In this paper, the author presents a concept he calls "simulacrics" and suggests its development into a future science of lifelike representation in motion picture films. C. Denis Pegge formerly taught in the engineering department of Cambridge University, having organized its Educational Film Council. He is now engaged in writing.

BY "SIMULACRICS" I imply a possible future field of study and science of lifelike representation. This kind of representation is to be associated primarily with the film, and—through their close relations to the film—with sound and sight broadcasting.

Because they largely make use of lifelike photography and sound recordings, it might be said that films as a class provide lifelike representation. Nevertheless, a particular sort of film expression is the concern of simulacrics. Let us call it "fully naturalistic" expression. It is lifelike because it is thoughtlike.

In the body of this article I hope to make plainer what I mean by these terms, but I want first to emphasize two primary points about simulacrics—its general incidence and pragmatical character.

A possible science of lifelike films would not be merely related to artistic expression, although that is likely always to remain a supremely important application of simulacrics; but to educational, psychological, and other uses, in fact all those uses outside the field of art and entertainment for which films are being increasingly employed, including the training and testing of people in situations of actuality, and to uses we cannot now foresee. Simulacrics has a generality of incidence approaching that of communication, because lifelike representation permits a uniquely direct and powerful kind of communication.
The other aspect of simulacrics I want to stress is its pragmatical character. The conception of simulacrics is of a possible science. It is not concerned with what through a priori reasoning we might think would be the effect of different kinds of film features, nor simply with terms as such, or what a thing should be called; it is concerned always with what is lifelike, in a total result, to the senses.

It is important to make this point clear, because there is often confusion and misunderstanding over terms like "lifelike" and "naturalistic" (terms which are in any case used differently by different people).

A simple illustration may help. Is the colored or the black-and-white film image the more lifelike? Perhaps reason might say the colored film was more lifelike, because objects in the actual world are colored. It might even be argued that in any case the colored film is correctly called the more lifelike.

Simulacrics would not base its conclusion on any such a priori reasoning or any such terminological considerations. The answer it would give to this question would depend on a total result to the senses when on one hand a black-and-white film image was projected and on the other hand a colored image, in an appropriate context and in all the circumstances of cinema projection.

An addition to the film image leading to an even stronger a priori logical and terminological judgment is the addition of sound. It will perhaps be argued strongly that the film image of a dog barking is rendered more lifelike when the sound of the bark is added.

But again the adherent of simulacrics will make no such a priori assumption about it. He will be guided by a total result to his senses in the two cases when the two kinds of image are projected before him.

Of course the comparisons that will have to be made to arrive at principles and conclusions of simulacrics are likely to be about more complicated entities than two isolated film images with only one varying feature. It would be necessary rather to compare two media of which the images were elemental samples, for example, to compare a whole succession of images seen in color with a whole succession seen in black and white.

Simulacrics would examine such features of film images, and more especially combinations of such features, and various film methods that have already been practiced or might be devised,