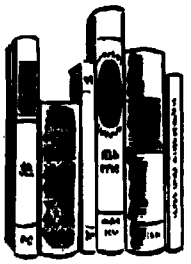

books reviewed

Coherence of Light

By Jan Peřina. Translated by T. W. Preist. Published (1973) by Van Nostrand Reinhold Ltd., Windsor House, 46 Victoria St., London SW 1, England (in the United States, 450 W. 33 St., New York, NY 10001). 316 pp. Illus. Diagrams. 6 by 9 in. Price $19.95.

With the coming of lasers and masers, and the generally easy possibility of coherent and nearly monochromatic light sources of substantial power, a review of the properties of coherent light is much in order, especially for use in scientific photography. This is an English translation of a recent European book that covers the field, largely from a mathematical point of view.

The author points out that, although in the past, light beams were generally dealt with as completely incoherent or completely coherent, in actual practice they were usually only preponderantly one or the other, and not altogether one or the other. He introduces the term "degree of coherence" as defined in somewhat different ways by three separate authors. He points out that the coherence exists in time as well as space. The author covers not only the usual second order coherence, characterized by a correlation function in which two amplitudes of the field are multiplied and averaged, but also covers fourth and higher order coherence phenomena, where correlations of field intensities are considered at a continuum of space-time points.

The author discusses a number of topics that relate to coherence phenomena, among which are applications of the theory of coherence to optical imaging, namely the reconstruction of an object from its image, and the similarity and differences between object and image.

A topic foremost in the author's mind is that of the coherent-state continuous or "classical" description of the electromagnetic field, and the comparison with the quantum theory of the electromagnetic field. The author comments, "Particular attention has been paid to the detection of optical fields and many theoretical results have been shown to be in very good agreement with experimental results obtained by a number of authors." It must be said that the analyses are heavily oriented toward severely mathematical demonstrations, and that the less erudite reader would feel more comfortable with some occasional heuristic touches to the development of the ideas to accompany the mathematics.

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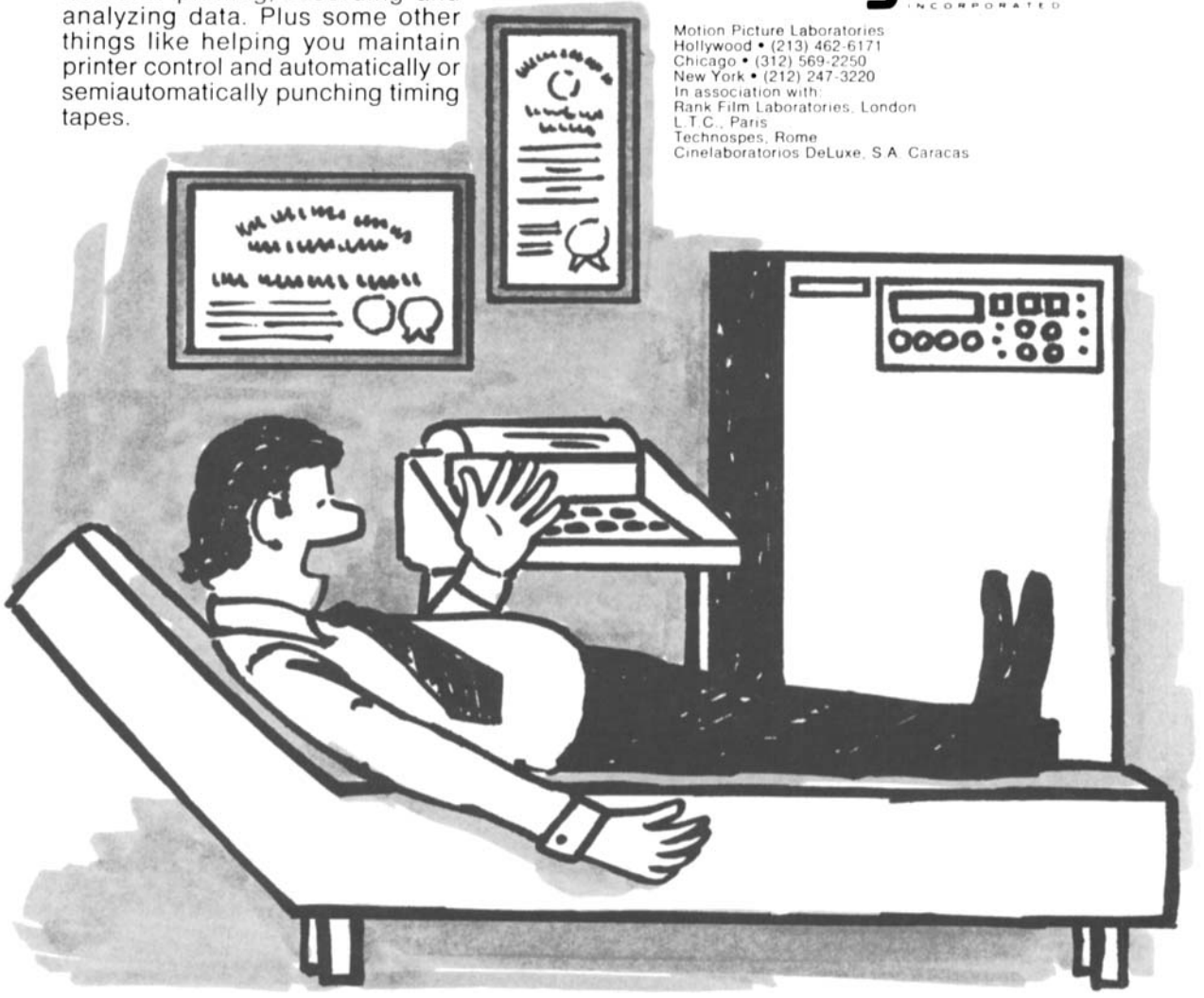

