Biograph's PERSONAL (missing from existing prints) and Edison's close copy, HOW A FRENCH NOBLEMAN GOT A WIFE THROUGH THE NEW YORK HERALD PERSONAL COLUMNS, in 1904, an inserted advertisement appears at the beginning of the two films. In Biograph's THE CRITIC, January 1906, the critic's entire review is used as an insert in the middle of the film (but not in mid-shot). The insert also appears as an advertisement in Biograph's WANTED - A NURSE, September 1906. This film contains another novelty, previously used by Biograph in LOOKING FOR JOHN SMITH in July of this year, in which animated cartoon balloons present dialogue within the picture itself. Edison had already experimented with animated intertitles in May of 1905, in which the letters were scrambled and unscrambled themselves to form titles. This was used in HOW JONES LOST HIS ROLL and DO YOU KNOW THIS FAMILY?

Among all these novelties, the narrative film was taking shape. Most of the longer films which began to appear in 1904-1906 were chase films. The chase is basic to film narrative, as popular today as it was in the beginnings of cinema. A real chase is not possible within the limits of stage space, and it demands more than one shot, if pursued and pursuer are to cover any ground at all. It is best filmed out-of-doors in real landscape, or city-scapes. It is all action, leading from one shot to the next. Within its form lie the possibilities of continuity devices which lead to editing. With the chase film, moving pictures really began to move.

The chase developed a particular form of its own, however, quite different from that which Griffith made so popular during his Biograph period, 1908-1913. Within the variations of the pattern in 1904-1906, there are found some ideas which might be considered to anticipate Griffith's work. During the course of our screenings, we happened to see a 1907 Biograph called THE ELOPEMENT, which had been included by mistake. The structure of this film made it evident that the next stage of a study of chase films pre-Griffith should include the chase films of 1907, to see how far the form may have come toward his ideas.

It seems that the British were the first to popularize the form. Sadoul says that Pathé Frères, the French company which made so many chase films, imported the idea from England. According to the films we viewed, the first tentative beginnings of the genre in the United States would probably include THE LIFE OF AN AMERICAN FIREMAN and THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY, but the chase did not really come into its own until 1904. However, England, according to the records, produced about a dozen of them in 1903. We hope to see at Brighton THE RUNAWAY MATCH, from November 1903, which may be a significant film for a study of chase films, since according to its descriptions, it has a car chase in which each car appears to have been filmed in turn from the viewpoint of the other.

The American chase film developed a form, beginning with Biograph's ESCAPED LUNATIC, photographed in November 1903, and closely copied by Edison's MANIAC CHASE, copyrighted in October 1904, and continued in Biograph's PERSONAL (photographed in June 1904) and Edison's copy, HOW A FRENCH NOBLEMAN GOT A WIFE THROUGH THE NEW YORK HERALD PERSONAL COLUMNS, copyrighted in August of 1904, which went like this: a situation would be introduced which motivated the chase, and then the chase would begin with a pursuit from the far distance up to and past the camera, both pursued and pursuers exiting in turn either to the left or right of the camera. The next shot would be in a new location, but a similar line of action would be followed. Every shot, until the pursued one is captured, is the same, but in a different setting, and varied by the terrain. The pursued and pursuers may run in diagonal or curving lines, covering as much ground as possible within the field of the shot, and now and then even extending this ground by panning the camera to follow action. Further variety is obtained by changing the point of exit of the shot to left or right of the camera, and by the fact that the runners must overcome many obstacles; fences, ditches, hedges, cliffs, bridges, and bodies of water. Normally the action is not from the foreground to the background, but occasionally there are chases in which the run from distance to foreground is interrupted by some obstacle and reverses itself to go back over the same ground.

