

**WRITERS CAN PRODUCE GOOD WORKS ONLY WHEN THEY ARE WELL-
INFORMED**

Speech Delivered to Scenarists
January 16, 1970

There are many writers in the Scriptwriting Company, and if they each write one screenplay a year, more than 90 film scripts will appear annually. But because they fail to do their duty, only a few such works are produced. Many have failed to write even a single scenario in three years. I think that three years are enough for any one to produce a scenario, even if it means studying by oneself. It is unreasonable for a professional writer to fail to create even one piece in three years. Worse still, there is one writer who has written nothing for six or seven years. He is living in idleness. Any Party member among those who have failed to write a screenplay for several years is no longer qualified to be a member.

Because many writers in the Scriptwriting Company are unproductive, others go to the trouble of bringing out several scenarios a year. If you, the writers of this company, could all write just one scenario annually, there would be no need for others to produce two or three a year. Those who have written many scripts should be assessed as efficient.

Not many scenarios have been produced so far, and even those produced are of very low ideological and artistic qualities. The themes and plots are not good and the conflicts presented are not serious enough.

Because of these ideological and artistic shortcomings, most scenarios cannot be adapted to the cinema intact. Even those that are well composed often have to be radically altered when they are made into films. Some writers are even unable to create model characters. The great leader has given instructions that film plots should not be on an epic scale, but the Scriptwriting Company continues to bring out scenarios on an epic scale. There is nothing much to admire in such works.

Many writers in the company indulge in empty talk and wrangle with one another instead of thinking about their work.

The Scriptwriting Company was formed with a view to having scenarists pool their collective efforts to bring out better works for the screen. But the way in which film scripts are created now does not differ from the way in which freelancers created them in days gone by. Currently writers are completing their works by dealing directly with the assessment group and the film studios.

There are several reasons for the failure to write many scenarios, the basic one being the lack of political consciousness on the part of writer. Writing requires of writers a high degree of political consciousness that they should contribute to the Party and the revolution; no one can force them to write. Creative work is

impossible without consciousness.

Some writers are also unable to create because their qualifications are low. If they are to produce good work they should be familiar with Party policy and be well-informed in general. At present, however, they lack basic knowledge.

We should make a careful analysis of the reasons why writers are failing to write, and adopt measures that encourage them to produce more.

So far we have criticized only scenarios and have not paid attention to the writing itself. From now on we must concentrate on the efforts to create scenarios.

First of all, you writers should step up your study of the great leader's instructions.

You are entirely correct when you say that you fail to write properly because you have not been imbued with the leader's great revolutionary thoughts. You cannot create well if you are not fully equipped with his revolutionary ideas.

From now on the primary Party committee of the Scriptwriting Company should organize a diligent study of the great leader's instructions on the part of writers. This work must be thoroughly under its control. The committee should not merely ensure that Party members fulfil their Party assignments, but also organize the writers' in-depth study of the leader's instructions.

Writers must study hard to broaden their minds.

People see, hear, feel and accept as much as they know and as much as they are politically and ideologically prepared. Writers can produce good works only when they are well-informed.

Diligent study will enlarge the mental vision of writers. They will benefit from reading classic novels and from seeing a great many films. Books and films are priceless sources for scenarists, especially films from socialist countries, and such books as *The Selected Works of World Literature*.

The great leader has on several occasions said that creative workers should read *The Selected Works of World Literature*. Last year he instructed that they read the novels *On the River Amnok* and *A Boy Wanderer*. Writers should read works such as *The Selected Works of World Literature*, as well as *On the River Amnok*, *A Boy Wanderer* and similar novels. From now on writers should strive to read such books as *The Selected Works of World Literature*. They should also read foreign novels, such as *The Nineteen*, *Mother*, *The Iron Flood* and *The Life of Zhao Zi-long*.

Many films should be seen by screen writers.

They need to watch all our films without exception, starting with *My Home Village*. Following such films is exactly the same as studying. The films that the great leader has seen himself and about which he has given instructions must be shown to writers and seminars organized about them. At the seminars writers must discuss how plots and conflicts are built up and resolved in films, and debate the experience they have gained from the process of creation. You must regard the watching of films as a way to study and grasp the leader's

thoughts on art and literature. These films must be attended in a serious, earnest frame of mind, not merely for amusement.