However, the author offers a profuse bibliography of 35 books and over 500 papers. This is exemplary, and it can keep the serious reader quite busy with consultation of sources. The language problem does not seem too serious, as a large proportion of the references are in the more common western languages, with apparently a majority of these in English. Nevertheless the reader must be prepared to buckle to. Generally, the book would appear most useful to the engineer who has much to do with coherent light, and who has a mathematical turn of mind. — *Pierre Mertz,* Consultant, 66 Leamington St., Lido, Long Beach, NY 11561.

Authors on Film

Ed. by Harry M. Geduld. Published (1972) by Indiana University Press, Bloomington, IN 47401. 303 + xiii pp. 5 by 8 in. Price $5.95.

In this intellectually stimulating survey, Prof. Geduld has collected the views expressed by 35 writers of international repute on the motion picture, both as it was at the time of their writing and as they saw its future possibilities. There is an uncanny consensus in these opinions, a gradual transition from wonder and optimism to disenchantment and contempt.

The intelligentsia's attitude toward the movies as a new art form tended toward the unsympathetic. It was more so in Europe, where conventional manifestations of culture such as drama and literature enjoyed a respect that the awkward and crude new medium could not command. In this country's fragmented society, intellectuals had less standing and, partly because of the emerging medium's popular and financial success, looked upon it with a lower degree of skepticism.

The book's first section, dealing with the silent period, quotes H. G. Wells, Upton Sinclair, Aldous Huxley and André Gide, among the contemporaries of cinema's youth. Leo Tolstoy predicted in 1908 that movies would create a revolution in the "old methods of literary art," forcing writers to find new forms of literature. Maxim Gorky showed astounding foresight in predicting films to be titled *As She Undresses* and *Madame at Her Bath,* an idea more daring in its period than any current defense of *Deep Throat.*

The second section is headed "The Medium and Its Messages." It includes, from Jack London, "The dynasty of right by mental might has pinned its faith to the spoken word. It is on the wane." From Virginia Woolf, "So much of our thinking and feeling is connected with seeing . . ." From G. Bernard Shaw, "The huge polynational audience makes mediocrity compulsory." From Louis Aragon, after viewing a Godard film, "I set off to talk about art. And I've only talked about life."