There is no cutting between pursued and pursuer, both parties must cross the frame and exit before we can move on to the next shot. As long as the chase is on foot, this means that individual shots are apt to be kept on the screen for a period of time that makes the modern-day viewer restless, accustomed as we are to fast cutting back and forth during chase sequences. One of the chief attractions of these chase films must have been the display of the feminine ankle, an erotic delight in this period. The pursuers are very often women, and they are obliged to climb fences and tumble down hills, revealing a good bit of leg within their voluminous skirts.

The use of horses, trains, cars and cycles in the chase film led to a more dynamic chase, if for no other reason than the vehicle crossed the camera's field in much shorter time. It also seems possible that it led to the idea of cutting back and forth between pursued and pursuer. There is a hint of this in Biograph's *THE GENTLEMAN HIGHWAYMAN*, January 1905, in which there is a chase in cars. In the fourth shot, the pursuer's car breaks down, as the first car continues out of the shot. In the fifth shot, the first car continues on alone. In the sixth shot, we return to the stalled car, and the first car comes back, from the point where it exited previously, loaded with policemen to arrest the highwayman. In the usual style of the chase film in this period, it would not have been necessary to show the first car continuing on alone in the fifth shot, and yet the narrative is easier to understand because this shot has been included. Perhaps it is not a very significant addition to the chase formula, but it is interesting to speculate on what led film-makers to change from the formula to the idea of parallel editing which seems to us now to be the basic structure of the chase. The chase was the most frequent among the narrative forms of 1905 and 1906, and for the most part, it followed the structure established by such films as Biograph's *ESCAPED LUNATIC* and *PERSONAL*.

The chase film, as we have noted, brought the film-makers out-of-doors and into the real world. It seems strange that audiences accepted for some years the artificiality of the stage set and painted backdrops, when in the same vaudeville program they might have seen actualities. The explanation may lie in the acceptance of fiction film as a kind of "canned" vaudeville act, the same kind of act they would have seen performed before the stage curtain ("front acts" were performed while stage sets were changed) or on the stage set. About the only films we saw from the year 1900 which were filmed out-of-doors in part were *LOVE IN THE SUBURBS*, photographed by Bitzer for Biograph in September, and the various faked news events, such as Edison's Boer War films. In 1901, there were no Biograph films filmed out-of-doors (except, of course, the many actualities) as far as I remember, whereas Edison did make about seven of them: *TERRIBLE TEDDY*, *THE GRIZZLY KING*, *LOVE IN A HAMMOCK*, *THE TRAMP'S MIRACULOUS ESCAPE*, *THE BAD BOY'S JOKE ON THE NURSE*, *PHOTOGRAPHING A COUNTRY COUPLE*, *THE TRAMP AND THE NURSING BOTTLE*, and *THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S MISHAP*. In 1902, Biograph filmed out-of-doors *ALPHONSE AND GASTON HELPING IRISHMEN*, *MILKING TIME*, *LOVER'S KNOT*, and *A PIPE STORY OF THE FOURTH*; Edison made *TWENTIETH CENTURY TRAMP*, *APPOINTMENT BY TELEPHONE*, *THE BULL AND THE PICNICKERS*, *THE INTERRUPTED BATHERS* and *THE INTERRUPTED PICNIC*. In 1903, the only venture outside for Biograph\* (again, of course, excluding actualities), was Wallace McCutcheon's trip to the Adirondacks in September, where he made (\* *ESCAPED LUNATIC*, November 1903, was inadvertently omitted here)

three fiction films (all of them very clumsily, in our opinion), KIT CARSON, THE PIONEERS, and THE CAMERA FIEND. But Porter and Edison went further, beginning with some scenes for THE LIFE OF AN AMERICAN FIREMAN, and continuing with RUBE AND MANDY AT CONEY ISLAND, TURNING THE TABLES, RUBE AND FENDER, and, of course, THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY. In 1904, however, as the chase film grew in importance, the camera moved out-of-doors and into reality. For interiors, the film-makers gradually began to set up realistically furnished sets, and gradually abandoned the painted backdrop, although it was not to disappear altogether for some time to come.