From now on new films should be shown first to writers.

We ought to make sure that writers get a chance to see many films from abroad. It would be good for them to see foreign films for their reference. Foreign films contain something we need to refer to in the practical aspects of production.

Films from overseas, which have been approved by the Party, should be all shown to the writers in the Scriptwriting Company. For the time being, many foreign films should be shown to them.

As they watch these films, writers should view them critically, with the great leader's instructions and Party policy as a guideline. Only then can they dispel their illusions about such pictures and avoid becoming contaminated by revisionism. They should at all times assess foreign works from the standpoint of Juche.

We must ensure that writers get the opportunity to attend films approximately twice a week. The shows should be organized by the Film Workers' Union, which needs to draw up a monthly schedule for showings and deliver it to the Film Distribution Centre.

I will make sure that the Scriptwriting Company is provided with a projector, but despite the projector, it is difficult for the present to provide viewers of the company with their own projection room. If they use the projection hall at the Documentary Film Studio, they will have problems with getting in, so they should be allowed to use the projection room at the Film Distribution Centre.

We ought to ensure that writers attend various meetings held in the capital. We can allow a couple of them to take part in each meeting. Writers must also be encouraged to go to production sites to gain experience in real life.

They should not attempt to create scripts at their desks without any knowledge of true-life situations. If they try to invent fantastic stories from beginning to end without experiencing life, they will be unable to produce proper works. The scenario for *A New Day Is in Sight* was written by a writer at his desk, so the seed from which this play sprang is not clear. Because of this, a great deal of effort had to be made to make it into a film. Since there is a limit to a creative person's concentration and enthusiasm, he should experience the reality of a situation in order to write a good piece about it.

The Scriptwriting Company should divide its writers into two groups and send one group for one or two years and the other for six months to workplaces to gain experience in life. Those who simply cannot write should be removed from its register and go to various working sites for about a year to practise writing while working there. This is my recommendation.

Writers must gain valuable experience of life during field work. At the moment they are supposed to be going there for this purpose, but in fact they are only making a tour of superficial inspection, not gaining experience of reality. Worse still, some writers, though unable to write even a simple comedy sketch, are said to be turning out pieces for amateur art circles without gaining any real experience

of the situation at factories or enterprises. We shall discuss separately the matter of sending out writers to explore reality in the second half of the year.

Writers must improve themselves constantly so as to raise their cultural level and acquire better moral standards. It is only when writers themselves have acquired noble traits that they can describe in their works people of noble characters. They should also live frugally.

Next, let us study the matter of training young writers.

It is impossible to teach them how to write in the same way one would teach them chess moves, nor is it possible to teach them by writing the scripts for them. Such example-writing would be a downright hindrance to their development. Writing for young writers is no way to teach or help them. Therefore, veteran writers should not write screenplays for their young colleagues, but give the latter their opinions on what they have written. We should see to it that experienced authors take charge of young writers individually, reading their works and giving them their opinions, and that young writers at a similar level exchange their works and make modifications to one another's writing. This literary exchange among young writers will enable them to express their opinions and add creative touches to the pieces. But writing for them is no way to train young writers.

If we are to train young writers, we must assign to them the task of creating works on schedule, and insist that they write as much as they can. Young writers should get into the habit of writing by themselves, whether they write well or not. They must not think that they can produce good works without going through much practice. Young writers should be bold. Without courage they will lose heart and become unable to write well. If they are placed among those who have written a great deal and are urged to write, they tend to feel timid, so it is preferable for them to write independently. It is all right for their work to be corrected after it is finished.

The main thing is that writers should never write for others, and young writers should not tolerate others writing for them.

As for those who are suffering from writer's block and are idle, we should treat them in a certain way. Some of them, while unable to write even a single piece, are receiving enormous national benefits according to the grade they have been assigned. This must not continue to happen. Writers who have lost their ability to produce should be given material incentives and sent to become a part of the labour pool.