Subsequent sections, "Authors on Screenwriting" and "The Hollywood Experience" offer the views of writers who had to deal directly with the film industry, such as William Faulkner, Truman Capote, James T. Farrell and F. Scott Fitzgerald. The closing section, "Of Mice and Movie Stars," includes comments on

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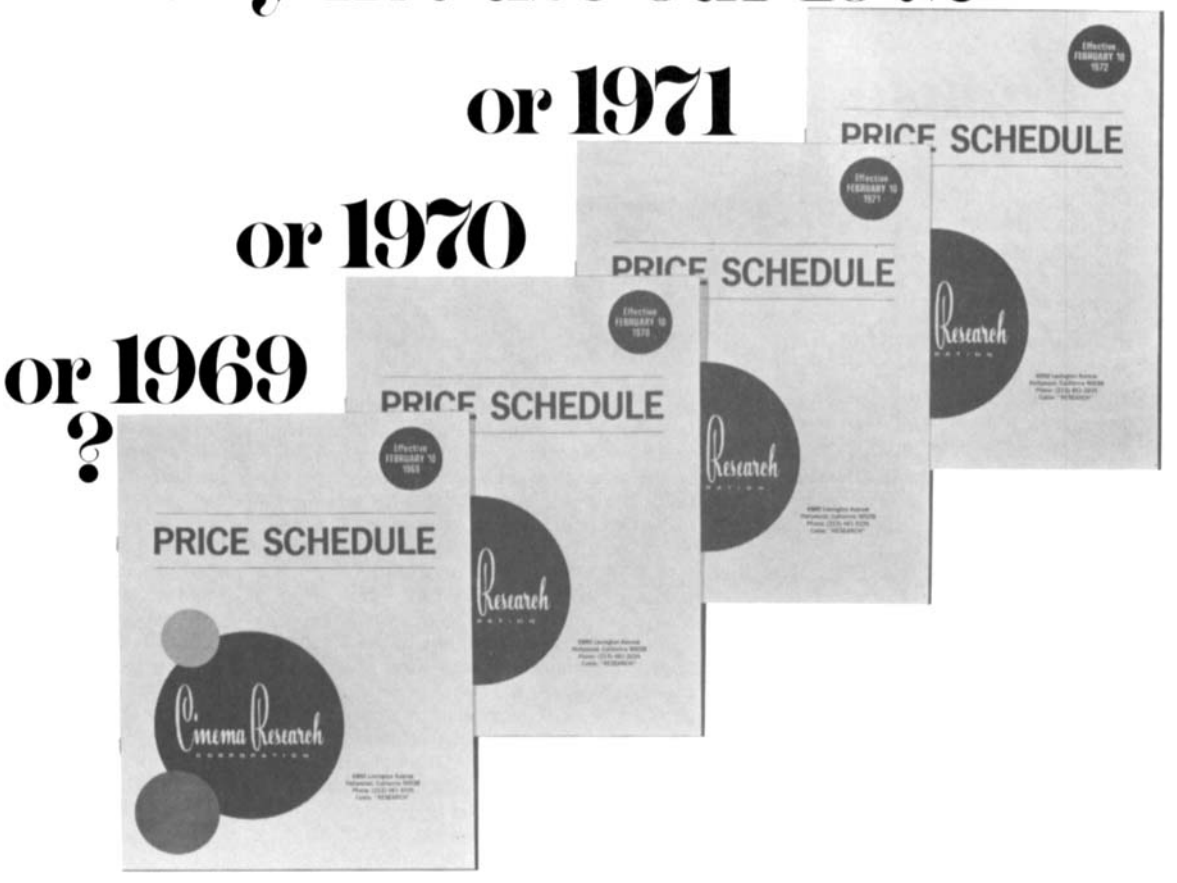

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Hollywood personalities (Chaplin, Valentino, Dietrich, Mickey Mouse) by John Dos Passos, Ernest Hemingway, Jean Cocteau, H. L. Mencken and Carl Sandburg.

An interesting aspect of Prof. Geduld's book is that most pre-World War II comments tend to be critical, while afterwards, as movies began to reflect life's harsh realities, opinions took on a favorable coloration. — *George L. George,* General Editor, Pitman Film Books, 6 E. 43 St., New York, NY 10017.

Fernseh-Messtechnik (Measuring Procedure in Television) (3d ed.)

By Dr.-Ing. Wolfgang Dillenburger. Published (1972) by Fachverlag Schiele & Schön GmbH, 1 Berlin 61, Markgrafenstrasse 11, Germany. 490 pp. Illus. Diagrams. Tables. 6½ by 9½ in. Price DM 56.