The serious drama, or melodrama, was comparatively rare for the whole period. Set in the context of all these comedies, it is even difficult to know at this point of time whether audiences regarded the moralistic and sentimental dramas, such as THE DOWNWARD PATH and A CAREER IN CRIME, Biograph 1900, in a serious manner. Given the rowdy nature of most of the films, as well as the frequent comedies at the expense of the unsophisticated country "rube", we wonder whether big city "sophisticates" didn't find these amusing also. Three other Biograph films of that same year, while not story films, might be considered as having a serious approach to their subject: THE ARREST OF A SHOPLIFTER, THE EXECUTION OF A SPY, and A CONVICT'S PUNISHMENT. In 1901, Biograph filmed the melodrama TEN NIGHTS IN A BARROOM, which was also available in slide shows. However, I haven't been able to identify any Edison fiction films as serious dramas or melodramas, until THE LIFE OF THE AMERICAN FIREMAN at the beginning of 1903. Later in the year, Edison added UNCLE TOM'S CABIN to the line of melodramas. Biograph's KIT CARSON and THE PIONEERS, in the fall of 1903, ineptly filmed as they were, are serious narratives, and then Porter's THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY at the end of the year was, of course, sensationally successful. Biograph's LOVE AND JEALOUSY BEHIND THE SCENES, filmed in December 1903, is a strange film, but surely a tragedy. In 1904, Porter's THE EX-CONVICT was a significant contribution to the moralistic melodrama, and THE ROUNDUP OF THE YEGG BANK BURGLARS, also in this year, followed the type established by THE GREAT TRAIN ROBBERY. Both Biograph and Edison made faked newsreels in 1904, BATTLE OF THE YALU and THE BATTLE OF CHEMULPO BAY, and we began to see some British dramas in this year, but the majority of the longer narrative films were comedy chases. In 1905, however, Biograph made notable contributions to the serious drama with THE NIHILISTS, THE FIRE-BUG, and THE GREAT JEWEL MYSTERY, and, less successfully, with THE RIVER PIRATES, THE HORSE THIEF and A KENTUCKY FEUD. Edison made the moralistic drama, THE KLEPTOMANIAC, and STOLEN BY GYPSIES and THE WHITE CAPS. In this year, too, we class Zecca's sociological study, AU BAGNE (SCENES OF CONVICT LIFE). For 1906, we have few Edison films surviving, but from Biograph we have some excellent serious dramas and melodramas; THE SILVER WEDDING, THE BLACK HAND, THE HOLDUP OF THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN EXPRESS, THE PAYMASTER, THE LONE HIGHWAYMAN, THE TUNNEL WORKERS, THE SKYSCRAPERS OF NEW YORK, which is not to name every one they made, but only the outstanding ones. By now nearly half of the Biograph fiction film had turned to the serious dramatic film, that is, if one does not count the little one-shot films, especially erotic films, that Biograph continued to produce.

To conclude this very general survey of the kinds of films we saw from 1900-06, I append my notes for a draft outline of the multi-shot film. These notes are inadequate, in part because the films were viewed only once, but I think I have

missed no film that was longer than one shot. Not counted as multi-shot are the trick films involving stop motion while the sets are rearranged, although technically they might be considered as more than one shot. There is, of course, room for error in the number of shots listed for each film, and for some no count was kept. Nevertheless, it is my hope that this outline will be of use to others who wish to study the growth of the narrative, and editing concepts, as they developed in the period. At least they may be able to save themselves the work of looking at all 690 films which we have examined. And perhaps it will serve to point to some specific films which would be worth close studying and analysis. As another participant in the Brighton project is writing about the use of pans in this period, particularly in the Edison films, I will only note here that camera pans, while not common, were not unusual in outdoor filming, and sometimes were used in ways that substituted for cuts. That is, the camera would pan to follow action to an entirely new location, having a similar purpose in continuity as cutting between two shots. However, the outline which follows is restricted to actual cuts between shots.