In the case of those whose ability is poor and who fail to write enough, we should adopt radical measures. Those who are unable to write feel distressed. Some ask us to transfer them to other occupations. Those who consider writing to be unsuitable to them should be sent to whatever other sectors they prefer. After April 15 I intend to see all those who are incapable of writing and to find out their states of mind in detail so that I can take steps on their behalf. Although there is nothing particularly scandalous about the officials

working in the Scriptwriting Company, there do appear now and then instances of unacceptable behaviour on the part of some. At the film studios writers are seen to go in and out of the editing rooms at unscheduled times. This sort of behaviour should cease among the writers of this company.

Some writers ask for their scenarios to be corrected at the stage of actual film composition, but writers should not be interfering at this stage.

The structure and work system of the Scriptwriting Company will have to be discussed separately, and problems arising in this connection will be solved soon.

I will study again all the problems concerning the creation of scenarios, including the desirability for a writer to reside at a film studio for writing.

After April 15 I will call a discussion on the problem of the film editors who have been excluded from the production of works, and on the problem of the grades and treatment of writers.

A film magazine needs to be published. Two thirds of scenarios that have actually been made into films should be printed in this magazine.

This year you must all fulfil your production assignments.

To this end, you should ensure that you write your scenarios before doing anything else. From now on the Scriptwriting Company should concentrate fully on the creation of screenplays. In this way you will ensure that the scenarios that are to be made into films this year are written by April 15 and that by the Fifth Congress of the Party those scenarios that are to be made into films next year are produced.

A special effort should also be made with the production of films commemorating the Fifth Party Congress.

Your writing must reflect socialist patriotism based on reality if it is to be a work to commemorate the Fifth Party Congress. It should be a fine piece of writing dealing with modern life and reflecting socialist patriotism, such as *A New Dawn on Chongsan Plain* and *An Aspen Tree of Kangson*, for example, which are now in production.

The great leader has said that only a small number of films dealing with our revolutionary traditions should be produced. The production plan for this year contains too many films dealing with this topic. Those scripts which have already been written should be made into films next year, after improvements have been made on them.

In general, films should not be too long.

The great leader has given instructions that films should not deal with extraordinary events. He has also said that our films seem too long. Ninety minutes is a suitable length for any film, and it is not easy to sit through one that lasts three or four hours. The films to be produced this year should be no longer than eight or nine reels.

The successful fulfilment of production assignments depends on the high political consciousness of the writers who without hesitation accept and carry out the great leader's instructions and Party policy.

Writers must be sure that the scenarios needed for film production this year are written with intense loyalty to the Party and the leader. After April 15 another meeting should be convened to review the film scripts that have appeared this year.

Proper deliberations should be held on each work.

The assessment group should study and evaluate scripts with the correct reflection of Party policy as the criterion. The dramatic qualities of a scenario should not be stressed until later. Even at the time of discussing the dramatic qualities of a work, they should be analyzed and assessed with Party policy as the guideline.

In order to evaluate works for the screen, taking Party policy as the standard, the members of the assessment group must be totally familiar with the great leader's instructions and Party policy, more so than the writers. At present these assessors have no more knowledge of these instructions and this policy than do the writers. Because of this shortcoming, the members of the assessment group have lauded *Rainbow Down to the Village* as a good screenplay. They should learn a serious lesson from their deliberation of this work.

In future the members of this group should conduct a close study of the leader's instructions, Party policy and other Party ideas on art and literature before assessing works carefully, while keeping Party policy as their standard.

While deliberating scripts, the assessment group should offer constructive suggestions for perfecting them. They must not simply reject them as substandard or neglect to return them.

All the works that have so far been turned down by the assessment group should be brought to me. I intend to form a group to examine them.

After the group discusses a scenario and passes it, the film studios should raise no complaints about it. We should examine whether the studios raise complaint or not, saying that works are good or bad, after the assessment group passed them.

Film scripts created by members of the masses should also be deliberated. At present people often appeal to the Central Committee of the Party concerning a scenario they have sent to the Scriptwriting Company, which has not been examined. Others send their work directly to the Party.

The Film Workers' Union should also have critics of its own. If these people are able, they can make useful comments on films.

The Children's Film Studio should produce as many cartoons and papier-mache films as possible to show to youngsters so that they might be inspired to start writing already in childhood.

Korean Friendship Association (K.F.A)

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