The first edition of this book was reviewed by Pierre Mertz (*Journal,* p. 42, January 1962). The book has been revised and expanded to include recent developments and techniques, but substantially, Dr. Mertz's evaluations still apply.

The work is a compilation, by the director of the studio equipment development laboratory of Fernseh GmbH, of the great variety of measuring techniques available to the television engineer. It covers a wide field, beginning with elementary measures of voltage and current, dc and ac; it ranges through images and transmission principles to various concepts of light, color measurements, photography and optics and television signal standards.

As Dr. Mertz pointed out in the 1962 review, "This is a very ambitious project ... the treatment, although covering many subjects is extremely sketchy on each one. An extraordinary amount of condensation has been achieved ..." Although the third edition has been expanded from the 376 pages of the first edition to 490 pages, this evaluation is still applicable. As Dr. Mertz noted, "The book will be handy as a general reference ... with the expectation that the reader who really intends to use it will do further digging on his own."

Two new chapters have been added: "Measurement of the Magnetic Field" and "Measurements with 2 T- and 20 T-Pulses." All other chapters have been revised and some have been enlarged.

According to the publisher's comments, selection of a rather typical measuring method has been made, because the methods to be employed are so many and the instruments available are even more numerous. Hence the book restricts itself to examples of instruments and methods considered to be of reliable use in Germany.

The main intent of the book is to show the reader the basic principles and to spark the reader's active evaluation of the results of measurements, also to show him what errors can be made in measuring.

The use of mathematics, again according to the publisher, has been avoided as far as possible, because the book is written mainly as a guide and help for the practical use in the technician's daily work.— *Edit.*

The American Newsreel 1911–1967

By Raymond Fielding. Published (1972) by University of Oklahoma Press, 1005 Asp Ave., Norman, OK 73069. 392 + xv pp. Illus. 6¼ × 9¼ in. Price $9.95.

Prof. Fielding is the highly competent author of *The Technique of Special Effects Cinematography* and *A Technological History of Motion Pictures and Television,* the latter being an anthology of articles culled from the pages of *The Journal of the SMPTE.* He brings to his new book, *The American Newsreel,* the same broad scholarship, attention to detail, knowledgeableness and clear thinking that distinguished his earlier works.

The newsreel was a popular item in regular motion-picture houses and specialized theaters between 1911 and 1967, the former date marking the first issue of *Pathé Weekly* and the latter the final *Universal Newsreel* release. Between these two dates, its contents generally followed a predictable course, humorously described by Oscar Levant as "a series of catastrophes, ended by a fashion show."

Actually, newsreels began before 1900, with Edison, Biograph, Vitagraph and other companies vying to supply nickelodeons with assorted film, such as the 30-min coverage of Queen Victoria's funeral in 1901. But films of the Spanish-American War, as well as various prizefights and natural disasters were deliberately faked by enterprising producers. The public was easily fooled because of the novelty of the medium, the poor quality of film and the brevity of the items.

The days of the silent newsreel saw its emergence as a widely popular attraction, with World War I providing much of the impetus. By 1922, Fox claimed to employ 1,008 cameramen throughout the world, many of whom were undoubtedly stringers. Five years later, Fox released its first sound-on-film story, Lindbergh's take-off on his celebrated trans-Atlantic flight.

The thirties, a period of social instability and international unrest, provided ample pictorial material. In 1924, The March of Time offered a new kind of screen journalism that combined newsreel with editorial comment. With increased politicizing of the world scene, censorship began to spread, causing in turn the "doctoring" of news for propaganda purposes with the ensuing development of a credibility gap. Newsreels declined in the 50's and 60's for economic reasons, the main factor being the emergence of television which provided a daily ration of news on the home screen.

Prof. Fielding's book is a definitive history of the American newsreel, stressing the important part it played in the development of the domestic motion-picture industry and in the popular acceptance of the new medium. The author has managed remarkably well to integrate factual data with anecdotal material, providing erudite information in a highly readable text. — *George L. George,* General Editor, Pitman Film Books, 6 E. 43 St., New York, NY 10017.